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**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CONTROVERSY IN THE
EDUCATION SYSTEMS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA
AND NEW ZEALAND: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS 1985-1993.**

by Anne Marie Coffey

**A Thesis submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award
of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**At the Department of Educational Policy and Administrative Studies,
Edith Cowan University
Perth, Western Australia**

Date of Submission: October 6, 1998

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

The release of Better Schools in *Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement* (1987), in line with other public sector agency reforms, contained a prescription for the restructuring of the Education Department of Western Australia from a bureaucratic to a corporate management system of school administration. These changes were intended to render the education system, and especially schools, more flexible, responsive and accountable. Among the proposals for educational restructuring was a new opportunity for community participation through "school based decision making groups." Contemporaneously, the education systems in Victoria and New Zealand were undergoing similar reforms.

The research agenda for this thesis is based on two questions. The first research question is:

In what ways did the reforms conducted by the governments in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand change the participation of the school community in school decision making in state schools during the period 1985-1993?

The extent to which the new organisational structures, based upon corporate management, facilitated the admission of the school community into the school decision making process is investigated.

In order to facilitate the analysis of policy, this thesis develops a conceptualisation of the notion of controversy. The controversy framework involves the investigation of a number of elements of a controversy - stimulus, context, events, issues, arguments, protagonists, constraints, consequences and closure. The use of this framework is intended to assist in educational policy analysis by highlighting and elaborating upon the interdependent elements, including power relationships, involved in educational policy formulation and implementation. The second research question is:

How effective is controversy as a framing device for educational policy analysis?

The adequacy of “controversy” as a framing device is evaluated at the conclusion of the thesis.

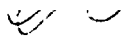
In order to investigate the research problems a variety of data was gathered and analysed. Scrutiny of the major Government and Education Department policy documents as well as a review of literature such as journals, books, newspapers, and documents produced by organisations such as teacher unions, was undertaken. In the case of Western Australia face-to-face interviews were conducted. A series of video-taped interviews with major actors in the controversy in Western Australia was also used in the data gathering process.

The data was then systematically ordered using the controversy framework which enabled comparison of the controversies in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand. The conclusions drawn focus upon the manner in which corporate management and genuine democratic community participation are antipathetic. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, the school community was unable to exert meaningful influence upon the direction being charted for government schools. As a framing device for educational policy analysis it is concluded that controversy, at this preliminary stage, appears to have merit and further use and refinement of this framework is recommended.

DECLARATION

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgement, any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institute of higher education and that, to the best of my belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text."

Anne Coffey



Date: 28/7/99

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In the mid 1980s attempts by the government of Western Australia to replace bureaucratic administrative structures with corporate managerialist practices were introduced with the *Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement* (Pearce, 1987) (hereafter referred to as *Better Schools*) report. These reforms were intended to obtain greater efficiency, responsiveness and flexibility in using resources (*Managing Change in the Public Sector*, 1986). Among the recommendations for more responsive schools were school based decision making groups - a qualitatively new organisational arrangement in order to facilitate community participation in government schools. In addition, a school development (corporate) plan and school grant were introduced.

Throughout the 1980s major restructuring of education systems was undertaken in all Australian states. In Victoria restructuring efforts were directed towards, inter alia, a greater role for school councils in school decision making. Contemporaneously the education system in New Zealand underwent similar reforms. In constrained economic climates government school systems were reorganised to render them more responsive to the economy (Lingard, Knight and Porter, 1993, p.2). Community participation in school decision making, to varying degrees, was a feature of the reform of education bureaucracies into more efficient corporate entities.

Reports and inquiries into education from 1973-1987 (e.g. *Better Schools*, 1987; *Keeves Report*, 1981, 1982; Ministerial Papers, 1982-1986) consistently recommended that “better schools” would emanate from the benefits of more localised decision making. Devolution of administrative responsibility was a recurrent theme in political thinking about education during the 1980s. Interestingly, while politicians extolled the virtues of

community participation in school decision making there was little impetus generated from parents and members of the local community.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The following quote from *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll, 1960, p.81) informs a number of issues regarding school community participation in school decision making to be addressed in this thesis:

“How am I to get in?” Alice asked in a loud tone. “Are you to get in at all?” said the footman. “That’s the first question, you know.”

This simple, yet provocative, quote contains several concerns of significance to this thesis. Such a statement is informed by notions of power. If there was a desire by the school community for greater participation in school decision making, would the participatory structures, such as school based decision making groups, determined by those in power, facilitate such participation? Underpinning a notion of augmented school community participation in school decision making is power redistribution whereby power is shifted from the central organisation to districts and schools. Would the traditional power brokers in education countenance an enhanced role for the school community in school decision making? If so, would there be some areas of school decision making in which participation by the school community would be prevented? These questions, whilst related to the research questions are beyond the scope of this thesis but would provide fruitful areas for further research.

The political milieu in which such reforms were occurring is an important consideration in attempting to answer such questions. Major reforms of the public sector were occurring in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand during 1985-1993. The restructuring efforts were directed towards the installation of “market mechanisms” (Lingard and Blackmore, 1997, p.4) within the public sector in order to render these entities more responsive and efficient. Lingard and Blackmore (1997, p.16) give some sense of the context in which the controversies to be examined were occurring:

Thus the paradox of postmodern times: at the moment when globalised and more culturally diverse economies demand a more highly educated and diverse workforce for gaining the competitive edge, the very same processes of globalisation (manifest as the ideology of market liberalism) demand reduced public sector funding, in which education and social justice take the brunt.

The preference for corporate management as a means of overcoming the perceived inadequacies of education bureaucracies has repercussions for the type of the participatory structures pursued by educational policy makers. Considine (1994, p.161) explains that:

Corporatist structures serve to share power with recognised interest groups such as business, trade unions and the professions... When these interests have a wide base of support in the policy system, this form of participation offers the prospect of real power sharing in the community and may harness a valuable source of new ideas and novel ideas to difficult problems. Such arrangements rarely extend beyond the one or two dominant interests in a policy system, however, and as a result may tend to consolidate existing power blocs and prevailing ideas. Emerging interests are often excluded.

In each of the controversies to be examined in this thesis the issue of school community participation in school decision making was an element of the educational policy reforms. New and dynamic policy contexts would form the arena in which the educational reforms would take place. The emergent participatory structures are examined with a view to assessing the extent of their role in school decision making.

CONTROVERSY AS THE KEY CONCEPTUAL FRAME

The work of Engelhardt and Caplan (1987) and their description of scientific controversies has been used to underpin the development of the notion of public policy controversies introduced in this thesis. Consideration of public policies as “controversies” is employed as a measure to assist in the formulation of a framing device for use in policy analysis. In this thesis this framing device is used in the analysis of the educational reforms purporting to increase the participation of the school community in school decision making. Porter, (1993, p.43) notes the importance of the significant links between the education reforms investigated, education restructuring

across Australia and reform of the public sector in general. This forms a major feature of the context in each of the controversies.

Scrutiny of the controversies described in Engelhardt and Caplan (1987) led to the emergence of the following common elements in each controversy - stimulus, context, events, issues, protagonists, arguments, constraints, consequences and closure. These elements are outlined in Chapter Three.

Controversy as a framing device offers a sophisticated approach to the problem of public policy analysis. It provides the means by which the analyst can methodically synthesise the disparate elements within the policy process. The perceived merits of this approach are outlined in Chapter Three. The efficacy of this framework is adjudged at the conclusion of this thesis.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this thesis is two-fold. Firstly, it is concerned with analysing those reforms aimed at promoting greater participation by the school community in school decision making in Western Australian, Victorian and New Zealand state schools during 1985-1993. It is an historical study of a critical moment in policy development. Thus the first research question is:

In what ways did the reforms conducted by the governments in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand change the participation of the school community in school decision making in state schools during the period 1985 -1993?

In order to facilitate the analysis a device, based on the notion of controversy is developed. This notion is drawn from the work by Engelhardt and Caplan (1987) on scientific controversies and is developed in Chapter Three. This analytic device highlights and elaborates upon the many interdependent elements involved in

educational policy formulation and implementation. A related intent of this thesis is to examine whether power relationships extant within the education system may be better understood in light of such an analysis. The second research question is:

How effective is controversy as a framing device for educational policy analysis?

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the research problems outlined above a variety of data was gathered and analysed. Use of the controversy framework necessarily requires gathering of data related to each of the elements of controversy. Such an analysis includes an examination of the major Government and Education Department policy documents. Scrutiny of these documents provided an insight into the political rationale for reform and in insight into the proposed *modus operandi* of school decision making bodies. Comparison between the policy proposals and the form and function of the decision making groups as they were actually implemented could then be made. A review of literature such as journals, books, newspapers, and documents produced by organisations such as parent groups and teacher unions was conducted in order to obtain a range of differing viewpoints in relation to the reforms aimed at increasing school community participation in school decision making. The analysis of the literature provided data in relation to the rationale for change, historical perspectives (relating, in particular, to the past participation of the community in school decision making), the contextual environment of the education system and the aftermath of change. The literature provided an important insight into the political milieu in which each of the controversies was taking place.

In addition to the scrutiny of key policy documents, in the case of Western Australia, face-to-face interviews were conducted with Ed Harken (then President of the State School Teachers' Union of WA) and Anne Spencer (then President of the WA Council of State School Organisations). Questions were asked in relation to the stance of each

of the organisations in relation to the *Better Schools* (1987) report and, in particular, the proposals related to community participation in school decision making. The interviewees were questioned as to their view of expected role of the school community in school decision making; their perception as to the implementation of the reforms related to school-based decision making groups; their perception as to the extent of their participation in the policy process; their views in relation to enabling legislation; and their predictions for future participation by the school community in school decision making.

A series of detailed video-taped interviews conducted by Bruce Haynes of Edith Cowan University with Max Angus (Executive Director, Schools Division), Warren Loudon (Director-General of the Ministry of Education 1985-1989) Bob Pearce (Minister for Education, (1983-1988) and Carmen Lawrence (Minister for Education 1988-1990) were used to ascertain the Ministry of Education perspective of the *Better Schools* (1987) reforms and, in particular, school community participation in school decision making through school based decision making groups.

The data was then systematically ordered using the controversy framework and assigned to the relevant element of controversy. The controversies in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand were then compared. Victoria and New Zealand were selected for comparison for several reasons. Firstly, both were controlled by Labour parties at the time which enabled comparison of policies related to community participation in school decision making by governments with a similar ideology. Secondly, the reforms were occurring during the same time period which also provided for interesting comparisons given that many of the contextual factors were similar. Thirdly, the reforms being implemented involved some form of increased school community participation in school decision making. Consideration of each of these controversies permitted the establishment of conclusions in relation to the research questions.

Policy analysis by its very nature will be markedly influenced by the “theoretical lens” of the policy analyst. Whilst not purporting to be a rigorous analysis from a critical theory perspective it is acknowledged that many of the references used throughout the thesis are written from this perspective. Thus the policy analysis which is conducted is, to a large extent, informed by a critical theory perspective.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This thesis is intended to make a significant contribution to knowledge in two ways. Firstly, a detailed analysis of the issue of school community participation in school decision making in Western Australian state government schools during the period 1985-1993 has yet to be conducted. Given the preoccupation by governments with issues of school governance this study will also be informed by developments in educational restructuring which occurred in Victoria and New Zealand. A detailed analysis of school community participation in school decision making in Western Australia may inform future developments in this area. Whilst education seemingly occupies a significant position on the political agenda, wider articulation and debate of the issues, such as school community participation in school decision making, must occur. This thesis may contribute to such a debate and improve the understanding of school community participation in school decision making in Western Australian state government schools.

Secondly, this thesis introduces a framework for policy analysis based upon the notion of controversy. This framing device has the potential to promote the disclosure of the complexities of educational policies and lead to an enhancement of knowledge by examining the many interrelated elements of policy formulation and implementation.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The conceptual framework for this thesis is advanced in Chapter Two. This chapter argues the need for a consideration of the concept of power when analysing reforms

intended to increase school community participation in school decision making. The concepts of power, bureaucracy, corporate management and participation which underpin the analysis are outlined. In Chapter Three the notion of controversy and the framing device derived from this notion are explained and justified.

An analysis of the issue of school community participation in school decision making in Western Australian state government schools (1985-1993), using controversy as a framing device, is conducted in Chapter Four. In order to inform the policy analysis with respect to the Western Australian situation, the recent restructuring experiences of the Victorian (Chapter Five) and New Zealand (Chapter Six) education systems, which also involved community participation, are also examined through the use of controversy. The situation in Western Australia may be better understood and evaluated in light of evidence drawn from elsewhere. Such an analysis includes an examination of the major documents, the rationale for change, historical perspectives, the method of implementation, the contextual environment of the education system and the aftermath of change. A summary of the three controversies is presented in table form in the appendix of the thesis.

The resulting analysis, presented in Chapter Seven, enunciates the similarities and differences between education systems in terms of the implementation and scope of school community participation in school decision making. The extent to which the notion of controversy assisted this analysis is evaluated and discussed. Finally, conclusions are drawn as to the extent of the role of the school communities in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand in school decision making during the period of the controversies. It is not proposed that such conclusions be generalised to include other school systems (including the private school sector) because these systems are influenced by different imperatives from those present in government school systems.

Chapter Two

SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND POWER

The purpose of this chapter is two fold. In the first section it is argued that an analysis of the concept of power is necessary when considering educational reforms which profess to devolve decision responsibility and, more particularly, increase school community participation in school decision making. The concepts of power and participation which inform the analysis of school community participation in school decision making are outlined. The conceptualisations of power proposed by Foucault and Lukes will be examined in more detail and the manner in which they are invoked in this thesis will be discussed. Following this the notions of participation, bureaucracy and corporate management will be examined.

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Before discussing the aforementioned issues the term “school community”, as it will be employed in this thesis, will be defined. The term “community” may refer to a body of people who share something in common or a group of people living in the same proximity. Harman (1977, p.2) provides some insight into the problem surrounding the use of this term when it is applied to schools. He explains that sometimes it may be used to mean the parents of students; sometimes it refers to the neighbourhood community of which the school is a part; it may refer to the members of smaller groups of parents and other interested people who are deeply involved in the work of the school; and finally it may refer to groups of people who have shared interests and attitudes relating to education and perhaps a certain school. For the purposes of this research the following definition, as given by the Beazley committee (1984, p.257) is accepted whereby the local school community is seen as consisting of “individuals and groups who are interested in and can have the potential to influence the operation of the school.” Hence it is possible to identify those individuals in the school community as parents, teachers, students, school administrators, school auxiliary staff and other

interested people in the wider community. This indicates that the school community is comprised of all who perceive an interest in schooling.

DEVOLUTION

Devolution is a somewhat ambiguous term leading to different expectations by stakeholders in education. In the *Karmel Report* (1973) devolution was regarded as a process whereby parents, students and teachers were granted a greater voice in the management of schools. This is akin to more democratic notions of participation. The Beazley recommendations in 1984 reintroduced the concept of community participation. In Chapter Four it is shown that, in 1987, in *Better Schools*, the concerns for efficiency and effectiveness led to the concept of devolution being more akin to decentralisation of administrative responsibility and accountability in contrast to a genuine delegation of power. Devolution was a “management tool” (*Devolution of Decision-making Authority in the Government School System of Western Australia*, 1994, p.16) used to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Devolution may involve the delegation of power from a central agency to local or regional administrations. Underpinning the notion of significant devolution is the transformation of power relationships. Reforms which propose to increase the decision making power of school communities purport to change power distribution within the education system. The change intended may involve the power relationships between all stakeholders in the education system or, more specifically, encompass the relationship between school level stakeholders and the central office.

Whilst educational policies propose actions targetted at changing current practice, the outcomes of policy implementation may not necessarily reflect the stated intentions of that policy. Entrenched power relationships may thwart reforms as stakeholders endeavour to protect their interests and power bases. *Better Schools* (1987) profiled the responsibilities of school-based decision making groups among which was

“participating in defining the role of the principal and advising on selection and appointment of the principal” (p.11). The State School Teachers’ Union of Western Australia (hereafter referred to as SSTUWA) objected to this reform and eventually this role for school-based decision making groups (hereafter referred to as SBDMGs) was removed. The teachers’ union, as is demonstrated in this thesis, exerted considerable pressure during the reform process. The notion of power and power relationships becomes central to an analysis of educational policies ostensibly aimed at augmenting the decision making responsibilities of school communities.

A number of reasons have been given to account for the manner in which the implementation of reforms was obfuscated by stakeholders within the education system. These problems were evidenced during the controversy surrounding the reforms aimed at empowering school communities in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand. Bottery (1993, p.109) contends that a lack of consultation with those members of the organisation who are responsible for instituting the legislation may, in part, contribute to difficulties in implementing reforms. This thesis demonstrates the manner in which certain stakeholders were excluded from the policy process and the means by which the government utilised political power to force the closure of elements of this controversy. Crump (1993, p.95) believes that policy documents, *inter alia*, act as “micro-political resources for educators, consultants, parent and others in the community to interpret, reinterpret, ignore or resist during implementation.” Stakeholders in the controversy approach educational policies from their own unique perspectives and react accordingly. Participation by the school community in school decision making, which had the potential to alter the power distribution within the Western Australian, Victorian and New Zealand education systems, was viewed and interpreted differently by the various stakeholders who, with particular interests in this issue, responded diversely during the policy implementation process. Dale (1989, p.59) concurs with the notion that such intractability is less a condition of bureaucracies than the outcome of various groups within the system protecting their interests in preference to promoting those of the

organisation. Sarason (1990, p.7) elaborates upon the intractability of school systems to reform by stating that reformers generally miss the point that:

the classroom the school and the school system generally, are not comprehensible unless you flush out the power relationships that inform and control the behaviour of everyone in these settings. Ignore these relationships, leave unexamined their rationale, and the existing "system" will defeat efforts at reform. This will not happen because there is a grand conspiracy or because of mulish stubbornness in resisting change or because educators are uniquely unimaginative or uncreative (which they are not) but rather because recognising and trying to change power relationships, especially in complicated, traditional institutions, is among the most complex tasks human beings can undertake.

