

## Three Market Articulations: Implications for Teachers' Work

Alison Mander & Elizabeth Hatton

School of Teacher Education  
Charles Sturt University  
Panorama Avenue  
Bathurst NSW 2795

## Three Market Articulations: Implications for Teachers' Work

### Abstract

In this paper, our focus is on market articulations. Connell et al. (1982) identify one form of market articulation; namely, that through which Australia's ruling class and elite private schools are articulated. This traditional articulation enables ruling class parents to influence and determine school policies and practices in ways which secure benefits for their children. This traditional market relationship means that the elite private schools are sensitive to trends in consumer demand. Principals' and teachers' work are clearly directly shaped by this market articulation. With an increasing emphasis in Australia on selling education to, amongst others, Asian consumers, market articulations have proliferated. In this paper we identify three educational market articulations now evident in Australia. Each has implications for the shape of principals' and teachers' work. The first is a variant of a straightforward, traditional market articulation in which the principal acts as the parents' agent, philosopher and friend (Connell et al., 1982), the second is an entrepreneurial market articulation in which the principal plays out his role as a charismatic business leader, and the third is quasi market articulation in which the principal has a dominant role as educator. Each of these articulations shapes teachers' work in ways which impact on the quality of student learning.

## Three Market Articulations: Implications for Teachers' Work

Connell et al. (1982) have identified two general categories of home-school articulations; namely market and bureaucracy. These categories fit to varying degrees different instances. In other words, there are instances which are more or less marginal to these categories and whose mechanisms and relationships of articulation stand in need of fleshing out. Hatton (1985), for example, identifies a third mechanism

of articulation within the state sector where a bureaucratic articulation might be expected but where a quasi market articulation is the reality. In this paper, our focus is market articulations. Connell et al. (1982) argue that the market articulation through which the ruling class and elite private schools are articulated enables ruling class parents to influence and determine school policies and practices in ways which secure benefits for their children. This market relationship means that the elite private schools are sensitive to trends in consumer demand. The price of failing to provide the educational goods that ruling class parents seek for their children includes falling enrolments, loss of prestige and economic difficulty. Teachers' work, according to this view, is clearly very directly shaped by the market articulation.

Given the possibility of variety of fit in the market articulation, there are likely to be variations found in direct and indirect influences on teachers' work in each version of the articulation. In this paper we show this phenomenon across three sites in which different versions of the market articulation are found. In the first school, St Luke's, the articulation is a straightforward market articulation with the principal acting both as the parents' agent, philosopher and friend and as a business manager (Connell et al., 1982). The second school, Hilltop, is an entrepreneurial market articulation in which the principal plays out his role dominantly as a charismatic business leader with far less concern for the agent, philosopher and friend of parents role. In the third, the Community School, there is a quasi market articulation insofar as financial sources beyond fees are utilised to run the school which enables the principal dominantly to act as an educator. Each of these articulations, we will demonstrate, shapes teachers' work in ways which have implications for student learning. Moreover, since the schools are geographically contiguous they exist in a 'lived market' (Lauder et al., 1994: 1). How one school markets itself has implications for the others and particularly teachers' work and students learning. Thus we argue that consideration of the form of specific market articulations within a 'lived market' (Lauder et al., 1994: 1) reveals a significant and under-rated determinant of teachers' work in the private educational market.

#### National/International Context

Most recent debate about marketisation of education has taken place in relation to the state school sector with the 'introduction of proxy market mechanisms into state education' (Lauder et al., 1994: 1).

Significantly,

In the absence of studies into the operation of actual markets, much of the debate over the merits of marketisation has been conducted at a high level of abstraction. Neo-liberal champions of the market have derived their justification for market policies from an idealised model

of market behaviour and from the claimed superior performance of private over state schools. In contrast their critics have argued that existing inequalities in education would simply be exacerbated by the introduction of market mechanisms in schools. This claim is made on the basis of well documented evidence concerning the economic and social causes of inequality in education and on the assumption that markets in education will behave, as they do elsewhere, to polarise rich and poor (Lauder et al., 1994: 1 - emphasis added).

In a market relationship, whether in the state or private sector, schools are pressed to maximise their reputations in the public arena, and draw students competitively through their constructed market appeal, from a wide geographic area rather than attempt to grapple with the specific local educational needs of the surrounding community. However, it is unlikely that this can be undertaken without some impact on teachers' work and pupils learning. Marketing of schools, we will argue, is not an unproblematic and value neutral management exercise. Since much of the recent debate, and some empirical work (Lauder et al., 1994) has focussed on the marketisation of state education it seems timely to revisit private education to examine the effects of the greater emphasis on teachers' work and students' learning. In particular, we are interested to evaluate one of the justifications for market policies; that is, the 'claimed superior performance of private over state schools' (Lauder et al., 1994: 1). Using data from ethnographic field work across three private schools (Mander, 1995) in a regional Queensland location, we demonstrate the significance of the marketing and/or management strategies adopted by Principals in

specific private school situations which interact as a 'lived market'.

The three co-educational schools in this study, St Luke's, Hilltop, and the Community School, are situated in a regional town in an eastern Australian state. Regionality is very important to this study since drought and rural recession has impacted on the traditional markets particularly for St Luke's and Hilltop forcing attention to a wider geographical area to maintain, and preferably enhance, 'market share'.

### Methodology

This study represents part of a larger study into teachers' work culture (Mander, 1995). The research methods used to collect the data for this study were qualitative. An ethnographic approach was used. Woods suggests that the ethnographer aims to 'represent the reality studied in all its various layers of social meaning in its full richness' (Woods, 1986: 4). The school principals and teachers in this study were interviewed several times. Interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and analysed. Further, two of the three principals also permitted work shadowing, each on three occasions, where the researcher was able to observe them at work carrying out their routine duties.

These observations were followed by further discussion to clarify significant issues. This data was triangulated by interviews and observations from several classroom teachers at each school. This data showed the clear association between the individual schools as workplaces and the visions the Principals had determinedly created for their schools.

### The Three Schools

The three schools, although geographically contiguous, make no attempt to engage in resource sharing or to integrate staff development. (In fact, staff development seems rather underplayed in these schools.) Outwardly they act as though the other schools did not exist. However, this is far from the reality. While each school even apparently markets itself in isolation from the others, there is a dynamic 'lived market' interaction between the schools. The marketing strategies of Hilltop strongly shape the policies of St Luke's and vice versa. For example, the move by Hilltop to market itself off shore has prompted a similar move by St Luke's despite a clear preference to keep the school monocultural. Moreover, policies and practices adopted by the Community School have been mimicked by the other two. For example, both schools have copied the Community School's practice of having an open day for the community. While the Community School has a specific informative educational aim, the practice at St Luke's and Hilltop is much more related to a marketing emphasis. By contrast, the Community School seems relatively unaffected by the others. The Community School does not engage in competition with the other schools nor does it employ aggressive marketing strategies. Its source of funding is crucial to the relative autonomy it has in the 'lived market'.

### St Luke's: The Traditional Market Articulation

This school is funded by a combination of government grants and school fees. The school is controlled by the School Governing Council which is very much an old boys' network. The Council appoints the Principal who in turn appoints other members of staff. The principal plays out his role by both acting as 'agent, philosopher and friend' to parents and by acting very directly as the employer of teachers. He is also the link between teachers and the Council, however, the teachers are never sure how this role is played out since they are not represented on the Council. He was both remote and authoritarian in his relationship with teachers.

The Council has considerable power. Teachers were frustrated by their lack of representation on this council and felt far removed from it and its members. Most teachers had not even met the members and felt they would not know of them or the role they performed in the school. Teachers were intimidated by the lack of contact with the council since they knew this body not only had power over their fates but also significantly shaped their work. Any suggestion for change in school

practice had to be approved by the Council. For example, on one occasion teachers wanted to make a change in the procedures for the annual Speech Day. The teachers had agreed at a staff meeting that change was desirable. They gave a proposal to the principal and asked him to defend it at the meeting. However, at the Council meeting the idea was given short shift. The message conveyed to the teachers through the principal was that 'nothing will change, we've always organised it this way so we'll keep it like that'. This left the teachers feeling alienated and powerless since they had to ensure the Speech Day was successful but they were assigned merely a technical role by the Council.