Entrenched power relationships are central to the problems inherent in educational reforms purporting to devolve decision making responsibilities leading to greater empowerment of school communities. In this thesis, the controversy surrounding the policies and implementation of reforms professing to increase the decision making capabilities of school communities in Western Australia is examined using the controversy process. This will highlight the degree to which the aforementioned factors were extant during the reform process.

POWER AND SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The need for a study of the notion of power when considering reforms aimed at increasing the decision making power of school communities has been alluded to above. In this section a brief, but by no means exhaustive, account of the different conceptions of power will be given with particular emphasis on both Foucault's and Lukes' interpretation of power.

Sarason (1990, p.49) interprets power as "possession of control, or authority, or influence over others." He claims that this definition stresses the feature of interpersonal relationships which explains why, in that context, the exercise of power is frequently accompanied by conflict.

Burbules (1986) argues that traditional theories of power assumed that power is a “property of individual persons, wielded instrumentally as a means to achieve intended outcomes.” In proposing his theory of power, Burbules (1986, p.95) argues that:

power and power struggles are the consequences of underlying conflicts between human interests; that these conflicts are inevitable given the hierarchical nature of our social system; that power is latent in structures of ideology, authority, and organisation; and that the resolution to the problem of power lies neither in simply exercising power nor in “getting it”, but in transforming the underlying conflicts that give rise to it.

Burbules adopts a relational conception of power: “that A has power over B, but that in most cases B empowers A.” A broader view of power is provided if power is seen as being “inherent in the framework of a status quo” (Burbules, 1986, p.103).

Power has also been conceptualised as a property or an effect of social structures and systems. Smart (1985, p.122) summarises three such conceptions. Firstly, in the work of Weber, power is not only formulated in terms of human agency but there is also considerable regard for the articulation of relations of power in systems of domination. In the work of Parsons, power is regarded not as a property held by groups or individuals but, rather, as a generalised resource flowing through the political system. Finally, in the work of Marx, power is seen as being deep-seated in the economic structure of society. For Marxists, power reflects economic power, and the key to the analysis of the distribution of power in society is the pattern of the relations of production.

Foucault’s conception of power differs, according to Smart (1985, p.77) because:

The questions which Foucault posed of power are first “how is it exercised; by what means?” and second “what are the effects of the power and where does it come from?” rather than “what is power and where does it come from?”. Power is not conceived as a property or possession of the dominant class, state or sovereign but as a strategy, the effects of domination associated with power arise not from appropriation and deployment by a subject but from ‘manoeuvres, tactics, techniques and functionings’; and a relation of power does not constitute an obligation

or prohibition imposed upon the “powerless”, rather it invests them, is transmitted by and through them.

Foucault argues that power is accompanied by resistance because the “existence of power depends upon the existence of numerous points of resistance. There can be no power relations without resistance. Resistance must be analysed in “tactical and strategic terms”, that we must posit “that each offensive from one side serves as leverage for a counter offensive from the other” (Foucault, 1980, p.163-4). Resistances are the more effective because they are formed exactly at the point where relations of power are exercised. In regard to the notion of struggle Foucault (1980, p.164) indicates that:

This theme of struggle only really becomes operative if one establishes concretely - in each particular case - who is engaged in struggle, what the struggle is about, and how, where, by what means...it evolves.

Foucault suggests that power is omnipresent, not always being localised in specific societal structures such as government or government instrumentalities. One is never outside power. Foucault suggests that power is best examined at the point at which it takes effect. Power works from the “bottom up” for it is interwoven with other kinds of social relations. Power begins in the “smallest elements” of the social body and “as far as we go in the social network we always find power as something that runs through it, that acts, that brings about effects” (Foucault, cited by Wickham, 1986, p.152). Hoy (1986, p.128) believes that by not attributing power to a “conscious agency” or to “underlying forces” such as modes of production, Foucault attempts to explain contemporary society by mapping the network of power relations which have evolved over time.

Foucault employed the term “power/knowledge” since, for his purposes, power and knowledge are analogous. Foucault (1977, p.27) explains that:

power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any

knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

Smart, citing Foucault (1979, p.102) indicates that mechanisms of power have been accompanied by:

The production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge - methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control.

It is therefore necessary to analyse power/knowledge on the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge. Rabinow (1984, p.175) contends that:

it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge.

Those “in power” have the capacity to determine the dominant discourse and the technologies of power. They determine the agenda. Truth is created through manipulation or control of the constructs of power. Foucault introduced the concept of a “discursive formation” which is comprised of the practices and institutions that produce knowledge claims found useful by the systems of power. A particular discourse “serves a maieutic function: it brings objects into being by identifying them, delimiting their field, and specifying them” (Wolin, 1988, p.184), As Ball (1990, p.2) indicates, discourses are not only “about what can be said and thought”, they also encompass “who can speak, when and with what authority.” He explains that:

Meanings thus arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations. Words and concepts change their meaning and their effects as they are deployed within different discourses. Discourses constrain the possibilities of thought. They order and combine words in particular ways and exclude or displace other combinations. However, in so far as discourses are constituted by exclusions as well as inclusions, by what cannot as well as what can be said, they stand in antagonistic relationship to other discourses, other possibilities of meaning, other claims, rights and positions.

Foucault’s “principle of discontinuity” states that discourses may also act as a hindrance and a position from which opposing strategies may emerge.

In the controversies to be discussed in this thesis the focus is upon school community participation in school decision making and the educational policies which purported to increase such participation. Lukes (1974) theory of power is of particular relevance as he proposes a conceptualisation of power which focuses upon behaviour, decision making, issues, conflict and interests. He defines power by indicating that (p.34):

A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests.

In a discussion of power and interests Lukes (1974, p.34) continues by stating that:

In general, talk of interests provides a licence for the making of normative judgements of a moral and political character. So it is not surprising that different conceptions of what interests are are associated with different moral and political positions.

Within the controversies to be discussed each of the stakeholders had a particular interest in the policies proposing an increase in school community participation in school decision making. That certain stakeholders were able to exercise greater power in the pursuit of their interests precluded the attainment of the interests of other stakeholders. Consideration of interests, through Lukes' conception of power, enables a valuable insight into the power relations extant within the controversies.

Lukes acknowledges that power is a value-dependent concept by indicating that (p.26):

both its very definition and any given use of it, once defined, are inextricably tied to a given set of (probably unacknowledged) value-assumptions which pre-determine the range of its empirical application.

Lukes proposes three dimensions or faces of power. The first focuses upon behaviour, decision making, key issues, observable conflict and subjective interests "seen as policy preferences revealed by political participation" (p.25). He recognises the limitations of this dimension of power in that it offers no means of considering the way in which power may be exercised to limit decision making in the policy process. He states that (p.37):

Individuals and elites may act separately in making acceptable decisions but

they may act in concert - or even fail to act at all - in such a way as to keep unacceptable issues out of politics.

The second face of power attempts to incorporate into the analysis of power the issue of control of the political agenda and the manner in which potential issues are excluded from the political process (p.21). The focus here is upon decision making and non decision making, a qualified critique of the behavioural focus, issues and potential issues, observable (overt and covert) conflict and subjective interests, seen as policy preferences or grievances. Considine (1994, p.140) in his discussion of power outlines the importance of such considerations by stating that the:

structuring of the "rules of the game" may be more important than the actual contest if the rules include devices to weed out issues considered to be too contentious, too radical or too difficult to resolve.

Thus if decision making elites within Ministries of Education were able to set the agenda for participation by the school community in school decision making through determination of enabling legislation it would be possible to prevent the emergence of potential issues such as determination of the modus operandi of school decision making bodies by all stakeholders. Likewise, in Western Australia, for example, the SSTUWA was able to utilise power to help set the agenda for the modus operandi of SBDMGs. The interests of WACSSO became a non-issue.

Lukes third face of power focuses upon decision making and control over the political agenda (not necessarily through decisions), issues and potential issues, observable (convert and overt) conflict and latent conflict and subjective and real interests. He considered this third dimension of power to be superior because it overcomes the problem of assuming that an absence of grievance is equivalent to consensus. This face of power overcomes the inadequacy of a conceptualisation of power that supposes that power only arises in cases of actual conflict for it ignores (p.23):

the crucial point that the most effective and insidious use of power is to prevent such conflict from arising in the first place.

The controversies discussed in this thesis focus more particularly upon Lukes' first two faces of power. The analysis is primarily directed towards a consideration of the behaviour of the stakeholders and decision and non decision making.

PARTICIPATION

Lukes' three dimensions of power and Foucault's conception of power/knowledge serve as useful referents in an analysis of the empowerment of school communities, for the technologies employed through state education policies are infused with a particular discourse. Discourse determines both how the notion of participation is to be interpreted and the mechanisms used to effect its implementation. Likewise the manner in which the policy process may be controlled by decision making elites such that non-decisions may occur and potential issues excluded requires consideration.

Community participation in school decision making will assume different meanings at different points in history and will also differ depending upon one's theoretical standpoint. Pusey (1991, p.19) concurs with Knight, Smith and Sachs (1990, p.133) who explain that current social policies:

attempt to represent the world in factual terms so that certain kinds of practices flow naturally from them. They appropriate scientific methods and social science theory in order to create a reality that is rational, objective, seamless, and taps into the sensibilities of national popular consciousness. In doing so, such policies tell stories which, once interpreted by audiences, are emptied of meaning and filled with available social myths. Competing stories are thus available for decoding and recording and otherwise clashing or collaborating with official policy.

Beare (1984, p.2) states that 'involvement' is a term meaning that one may be co-opted but involvement is not a "personal right". Pettit (1980, pp.17-18) argues that involvement is a process whereby consultation may occur, information exchanged or assistance given by individuals but that the final responsibility or prerogative for a decision resides with another person or group. The Beazley Committee used the term to

mean the process which ensures that the community has a role in the school but that role is defined by the professional members of the staff of that school.

In contrast to 'involvement', 'participation' implies a personal right (Beare, 1984, p.2). The Beazley Committee understood the term to mean that the members of the school community share an active role in the decision making process. Pettit (1980, pp.17-18) uses the terms "partial participation" or "concept interaction" to describe how involvement can blend into participation. He argues that this occurs when people can and do exert influence upon an outcome but that the final decision is made by another person or group. Beare (1984, p.2) states that from the following description four important issues and meanings emerge:

- 1) "Community involvement" implies that the community is drawn into action.
- 2) "Parent involvement" means that the parent is coopted or invited into the action.
- 3) "Community participation" means that the community has a right to be part of the action.
- 4) "Parent participation" means that the parent has a right to, and a responsibility for, part of the action.

An argument frequently cited in support of devolution, and inherent in much of the political rhetoric surrounding devolution, is that more democratic and responsive educational systems and schools will emerge. Participative decision making has the potential to produce more commitment to the decisions reached thereby eliminating the "them versus us" attitude thought to pervade educational bureaucracies. Docking (1990) suggests that parents, for example, may play one of three roles in the organisation of schools - that of acting as a "problem", that of a customer, or that of a partner.

Community participation in school decision making, through a system of devolution which supposedly empowers school communities, entails a radical reconstruction of institutional power arrangements (Popkewitz, 1977, p.206). Both Gamson (1968) and

Burbules (1986) argue that devolution is a means by which the government uses power as a means of prevention. This is akin to Lukes' (1974) assertion that the most insidious use of power occurs when power is used to prevent conflict from arising. If school communities are permitted access to decision making their acceptance of decisions is probable even when the decision is contrary to their initial preference. It will be argued, for example, that the corporate management agenda of the Western Australian government required a "human face" (McTaggart, 1988, p.24) whereby community consultation would occur through the auspices of SBDMGs. These groups operated under strict parameters with little opportunity for a pro-active role in school decision making. They merely "rubber stamped" school policies. Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation would categorise such participation as "tokenism" for the community is only included in policy making procedures to the extent that they may be educated as to management goals and procedures and pacified when complaints emerge (Considine, 1994, p.144). Typical of tokenistic participation are the rubber stamp committees described above whereby the interests of the community are countenanced but little power is invested in the group, i.e. stakeholders are incorporated in the process but cannot influence the outcome. In contrast, both the Karmel Report (1973) and Beazley Report (1984) had earlier argued for more democratic participation by school communities. Here power/knowledge would be shared equally amongst the participants rather than residing exclusively with corporate managers.

Considine (1994, p.130-1) views participation as an integral element in all policy development and implementation. Within this framework, participation describes three types of action - it contributes to "rational deliberation", it creates and communicates moral principles and it leads to the expression of personal and group affects and needs. Participation has both an instrumental value (it produces decisions, outcomes and programs which participants value) and developmental value (it allows for the communication of moral and ethical norms, and potential for the building of trust and solidarity between protagonists). Considine (1994, p.131) explains that participation:

is judged as a means to improve decision making or implementation, and as a process for binding, improving and securing the group or system. The instrumental value of participation is the observable effect it has upon the improvement of any single decision or plan. The developmental value of participation is the effect it has upon persistent capacities within a system or community. Developmental values include increased knowledge, greater understanding, increased solidarity, trust and sympathy.

Four general principles of participation are given by Considine (1994, p.157):

- types of negotiation - this is the willingness of stakeholders to trade and compromise certain objectives or preferred strategies in order to gain some other valued outcome.
- nature of conflicts - this is dependent upon the intensity of the commitment of the stakeholders in the policy process.
- knowledge issues - if participants share equal knowledge then all can focus their attention upon a set of facts to reach a conclusion.
- participatory institutions - a wide range of structures are available and these will facilitate varying degrees of participation.

Considine (1994, p.163) suggests:

where actors invest time and commitment to the longer-term objectives of creating knowledge and negotiable systems, specific conflicts show a greater inclination towards resolution.

If the four key elements of participation inhere within the policy process, outcomes more amenable to all stakeholders are more likely to emerge. This is problematical, however, when there is a gross differential in the distribution of power within social systems. The greater the power of each stakeholder group the greater the potential to control the political agenda (Lukes' third face of power). The degree to which these elements were extant within the controversies presented in this thesis will be examined.

BUREAUCRACY AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

Central to a discussion of school community participation in school decision making is reference to the organisational structure in which such participation is being

contemplated. Until recently, bureaucratic approaches to administration have predominated. Since the 1980s corporate management practices from the private sector have been introduced into public sector organisations in order to deal with the problems of “hard times” and the inability of large bureaucracies to “solve problems” (Porter, 1991, p.43). As the onus for educational funding shifted “from the state as a matter of national investment” to the individual “as a matter of private investment” there was an “accompanying policy shift to a stress upon indicators of performance” (Lingard and Blackmore, 1997, p.1). Community participation was interpreted differently and had a different purpose in purely bureaucratic organisations as compared to the reconfigured corporate structures which would emerge.

Weber’s thesis on the evolution of bureaucracy may be regarded as the classic description of this organisational form. Bottery (1992, p.38) indicates that this notion suggests that organisational structure is increasingly affected by a rational approach to knowledge and society in general. The motivation for all human activity is based upon “the clear specification of ends” and a similarly “clear analysis and specification of the means to attain these ends.” Weber (1947, p.337) states that bureaucracy:

is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings. It is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability.

A distinguishing property of bureaucracy is the hierarchy of authority. In a bureaucracy, rules regulate virtually every aspect of task performance and hence eliminate the need for constant supervision. As the superior is held accountable for the job performance of his/her subordinate this leads to the tendency for the superior to invade possible areas of discretion of the subordinate.

Control is exercised on the basis of knowledge. Weber (1947, p.339) indicates that:

This is the feature of it which makes it specifically rational. This consists

on the one hand in technical knowledge which, by itself, is sufficient to ensure it a position of extraordinary power. But in addition to this, bureaucratic organisations, or the holders of power who make use of them, have the tendency to increase their power still further by the knowledge growing out of experience in the service.

Weber contends that bureaucratically structured organisations are, from an economic point of view, ideally suited to a modern capitalist economy for they have many virtues which are valued by this economic system (Bottery, 1992, p.39). As long as the bureaucracy has prior warning, any change may be accommodated. Stable conditions were more prevalent prior to the 1950s but have since been replaced by more turbulent societal contexts and the “amount of change, complexity and uncertainty” exceeds that which bureaucratic organisations can cope with (Williams, 1982, p.9). In addition, the sources of change have tended to move beyond the sphere of competence of the organisation. Because bureaucratic organisations are unable to respond or adapt promptly, inefficiency and unresponsiveness are terms which have come to describe bureaucracy in contemporary society.

In Western Australia the Education Department (as shown in Chapter 4) evolved along bureaucratic lines. Increasingly, as the size of this organisation has grown, concern with its ability to cope with the complexities of change have increased concomitantly. The imperative for change is manifest in the mounting preoccupation of political leaders with the organisational configuration of government departments as the need for accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness grows.

A feature of the economic concerns which grew during the 1980s is an emphasis upon economic rationalism, managerial efficiency and a preference for corporate management (Marginson, 1993, p.56). This was accompanied by a reduced commitment by governments to the public sector with the public sector being “very substantially restructured with greater emphasis given to the market” (Lingard and Blackmore, 1997, p.4). Bureaucracies were restructured to accommodate such trends and were reconfigured upon corporate lines. Considine (1988) indicates that a feature of corporate

management is the creation of ostensibly autonomous bodies capable of independent decision making which are coordinated through strict policy and financial guidelines. In education systems accountability mechanisms consist of performance indicators which monitor the performance of the system (this information being made public) and the capacity for “trouble shooters” to correct any malfunction (McTaggart, 1988, p.23). Considine (1988, p.16) suggests that corporate management “rests upon a seriously flawed characterisation of the efficiency question” as it regards the problem primarily as a “failure of control” rather than, for example, the “failure to develop open, problem-oriented policy making processes.” Whilst retaining many features of bureaucracy such as a hierarchical structure, corporate management is believed to overcome some of the key failings of bureaucracy including the time taken to implement new policies. Ultimate authority is retained by the employer, however, employees are taken into the employer’s confidence and their views canvassed, thus enabling more effective control. This is an example of Lukes (1974) third dimension of power for the corporate bodies may exercise power in order to control the agenda and hence the emergence of certain issues. Corporate managers determine the discourse. Considine (1988) notes that key ministers, in portfolios such as finance, use the premises of corporate management to exert their control of the public sector. New alliances between business, teacher unions and the employer are indicative of the corporatisation of the education sector. McTaggart (1988, p.24) notes that the control system, an integral aspect of bureaucracy, is coopted in corporate management structures for managers demand increased compliance through accountability for performance outcomes. He also indicates that corporate management coopts some aspects of participatory democracy for it recognises that:

the smooth functioning of the system requires management to be informed and to have a human face. This will usually be effected through the use of committees with wide representation. But the powers of these committees will necessarily be curtailed, by definition or by intervention. Corporate management uses participation as a technique. This contrasts with the commitment to participation as praxis, the hallmark of the communitarian impulse of participatory democratic approaches. Corporate management

will consult, but reserves the right to decide - in the interest of system efficiency and responsiveness as these are perceived by corporate managers.