From the outset the principal made clear to teachers that they must fit into the status quo rather than attempt to change it. Indeed, staff appointment interviews were focussed on the teacher's acceptance of the school's philosophy, teaching load, code of conduct and their willingness to participate in directing extra-curricula activities scheduled outside usual school hours. Teachers' work, at St Luke's, was significantly shaped by these expectations. For example, one conscientious teacher said of the expectation that extra curricular work should be a regular demand of teachers 'the load can be quite onerous at times'. As is common in private schools, the staff was stable and experienced.

The recent drought and internationally induced recession has resulted in reduced school enrolments from the school's traditional clientele; that is, wealthy families in the rural sector such as grazier families and business owners from the local area. The downturn was particularly evident in boarding house enrolments. St Luke's Council responded to these changed economic conditions in a distinctive way. Fees were not reduced, they remained at high levels. Moreover, the school continued to manage its affairs in ways which staged the impression that the school was as prosperous as ever. For example, despite the downturn in boarding enrolments a lavish new boarding house was built. In fact, it was clear that the Council feared the response of parents should they find out about their current difficulties and its subsequent measures were clothed in rhetoric about enhancing educational opportunity to divert parents' attention from the real problems.

In the meantime, the Bursar started to market the school aggressively both to off shore students from South East Asia and to students from Papua New Guinea and to on shore students including the recipients of Aboriginal study grants. The on shore drive was conducted within the state and interstate in educational magazines and provincial newspapers. The boarding market was appealed to by emphasising the safety and health advantages of the rural environment. The Bursar's goal was not merely to boost enrolments to their former level but to achieve growth in a declining market. However, while the school was appealing to a non Anglo market, it was clear that the principal's preference was to maintain the Anglo dominance of the school and only

take more socially and culturally diverse students as a last resort. Perhaps if Hilltop, which at some level was beginning to be seen as competition, had not been engaged so heavily in marketing off shore, St Luke's might have managed its affairs by marketing in Australia alone.

Teachers bore the brunt of the changed economic circumstances. Not only did the marketing strategy simply mean that more socially and culturally diverse students were attending the school, it also meant that more diverse groups of students with varying educational needs were attending the school. To put it bluntly, the school was no longer in a position to limit entry by academic standards. These changes had direct implications for the teachers' work especially since there was no additional provision for increased resources or support staff despite the fact of this changed clientele. So, the competitive academic curriculum which teachers had taught unproblematically now became difficult to teach. Teachers, who previously had not needed to concern themselves with low levels of literacy found an increasing number of their students had difficulties, especially in subjects such as History or English. There was an increasing need for ESL help for some students but the school did not recognise this need by specialist staffing. Teachers raised this issue in staff meetings but they were told by the principal that times were tight and they would have to cope. Moreover, the fact that they were experienced teachers was used to suggest that they should not require specialist help.

The cultural diversity brought about by the new marketing strategy put strains on teachers and their long held assumptions. They were a stable, experienced staff, and had been quite comfortable teaching to the top of the class and feeling that their work consisted in no more than this. Some teachers continued their old modus operandi and simply adopted a sink or swim approach and offered their non-traditional students no extra help. Others found themselves neglecting their brighter students and teaching to the middle to attempt to ensure the new students might pass. In all cases, teaching remained monocultural with pressure on students to assimilate and become like the local dominant group.