Likewise Yeatman (1990, p.46) concludes that in such structures "organisational effectiveness does not appear incongruent but congruent with the principles of democratisation that emphasise information sharing, participation and dialogue."

Corporate management has become a central element in the machinery of politicians to effect greater control over the economy. The discourse of corporate management, introduced new organisational forms and methodologies into educational policy making. Economic rationalist ideology, through the discourse of corporate management, determined the salience of the arguments presented and hence which arguments would "win" when policy issues were contested. The power to determine when, where and under what conditions participation in the policy process would occur, in addition to those issues which would remain unstated, was held by decision making elites within the Ministry of Education. This, in turn, guaranteed their successful contestation of educational policy debates surrounding community participation in school decision making. In this process alternative viewpoints became marginalised and alternative issues failed to emerge. Pusey (1991, p.22), in his summation of economic rationalism in Canberra, concurs with this notion when he states that:

At the level of public policy, the rationalisations may have brought needed gains in efficiency in many areas of state action and this may indeed continue... The inherent problem lies instead at another level - with the criteria that define what counts as costs and benefits; with the loss of social intelligence; and with the number and range of potentially constructive discourses that have been suppressed.

The above discussion has focused upon the notions of power and participation which will inform the analysis of the reforms which have occurred in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand in order to ascertain the manner in which school communities were empowered. In the following chapter the notion of controversy, employed as the framework for this investigation, is explained.

Chapter Three

CONTROVERSY

Educational policies and reform programmes in Australia and New Zealand during the past decade have been the subject of considerable debate. The educational policy analyst is therefore in need of a process or framing device to promote the disclosure of the complexities of the policy process. Education systems are sites where particular policy decisions are contested by protagonists within the bounds of existing power relationships. The policy analysis device, based on the notion of controversy, to be trialled in this thesis, is introduced and explained in this chapter. Public policies are considered as “controversies” in the fabrication of this framing device for use by the policy analyst.

WHAT IS A CONTROVERSY?

The work of Engelhardt and Caplan (1987) on scientific controversies has been used to underpin the development of the notion of policy controversies. The characteristics of controversies in science, ethics and politics contribute to an overall understanding of this concept.

Controversy involves change and the development of new approaches in the areas of science, politics and ethics (Engelhardt & Caplan, 1987, p.1). Each of these realms is steeped in polemic. A controversy, by its very nature, is a prolonged argument or dispute. For a dispute to be adjudged a controversy several criteria must be satisfied. Firstly, it must be a continuing disagreement with arguments presented on both sides. Secondly, the debate must be aired publicly - through either written or verbal means - a dispute between two individuals does not constitute a controversy. Whilst the controversy may originate from a private dispute, to be regarded as a controversy the disagreement must be one involving all who are sufficiently qualified to deal with the issue. The final criterion is that the dispute must be deemed worthwhile with merits

perceived on all sides of the disagreement. Engelhardt and Caplan (1987, p.12) note that the greater the public involvement in the debate the more complex the disputation becomes. The probability of disagreement as to what constitutes a sound argument diminishes as the number of participants increases. Whilst the tendency is to polarise debates and construe them as being two-sided, in actuality they may be multi-sided.

Scientific controversies will differ markedly from those in political or ethical arenas, yet, many will have considerable political and ethical content (for example, genetic engineering, the nuclear debate and the use of various drugs for medical purposes). Political controversies will differ in that they may, for example, concern specific government rulings, political platforms or broad policy directions. The influence of science on public policy is apparent in that multifarious social policies, whilst didactic in their presentation, are based upon certain understandings of empirical facts. Social costs necessarily accrue with the choice of a particular social policy, viz. whilst one group may benefit it is at the inevitable cost of another. Some policies may involve the expenditure of greater resources or involve the redistribution of resources. Controversy in educational policies may surround, inter alia, specific decisions of the government, ethical issues or broad policy directions.

Subsequent to consideration of the controversies discussed by Engelhardt and Caplan (1987), the following may be deemed the elements of a controversy necessary for a comprehensive policy analysis:

- **Stimulus** - specific controversies begin at some point, yet precisely when is by no means obvious in all instances. Given the interconnectedness of the events surrounding the controversy (together with the theoretical lens of the policy analyst) judgement of the stimulus for the controversy will largely depend upon the view of the individual analyst. The intent of the analysis will have an important bearing on the event deemed the stimulus for the controversy.

- **Context** - a description of the context defines the historical milieu of the controversy. Certain events and issues are consequential for the community at particular points in history and dealt with in a particular manner at specific times. Why a certain discourse predominated in a controversy, who becomes involved and the expectations of participants are determined by contextual factors. At another time the issue may not be deemed important. Consideration of the environment in which the controversy transpires is essential. Why certain educational reforms were favoured at a particular time is of particular concern to the educational policy analyst. Why, in the controversy considered in this thesis, was community participation in school decision making thrust onto the policy agenda? Consideration also needs to be given to the manner in which prioritisation of issues occurred. Seddon (1994, p.6) states that context:

is a concept which makes general reference to an external milieu and the institutional and discursive setting within which practice occurs. It is used to capture that reality and lived experience of change.

Considine (1994, p.157) suggests that each “new episode” of policy formulation and implementation will necessarily “contain aspects of previous entanglements.” This must be considered by the policy analyst.

- **Events** - the events may be considered as the turning points or critical moments of the controversy and may involve individual actions, political decisions or the publication of influential reports. The events, occurring during the course of the controversy, provide significant input into the construction of the context in which the controversy occurs.
- **Issues** - these are the matters about which the dispute is taking place. Participants in the controversy will each have distinct agendas which, whilst subject to change over time, will determine the course of the controversy. In analysing a controversy, the analyst must carefully identify the central issues from peripheral issues. In addition it must be acknowledged that little is known of the means by which policy agenda is formed and why certain items gain priority whilst others remain largely ignored (Considine, 1994, p.157).

- **Protagonists** - these are the stakeholders. Whilst those directly affected by a policy will be involved in the controversy other individuals may also become involved. Each group or individual protagonists, possessing different levels of influence and knowledge, contribute in distinct ways to the course of the controversy. Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1989) provide a classification of policy actors. They identify the following classes - insiders, near circle, far circle, sometimes players and often forgotten players. It must be noted that the different aspects or levels of policy making with which the analyst is concerned will influence these classes. Individuals or groups are then identified and assigned to one of these categories. Identification of individuals or groups affected by a policy but not involved in the controversy is also considered requisite.
- **Arguments** - throughout the controversy varied arguments, based upon certain assumptions, will be proffered by protagonists. Hence the philosophical differences between protagonists will influence the extent to which arguments are acknowledged and accepted. The assumptions underpinning the arguments, whilst tacitly accepted by those proffering that argument, may be either rejected or unknown by other protagonists.
- **Constraints** - these influence the development of the controversy through their repression of particular courses of events which may have led to more amenable outcomes. The salience of particular constraints will vary from the diverse perspectives of stakeholders but may be construed as evidence advanced by interest groups as “givens”.
- **Consequences** - these may be either intended or inadvertent. Consequences are the outcomes of the controversy. New controversies may emerge due to the closure or continuation of the various issues surrounding a controversy.
- **Closure** - this term is used to indicate the “conclusion, ending or resolution of a controversy” (Engelhardt & Caplan, 1987, p.2). An understanding of the types of closure enables an insight into the selection of the most appropriate form of closure for the specific issues of the controversy or the ending of the overall controversy. This may facilitate a more apt conclusion for the dispute. The power of certain groups in forcing

closure to the debate may also be highlighted. The following modes of closure are described by Engelhardt and Caplan (1987, p.13-15):

a) **Loss of Interest** - closure is achieved by loss of interest if closure of the current controversy is improbable and the protagonists are attracted by new, more interesting controversies or closure is achieved by the death of a central participant in the controversy.

b) **Force** - closure by force may occur, for instance, through political legislation or coercion of other protagonists resulting in their withdrawal.

c) **Consensus** - this may occur when protagonists reach agreement or when, through the presentation of certain arguments, some protagonists subsequently change their viewpoint.

d) **Sound Argument** - the controversy is closed when, for particular reasons, protagonists come to regard a particular resolution as the preferred solution. Sound argument in the strict sense occurs when the adequacy of the rules of evidence and inference are adjudged at a point outside the community involved. Sound argument in the broad sense occurs when the rules of evidence and inference are recognised as rationally judged by the participants themselves.

e) **Negotiation** - the controversy is closed through negotiation by participants in the controversy. Appeals to particular considerations and compromises enable the controversy to be resolved without necessarily having completely resolved the issues.

Consideration of these elements of a controversy serves to enlighten the policy analyst through provision of detailed features and impact of a particular educational policy. The manner in which the policy issues will be analysed using the controversy approach will be influenced by the theoretical lens of the analyst. The subsequent description of the controversy will have a considerable historical flavour, for the method by which the elements of the controversy are dealt with by the policy analyst will be shaped by the societal conditions extant at the time of the analysis.

It must be acknowledged that educational policies are subject to continuous change and interplay with other government policies. Inadequate time may avert the closure of a particular policy controversy. Factors such as changes of government or Minister for Education are inevitably accompanied by the introduction of new policies. The controversy approach provides a method for the examination and analysis of specific educational policies.

CLOSURE

Closure is a particularly important aspect of the controversy process for it is pivotal in the revelation of the degree of control possessed by each individual or group of protagonists in determining how the controversy was closed. McMullin (1987, p.63) argues that controversy occurs when the “consensus of the community breaks down.” The concept of a consensus embodies the notion of compromise, there being an acknowledgement of the need to agree.

Consensus is a politically useful method of dealing with controversy and is appropriate for ending public policy disputes. In assessing the extent and significance of this form of closure it is necessary to be cognisant of the fact that political decisions often represent agreements to disagree. Certain stakeholder groups may be rendered important or, alternatively, closed out of negotiations. In this way compromises are reached which leave the conceptual, ethical, or interest group’s arguments open for continued debate in the same or other forums (Omenn, 1987, p.460). Mendelsohn (1987) distinguished between the terms “resolution” and “closure”. Resolution is seen to represent a coming together of the conflicting parties and the emergence of a consensus. Conversely, closure may be used to represent a more formal structure for ending a controversy that permits a partial resolution but not necessarily a dissolution of the disagreement. Closure of a controversy will also, according to Markle and Peterson (1987), be shaped by the extent to which the authorities accept the partisans as valid representatives of a legitimate set of interests. Chomsky (1991) would argue that the

public and their interests have become marginalised for the media, being dominated by decision making elites, determines the information imparted to the public. Hence the authorities do not accept that the partisans are representative of a legitimate set of interests for these interests are subsumed in favour of those of the decision making elites.

Rich (1987) writes of the problems of closure in political controversies. Public sector actions are directed towards achieving the public interest. That there may be alternative means for achieving the public interest is responsible for conflict and controversies in democracies. Rich (1987, p.160.) argues that macro-level disputes involve broader questions concerning many competing interests. In order to achieve closure in a policy Rich (pp.162-3) states that:

1. Each stakeholder should have a voice and should be heard in a public forum.
2. Each stakeholder should have the opportunity to legitimately affect decision making procedures.
3. The best evidence in a system of negotiated settlement is often political influence and the ability to use political pressure.
4. There are no fixed procedures for presenting challenges to existing paradigms.
5. Settlement or closure is reached through negotiation or alternatively through the exercise of raw power.

Lawton (1992b, pp.106-201), in his discussion of English education policy making, outlines the basis for a consensus of educational policies which he considers expedient in a two-party system. Sufficient common ground is thought to exist rendering a consensus possible. He analysed several levels of consensus; the broad agreement that exists on the questions of values; on other aspects of the common culture; on the structure of the education system; and on the more specific questions of education policy and curriculum.

Whilst consensus, being one method of closure, is highly desirable in controversies of a political nature, significant questions may remain unresolved leading to an eventual breakdown in the consensus. Consideration of policy issues as controversies introduces

other methods of closure which may be more amenable for closure of the controversy in general or specific aspects of the controversy. In dynamic educational contexts new issues may emerge prior to closure or new aspects may develop as the controversy unfolds. This may emerge as a limitation of the controversy model for it may prove difficult to employ in contexts of rapid, profound change. Mendelsohn (1987, pp.102-3) believes that:

Closure...has been achieved. Sometimes it comes with the judgement of a commission, which gives greater credence to one party as opposed to another. At other times legislative acts establish procedures by which a contested area is monitored and regulated, and the sting is thereby taken out of a debate. In other cases those who are weaker, sometimes in intellectual argument, sometimes in political strength, are driven from the scene...It is clear that often a party maintains its point of view even as its opposite has gained greater recognition and legitimation within the scientific community. Often the only real closure comes with the death of a participant in a debate. After all, if interests do inform judgement and action, we cannot expect a resolution or or consensus to emerge unless those interests themselves undergo change. What we can expect is that the more powerful (a combination of both intellectual elements and social interests) will come to prevail.

In analysing public policy controversies it is necessary to distinguish between the specific resolution of particular policy questions and the ending of the more general controversy. Consensus is but one form of closure. Consideration of alternative methods of closure enables a broader and more sophisticated understanding of the means by which closure of specific policy issue disputes or the ending of the more general controversy may be achieved.

THE MERITS OF CONTROVERSY

Controversy offers a new, sophisticated approach to the problem of public policy analysis. According to Davis, Wanna, Warhurst and Weller (1988, p.9) public policy analysis:

involves observing politics, and tracing how economic and social forces, institutions, people, events and circumstances interact. It offers a way of exploring how policies were chosen, and a method for judging their impact.

Controversy provides the means by which the analyst can synthesise the disparate elements within the process of policy formulation, implementation and impact. This framework elucidates the means by which the policy makers legitimise policy and hence how the discourse of one group or actor in the policy process prevails over others - that is, how power relations operate within the policy process.

Controversy offers an alternative to other systems models such as Easton's widely used model. Clearly, certain elements of controversy correspond to those of Easton's model. For instance, Easton includes in his model, the "environment" of the policy process, i.e. social, economic and political influence on the process. This corresponds to the "context" in controversy. Both controversy and Easton's model are systems approaches to policy analysis and, as such, involve the disaggregation and understanding of the elements of the policy process (Jenkins, 1978, p.19). Controversy attempts to both disentangle these elements and show the interplay between the features of the policy process. This is achieved by the manner in which the elements of controversy interrelate to divulge the elements of policy formulation and implementation.

Controversy enables the analyst to "flesh out" the power relations within the policy process. This is achieved through an examination of the arguments proffered by the protagonists, the consequences and constraints, and finally, through closure of elements of the controversy. Controversy, therefore, enables consideration of both the constraints and closure in the policy process. These important elements are difficult to discern in Easton's model as they do not appear to emerge as "policy outcomes". Likewise, protagonists in the policy process are not easily identified through the use of Easton's model.

The resulting description of the controversy provides a critique of the existing administrative structures and arrangements, and ideologies through an analysis of the issues, context and arguments. Seddon (1994) in her analysis of context indicates that:

This trend to consider context is associated with a trend to 'contextualism'; an orientation which stresses the connectedness of the social and discursive world. This orientation opens up a way of seeing the world which does not just consider events, actions, institutions, individuals, or utterances in isolation, but addresses the connections of one event, action, institution, individual with others.

Clearly the use of controversy enables the analysis of the interconnectedness of elements of educational policy processes. For the analyst who is committed to unveiling the "false consciousness" of the oppressed, controversy can contribute to the revelation of the manner in which the policy, determined by decision making elites, subverts the interests of those to whom the policy is directed. Controversy allows the power relations between protagonists to be described and analysed in order to expose forms of domination and repression of certain stakeholders. The power of one group or alliance in determining education discourse, thus what is considered to be sound argument, may be exposed through an analysis of the arguments proffered during the course of the controversy. The manner in which the issues of the controversy are closed (or attempted to be closed) is also important in analysing the power relations between protagonists.

An awareness of domination and repression created through the analysis of controversy can serve as a catalyst for action for those affected by the policy. This framing device may be used to assist in the determination of appropriate forms of closure, or otherwise, of the issues involved. This too may assist in mobilising, for a certain course of action, those protagonists who are aggrieved. Thus the emancipatory interests of the oppressed or disenfranchised, may be addressed following an analysis of educational policy using controversy. Oppressed groups may be equipped with greater knowledge thus permitting more symmetrical power relations and less distorted communication. This knowledge, emanating from the analysis of the policy controversy, may be used by groups to address unresolved issues resulting from the analysis.

Use of this model by school community groups is also envisaged. It is not considered advantageous for a policy analyst to enter a school, conduct the analysis, make

recommendations and then depart. Instead, the school community would ideally be engaged in the process of analysis and then collectively address those issues requiring attention.

Controversy may be considered an heuristic device which can be employed by the educational policy analyst. Modification of the elements of controversy may be required as familiarity with this framing device increases. Whether other policy analysis models would have enabled similar conclusions to have been drawn is difficult to discern. The efficacy of controversy as a method of policy analysis is adjudged at the conclusion of this thesis following its application to the issue of school community participation in government schools in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand during the period 1985-1993.

Chapter Four

CONTROVERSY : SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM 1987-1993

INTRODUCTION

Western Australia is a distinctive Australian state in many respects. This state occupies almost one-third of the Australian land mass yet, historically, has had one of the smallest populations. Delivery of education, in a system in which the majority of the population is concentrated in Perth (the capital city) and the remainder scattered over a vast expanse, is complex. The Western Australian state education system comprises approximately 750 state schools and colleges.

In 1983 the Labor Party, under the leadership of Brian Burke, won government. Labor, which retained power until 1993, initiated a series of public sector reforms of a magnitude unprecedented in W.A. Controversy accompanied the restructuring programmes in other Australian education systems and this was no less the case in W.A. The following is an account of the controversy resulting from the educational administrative reforms emanating from *Better Schools* (1987). Similar to the reforms elsewhere in Australia, the restructures were underpinned by a demand for an education system which was more efficient, effective and accountable to the government and parents. The focus of this analysis is on the issue of school community participation in school decision making.

4.1 Stimulus

In 1983 the Labor Party won office after a long period in opposition. Bob Pearce, a former teacher, was appointed Minister for Education in the Burke government. Keen to honour his election promise to undertake a major review of the state education system, Pearce both encouraged and initiated two inquiries into education. The first of

these reviews was directed primarily to issues pertaining to the curriculum and working conditions for teachers. The size and complexity of the administration system of the Education Department which had evolved was perceived to be a major problem and was addressed in the second of the major education reports. The election of the Burke Government and the decision of Cabinet to restructure the public service, including the Education Department, is deemed the stimulus for this controversy.

4.2 Context

Numerous factors, some peculiar to W.A. and others common to all Australian states, formed the context of this controversy. Smart and Alderson (1980) provide a detailed account of the political climate which shaped education in W.A. A brief account of the evolution of education in W.A., with particular emphasis on school community participation in school decision making is considered advantageous as it will provide an indication of the nature and extent of such participation in government schools.

The first education legislation was the Elementary Education Act of 1871 which remained in the statute books until 1928. This Act enabled a Central Board of Education and district boards to administer schools in a decentralised fashion. The functions of the Central Board focused upon the general supervision of schools. More specifically, the Central Board had the authority to frame by-laws and regulations, appoint staff, apportion and distribute funds, liaise with district boards, levy fees for government schools, and submit an annual report to the legislative council (Mossenson, 1972, p.46). The functions of the local boards included the supervision of all schools receiving public grants in the district together with the authority to frame regulations governing compulsory attendance. For government schools they exercised the additional powers of the appointment and dismissal of staff.

The Constitution Act of 1890 gave Western Australia responsible government.

Politicians were of the view that the Central Board had functioned well, there being no

need for the creation of a Department of Education, responsible to a Minister. Growing dissatisfaction with the public system eventuated in the creation of an Education Department in 1893. Government schools were perceived to lag behind church schools. However, in contrast to the 1980s where the government inspired the reform process, in the 1880s and 1890s public opinion provided the impetus for reform. Mossenson (1972, p.70) states that:

Certainly it had been a fact that in each previous crisis, the Colonial Office, or its nominee the Governor, and not majority opinion in the colony, had determined the reorganisation of education. In contrast, the Constitution of 1890 introduced an age in which a gathering complex of educational problems would be decided by majority opinion.

The Central Board had become dysfunctional and the parliament became impatient “over the continued delegation of the administration of public education to an outside body” (Mossenson, 1972, p.74). The Elementary Education Act, 1871 Amendment Act 1893 decreed that the Minister assume the functions of the Central Board, undertake the appointment of teachers and inspectors and frame education regulations. The failure of the school system to function under a school board system led to the creation of a centralised Education Department. This prompts the conclusion that community participation, in this instance, had failed the schools (Haynes, 1985, p.2). Smart and Alderson (1980, p.11) consider the creation of the Ministerial Department of Education a momentous step for:

it firmly established the principal governmental structure and authority for the control of education to the present day; and it effectively sealed the fate of church schools.

Haynes (1985, p.2) indicates that at this time the level of community participation was minimal although opportunity for participation was afforded through a school board system. For example, in 1901 the triennial elections for parents and others to school boards did not take place. This was because in 1898, of the thirty three school districts, only one required an election as there were too few nominations to warrant an election. Few community members wished to serve on such boards and the positions had to be nominated by the Minister for the boards to continue.

In 1922 the District Boards were replaced with Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&C). These Associations, whose functions have been strictly controlled by the Department, were the only community group to be given Departmental recognition (Adams, 1984, p.1). The original Education Act of 1871, following numerous amendments, was repealed and replaced by the Education Act of 1928 which has undergone further amendments.

The Western Australian state education system developed a highly centralised administrative structure. In 1969 the *Dettman Report* recommended that schools become more responsive to community needs. Later, in 1976, a major restructuring, based on the principle of regionalisation, was commenced. The restructuring, aiming to bring policy making closer to schools, altered the structure of the Department from being divisionally to functionally based. The Education Department declared that as none of the regions was sufficiently large enough to enable a system of decentralised control to be economically viable, regionalisation was preferred to decentralisation (*Annual Report*, 1975, p.22). Limited devolution of authority was supposedly to occur. Four metropolitan and nine country regions, differing both demographically and geographically, each headed by a regional superintendent, were formed. In essence a centralised departmental structure had been maintained. In 1978 the Education Department, in reference to regionalisation, contended that the following educational and administrative advantages would accrue:

provision of greater opportunities for educational leadership; an improvement in Departmental communication and in the quality of decision-making; increased responsiveness of services to meet the needs of schools; an increase in the morale and effectiveness of teachers through the ability to effect on-the-spot decisions; educational policies framed to meet the special needs of each region; provision of more opportunity for community involvement and an increase in the range and availability of services and resources in rural areas.

(*Annual Report*, 1978, p.9)

These themes were re-introduced in both *Education in Western Australia: Report of the Committee of Inquiry Into Education in Western Australia* (1984) and *Better Schools* (1987).

Smart and Alderson (1980, p.14) identified several characteristics of education in Western Australia among which was “the strong and enduring tradition of parental and public apathy and non-involvement in educational matters.” The absence of a close working relationship between schools and the community is a significant feature of this controversy. Rather, community participation has been limited to fundraising, provision of amenities and running the school canteen. Section 27 of the Education Act 1928 provides further insight into the scant opportunity for participation by the school community in educational policy making in stating that “an association shall not exercise any authority over the teaching staff, or interfere in any way with the control or management of any Government school.”

Principals, in 1976, were urged to adopt a cautious stance vis-à-vis school councils. Whilst the Department held no objection to school councils being formed, principals were encouraged to “plan carefully” and to be cognisant of their “responsibility for control and management” of the school (*Education Department Circular*, February 1976, p.30). Schools were not furnished with any guidelines as to the formation of school councils. The Department’s concern followed the release of the Commonwealth Government’s *Karmel Report* (1973, p.13-14) which suggested “the need to broaden the basis of educational policy-making beyond those presently involved and to inform public debate about the operation of schools and school systems.”

Several subsequent reports from the Schools Commission were also supportive of greater community participation in school decision making. Whilst not being prescriptive, the Beazley committee recommended that schools in Western Australia involve the community in school decision making.

A study by Beck and Goodridge in 1978 of community involvement in fifteen Western Australian schools revealed that parents were still largely viewed as resource providers. The individual school projects which formed the basis of the research were funded by the Innovations Programme of the Schools Commission. The study restated the desirability for greater community participation yet there was no increased momentum to establish school councils nor expand the role of the P&C Associations.

A study of parental involvement in schools conducted by the Research Branch of the Education Department in 1978 revealed that few parents were dissatisfied with the extent and nature of the involvement in secondary schools and most had a passive relationship with schools. The majority had no desire to increase their participation in school decision making nor exert more influence over school spending. Levels of involvement were related to socio-economic status with schools in affluent areas attracting greater involvement from parents. These findings add credence to the assertion that there was no groundswell of support for greater participation by parents in Western Australia. The role of the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations (WACSSO) as a pressure group will be discussed at a later point. The Disadvantaged Schools Programme, initiated by the Schools Commission, sought to promote more equitable educational opportunities and placed a heavy emphasis upon community involvement and parent participation. Contrary to popular belief the Schools Commission (1981, p.369) observed that:

the program is dispelling many of the myths that parents are apathetic; that parents, particularly working class parents, do not sufficiently understand educational processes to allow them to share in significant decision-making; or that teachers will not accept parents as partners in the decision-making process.

Participants in this process acquired considerable experience in shared decision making. This was supported by Gaynor (in Haynes, 1985, p.11-13) who was principal of a Perth primary school involved in the Priority Schools Programme. Parental involvement in the school increased markedly during the programme and, given the directions offered

by the Beazley Committee, Gaynor expressed confidence that community participation would work. This experience was not harnessed by the Education Department through implementation of either the Beazley recommendations in 1984, nor the *Better Schools* (1987) reforms.

Following the recommendations of the *Karmel Report* (1973) and the stimulus for discussion of the issue of school decision making, WACSSO, as a result of deliberation at a Special Executive Council meeting, established a Standing Committee in August 1974, on this subject. The Council had previously surveyed its members and discovered that the theme underpinning the results of the survey centred upon the apparent disinterest in greater involvement. There was little incentive to participate in more “unpaid toil” but members were prepared to countenance the issue of participation if there was the prospect of more meaningful decision making. The Standing Committee was to examine and evaluate overseas and interstate systems of school governance. The Executive Council believed that the responsibility for educational philosophy and policy should be devolved and removed from the political arena.

The Standing Committee’s proposals were forwarded at a State Council meeting on 14 June, 1975. The proposals endeavoured to incorporate the interests of all stakeholders and considered a form of regionalisation which “included the best of the WACSSO district council experience along with the cooperative view of Departmental regionalisation on the lines of the Victorian model” (Anderson, 1985, p.94). Whilst supportive of devolution, the conference was unwilling to accept the financial or legal implications of the proposals and rejected the recommendations. The Education Department pursued its own regionalisation policy which precluded an increased role for parents. According to Lockhart (in Haynes, 1985, p.10), WACSSO then entered an “era of inertia” for it failed to focus on the basic issues of who wants participation, why do they want it and how might successful participation be implemented (Haynes, 1985, p.2). The formation of the Beazley Committee in 1983 reactivated debate on the issue.

The above discussion has sought to indicate the absence of a strong tradition of, and lack of demand by parents for, meaningful community participation in schools. Hence, the subsequent failure of school based decision making groups of the *Better Schools* (1987) era to become significant entities in school governance generated little public discontent.

Other factors contributed to the context of this controversy and were shared by other Australian education systems. O'Brien (1986, p.x) indicates that corporatism and economic rationalism "engulfed W.A. politics during the tenure of the first Burke Government" which witnessed an increase by over forty percent in Government taxes and charges, numerous enquiries "into nearly everything from fish to football", the establishment of government owned and taxpayer funded trading and business corporations and the dispensation of favours to millionaires who generously donated to the Labor Party (O'Brien, 1986, p.xi). The Premier favoured the notion of government assuming a more entrepreneurial role, with government departments viewed as profit centres. This was the means by which increased revenue could be raised thereby alleviating the need for increased government taxes and charges.

Economic constraints affected public sector spending and the Ministry of Education was unable to secure funding at the level requested. International economic trends, which saw many economies in recession, placed restraints on the W.A. economy which was traditionally reliant on export earnings. International demand for mining and farm produce declined during the 1980s and the revenue derived from the sale of these goods consequently fell. The recession of the late 1980s meant that many families and businesses became more dependent upon government services and less able to afford increased taxes and charges. The White Paper (1986) was based on the notion that the public would no longer accept extensions to the tax base in order to fund increased government services (McCullagh, 1987, p.23).

The enormity of the education budget increased the need for the education system to become more accountable and to deliver more value for money. The growth of the education bureaucracy and the need to control spending on education, together with the impression that the organisation was inflexible and incapable of responding to changing circumstances created a climate conducive to reform. Corporate management philosophy and discourse became all-pervasive in W.A. government schools following the inception of *Better Schools* (1987). The role of ministerial advisors and Labor Party education policy committees increased to the exclusion of those traditionally entrusted to set the course of educational policy viz. Director-General of the Education Department.

Developments both overseas and interstate also contributed to the context of this controversy. In England, for example, the release of the *Taylor Report* in 1977 recommended an enhanced role for Boards of Governors and Managers. In Australia the release of the *Karmel Report* in 1973 promoted devolution of decision making as a means of promoting greater community participation in school decision making. Following the release of this report a number of state level inquiries were initiated which took up the theme of school governance. The *Keeves Report* (1981, 1982) in South Australia and *Hughes Report* (1982) in Tasmania addressed this issue. In Victoria, the election of the Labor Government in 1983 saw the release of the Ministerial Papers which advocated devolution of responsibility and participation by parents in decision making.

The interest generated in school decision making and the role of the community in that process, by overseas and interstate trends, influenced the Beazley Committee (1984), which devoted a whole chapter to this issue, and contributed to the recommendations for an enhanced parental role in school decision making. The Committee's recommendations were characterised by their lack of detail and prescription but recommendation 161 (p.277) stated "that the Western Australian Education Act and

Regulations be reviewed in order that existing barriers to community participation in school based decision making be removed.”

Support was given for the establishment of pilot projects in school based decision making and the formation of a group of consultants. Beyond this there was little firm commitment for change. In addition, the cost of implementation of the recommendations was prohibitive. Smart and Wilson (1991, p.6) also note that:

an examination of the outcomes of the report reveals that this participatory approach [adopted for the conduct of the inquiry] did not translate into eventual practices which were in accord with broad community or stakeholder concerns.

The context in which this and other Burke Government inquiries was conducted had enhanced expectations for a more participatory approach. The Western Australian Institute for Educational Research (WAIER) made a submission to the Beazley Committee to conduct research into the implementation and operation of the Beazley recommendations. The Committee chose to ignore this submission. This is in contrast to Victoria where a team from Deakin University was commissioned to investigate and report upon the reforms of the Labor Government. Burke (1983, p.13-15), in his opening address to WACSSO, commented:

We have already taken measures to put into practice our strong commitment to consultation with all interested groups and individuals in the processes of education. Our policy recognises that parents, as the first teachers, have an invaluable contribution to make to the schooling of their children. But we will not be satisfied with token involvement of parents in schools...Parents have the right to have a say in the decisions that determine educational policies affecting their children. They have a right to full consultation!

In June, 1984, the Community Participation in Schooling Committee was formed for the purpose of implementing the Beazley recommendations related to community participation in school decision making. The Committee, chaired by Jim Davies (the Assistant Director-General, Primary) was comprised of representatives from numerous interest groups. A pilot project was instigated in which eighteen volunteer school communities would trial different decision making models. The Committee produced a

booklet, circulated to all schools and P&C Associations, entitled “Increasing Community Involvement”. A working party was also established to prepare enabling legislation to facilitate participation in decision making by the community.

The Committee, in 1985, predicted continued support for community participation beyond the pilot project because of the Labor Government’s strong support and election commitment; the endorsement by the Education Department for the relevant Beazley recommendations; and the support received from the community (Deschamp, 1986, p.32). However support was withdrawn in late 1986 when the Education Department terminated the project. No reason was made public. With no commitment to community participation in school decision making from the Education Department, much of the impetus was lost.

Several of the Beazley Committee’s recommendations were implemented. Merit promotion and the Unit Curriculum, whereby lower secondary school subjects were divided into a number of 20-30 hour units, were introduced. Porter, Knight and Lingard (1993, p.238) concluded that the Beazley Report (1984) opened “a small space on the field of possibilities for the later development of the *Better Schools* (1987) document.” Developments, such as cabinet reshuffles, pressure from the teachers’ union and changing economic circumstances, prior to and following the stimulus for this controversy influenced the dominant issues which emerged. The course of this controversy was shaped by these contextual factors.

4.3 Events

The central events of this controversy may be linked to the release of various reports. Wilson and Smart (1991, p.5) note, on reflection, a change in the nature of the inquiries undertaken by the Burke Government from “open and participative, where major stakeholders had significant influence, to internal, confidential government inquiries driven by economic forces.” The first of the inquiries was commenced in 1983 when

Pearce formed the Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia chaired by Kim Beazley Sen., a former federal Minister for Education. The recommendations given by this committee have been mentioned. This inquiry was followed by several other inquiries and reports into the functioning of both the education system and the public sector.

4.3.1 The Phase One Report

The Burke Government embarked upon a major review of all public sector organisations. As a prerequisite to a full scale review of the Education Department by the Functional Review Committee (created by the Labor Government in 1983) the *Phase One Report* was completed. The Corporate Planning Unit was established by the Education Department in 1984 with the view to facilitating the conduct of this major review as one of its functions. In essence the *Phase One Report* outlined the status of all sections of the Department, i.e. size, cost, services and so on. This report provided the background information necessary for the Functional Review Committee to commence their investigation.

4.3.2 Managing Change in the Public Sector

This White Paper influenced the Functional Review of government departments. The principle underpinning the White Paper is outlined by McCullagh (1987, p.19) who indicates that the government imperative was for improved management of public sector organisations and an unwillingness to “throw money at a problem as its solution” as had been a feature of past governments. Porter, Knight and Lingard (1993, p.238) state that the White Paper is “concerned with the *management* of *both* the politics of consumption (social services) and the politics of production (economic policies) but is framed by a *prioritization* of the economic policies.” The guidelines for public sector operation were identified as an ethos of change; a quality service responsive to community needs; accountability and responsibility; results achieved through people; structural flexibility; and a whole of government approach (White Paper, 1986, p.4).

The following expectations of the public sector were specified (p.5):

- an orientation towards service to the community;
 - responsiveness to Government policies and changing priorities;
 - a service characterised by a high degree of expertise;
 - provision of relevant, high quality services;
 - efficient and effective deployment (and where necessary, redeployment) of financial and human resources;
 - merit promotion and management of personnel in a manner which maximises and develops their contributions to the work of Government;
 - positive management of organisational change to promote employee morale; and
- a service characterised by a high degree of honesty and integrity in all its dealings.