Teachers were told by the principal and the Bursar that their work must remain 'resource neutral' because of the economic recession. Indeed, they were painfully aware that their jobs were under threat and that they must simply cope. For teachers, declining enrolments meant larger classes, fewer full time positions and the creation of more part-time positions. A few teachers lost their jobs altogether. This situation was handled poorly from a human relations viewpoint with very little communication between teachers and the principal and little support from their peers who were kept, by and large, unaware of what was happening. The retrenched teachers were not sure why they had been singled out. They worried that the fact that they were chosen and others were not was a reflection of the Principal's perception of their

competence. Interestingly, the sackings were quietly managed and many teachers and parents were kept unaware of them. Parents were simply told things were being rationalised to enhance educational opportunity for the students. There was no mention of economic difficulties to these powerful parents. Here fear of the impact of the market was clearly evident. Part-time positions and sackings were not the only measure implemented at this time. Other teachers had to take subjects that were not in their specific teaching areas. As Paula said of her teaching in Home Economics and English instead of teaching in her Science and Maths speciality, 'I'm filling in just to keep a job.' Despite these private difficulties in the classroom, the school continued to market itself as one in which high academic standards were expected and, indeed, achieved.

Despite the fact that they were required to do more with less, teachers were aware, on the other hand, of the employment growth within the administrative section of the school. The growth area was the Bursar's office. The Bursar took on more staff and created the position of the

Development Officer. This position was created, with a layer of additional supporting clerical staff. This increase in bureaucracy was perceived by teachers as untimely, in the light of the contraction of teaching staff, and their consequential increased workloads. Some of the teachers, however, accepted the need for the school to market itself professionally, however, there was considerable angst about the money directed towards advertising and new buildings, rather than teaching resources or staffing for teaching. In the face of needing equipment such as computers for his geography classes Jason said, 'I'm treading water for a few years'. He assumed other such schools were experiencing a similar economic situation and that better days would return. He was happy in comparison to some of his colleagues for he had his job, and maintained his senior status.

Interestingly, it seemed that the need for economic stringency may have been over stated to the staff. It was as though the economic recession was being used as an excuse by the principal and the Bursar to introduce a stronger managerial ethic in the school, to rationalise it and make the school more 'efficient'. One by product of this change was the greater exploitation of teachers. By and large teachers seemed unaware of this although some became suspicious when they saw the level of expenditure around the Bursar's position. Indeed, when the Bursar was provided with an expensive four wheel drive vehicle as part of his package, some teachers began to be a little less convinced that the need for stringency was as pressing as they were told. Moreover, teachers wondered what the new administrative staff were doing when they were told to take on an increased load of administrative tasks.

The teachers in this school had always had little insight into, and involvement in, decision making, however, as the Bursar gained more

power in the school their chances of making informed judgements about processes going on within the school diminished further. They literally became powerless pawns in a game in which the rules were set elsewhere. For example, the Bursar realised that he could manipulate the amount of funds the school attracted by ensuring the staff/student ratio did not appear too favourable. Sacking staff achieved this outcome, however, those who lost their jobs had their job loss explained away through the effects of the recession.

As a result of these initiatives, students received a considerably reduced range of curriculum options sometimes taught by teachers who were not specialists in their field. And as indicated above, those students with special needs; that is, those who were not academically able and those who had need of ESL help were not able to access adequate help.

#### Hilltop: Entrepreneurial Marketing

This school, like St Luke's, was also financed both by government grants and school fees. It had been a traditional day and boarding school for a mainly Anglo clientele. Some government funded Aboriginal students were also part of the traditional school population, however, they were clearly a minority. At the time at which Hilltop first began to suffer a loss of enrolments, a previous principal had decided to address this problem. He had sought Aboriginal students from remote communities financed as boarders through Government scholarships, to supplement the schools declining numbers of traditional clientele. The inclusion of Aboriginal students, who eventually became a majority in the school, brought significant changes in the curriculum. There was, in addition to the traditional academic subjects, a trend to a broader education for literacy and more manual subjects.

Both the changes in the clientele, and the changes in the curriculum, introduced to save the school from financial difficulty, had the

contradictory effect of making the school even less attractive to its traditional Anglo Australian clientele. They felt it was becoming 'too Aboriginal'. (Here the racism of non indigenous Australians towards indigenous Australians is clearly evident.)