Decentralisation was favoured as this would “improve responsiveness to local need; increase accountability; more fully utilise the talents of the public workforce; and better equip the public sector organisations to respond to change” (White Paper, p.7). The role of the central agencies was one of advising government; establishing overall standards and broad controls for public sector operations; coordinating the implementation of government policies and facilitating the work of operating organisations rather than directing and controlling them (White Paper, p.7).

The issue of financial accountability was central to the White paper. Chapter Four - “Achieving and Maintaining Financial Accountability” - foreshadowed the mechanisms of considerable import to the operation of all government departments. The Financial Administration and Audit Act (FAAA) significantly influenced the public sector.

The White Paper (1986) was touted as a “further initiative in the Government’s determination to live within its means and to get value for money on behalf of all Western Australians” (p.23). Given the now infamous business dealings of the Burke and Dowding Labor Governments these words have a somewhat hollow ring. However,

the influence on all public sector operations, including the Ministry of Education, of this document with its corporate management philosophy, cannot be disputed.

4.3.3 A Review of the Education Portfolio

The Functional Review was conducted in 1986. Smart and Wilson (1991, p.8) comment that:

Because of Minister Pearce's conviction that the highly centralised Department of Education was cumbersome, inefficient and ripe for cost cutting economies at its head office level, he had no hesitation in offering up his department as one of the targets for the FRC. In doing so he hoped to overturn the established bureaucratic power structure within the organisation.

The Functional Review team for the Education Department review was comprised of only three members. The two reports which were produced were neither made public nor circulated amongst Education Department personnel. Only Pearce and members of the FRC were privy to the contents of both reports. Whilst the second report was never released, the first *A Review of the Education Portfolio : Report of the Review Group*, which was a culmination of an investigation including interviews with senior Education Department personnel, did have a limited circulation. This report was antecedent to the many changes which were to be formally announced in the *Better Schools* Report. The second report was presented in November 1986 by Minister Pearce to the Premier, Mr. Burke but not released until January 1987.

The FRC proposed the restructure and reconstitution of the Education Department as a Ministry of Education comprised of a Schools Division, TAFE Division and a Policy Division. The Ministry would be headed by a Chief Executive Officer responsible to the Minister (*Review of the Education Portfolio*, 1986, pp.2-3). Corporate management philosophy and discourse pervades the report. An overriding concern for economic imperatives in the administration of education was evident. Many of the sentiments expressed in the Government's White Paper were embodied in this report. The benefits of the restructuring would accrue through cost savings. The report stated that by

changing to a Ministry structure a forty percent reduction in the number of senior administrative positions would be achieved with the resultant saving of \$0.5m per annum (*A Review of the Education Portfolio*, 1986, p.16).

Smart and Wilson (1991, p.9) contrast the lack of influence of the Director-General in the review process with the considerable influence of the Minister. The FRC report was given to Quinn Communications, a private public relations/advertising firm, which, in consultation with Minister Pearce and the new acting Director-General (Dr. Loudon), produced *Better Schools*.

4.3.4 The Financial Administration and Audit Act

The Financial Administration and Audit Act (FAAA) 1985 provides for the administration and audit of public finances and arose from the commitment outlined in the White Paper (1986, p.7) to the issue of accountability which was regarded as a commitment to “not only to doing things right and doing right things but doing right things right.”

The accountable officer of the Ministry of Education was the Chief Executive Officer. The audit of the accounts of every department would occur each financial year. Performance indicators and performance in relation to those indicators provided the means by which the audit would be conducted. Whittaker (1989, p.34) indicates that performance indicators must be “relevant, verifiable, free from bias and quantifiable in some manner.” For the Ministry of Education all performance indicators were related to the single objective which was to ensure that students “develop the understandings, skills and attitudes relevant to individual needs, thereby enabling them to fulfill their potential and contribute to the development of society” (*Ministry of Education Annual Report*, 1990/1991, p.41). Under the FAAA the Treasurer may issue instructions relating to the preparation of performance indicators. The auditing of each department

under the provisions of the FAAA was a key feature of the corporate management model of the Government.

4.3.5 The *Better Schools* Report

Pearce (1987) stated that the *Better Schools in Western Australia: A Programme for Improvement* document which was released in February 1987 (at the commencement of the school year) arose from both the Beazley report and FRC documents. The Beazley report contained new educational initiatives and the FRC documents outlined the operation of each government department (Pearce, 1987). Because the Education Department was inherently different from other parts of the public service, Pearce did not accept all parts of the FRC report. With the implementation of the unit curriculum still causing disruption to schools and release of the report occurring at the commencement of the school year, the initial reaction to this report was almost one of disinterest - especially in schools and P&C Associations. This may well have been indicative of the absence of any demand for change by the school community at this time. The implications of the reforms were not fully comprehended by school staff nor the SSTUWA. Perhaps the presentation of the document - its brevity (one paragraph statements) and the numerous colour photographs it contained - minimised its impact. Once the magnitude of the reforms was fully comprehended, the attitude of the SSTUWA and school staff towards the *Better Schools* (1987) document changed considerably (See 4.3.7).

The rhetoric of corporate management, commenced in the White Paper and continued in the FRC report, again emerged in the *Better Schools* document. The predilection for efficient use of government resources, responsive and adaptable administration of education, flexible use of resources and accountability to the Government and the community continued. Pearce (1987) indicates that there was a need to restrict the size of public expenditure and to “spend money efficiently.” Terms such as “self-determining schools”, “school-based decision making groups”, “school grant” and

“school development plan” were introduced. These were central elements of the new design for schools.

Major changes included the reduction of central office staffing; the creation of three functional division - Schools, TAFE and Policy; devolution of decision making; reorganisation from a regional to a district structure and reconstruction of the Ministry along functional lines rather than divisional lines. Participation by the community in school decision making was returned to the agenda with proposals for school-based decision making groups (SBDMGs). Whilst not envisaging a role similar to that of school councils in Victoria, there was a greater responsibility for the community in school decision making. SBDMGs were regarded as a means by which accountability to the community could be increased. A “formal decision making group” comprised of community members, staff and, where appropriate, students, was to be established in each school and be responsible for (p.11):

- setting the broad school policies and priorities, taking into account both Ministry policy and the particular needs of the school;
- establishing a resource management plan for the school (including budgeting and guidelines for supervising construction, maintenance and alterations to buildings and grounds);
- overseeing the expenditure of school funds and the use of school resources and facilities; and
- participating in defining the role of the principal and advising on selection and appointment of the principal.

Principals would retain control of school management and consult with the SBDMG in the formulation of the school development plan. The school development plan was to facilitate greater self determination by schools and the report (p.11) stated that this involved substantiation of the school's:

- educational goals and priorities, consistent with Government policies and community concerns;
- educational programmes to achieve these goals;
- proposed use of facilities and resources, (both financial and staffing);
- evaluation strategies to measure desired educational goals and standards; and

- controls and reporting systems established to enable monitoring and auditing of resource usage.

The school development plan would supposedly provide assistance with curriculum planning and financial and resource management. In addition it would afford a “focus for cooperative decision making by school staff, community members and central administrators” (*Better Schools*, 1987, p.11). Perhaps, more importantly, this was the means by which schools were to be rendered accountable to the Ministry of Education for evaluation against centrally contrived performance indicators.

Each school would be provided with a consolidated cash grant - paid annually at the commencement of the school year - enabling greater discretion over the purchase of goods and services. This grant would be used for purposes including the purchase of professional development services, purchase and production of resource materials, salaries of casual and relief staff, furniture acquisition and so forth. The principal, in consultation with the SBDMG and in accordance with the school development plan, had discretion as to the expenditure of the grant. The size of the grant would be commensurate with factors such as student numbers, geographic location, social circumstances and special needs.

To support the move to a more decentralised system a school district structure was proposed. Each school district, headed by a district superintendent would be comprised of between twenty and forty schools. The district would provide the link between schools and the Ministry with the district superintendent responsible for ensuring adherence by the district’s schools to Ministry policy. The district office staff were responsible for provision of professional development, advisory and consultancy support. The districts were smaller in size than the regions they replaced.

The role of the central office was stipulated as one of “forward planning and quality control” (*Better Schools*, 1987, p.17). The reorganisation would see a halving of the number of central office staff. The Corporate Executive, heading the Schools Division,

was to comprise the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director (Schools), four Directors of Operations, the Director of Curriculum, the Director of Personnel and the Director of Corporate Services. The composition and function of each of the Directorates was outlined.

The timeline for implementation of the changes was presented at the conclusion of the report. The reorganisation to be completed by 1992. More detailed policy guidelines to assist the change process were to be forthcoming from the central and district offices.

4.3.6 Cabinet Reshuffle

In February 1988, a Cabinet reshuffle, caused by the resignation of Brian Burke, saw Dr. Carmen Lawrence become the new Minister for Education. Peter Dowding (former Deputy Premier) became the new Premier of Western Australia. Dr Lawrence (1988) indicated that she wished to see the *Better Schools* programme consolidated. Whilst cognisant of the difficulties of the restructuring programme, she saw no problems with the pace of change itself. Rather, the lack of resources, training in new skills and commitment of parent groups to become involved in SBDMGs were perceived as problems. As Minister for Education she saw no need to become involved in the day-to-day running of sections of the bureaucracy as she was not an expert in the field. However, she did see the need to make the bureaucrats aware of their performance and failure to perform to expectations. She also saw her role as including the task of responding to the needs of the community and mobilising resources according to need.

4.3.7 Industrial Unrest and the Memorandum of Agreement

Significant industrial disruption occurred in schools from 1985 with the implementation of the Beazley recommendations and *Better Schools* (1987) reforms. This disruption, detailed more fully at a later point, was related to teacher perceptions of a deterioration in working conditions (including salaries) and lack of consultation by the Ministry. Among the actions of the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia

(SSTUWA) were bans on participation in SBDMGs and extracurricular activities. A general strike was held on 31 July, 1989.

A Memorandum of Agreement between the Ministry of Education and the SSTUWA was signed in April 1990 and subsequently ratified effective from 12 July, 1990 by the Government School Teacher's Tribunal. This Memorandum established a predictability in the implementation of the *Better Schools* initiatives and ensured a more extensive role and representation for the SSTUWA in Ministry of Education policy making. Hence negotiation between the two parties was concerned with determining policy and then agreeing upon the timeline for implementation. Achievement of these agreed upon objectives formed the basis for pay rises for teachers based upon increases in productivity. The SSTUWA was agreeable to the implementation of policy under such conditions. Whilst the Union was satisfied with the Memorandum there was reluctance for this to be extended to a tripartite arrangement to involve WACSSO in negotiations. The focus of the Union upon industrial issues vis-à-vis the protection and betterment of teachers working conditions ensured that the participation of WACSSO continued to be precluded.

4.3.8 Ministry Policy Documents

Better Schools (1987) outlined the general principles of SBDMGs with no details as to their implementation. In October, 1988 the first discussion documents related to school development plans and SBDMGs were released. The principles and functions of SBDMGs were outlined and enabling legislation was foreshadowed. Details of the means by which a school might implement and utilise such a group were scant. Likewise, information pertaining to school development plans was limited.

On 1 May, 1990 a discussion document *School Decision-Making Groups* was released. This was followed by two draft policy statements *Parent participation in Schools: Policy and Guidelines* (8 May, 1990) and *School Decision Making: Policy and*

Guidelines (7 August, 1990). The final policy statement *School Decision Making: Policy and Guidelines* was released in October, 1990 and defined a “school decision-making group” (p.4) as “a body formally constituted under the Education Act and Regulations. It consists of equal numbers of parent and staff representatives and the principal.”

Secondary schools could include elected student representatives with voting rights should the student body wish. The constitutions and procedures for the SBDMG could be determined by the individual school according to need and circumstance but in keeping with the Education Act Regulations. Perhaps the fate of SBDMGs was sealed in the following paragraph of the policy document (1990, p.4):

School Decision-making Groups are constituted to enable participation in the formulation of a school’s educational objectives and priorities. They are not able to hold accounts, employ staff or provide amenities. These functions can only be performed by the Ministry or an incorporated Parents and Citizens’ Association. School Decision-making Groups do not have a role in advising school staff on such matters as accounting procedures or teaching methods.

The policy document reiterated the functions regarding the establishment of the school development plan. The SBDMG was to endorse both a statement of the school’s purpose and priorities and the school budget (after it had been specified by the principal and staff). The design and implementation of educational strategies was the responsibility of the principal and staff. The principal had a key role in informing the community of the school’s overall performance and in maintaining lines of communication thereby ensuring the community remained abreast of developments within the school. One of the major roles for the principal was outlined (p.7) as

clarifying the nature and limits of the authority of School Decision-making Groups and in ensuring that appropriate participative processes are established and fostered...[and] for ensuring that School Decision-making Groups do not become involved in the day-to-day running of schools.

Principals would be responsible for enabling staff participation in some decision making and the participation of parents in the planning process (in accordance with Education

Act Regulations). There was no reference to the *Better Schools* (1987, p.11) proposal for participation by SBDMGs in defining the role of the principal and advising on the selection and appointment of the principal.

Other policy documents related to school community participation include *School Development Plans: Policy and Guidelines* (1989); *School Financial Planning and Management: Policy and Guidelines* (1991); and *School Accountability: Policy and Guidelines* (1991).

4.3.9 Education Amendment Regulations

Whilst the Beazley committee recommended that a review of the Education Act and Regulations be undertaken in order to permit the community participation in school decision making it was not until 1991 that legislation was finally enacted. When Dr. Lawrence became Minister for Education WACSSO had an expectation that the Minister would enact enabling legislation soon after (Spencer, 1992). However pressure from the SSTUWA, and perhaps elsewhere, witnessed a protracted process of review (which precluded the participation of WACSSO). The Education Amendment Regulations (no. 3) enabling SBDMGs eventually came into effect in January, 1992. The regulations outlined the form, function and jurisdiction of these groups.

The principal of the school had responsibility for facilitating the establishment of the SBDMG. The SBDMG would comprise the principal; person/s representing the staff of the school; person/s representing parents at the school and local community members; and person/s representing students at the school (in the case of secondary schools). The size of the groups could vary but the number of parent and staff members must be equal. The term of membership could not exceed one year but members could be re-elected. Regulation 293 provided for the co-optation of local community members to act in an advisory capacity to the group. The group would determine the tenure of the co-opted member.

The role of the SBDMG, in terms of the school development plan, was outlined in Regulation 284. The SBDMG would be responsible for formulating the objectives and priorities referred to in Regulation 284 (2)(a) - the objectives and priorities for the school for the period for which the plan is prepared. The principal of the school, following consultation with the school staff had responsibility for formulating those parts of the school development plan dealing with strategies to achieve the objectives, allocation of resources and reporting on the school's performance. Regulation 286 states that the SBDMG had responsibility for endorsing the plan when it was satisfied that it was consistent with the objectives and priorities formulated by the group. Following endorsement by the SBDMG, the principal would then submit the plan for approval to the Superintendent. Provision for the group to appeal a negative decision by the Superintendent was given in Regulation 288.

Under Regulation 290, the SBDMG had responsibility for review of the school's performance in achieving the priorities and objectives outlined in the school development plan. To enable this the principal was required to report regularly to the SBDMG on the school's performance. There was no indication of the measures to be taken by the SBDMG should the school's performance be deemed unsatisfactory.

The principal, under Regulation 294, had to advise the Superintendent, in writing of:

- (a) the name (if any) by which a school decision-making group wished to be known;
- (b) the number of members in the group;
- (c) the name of each member of the group and the capacity in which the person is a member;
- (d) the date on which the member was elected and the term for which the member is elected;
- (e) the name of any person co-opted to the group, the area of expertise of that person, and the period for which the person is co-opted to the group;
- (f) any procedures determined by the group for the conduct of proceedings of the group, and shall advise the Superintendent in writing of any change in those particulars as soon as practicable after the change occurs.

The Minister, under Regulation 295, had responsibility for dissolution of groups deemed dysfunctional.

4.4 Issues

Considerable disruption accompanied the *Better Schools* reforms of the Western Australian state education system. Both the individual reforms, with their attendant political motivations and ideologies, and the implementation process gave rise to the central issues of this controversy.

One issue to emerge is that which may be termed the politicisation of education. Pearce (1987) saw himself as a “proactive minister” with a “fair personal stamp” on the development of *Better Schools* and fully utilised the powers afforded by the Westminster system of government to initiate change. These changes redistributed power and challenged conventional policy and practice. Resistance was, therefore, to be expected.

A second issue is that of decentralisation whereby devolution of authority and decision making from the centre is thought to render the bureaucracy more responsive and accountable. Politically appealing notions of community participation in school decision making and a responsive accountable bureaucracy abounded in the rhetoric of Government documents. In *Better Schools* (1987, p.5) the “valuable role” of parents in “enhancing the relevance and quality of school decision making” was expressed.

A third issue is that of corporate management, whereby economic restraint and community participation are incorporated to encourage favour for this approach. Devolution of authority implies a shift in decision making responsibility from the centre. Corporate management, on the other hand, connotes a strong central (corporate) control of decision making responsibility. Decision making resides with management, for whilst the community may be consulted, no real participation is possible. Thus the

paradox of centralisation and decentralisation may be related to this third issue with fundamental implications for participation of the community in school decision making. Fundamental to corporate management is accountability and the demonstration of accountability by the Ministry of Education.

The fourth issue to emerge is the implementation process. Political expediency, together with constrained economic circumstances influenced a change process which, to be effective, required expenditure of both time and financial resources. Lawrence (1988) indicated that whilst she believed that there were few complaints with the pace of reform itself, she was rather more concerned that there were insufficient resources to make the changes. A related aspect of this issue is the lack of clarity and specifics in Ministry policy documents and guidelines, together with problems in the time lag in their issue. The failure of the Government to immediately enact enabling legislation raises the question of SSTUWA influence. Hence the commitment of the Government to implement meaningful community participation must also be related to implementation. As a consequence of the implementation process considerable acrimony between the Union and the Ministry of Education existed during this period. This may be attributed, in part, to the lack of consultation between the Union and the Ministry during the formulation of the *Better Schools* proposals which were presented as a fait accompli with no input from the Union or parents (Harken, 1987). All Union bans included bans on participation in SBDMGs. A spirited salary campaign was mounted by the Union in addition to pressure for a reduction in the speed of implementation of the *Better Schools* proposals. The culmination of this unrest was a general strike on 31 July, 1989. A Memorandum of Agreement, signed between the Ministry and the Union in April, 1990, restored a certain degree of harmony to the state education system and assisted in the implementation of the *Better Schools* reforms.

The implementation of the *Better Schools* proposals was accompanied by a numerous influences which, together, created a climate incompatible with the smooth introduction

of the reforms. A failure to consult all stakeholders prior to implementation of the reforms, lack of resources, the speed with which the changes were to be introduced, lack of training of Ministry personnel, purging experienced administrators from Head Office, elimination of subject superintendents, industrial unrest and the polarised stance of the SSTUWA and WACSSO led to the emergence of the implementation process as an issue in this controversy.

That significant power redistribution would accompany organisational restructuring is manifest. This is the fifth issue in this controversy. The new frameworks which were established changed power relationships. *Better Schools* may have been intended as a vehicle to re-concentrate control in education in a policy making elite (Minister, CEO and Directors). The lack of a groundswell of public support for greater participation in school decision making is also related to the issue of power redistribution.

4.5 Arguments

The arguments presented in this controversy are similar to those presented in Victoria and New Zealand and reflect the dominant political ideologies during the period of this controversy. Economic imperatives were the driving force behind the reforms.

4.5.1 The Politicisation of Education

The Burke Labor Government, acting upon its mandate for change, perceived the public sector, including the Education Department, to be inefficient and ineffective. The new education structure would address these problems, render the system more accountable and re-focus power in the hands of the Minister for Education. The arguments presented by the Government focus upon the role of the Minister for Education fully utilising the policy making capacity accorded under the Westminster system together with the perception of the Government as the principal client of the Ministry. This more pro-active and influential role of the Minister for Education may be termed the politicisation of education and may be predicated upon the need to curb spending on

education. Pearce (1987) argued that the days of the “ministerial figurehead” had passed and that his more interventionist role was paralleled by other Labor ministers. Educationists argue against this phenomenon by stating that the traditional education policy maker, viz. Director-General/CEO, is better placed to effect policies which reflect long-term educational, rather than short-term political values.

The politicisation of education extends further than a more “interventionist” role for the Minister for Education. The dominant values of the Government, viz. efficiency, effectiveness and accountability within the public service, as outlined in the White Paper (1986), needed to be infused in the public sector. In order to expedite this process, politically appointed personnel needed to be strategically placed within the new Ministry of Education. These appointees did not necessarily have experience in the education sector, rather, they possessed values sympathetic to those of the Government. In line with corporate management, professional knowledge shifted from education to managerial expertise. The traditional leader viz. Director-General would no longer be entrusted to “manage” the organisation and set policy directions. The politically appointed CEO, not necessarily a teacher professional, had managerial experience. Decisions previously based solely upon “educational” grounds were now predicated upon the values of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and responsiveness.

The short tenure of the CEO's may be compared to the previously longer periods in office by the Director-Generals. Beare (1991) describes this as the “impermanence of permanent heads”. Dr. Vickery, as Director-General, served between 1982-1986. Prior to this Mossenson served between 1976-1982; Barton between 1973-1976; and Dettman between 1966-1973. Since 1988, during this controversy, three CEOs (Louden 1987-1989, Nadebaum 1990-1992 and Black 1992) and three Ministers (Lawrence, Gallop and Hallahan) have held office. Pearce held office for five years and may be deemed a long serving Minister. The Director-Generals, due to their longer stay in office, had the capacity to introduce, implement and evaluate policy over a relatively

long period of time. They had also worked their way up the hierarchy rather than being “parachuted” into the Ministry. Present-day CEO’s act as a conduit through which policy is determined at the Ministerial level. A CEO may spend a short time as the head of the Ministry of Education before transferring to head another Government department.

The absence of a long serving Director-General to question the policy direction of Government is problematic. Angus (1987, p.8) questions the extent to which education had become politicised arguing that the Westminster system of government had always vested the Minister with the responsibility for the education portfolio and all that it entails. A “Ministry of Education” would not increase the powers of the Minister nor see the Minister subsume the role of Director-General. Angus concedes that *Better Schools* is a political statement but contends that this is legitimate given the White Paper statement that the “Government sets policies and priorities; public sector organizations translate these policies into action within the constraints of available resources.”

Whittaker (1989, pp.23-4) explains that in the “model public sector agency” two prerequisites are necessary. Firstly, the government is regarded as the principal client of the agency. This is in contrast to the traditional view of parents and educationists who regard students as the principal clients. The second prerequisite is that the agency should have flexibility together with accountability. Clearly the Ministry of Education was responsible to the Minister in both advising on and implementing policy. Thus the government has the role of setting policy and is the principal client of the Ministry of Education. The role of the CEO as a proactive policy maker and initiator is significantly altered under corporate management. Traditional educationists and parents, in opposition to Angus, would thus indicate the decline in the positional power of the CEO and the influence of more active Ministers for Education on educational policy making as evidence of the politicisation of education.

4.5.2 Devolution of Decision Making

A system of devolution, whereby power was seemingly delegated to the community is congruous with Labor Party ideology. The political arguments presented in support of devolution, (where, under corporate management, devolution was regarded as a tool of management), concern a redistribution of power which enabled the Minister for Education to exert a more dynamic policy making role. Schools needed to become more “self determining” and more responsive to the needs of the community. From the perspective of participatory democracy, devolution implies a shift in decision making from the centre to the periphery which permits the participation of all stakeholders in education. For the SSTUWA, (and contrary to the central organisation of the union), devolution, in line with the principles of organisational democracy, is favoured for this permits teachers a greater influence in school decision making. Porter, Knight and Lingard (1993, p.256-7) note that:

Devolution is a theme in both Beazley and Better Schools. In Beazley it is tied more to traditional Labor notions of progressive democratic participation, although other agendas are foreshadowed. Better Schools is more clearly within the corporate managerialist mode of devolution conceived as a strategy for better achieving efficiency and effectiveness in education. Yet it is seen as building upon Beazley, and participants use the language of democracy as much as that of economic rationalism.

The arguments presented in favour of devolution in Western Australia were explained in the White Paper (1986), where the term decentralisation was used, and continued in *Better Schools* (1987). Both argued that management structures and systems provided the key to improvement in the delivery of public services. Nadebaum (1990, p.3), whilst CEO, in an address to the Western Australian Primary Principals' Association explained the Government position:

[*Better Schools*] accepted that it was necessary to alter the management structure and systems to reflect the importance of accountability, flexibility, effectiveness, and efficiency in the expenditure of public funds - essentially it was the value for money argument. However, implicit in the “Better Schools” document was the assumption that improved management was only a tool...to help deliver quality education relevant to the Australian community in a time of increasingly sophisticated technology, a changing industrial climate, and at a time when our economic competitiveness on the

international scene was and continues to be a critical issue.

The Burke Government was committed to devolution and decentralisation, the arguments presented in both the White Paper and *Better Schools* (1987). Centralised educational decision making and the dependency created by the central office through bureaucratic organisation was addressed in the *Better Schools* proposals. Devolution of decision making with “self determining” schools would arrest this trend. The White Paper instituted a new approach based on decentralisation, a “self help” ethos and participatory decision making - notions compatible with a perspective favouring democratic decision making. However, their implementation under corporate management is contrary to that occurring under a more participatory philosophy. Louden (1987) stated that because there were now people in schools capable of making decisions, together with an interested and capable parent body, decision making could be devolved to schools. This would not have been possible some fifteen years before. Angus (1990, p.3) states that the “devolution paradigm” intrinsic in *Better Schools* can be explained in terms of means and end. Four steps are involved:

1. a clear articulation by the Central Office of the desired outcomes;
2. provision of resources to school based decision making groups in order to achieve stated outcomes;
3. empowerment of school based decision making groups to determine how to achieve the outcomes; and
4. the accounting by schools of progress towards the achievement of the agreed outcomes.

The school was intended to be the central focus in the new devolved system, for “good schools make a good system” (*Better Schools*, 1987, p.5). In order for devolution of decision making to occur under a corporate management approach *Better Schools* proposed several mechanisms: a school development plan; the school grant; SBDMGs; a district office structure providing assistance to schools; a central office reoriented towards policy formulation and “quality control”; and an external auditing both of financial and educational factors (Angus, 1990, p.4). The devolution, decision making and accountability framework of the Ministry of Education operated at the school, district and central office levels.

Traditional Labor Party ideology is closely aligned with the principles of organisational democracy and hence the initiation of more participatory structures was among Labor's election promises. The argument presented in the policy statement *School Decision Making: Policy and Guidelines* (1990, p.2) is that which is frequently advanced in support of community participation in school decision making:

By sharing responsibility for decision making in a school, parents, other community members and school staff members can work together towards shared goals. Teachers are able to direct their efforts towards student outcomes that are supported by the school's community. School staff members benefit from knowing that their efforts are supported by the whole school community. Parents and other community members can be confident that their viewpoints and expectations have been represented in the setting of the school's educational objectives.

The mechanisms employed in order to increase community participation emanated from a corporate management ideology and not from one committed to participatory democracy. Thus the structures and means by which they were established reflected the dominant values of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability rather than a concern for democratic participation.

Democratic participation in decision making is argued as a means by which the bureaucracy may be rendered more responsive to both the needs of the community and Government and less prone to unilateral decision making and a failure to respond to new environmental demands. The Labor Government, through the White Paper and *Better Schools*, argued that by increasing the participation of the community the organisation could better respond to the needs of the Government, and to a lesser extent, the needs perceived by the community. By locating decision making closer to the point at which the decision takes effect and "where the best information is available" (Louden, 1987), devolution will increase the responsiveness of the organisation. Rather than requiring sanction from the central office, more decisions could be made at the school level. With major decision making responsibility residing at the centre of a bureaucratic administration, school personnel were required to endure a cumbersome process before

gaining authorisation for their requests. Decision making would be expedited by devolving authority for many of these decisions to schools for, as different needs are perceived or problems arise, schools could adapt quickly by making their own decisions. More importantly however, the corporate management approach in W.A. employed the devolution process to provide an important cog in the accountability process of the schools to the Government. Nadebaum elaborates in *School Accountability: Policy and Guidelines* (1991, p.iii):

The devolution of increased responsibility to schools needs to be accompanied by a mechanism through which schools can account for the decisions they make. This is vital to provide the public assurance that the quality of education in government schools is underwritten by the system.

Participation in school decision making by the school community enables the use of the considerable expertise which exists within the community. Such expertise may be in diverse areas such as accountancy, law, building and management. Whilst this is no doubt true, the expertise of the community in educational decision making must be questioned. The community in Western Australia had scant opportunity to participate in educational decision making due to the absence of any meaningful mechanisms supportive of participation. Likewise school personnel, who have expertise in some educational decision making, acquired responsibility under the *Better Schools* proposals for decision making in a variety of new areas such as financial and resource management. The lack of expertise in participatory decision making or educational decision making, together with the popular impression that participatory decision making is a more time-consuming process, is thought to outweigh any benefits that may accrue. Whilst not under-estimating the time collaborative decision making could take, Angus (1987), then the Executive Director of the Schools Division, indicated that effective management could overcome this. To the contrary, decisions made quickly and unilaterally may not best serve the organisation. Professionals were also required to make decisions for which they had not previously been accountable and in areas in which they had no previous expertise. Thus there was scepticism on the part of the professionals as to their own ability to make such decisions.

Meaningful participation is argued by proponents of participatory decision making as a means by which performance, motivation and morale may be improved. Advocates of organisational democracy favour a greater voice in decision making by employees and argue that the benefits of greater participation are reflected in a more committed and motivated workforce. Likewise, participation by the school community is believed to be accompanied by commitment to the decisions reached and greater support for the school. Counter to these arguments is that which states that most members of the school community do not wish to participate. There was no evidence of a strong groundswell of public support urging community participation in school decision making.

The SSTUWA was supportive of devolution for this was the means by which management could be wrested from the Ministry of Education and given to teachers.

The Union (1990, p.3), a proponent of industrial democracy, argued that:

Successful devolution hinges on flexibility. To be flexible schools need options which can be selected and adopted as situations arise. While a centralised system has its place in the decision making process, excessively centralised and bureaucratic decision making processes can strip schools of flexibility. There are many matters which can be handled more quickly and sensitively by schools.

Watkins (1991, p.28) indicates that school democracy may be viewed cynically as a means of controlling militant unions. The argument is that if teachers are permitted greater participation in decision making there is less likelihood of union militancy. A good record of industrial harmony can be a boon for governments seeking re-election. SBDMGs provided one avenue through which teachers could exercise more control over school decision making i.e. provider capture. Angus (1990, p.8) argues that these groups “provide checks and balances on the authority of principals and Ministry officials.” This supports the view that conflict between administrators and the school community can be reduced through collaborative decision making. By considering a wider range of viewpoints before reaching a decision more equitable outcomes can supposedly be achieved. Consequently there is an increased likelihood that more harmonious relations may exist between all parties when all have had their interests

taken into account. Consideration of the Union angst at its exclusion from the formulation of *Better Schools* is testimony to the fact that should significant differences exist between the interests of stakeholders, more difficulty will be experienced in reaching an harmonious decision. In this case it is more difficult to reach a consensus and antagonism and criticism is directed to policy makers by aggrieved stakeholders. Domination of SBDMGs by certain groups to the detriment of others is an argument given in opposition to participatory decision making. While it was assumed that the SBDMG would naturally be representative of the school community, experience elsewhere suggests that this is not automatic. Also taken for granted was that the community had a commonality of interests and a unity of purpose. Power is differentially distributed within the community (as has been noted in Victoria where some groups were under-represented on school councils) nor is there a broad based community view. Manipulation of SBDMGs by principals or local interest groups, for example, is antithetical to the intended purpose of these groups. Encouraging community members to become involved in SBDMGs is also problematic.

4.5.3 Corporate Management

The Government was keen to instigate a strategy which would no longer see money being “thrown at schools” in an attempt to solve the problems within the bureaucratic system. Corporate management was favoured as an effective strategy for improving efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. A technocratic view of education was favoured by the Government with technical solutions proposed to educational problems. In opposition to corporate management, traditional educationists argue that the aims of education are not readily equated with those of big business which must return a profit. Accountability and efficiency are worthy attributes within the education system but should not be regarded as the dominant purpose of the system.

The management ethos of the Government required new skills on the part of those in leadership positions. Angus (1987, p.7) indicates that the Senior Executive Service suggested that senior public servants possess the following skills:

- highly developed communication skills;
- demonstrated ability to manage people effectively;
- policy formulation skills;
- conceptual and analytical ability;
- strategic management skills; and
- initiative.

The perceived failure of educationists to possess these skills witnessed the appointment of non-teacher professionals to senior Ministry of Education positions. Educationists would question why these are regarded as “high” level skills yet the skills and experience gained in the classroom and school administration are not. From this perspective, a commitment to education, acquired through service within the organisation, is a worthy attribute for a CEO. This service provides the skills and experience necessary (such as country service and experience as a school principal) for strong educational leadership.

Clearly, while Government discourse created the impression that the bureaucracy must become more responsive to the needs of the community, corporate management required that the Ministry of Education must become more responsive to the needs of the Government (its principal client). Accountability measures, through the provisions of the FAAA, resulted in the Ministry of Education becoming more responsive to Government concerns for efficiency and effectiveness. The degree to which schools could directly respond to the needs of the school community were constrained through centrally determined policies which limited the capacity for self determination by schools. While Government rhetoric would indicate that the Ministry of Education would become more responsive to community needs, in reality, the Ministry effectively

became more responsive to Government needs. However, the Government does have potential contact with the community for politicians, through contact with their electorate, have the capacity to tap into the issues of concern to the community. The Government has the ability to stay in touch with the “grassroots” and formulate policy according to community needs.

Whilst ostensibly enabling greater participation by the community in school decision making, tight central control was retained by the Minister for Education. Performance indicators, guidelines for expenditure of the school grant, and mandatory school development plans were, inter alia, means by which close monitoring of schools by central office, without direct supervision was facilitated.

Accountability is a key feature of corporate management. Whittaker (1989, p.24) in his view of the ideal public sector agency for W.A. comments that accountability:

is the duty or obligation of those given responsibilities and resources to explain and justify how they have used (or applied) the responsibility and resources in the achievement of agreed objectives. Properly defined in this way, accountability is a much broader concept than mere efficiency and legality: more importantly, it embraces the effectiveness of the agency, and therefore requires that the effectiveness of programs is evaluated.

The operation of corporate management requires that objectives be stated and that some means of measuring the attainment of these objectives be devised. Performance indicators provide the method of quantifying the effectiveness of the organisation. Accountability was to be demonstrated to the community in two ways. Firstly, the school development plan, conceived in conjunction with the SBDMG, provided the means by which the school demonstrates accountability to both the school community and the Ministry. Secondly, the Ministry could demonstrate its accountability through programmes such as Monitoring Standards in Education which were designed to assure the community that standards in government schools were being maintained. The Minister, in turn, would be able to demonstrate the efficacy of the Ministry of Education and its new organisational structure and method of operation. Corporate management is

dependent upon this demonstration of accountability to the government and the public. If accountability cannot be demonstrated the system may be considered dysfunctional. This lack of demonstration of accountability occurred during the period of this controversy for, some five years following the enactment of the FAAA, the auditor general was unable to conduct an audit of a government department (Annual Report 1990/1991, p.40). This reflects a serious deficiency in the accountability mechanism of the government. Harvey (1987, p.3) argues that *Better Schools* was a “vehicle for the transmission of corporate management practices and culture from business and industry into school organisations.” Whether corporate management produced “better schools” and students benefited remains a question in point and should provide fertile grounds for research.