The principal who was a well intended assimilationist made genuine efforts to build a productive relationship with the Aboriginal students. Despite his dubious political position, the students came to feel ownership of the school. Each new generation of Aboriginal students was inducted into the school by existing students and relationships within the school were relatively harmonious.

The current principal who sees himself as an educational innovator and charismatic leader, then decided not only to address differently the problem of falling enrolments but to gain for the school an enhanced market share through entrepreneurial strategies. The solution adopted

was to market the school off shore in South East Asia. This initiative brought with it significant changes in the school. First, the influx of relatively wealthy South East Asian students into a school which (the financially subsidised) Aboriginal students had come to see as their own, brought problems of race relations for which the school seemed singularly unprepared. The students had little understanding of one another and often no common language through which to communicate. Things became so unpleasant that the Asian and Aboriginal students were kept separate in the boarding facilities to avoid violence, particularly among the boys.

For the Aboriginal students there were other significant changes. The move to increase enrolments compromised the school's previous caring (albeit assimilationist) philosophy towards them. They had previously been taught in small groups and had significant help acquiring appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy. With the advent of the Asian students this help disappeared and the Aboriginal students suddenly found themselves working in larger groups without the help to which they had become accustomed. Discipline problems became apparent. The Aboriginal students thought that the new Principal favoured the Asian students because they were non-subsidised full fee paying students; that they were now second rate citizens in the school.

The work of the teachers was increased through problems associated with literacy and cultural differences and increased behavioural difficulties. Behavioural difficulties were evident in both groups of students, not merely the Aboriginal students. It seemed that the principal's strategy of off shore recruitment had resulted in the inclusion of quite a few South East Asian students who had been expelled from schooling in their own countries because of inappropriate behaviour in school. These students were no easier to manage in Hilltop. Similarly, the entrepreneurial principal had cut fees to local students in order to attract them and this strategy also netted some students who had been in trouble in their previous schools. And Hilltop's teachers struggled with these students too.

At the same time as recruiting from off shore, the Principal instigated a new teaching regime to economise and bring about greater efficiency and economies. Teachers lost their jobs, and more part-time, casual positions were created to fill the special needs in relation to the curriculum. In the interests of flexibility, contract rather than tenured positions were preferred. Moreover, the school marketed itself as a senior college in order to attract from home and abroad senior students wishing to attempt tertiary entrance. Large, lecture sized classes were implemented with consequential restructuring of teachers' work. Teachers were required to lecture and run follow-up tutorials to

assist students to cram for examinations. The curriculum was narrowed and focussed on Maths and Science, Business subjects and English. Areas

such as Music, Physical Education, Art and Social Studies were removed from the curriculum.

The Principal felt that he had a mandate to make any alterations he saw necessary in order to put the school on a financially sound course, and did not regret the retrenchment of staff. He felt that he was on the right track for rebuilding the school within this new design. Indeed his philosophy was simply that teachers should take his lead and do his bidding while students should be autonomous learners. Given his faith in his charismatic leadership, and his vision and philosophy he was both puzzled by, and annoyed with, any elements of resistance he encountered.

The staff who had not been sacked felt insecure. Few had tenure. Limited term contracts were the principal's preferred method of employment. A few senior teachers left as soon as they found alternative employment. Less experienced teachers remained, and like the teachers at St Luke's, some accepted part-time conditions to keep a job. These teachers had to adjust to working some of their classes in the evening, as some classes were timetabled at this time. The Principal stated that this was to give students an appreciation of tertiary study. It was also a method of utilising limited resources, and providing suitable times for adult learners. Under the new approach, students were to take responsibility for both their attendance and work. Nevertheless, there were no changes in the expectations on teachers. The teachers knew they were expected to get good results for these students, but felt that this free school structure limited their influence and relationships with the students. For example, they faced the problem of ensuring that student work was completed and submitted in time to maintain the necessary assessment to complete student portfolios but they had lost their former power and authority to exact work from students. And the leadership style of the Principal left no room to negotiate change. Teachers felt frustrated that the market enforced changes in their labour had the consequence of reducing the work related rewards that they had experienced in the past. Alex said,

I feel its just a job now. I set out my lectures, mark the work, and get on with it, but the relationship with the kids is different ... The pressure to get results is tremendous. The boss expects kids with poor English skills to cope O. K. They really need more time. It's like a pressure cooker situation, really. We're not catering for a broad education anymore.

Some of the students were markedly affected by the rationalisations at Hilltop. Previously there had been a number of welfare-related staff to help support students, particularly Aboriginal students from remote communities at school. These roles were dispensed with. Moreover, less academic students who may have benefited from a broader curriculum were disadvantaged by the narrowing of curriculum options. (The narrowed curriculum was justified by the principal as a response to the Asian

market which was perceived as requiring a limited number of academic subjects.) Additionally, no ESL help was provided for students beyond the help which regular teachers could provide. However, this was very limited since most teachers, like their peers at St Luke's, felt poorly equipped for this.

#### The Community School: Quasi Market Articulation

In this case, the school was financed differently. In the main, it was funded by benevolent business interests. It was also eligible for government grants, however, it did less well than St Luke's and Hilltop in this respect because, amongst other things it did not manipulate its

staff/student ratio to maximise the funds it was able to attract. Rather it attempted to maintain favourable ratios to enhance academic outcomes for its students. Only 15 per cent of its income came from Government grants. A further 15 per cent of school costs were recovered in school fees. The remainder came from benevolent funding.

The principal's role in the Community School was as an educational leader. Unlike the rather remote relationship of the principal at St Luke's, he consulted regularly with staff although he was not afraid of making the decisions he considered appropriate. However, teachers felt they had some input into decision making. At the very least they were more informed about decision making than their peers at St Luke's or at Hilltop. Consequently, there was a better, more amicable, feeling between teachers and the principal than was evident at St Luke's or Hilltop.

The school was sufficiently well financed that severe cutbacks were not necessary despite the economic recession. During a previous downturn, the school had made some cutbacks in staff and consequently reduced the range of subjects taught in the school. However, staff retrenchments were handled compassionately and parents were informed through open meetings about the reasons for retrenchments. Parents were left in no doubt that the difficult decisions that had to be made bore no relationship to the competency of teachers. Teachers were all involved in decisions about who would be retrenched and the displaced teachers were helped to find jobs at other schools. Significantly all the teachers were subsequently re-employed at the Community School when times had improved.

Despite the economic recession this school did not actively market itself in new ways. The ethos seemed to be one in which there was a preference for enrolments from interested parents who sought out the school rather than from parents who were attracted by glossy advertising. Class sizes were small, and the Principal and teachers were less directly involved in budget matters. In fact, budgetary matters did not directly impinge on their work in the way in which it did the teachers at Hilltop and St Luke's. Faculties communicated with one another and were willing to help each other by allowing one faculty

to be advantaged to meet particular needs for equipment etc. on the understanding that there would later be some equity built in for other Faculties. If Faculty budgets were not adequate enough for particular projects, the teachers felt they could approach the principal and get a good hearing for extra funds. Obviously, there were finite limits to the budget, however, the situation was not one in which the need for budgetary constraint suffused all aspects of teachers' work.

The philosophy of the school is that teachers teach and the Principal guides and formulates educational policy with direction from the school governing council. The benevolent businesses provide the money to implement the policy. (There are, however, no obvious signs of this business involvement in the school. The general public would be unaware of which businesses were making a contribution to the school. This situation contrasts quite strongly with the overt sponsorship of schools by businesses like McDonalds or Toshiba 'exchanged' for goodwill and advertising evident in some schools.)

The Community School provided a much more flexible, communicative working situation for teachers than was the case at St Luke's or Hilltop. For example, the principal was willing to accommodate the needs of some women for part-time work. Efforts were made to shape the timetable to accommodate these women and their preferences for particular hours. This contrasts sharply with the situation at St

Luke's and Hilltop where the timetable is planned and the part time teachers simply have to adjust to it.