4.5.4 The Implementation Process

The implementation of *Better Schools* (1987) emerged as a significant issue in this controversy. Political expediency and a lack of consultation with key stakeholders viz. SSTWUA and WACSSO, together with a constrained economic climate created an environment in which reforms would be difficult to implement. Policy documents such as those relating to SBDMGs were not released until 1991. The dysfunction of the FAAA has been mentioned and is indicative of the fact that even where legislation exists the practicalities of enacting the provisions of the legislation are problematic. SSTUWA questioned the capacity of the school community to participate effectively in school decision making but was committed to gaining an increased role for teachers in school decision making.

According to WACSSO, Dr. Lawrence, during her term as Minister for Education, indicated her favour for community participation leading to an expectation that enabling legislation would soon follow (Spencer, 1992). However, the influence of the Union prevailed and a long delay ensued before enabling legislation was enacted. Again, as had occurred following the Beazley recommendations, heightened expectations for

greater parent participation arose. In the case of the *Better Schools* proposals, a reduced role, from that which had been proposed, was provided for in the legislation.

The Union had supported the majority of the Beazley recommendations related to community participation in school decision making (*The Western Teacher*, 16 April, 1984, p.16). Indeed, the Union tabled before the Beazley Committee several documents which focused upon an increased role for teachers in decision making. The *Better Schools* proposals were not well accepted, their ambiguity contributing to this lack of support. It should be noted that the Union regarded the school community as consisting of teachers and administrators (*Conference Decisions*, 1990, p.10) and was prepared to vigorously pursue a more active role for teachers in school decision making. Whether the community was deserving of an increased role was regarded as problematic. Whilst the Union accepted a broader definition of the school community to include all those who have a vested interest in the school (Harken, 1992), industrial issues were the central focus of union policy. There was support for parental participation in school development planning but no role was seen for parents in determining school organisation structures (such as timetabling), school financial management or school staffing. Whilst being outwardly agreeable to an increased role for parents, the areas in which such an extension could occur, given the aforementioned restrictions together with the strong bargaining power of the Union, would indicate that a more pivotal role for parents in school decision making was doubtful.

The Education Amendment Regulations (No.3) 1991 began operation in January, 1992, some five years after the release of *Better Schools*. This time lag obviously contributed to the considerable cynicism concerning the commitment of the Ministry of Education to SBDMGs. The Union played a significant role in framing the regulations (in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement) and perceived no need for WACSSO involvement as the regulations were considered industrial matters (Harken, 1992). SSTUWA argued that part of the reason for the time taken for enactment of the

regulations was due to the necessity of the regulations to protect both teachers and students. The wording of the regulations needed to be accurate in a legal sense (Harken, 1992). The industrial unrest which plagued the implementation of *Better Schools* contributed to the delay in the regulations being enacted as the Union sought to establish a prominent role in Ministry of Education decision making. The Union would not countenance participation by teachers on SBDMGs without adequate compensation. Rayner (1989, p.7), a Union organiser, commented in the Union journal:

What do teachers and school administrators get out of such groups? Staff need to actively question whether or not they or the school are going to be any better off with a SBDMG than with their current arrangement. One can't help wondering whether the SBDMG and devolution are not just a mechanism for the Ministry to dump responsibility for unpleasant decisions on schools.

The Union was therefore skeptical as to the real intentions of the Ministry with regards to devolution. Without adequate reparation teachers were regarded as failing to benefit from participation in the devolution process.

4.6 Protagonists

Individual and group actions have shaped this controversy. The influence each exerted had varied according to changing circumstances. The protagonists include premiers Burke, Dowding and Lawrence; Ministers for Education Pearce (1983-1988), Lawrence (1988-1990), Gallop (1990-1991) and Hallahan (1991-1993); Director-General/CEO Vickery (1982-1985), Loudon (1985-1989) and Nadebaum (1989-1991); State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia; Western Australian Council of State School Organisations; High School Principal's Association; Primary Principal's Association; academics; teachers; district superintendents; principals; students; Functional Review Committee; Beazley Committee; Public Service Board. Two pressure groups will be considered in further detail in this controversy - SSTUWA and WACSSO.

4.6.1 The State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia

The SSTUWA was formed in 1898 and is an organisation of government school teachers. The Union gained recognition as the representative of teachers in negotiations in 1920 following industrial action. The result was the establishment of an appeal board (later to become the Teachers' Tribunal) on which the Union had equal representation with the Department (Smart and Alderson, 1980, p.56). Horner (1977, p.240), in an early study of the Union noted that its influence on policy formulation was "normative" rather than "formative". The Union's power was described as "indirect" based upon accessibility to the Minister for Education.

Smart and Wilson (1991, p.19) noted the considerable influence of the Union in educational policy setting when Labor won office in 1983. Pearce had been a Union Vice President prior to his entry into politics and insisted that senior union officials exert significant influence over educational policy setting at that time. Cordial Union/Government relationships issued from the close relationship between the Union President (John Negus) and Pearce. The Union had substantial representation on the Beazley Committee. When Jeff Bateman became President in 1985 the situation changed markedly. The Union was oblivious to the FRC and its recommendations (Smart and Wilson, 1991, p.19). According to Harken (1992), Pearce presented the *Better Schools* document to the Union hierarchy, seeking their endorsement, allowing only for a few days for the report to be studied. The radical proposals, particularly those related to school financial and staff management, were denounced by the Union which subsequently rejected the entire report. Indeed, Bateman had claimed no prior knowledge of *Better Schools* when it was released in February, 1987. The expectation, by the Union, for extensive consultation had been raised by the collaborative manner in which the Beazley enquiry had been conducted. Whilst consultation, in a strict sense, may occur before, during or after the release of a report, the Union had expected consultation at all three stages.

The proposal for participation by the community in school decision making was regarded as threatening for the Union's strength lay in centralised negotiation and not devolved sites. However, it should be noted that such opposition has a long history for, as Haynes (1985, p.2) indicates, the Union passed resolutions at annual conferences between 1913 and 1915 to abolish school boards for they were regarded as an attempt to control teachers.

Bateman (1985, p.7), whilst Senior Vice-President, and cognisant of trends elsewhere, forecast the emergence of community participation as an educational and industrial issue for the remainder of the decade. While offering general support for the principle of community participation in school decision making, the SSTUWA endorsed a limited role for the community in policy making at any level of the education system. The concern for industrial issues and protecting the interests of teachers is the *raison d'être* for the Union. Whilst WACSSO was regarded as somewhat of a "paper tiger" (Harken, 1992) the Union concedes that campaign success is more likely if WACSSO support is obtained. Support for WACSSO is limited because the Union adopted the strategy that WACSSO lobbies on behalf of parents and the Union lobbies on behalf of teachers. The Union believed that more resources are likely to be granted from the government if the groups work independently rather than jointly (Harken, 1992).

4.6.2 The Western Australian Council of State School Organisations

WACSSO is the coordinating body of the individual Parents and Citizens' Associations instituted in most state schools. Established in 1921 as the Western Australian Federation of Parents and Citizens Association, WACSSO has grown significantly. The Ministry of Education provides office space and staffing salaries (a situation not enjoyed by their eastern states counterparts). WACSSO's policy direction is determined by an annual conference. Anderson (1985, p.10), in a detailed study of WACSSO, notes that cordial relations with the Ministry of Education are the norm. Security of tenure has

enabled the WACSSO Executive to provide for parent interest unencumbered by the task of revenue raising. Anderson (1985, p.10-11) outlines the two main functions as:

- provision of services to individual P&C Associations, e.g. details as to meeting procedures and publication of "The Western Australian Parent and Citizen Journal."
- representation of the views of parents and students in decision making arenas.

Anderson (p.129) concludes that WACSSO:

has enjoyed "playing politics" on occasions but is not a political organisation. It is not engaged in point scoring as a means of gaining or keeping power; but instead, is content to work quietly towards well-considered achievable goals...

WACSSO was not consulted during the FRC inquiry nor during the subsequent compilation of *Better Schools*. Subsequent to the release of the report *The Western Australian Parent and Citizen* published frequent articles imploring parents to become more familiar with the proposals. The journal, however, had a limited readership. There was a concerted endeavour to allay the fears of the SSTUWA concerning the impact of parent involvement in school decision making. The stance of the Union and parents on this issue was polarised. A reproduction of correspondence allegedly sent by the Union to all P&C's was published in the second term journal in 1987. This correspondence, which sought the support of parents, was an expression of Union dissatisfaction with the *Better Schools* proposals. WACSSO's derisive reply was to expose the irony inherent in a request for parent support from an organisation which held little regard for the decision making capabilities of parents (*The Western Australian Parent and Citizen*, Term 2, 1987, p.13).

Among the five principles underpinning WACSSO's policy, which was updated in 1991, was "broad and meaningful community involvement at all levels...to ensure a complete public system of education" (*The Western Australian Parent and Citizen*, Term 3, 1991, p.10). The following was stated with reference to community and public education:

2.1 The school is an integral part of the community and therefore its operation and management must be open to the active participation of the community.

2.2 The community shall be consulted about the formulation of policy concerning the operation of government schools, including establishment and closure.

2.3 Parents and citizens, through WACSSO, must be represented on any inquiry or committee concerning education; parents and citizens, either individually, through Parents and Citizens' Associations, or through WACSSO must have the right to make submissions to any inquiry or committee concerned with education.

2.4 The representative participation of students in all levels of education decision-making is vital and therefore must be encouraged and properly resourced. To this end, structures for decision-making in education should be open to all.

(The Western Australian Parent and Citizen, Term 3, 1991, p.13)

The 1990 WACSSO conference endorsed the proposed Education Amendment Act amendments related to SBDMGs and called on the Minister to implement these immediately. Amendment (7) is noteworthy:

the objects of a school decision-making group shall be to participation in the formation and monitor implementation of the school development plan, to develop a staffing profile, to formulate the school budget, to promote the interest of the government school or group of schools in relation to which it is formed, to enhance and promote the good reputation of the school, to assist in the formulation of the school's policy as regulated, to provide additional amenities, including buildings, facilities, services, not already provided by the Ministry of a Parents and Citizens' Association, to undertake other functions as the Minister may allow and generally foster community interest in educational matters.

(The Western Australian Parent and Citizen, Term 4, 1990, p.24)

Whilst WACSSO has served as an effective lobby group for parents of Western Australian state school students the absence of a strong tradition of parental participation has been a hindrance in the implementation of SBDMGs. WACSSO was reasonably happy with the status of parents in school decision making although it conceded that there was room for further progress. Hence the "battle has not been won" (Spencer, 1992). Whilst more "militant" members of WACSSO expressed displeasure at the degree of participation afforded SBDMGs, the consensus was that inroads had been made and the door had been opened for the future. WACSSO felt that the Ministry of Education was now paying more attention to the parent organisation as parents played

a “bigger role with more confidence in speaking and voicing their opinions” (*The West Australian* “Education Insight”, October, 15, 1991, p.3).

4.7 Constraints

Numerous factors acted as constraints in this controversy. Chadbourne (1991, pp.1-2) notes that during 1987 the restructuring tended to make scant difference to the way schools operated.

There was a certain irony in all of this. For decades teachers had criticised the centralised state Education Department for being paternalistic, inflexible and authoritarian. They wanted greater professional autonomy, less regimentation, and a more responsive bureaucracy in Central Office. Yet, when the *Better Schools* report offered them increased control over resources, staffing and the educational direction of their schools, it was not enthusiastically welcomed as might have been expected. Quite the contrary. Many school staff treated the proposed reforms with cynicism, antagonism and resistance. Their response seemed to be a classic case of “the cage door was left open but few tried to escape.”

The manner in which *Better Schools* was contrived may be construed as a constraint. The clandestine manner of the FRC enquiry and the lack of consultation with key stakeholders in formulating the proposals contributed to Union ire and contrasts with the collaborative nature of the Beazley enquiry. This, coupled with the failure of the authors of the report to elaborate upon the “purposes and assumptions underpinning the 1987 restructuring” (Angus, 1990, p.1) produced derision and cast doubt upon the merit of the proposals. Aware that the massive restructuring may have been regarded as all for nothing the Ministry of Education devised a project entitled “Managing Change in Schools” which, according to Chadbourne (1991, p.2) was to determine “what changes need to be made to the rules (both explicit and implicit) which govern the operation of schools to enable them to become self determining.”

Suspension of the project occurred mid-way during 1989 due to the industrial dispute between the Ministry and the SSTUWA and the resultant moratorium on all activities linked with restructuring. However, the participating schools had, by this time,

submitted their proposals to the Central Office and had commenced the process of implementing the proposed changes for which no approval was necessary.

Chadbourn (1991, p.36) notes that from the project's inception the Central Office "transmitted the hope, if not the expectation" that the project schools would adopt a corporate management approach. The Central Office Project Consultant (who, during 1988 was given the task of producing guidelines on school decision making and school development planning) made an analysis, in 1988, of the schools' response to the project. Chadbourne (1991, p.51) stated that "the way schools reacted to the project is symptomatic of broader issues which are unresolved in the system at present."

The following issues, inter alia, were identified as requiring resolution:

- A sense of waiting for some clearer direction from the Central Office.
- Lack of conceptual clarity about the Better Schools reforms amongst school staff.
- The bureaucratic tendency to abdicate responsibility for problem solving.
- Schools looking for structural solutions to problems requiring attitudinal or behavioural change.
- Suspicion and fear about how the notion of accountability will impact on schools.
- A sense of powerlessness amongst teachers in terms of their capacity to influence the direction of education in their school and the wider system.

Policy directions (though one could argue the extent of their clarity) were eventually forthcoming and schools became accustomed to the new structure. However the majority of these constraints to self determining schools remained inherent in the system and acted as barriers to the implementation of the *Better Schools* reforms, including SBDMGs. *Better Schools* lacked prescriptive guidelines as to the formation and function of SBDMGs. The fate of the Community Participation in Schooling project has been mentioned. This group was disbanded prior to the inception of *Better Schools* and the majority of members of this group resigned from the Ministry (Ramsden, 1990, p.92). The School Development Project (1987) was of little assistance to schools.

With limited experience with SBDMGs or writing school development plans and few guidelines issued from the central office it is understandable that schools met with varying levels of success in undertaking these tasks. It was almost two years before any substantial documentation on SBDMGs or school development plans was released by the Ministry. Firm policy statements were to follow even later. Thus the constraining influence of policy implementation before the policy was written is apparent. However, in the reverse, where a school community attempted to exercise its capacity for self determination central office support was absent. Some schools, for example, attempted to enforce compulsory wearing of school uniform. Even where there was unanimous support from the school community the presence of regulations to the contrary prevented the schools introducing such a policy.

The failure to provide firm policy guidelines and to elaborate upon the implementation of the of the proposals in *Better Schools* was a constraint. In retrospect the lack of a detailed plan for implementation together with the complexities associated with change was not fully comprehended. Whilst giving no specifics as to the “how”, *Better Schools* was unequivocal in the timeline for implementation. The speed with which schools were to effect change created problems for the Unit Curriculum had already increased the workload for secondary school personnel. The SSTUWA campaigned vigorously for amendment of the implementation timeline to permit consideration of the issues and to reduce the workload for schools. The Union’s actions became increasingly militant in response to the more authoritarian tone of the Ministry documents (Ramsden, 1990, p.126) which contrasted to the ambiguous *Better Schools* proposals. While couched in more imperious terms, the Ministry documents were no more constructive in their provision of guidelines to schools. The unpopular proposal for community participation in school decision making coupled with a Union embittered through a lack of consultation rendered SBDMGs a prime target for industrial action. From December 1987, bans were placed upon participation by Union members in SBDMGs and school development plans.

Related to the implementation process is the lack of training and funding provided by the Ministry of Education to support the new initiatives. Education and training of principals, teachers, community members, district office staff and students in the skills of participatory decision making was imperative if SBDMGs were to function effectively. This lack of inservice training impeded the implementation of the reforms for, whilst structural change may be effected with relative ease, behavioural change requires the expenditure of considerable time and money. District office personnel were ill-equipped to assist schools with the multitude of functions for which they assumed responsibility. District superintendents continued to occupy a largely undefined role.

The crucial link between the schools and the central office provided by the district offices was not fully exploited. Principals also experienced significant changes to their role with little assistance from central office.

The Union attempted to have teachers paid for participation on SBDMGs as the devolution process increased the workload for schools. While schools received additional funding through the school grant, difficulty was experienced in effectively utilising these funds to release teachers from classroom duties to participate in school development and other activities (Angus, 1990, p.19). In addition, funding was not available to enable the continuance of projects such as the Community Participation in Schools Project, the results of which may have been of direct assistance to schools. Harvey (1987, p.6) predicted that schools would need assistance, in terms of time and resources, in the following areas previously the responsibility of central office:

- The establishment, maintenance and use of a data base containing information related to all aspects of school administration;
- Personnel management;
- Financial management;
- Preparation of a school development plan; and
- A sophisticated committee structure to manage school policy making.

Usher and Cross (1987, p.7) concluded:

Workloads will, and have, increased dramatically; services have been and will be again cut; roles, relationships, functions and powers have been, and will continue to be shifted, eroded, displaced and adjusted in all sorts of ways. And while a major upheaval of this sort may be lived with (if not embraced) under certain circumstances - i.e. that the reforms are enormously beneficial for education - we can come to no such conclusion in this case.

Several other factors hindered the fruition of SBDMGs. The commitment of the Ministry of Education to the concept of participatory decision making is questionable given the degree to which the proposed functions of SBDMGs were progressively limited. The time lag before enabling legislation was enacted was also a constraint.

Deschamp, (1988, pp.3-7) delineates the necessary prerequisites for SBDMGs:

- 1) A keen and enthusiastic principal who is actively encouraging the move towards increased community participation in school affairs.
- 2) A group of keen and able people prepared to put in and take on responsibility.
- 3) That the present levels and styles of community involvement in that school's operation are quite high.
- 4) The desire on behalf of the principal and staff to expand the basis of decision making and the belief that it is a worthwhile approach.
- 5) That the SBDMG have the support of the school community, parents, staff and where appropriate students.