The different ethos of the three schools is perhaps most evident in the way in which solutions are found or not found for particular problems. Consider the following. A common problem in all schools is the increase in petty tasks such as the collection of money from students for excursions and other activities. At St Luke's, Felicity was frustrated at what appeared to be a growing control by the Bursar's office into teachers' work. Policy decisions had been made allegedly to improve efficiency. This resulted in more forms to be filled in and routines to complete. Tasks which reduced effective class teaching time were being devolved to teachers. It was also the type of work that Felicity felt should not be done by a teacher since they had traditionally been done by office staff. Teachers accepted these changes, as they were constantly reminded of the school's declining economic position. They were willing, therefore, to shoulder some of the burden. However, it was felt by some that the situation had gone too far.

A similar situation arose at the Community school. The office staff were experiencing difficulty collecting money from students. The Principal noted the corresponding slowness and inefficiency when the task was given over to class teachers. Collection of petty finance was causing problems and wasting time. The Principal took the decision that

the School would cover the cost of excursions up to a certain amount, and beyond that, the teacher organising the excursion had to take responsibility for money collection. Since, in practice, most of the excursions came under the category of small costs which the school was now covering, this innovation proved a relief to both office staff and teachers. Only one cheque was necessary, and this was provided by the office. The time and effort required to complete these transactions were greatly reduced. Although this solution cost the school a little more, it had other benefits. It reduced stress on teachers. Jim said that he really appreciated the reduction in load and tedium that was associated with this. It was a simple and perhaps only a partial solution, but it proved effective in strengthening relationships between the executive, the office and the teachers. It appeared to show evidence of care and understanding of teachers' situational problems.

Although the least prestigious of the three schools, students in this school benefited from small classes with ready access to help as they required it. Moreover, it was in this school that students had access to the most varied curriculum taught by subject specialists.

#### Discussion

Schools in competitive environments face dilemmas. Lauder et al. (1994: 47) draw attention to a useful distinction between 'image' and 'vision' made by Bowe, Ball & Gold (1992):

Image is what schools need to project in order to survive; it is essentially a public relations exercise. Vision refers to what schools consider to be educationally desirable. Ball argues that image and vision pull in different directions and pose professional and ethical dilemmas for teachers.

St Luke's is a school in which considerable energy and resources (consider the lavish new boarding house and the expenditure on the Registrar's domain) is deployed to protect the public image of the school. Simultaneously the more private world of teaching is deprived of resources in order to allow the school to cope with the constraints imposed by this expenditure. Teachers labour in very changed circumstances with problems that are largely new to the elite private

sector without the additional resources which would be found typically in much maligned state schools. Teachers have to cope with these difficulties because of the insecurities they face over their employment. Moreover, they are so far removed from decision making in the school they cannot judge how real the threat to them is. As they face new teaching difficulties and an increased administrative load, teachers feel they have lost much of the rewards that used to sustain them in their work.

Students' parents are buying, with their fees, a school with a glossy

image which is burnished at the cost of educational vision. The range of curriculum choices found in the school is very narrow. And while academically able students working in English as a first language cope with the situation, there is no doubt that academically able students for whom English is a second language would be better served by attending a state school or a less glossy, less expensive private school such as the Community School. Those who are less academically able gain limited help only in those classes where teachers have shifted their attention from teaching to the top range of students to teaching to the middle.

The Principal, in this case, sacrificed any possibility of playing a role as educational leader to that of managerialist business manager while still attempting to keep parents on-side both by the visual imagery of success and by the way in which he 'sold' changes within the school to parents. He appeared therefore to be playing his traditional role of agent, philosopher and friend but, in reality, he was a less than ethical business person who had lost sight of the fact that education should be offered equally to all students not merely the most able working in their first language. He, and the Registrar, were implicated in selling a commodity; namely, 'high educational standards', that only a few in St Luke's could reasonably achieve given the economies imposed on staffing and resources for teaching.

Hilltop's problems were slightly different to St Luke's. St Luke's was trying to maintain its traditional image while building its market share. Hilltop, by contrast, was rebuilding its image from the one that had chased its traditional clientele away in a racist 'white flight' (Lauder et al., 1994: 48) from a school that was seen as tarnished by being 'too Aboriginal'. The Principal chose to do so by marketing the school as a senior college which encouraged autonomy in students by provided tertiary-like teaching experiences which would best equip students for university. However, while he encouraged autonomy in students, teachers were not so encouraged. Their role was to simply carry out his vision even to the extent of being accountable for students' results in a system which at the level of rhetoric left it to the discretion of students whether or not they attended classes, completed assignments and the like. At the same time it was also trying to enhance its market share of traditional and non traditional students. One consequence was that like St Luke's, it attracted a more varied clientele with special needs that were not met by the economies made in teaching staff. Moreover, a school which had made genuine attempts to cater for the needs of indigenous Australian students shifted so dramatically that Aboriginal students were made to feel like second rate citizens. Racism between Aboriginal and South East Asian students which was partially provoked by this situation was dealt with ineffectually by a separatist philosophy.

Teachers, in this setting, had their work dramatically changed. While they were not unused to dealing with the needs of Aboriginal students,

they lost the conditions which had enabled them to do so. Moreover, many of the new students gained through new marketing strategies had

special needs to which they, like St Luke's teachers, had to attend without the staffing resources and expertise that would be found in the state school sector. Moreover, they were obliged to implement a philosophy in the senior school about which they had not been consulted and for which they seemed very unprepared. Ironically, the philosophy gave students more autonomy than they were given by their principal.

The principal saw himself as an educational innovator and charismatic leader. He certainly had brought changes to Hilltop and these were implemented without consultation with teachers whom he saw as functionaries who should simply follow his lead and implement his vision. He was annoyed by the teachers lack of good will in this. While the changes were implemented and the on-shore and off-shore strategies were relatively successful students with specific educational needs like those at St Luke's with similar, received little assistance. Curriculum was stripped of any 'frills' and subjects which might have appealed to less academically able students were no longer taught. Moreover, citizenship needs, such as the need to educate students to be non racist in a democratic country, were ignored. While he was able to implement change in a climate of fear amongst his staff, it is hard to see this principal as intimately concerned with the achievement of high educational outcomes for all students. Rather, he seemed to satisfy himself with impression management of that concern in order to rebuild the school's image. Vision was largely sacrificed to this end.

By virtue of its seventy per cent benevolent funding, the Community School was relieved of the need for aggressive marketing. This meant that the contradictory pulls of image and vision were not really felt in this context. Rather image and vision were able to be kept on parallel tracks. There was not the need to utilise precious resources to enhance the school's image to the detriment of its vision. Rather, its educational vision shaped its image. The Principal, in this case, was able to play a role as an educational leader concerned with the welfare of staff and students alike.

### Conclusion

Idealised models of market behaviour and a belief that private schools provide a superior education to state schools underpins a justification for introducing proxy market conditions in state education. This analysis shows the weakness of both the idealised market model and the claim that the education provided in the private sector is necessarily superior to that provided in the state school sector. In fact, it shows that responses to the 'lived market' may have negative outcomes particularly for those students with special educational needs such as the need for ESL assistance for off shore students and Aboriginal

students from remote communities.

#### References

- Bowe, R., & Ball, S. with Gold, A. (1992) *Reforming Education and Changing Schools*. London: Routledge
- Connell, R.W., Ashenden, D. J., Kessler, S. & Dowsett, G.W. (1982) *Making the Difference*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin
- Hatton, E. J. (1985) Equality, class and power. A case study. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 6 (3) pp. 253-272
- Lauder, H., Hughes, D., Waslander, S., Thrupp, M., McGlinn, J., Newton, S. & Dupuis, A. (1994) *The Creation of Market Competition for Education in New Zealand. The Smithfield Project Phase One: First Report to the Ministry of Education*.
- Mander, A. (1995) *Experienced Teachers' Perceptions of Influences on their Teaching: An Ethnographic Study*. Unpublished thesis for M. Ed.

(Hons).

- Woods, P (1986) *Inside Schools. Ethnography in Educational Research*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.