These prerequisites were absent in Western Australian state schools. Prevailing circumstances were not conducive to the successful introduction of community participation in decision making. Addressing the 1984 WACSSO state conference, Lockhart (1984, p.25) urged parents to seize the opportunity for increased participation presented by the Beazley Committee.

But worse than all of these things will be the indictment that active parents, school administrators and teachers in schools will go down in education history as the group that had the chance, the first decent chance in this century, the chance to participate and to enable others to participate, the chance to be part of a massive uplifting of the quality and sensitivity of public education - they had the chance and they blew it!

These are prophetic words in retrospect. The absence of a tradition of participation and the weak power base of members of the community in school decision making contributed to the propensity of the community to defer this responsibility to the school. P&C meetings generally have not been well supported and there was no strong

groundswell of support for an increased voice in school decision making. The tendency to leave school management and policy making to the education professionals contributed to the centralising trends observed.

In order to schools to become truly self-governing there is the requirement for greater control over financial decision making. Otto Von Bismark's golden rule holds no less credence today than when first uttered - "he who has the thumbs on the purse has the power." The Ministry of Education's commitment to devolution was doubtful given the central control of fiscal considerations. Angus (1990, p.12) states:

In many respects the current audit and financial administration regulations that apply across government schools are antithetical to the objectives of the Better Schools reforms. There is an inherent tension between central accounting and local decision-making.

School grants had to be expended within strict centrally determined guidelines.

Changes to the legislation enabled schools to retain unspent funds and to invest funds.

School bank balances significantly increased (Angus, 1990, p.13) giving schools a certain degree of financial independence. However, the decisions as to how this money was expended was vested in the hands of a few. SBDMGs could only sanction the school budget and school priorities.

While school personnel achieved greater control over financial decision making this was not extended to the wider school community. SBDMGs were unable to "hold accounts, employ staff or provide amenities." With no capacity for revenue raising, the Ministry of Education severely limited the autonomy of SBDMGs. The *Better Schools* reforms were purported to address the perceived impotence of school councils, however the changes would at best be described as cosmetic. SBDMGs were given no more real power than an effective P&C Association. The community seemingly was given a voice in school decision making yet, the corporate management framework vested real decision making in the hands of a few.

4.8 Consequences

As a result of the devolution paradigm enacted by the Government, the policy was for SBDMGs to “play a key role in formulating some aspects of the school development plan and not others” (*School Decision Making: Policy and Guidelines*, 1990, p.5).

Together with the absence of any revenue raising capacity, this meant that the expectations for an increased role in school decision making by the community would be unfulfilled. Community participation in the formulation of the school’s educational objectives and priorities existed, yet they had no role in advising school staff on accounting procedures and were afforded no independent status through a revenue raising capacity. Thus SBDMGs had scant capacity to exert any meaningful influence on school decision making. Had there been provision for SBDMGs to act in an autonomous manner through the provision of funding or ability to raise funds, their independence and power would have been affirmed. That provision for such independent function was not forthcoming raises the question of the commitment of the Ministry of Education to meaningful community participation. Rather, SBDMGs were assigned a minimal role and assisted in the accountability process by participation in the formulation of the school development plan. The failure of the wider community to demand participation in school decision making enabled Union pressure to sway Ministerial opinion and limit the function of SBDMGs. The reliance of WACSSO upon the Ministry of Education for finance and the provision of offices perhaps reduced the capacity of the parent organisation to act as an autonomous pressure group. The necessity for public pressure seeking participation in school decision making to place the issue on the political agenda cannot be overstated.

Smart and Wilson (1991, p.26) note that in many schools, the creation of SBDMGs was positively received by parents who welcomed the opportunity to assume wider roles in school decision making. There is a need for further research to determine the impact of SBDMGs in schools. Angus (1990, p.32) concludes that:

devolution of itself does not improve schools, rather it provides a condition for improvement. It does not make, rather it enables schools to put into place home-grown plans for improvement they could not otherwise achieve. Similarly, central structures, depending upon their capacity to coordinate and respond to local requirements, can support schools and need not be cast as antithetical to their interests. Getting it right demands a balancing act of great finesse.

Corporate efficiency propelled the restructure of the Ministry of Education. The new organisation had a flatter structure and more clearly defined lines of authority.

Restructuring necessitated the formation of new power bases and for individuals to determine their position in the new order. The central office retained important decision making powers at the expense of SBDMGs which were expected to gain under the new system. Devolution of administrative responsibility to schools occurred but the degree to which real power was devolved is problematic. Given the central influence retained over the financial aspects of the school and district management and the quality control achieved through accountability measures, principals could possibly feel under closer surveillance than in the past.

The Minister for Education established clear lines of authority to schools which would ostensibly distance the Minister from provocative, difficult decisions (these being made at the local level). Budgetary decisions remained at the level of the Minister. However as the Minister is held responsible by the public for decisions made about education e.g. school closures, the brunt of unpopular decisions would still be borne by the Minister.

The demise of Directors-General as major Education Department power brokers has been noted by Macpherson (1991). Smart and Wilson (1991, p.18) regard Dr. Vickery's resignation as a "symbolic turning point in the loss of power by the Director-General" and the beginning of the "new management imperative as the *modus operandi*" of the Ministry of Education. CEOs now are regarded as the mouth piece of the Minister for Education and hence have reiterated and defended the corporate management policy.

Whilst the Ministry (through the Minister) maintained power, the senior bureaucrats lost power through restructuring. The resignation of many senior departmental officers which accompanied the initial restructure resulted in a significant loss of expertise from the Ministry. The role of the central office was to have been one of policy formulation and quality control. Due to the nature of the implementation process, schools were expected to operationalise policy statements, such as the introduction of SBDMGs, with limited and somewhat ambiguous guidelines. In some respects the central office appeared unsure of the direction in which it was to proceed leading to the impression of ad hoc implementation of the reforms.

The district office was deemed essential in facilitating the creation of a “decentralised network of services to maintain quality, and ensure professional development facilities are provided” (*Better Schools*, 1987, p.15). The regional structure was replaced by the new district boundaries early in 1987. As time progressed, the dearth of power of the district offices in contrast with their predecessors became increasingly apparent.

Ramsden (1990, p.132) comments:

Probably this was intentional as the new focus was to be the school itself. Progressively, the central office dealt directly with school principals and by-passed the district offices. Often, duplicate correspondence would be sent to both the schools and the district offices...

Accountability procedures required that school development plans receive District Superintendent approval. Schools were therefore under the scrutiny of the District Office which enforced centrally determined guidelines.

Improved management and administration was intended by the *Better Schools* reforms. Angus (1987) indicated that effective management could overcome the issue of the time collaborative decision making consumes. With a more collaborative approach to school decision making the role of the principal would necessarily undergo change from one of autocratic leader to facilitator (Angus, 1987). The principal of a self determining school clearly was required to assume greater responsibilities as financial manager, educational

leader and planner. There were several responsibilities for principals in the area of SBDMGs. They were to ensure that parents and other community members were afforded the opportunity for meaningful participation in the policy-setting aspects of school development plans. Regular articulation of Ministry policy to the school community was necessary. All groups were required to have the opportunity for participation on SBDMGs. In addition, principals were required to outline the jurisdiction of the SBDMG and ensure that participative processes were established. Individual principals would differ in the extent to which they perceived a decline or increase in power. Those principals inured to the role of authority figure and sole decision maker would argue that their power had declined due to the requirement for staff and community participation. Others would argue that the new tasks acquired by principals had increased their power. Nolan (1987, p.15) as President of the High School Principals' Association was of the view that:

The challenge for principals is to encourage school based decision making groups to work for them and not vice versa. It must be clearly understood by staff and parents alike that the principal is the leader of the school and is responsible to the Ministry as well as the community for its efficient and effective functioning. The leadership role is decisive and unique and cannot be shared. Neither can it be delegated or abrogated.

Ministry policy on school decision making included provision for teacher participation. Teachers in those schools previously managed autocratically would be afforded the opportunity to participate in school decision making. The findings of Chapman (1988) and Chapman and Boyd (1986) indicate that some teachers welcomed the opportunity for participation in decision making whilst others found it an imposition. Thus some teachers perceived an increase in power. Nolan (1987, p.14) regarded the concept of SBDMGs as basically sound but added that Western Australia should learn from experiences elsewhere, particularly Victoria. He noted that adequate training was necessary before schools could be "operated" by the community.

Schools cannot be operated using a group of amateurs, no matter how well intentioned, to make decisions that can only properly be made by trained professionals. Community involvement is a popular form of political rhetoric that emanates from the ideals of democracy. In secondary schools, however,

parents in the main rely on professionals to make the educational decisions. Parents generally do not have the time or inclination to develop the necessary skills to participate in a meaningful way.

Forester (1990, p.7), then WACSSO President, attended to allay the fears of school staff that parents would take over.

Sadly the management of schools is being seen as a power struggle rather than that of sharing a vital responsibility in helping tomorrow's generations to gravitate into the world of work as stable members of the community.

The WACSSO (1990, p.4) view was that little change to the role of principal or teacher would ensue from the participation by parents in the school decision making process.

Whilst schools were initially isolated from the reforms, measures such as accountability, performance appraisal, performance indicators, school development plans and SBDMGs began to impact upon schools. The efficacy of the *Better Schools* implementation in delivering "better schools" is problematic. The extent to which student's educational experiences were enhanced is difficult to determine given the absence of research into the effectiveness of the new structure. Given the emphasis placed by the Labor government on accountability of the public service, research on the implementation and operation of the new structures would have been expected. This research could have indicated that the new structures were indeed more efficient, effective and accountable to the public and the government. In addition, the extent to which SBDMGs improved the functioning of schools could have been investigated. One may speculate as to the reasons for the failure of such research to be conducted.

4.9 Closure

Closure of some of issues in this controversy occurred during 1987-1993. It would appear that the issue of SBDMGs reached closure through lack of interest. The absence of a groundswell of public disapproval accompanying the fate of SBDMGs is indicative of the lack of interest by the parents and community members. The enactment of the Education Amendment Regulations (No. 3) 1991 closed, by force, the issues related to the role and functioning of the SBDMGs. Certainly, different notions of community

participation prevail when one considers the participatory democracy, bureaucratic and corporate management perspectives. Perhaps the corporate management perspective has the imprimatur of the community.

Closure by force, on the broader issues of devolution, may have been reached due to the failure to provide adequate funding for education and training of personnel or structural change to enable this process to occur. Whilst “throwing money” at a problem does not ensure its solution, the *Better Schools* reforms were not accompanied by expenditure of sufficient resources to permit their successful implementation. The Minister for Education exercised greater control over educational policy making and thus has the power to bring issues to closure through the use of political might. Likewise the issues related to the issues of a responsive bureaucracy may be deemed to have reached closure by force, viz. strong central control. Corporate management policies have ensured this central authority.

Corporate management is favoured by both major political parties thus these issues may be deemed closed, at least for the foreseeable future, until there is a sea-change in political thinking. The instigation of measures to ensure accountability rendered these aspects closed through force. The inability of the Auditor General to audit government departments, during this controversy, hindered the operation of the FAAA. The issue of accountability, fundamental to corporate management, remained open. However, the broader, more philosophical, issues remain unresolved and may be brought to closure through force, loss of interest or sound argument.

Closure of issues related to the SSTUWA was reached through negotiation with the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement. Some would contend that industrial force was used to close this issue. The issues related to WACSSO appear likely to reach closure through lack of interest. This pressure group lacks sufficient force to bring issues to closure through force. The reliance upon the Ministry of Education for offices,

salaries and staffing places WACSSO in a somewhat precarious position when attempting to exert force upon the Ministry.

CONCLUSION

From the outset the Burke Government was committed to a corporate management framework. With difficult economic circumstances the government was keen to display control and that the public was getting value for its tax dollar. Restructuring of the education bureaucracy, following the release of the White Paper in 1986, introduced corporate management, which focuses power in decision making elites, into the education sector. A more active role in policy development taken by the Minister for Education and a CEO, no longer necessarily a teacher professional, changed the traditional power structure of the education bureaucracy. This approach had serious repercussions for community participation in school decision making in W.A.

Despite the open and participative nature of the Beazley committee enquiry, which regenerated discussion relating to increased community participation in school decision making, a more clandestine approach to policy development ensued. Trends both interstate (Victoria) and overseas (New Zealand) witnessed a greater role for parents in school decision making. The absence of a tradition of community participation in Western Australia or a strong groundswell of support leads one to question why the *Better Schools* report proposed SBDMGs. This may have been a strategy to gain parental support in the event of conflict, during this period of restructuring, with the SSTUWA. Clearly the teacher union was keen to maintain and strengthen its central bargaining power and was opposed to greater power for parent groups. That WACSSO failed to engage in a determined struggle for more democratic participation is problematic and perhaps indicative of the absence of a desire for an increased role in school decision making. The participation of the SSTUWA in the formulation of enabling legislation for SBDMGs is testament to the lack of power of the parent body. On the contrary, it may be suggested that the corporate management philosophy and

token participation afforded by SBDMGs have the imprimatur of the school community. With corporate management requiring a “human face”, SBDMGs simply rubber stamp school development plans. The lack of autonomy and a revenue raising capacity by these groups constrains their potential for meaningful participation in school decision making.

Chapter Five

CONTROVERSY : COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND REFORM OF THE VICTORIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM 1979 - 1991

INTRODUCTION

Reform of educational policy making and administrative structures was a continuing phenomenon in Victoria during the period 1979-1991. The issue of school community participation in school decision making has been an attendant aspect of these reforms. In the previous chapter school community participation in school decision making, as part of the reform agenda in the corporatisation of the Western Australian state school system, was discussed. In Victoria there was also a concern for increased community participation in school decision making. In this chapter an analysis of the controversy resulting from the restructuring efforts, with particular emphasis upon school community participation in school decision making undertaken by successive Ministers for Education throughout the period 1979-1991, will be conducted. The circumstances and issues arising from this controversy will be contrasted to those in Western Australia.

5.1 Stimulus

On 17th May, 1979 Alan Hunt was appointed Minister for Education in the re-elected Liberal Government and Norman Lacy Assistant Minister for Education. Hunt immediately undertook a preliminary review of administrative arrangements of the Education Department together with an examination of its aims and objectives and the processes of policy formulation and dissemination. He was disappointed to find that no clear set of aims and objectives existed, there was a high degree of duplication, no clear lines of communication and the organisational structure was overly complex.

The appointment of Alan Hunt as Minister for Education and Alan Lacy as Assistant Minister for Education is taken to be the stimulus for this controversy.

5.2 Context

A number of significant factors shaped the context in which this controversy occurred. Whilst some were peculiar to the Victorian situation, others are typical of all education systems in Australia at that time.

The worsening economic climate in Victoria, as in other Australian states, significantly influenced public spending and the public perception of government instrumentalities. Australians witnessed a huge deficit in the balance of payments, rising unemployment (particularly amongst youth), high interest rates and low productivity during the last decade (Knight, 1990, p1-2). In such circumstances scapegoats must be found. These conditions, together with the perception by the public that schools were failing to provide an adequately skilled workforce, rendered the education system a prime target for such criticism. With substantial public expenditure being absorbed by the education system greater demands for accountability and efficiency ensued.

The application of corporate management principles to education produced very different conditions for school personnel. The managerialist approach reduced the role of the Director-General as chief educational policy maker. Teacher professionals were no longer entrusted with the management of the education organisation. A factor which shaped the context of this controversy is the economic concern for efficiency and the pursuit of economic rationalism. All Victorian government departments were reorganised according to corporate management principles.

As has been alluded to above, the education system became increasingly politicized. The succession of Ministers acting as change agents imposed their ideologies and preferences, through the auspices of politically appealing rhetoric. Whilst the pursuit of devolution and collaborative decision making is commendable it occurred in an economic climate not conducive to the expenditure of sufficient funds to support such initiatives. The Victorian education system experienced numerous changes of Minister

and Director-General/CEO. This, together with the incessant restructuring, produced a system in disarray and with low staff morale.

Perhaps partly related to the perceived failure of government schools, private school enrolments continued to rise as post-1973 funding from the Commonwealth Government made private schooling economically possible. This trend may have contributed as a militating factor for state education organisations to “tighten up”. It is not surprising, therefore, that many parents found the stability and certainty of private schools attractive.

A further factor shaping the context of this controversy was the growth of the education system. The huge bureaucracy was considered unresponsive and incapable of adapting to changed circumstances. It was the coexistence of divisions, regions and the functional office of the Director-General and the consequent blurring of power relationships which created the need for restructuring. This gave rise to a climate conducive to reform (Frazer, Dunstan and Creed, 1985, p.9).

Following recommendations in the *Karmel Report* (1973), which proposed a move towards decentralisation and more personal management, there was a greater expectation by parent and teacher groups for participation in school decision making. The Commonwealth Schools Commission reinforced this expectation. The Education (School Councils) Act (1976) was enacted to afford school councils a greater role in school decision making. Prior to this there was limited interaction between school and community. The Act empowered school councils with responsibility to improve such interaction through encouragement of greater use of school facilities by the community.

Developments prior to Hunt’s proposals had therefore fuelled the expectation by parent groups and teacher unions for greater participation in school decision making. Whether such an expectation existed in the general community is questionable.

5.3 Events

The events surrounding this controversy are related to the succession of Ministers for Education throughout the 1980s. Frazer (et al, 1985, p.vii) described the programme of organisational change undertaken by Hunt as “the largest organisational change project ever attempted in Australia.” Johnson (1989, p.63) provides some insight:

However when one realises that since 1980 there have been at least seven Ministers in Education portfolios (Hunt, Lacy, Fordham, Cathie, Hogg, Kirner and Walker), along with five permanent heads (Shears, Curry, Allen, Morrow and Collins acting for about a year) it is understandable that responsibilities are blurred and that career paths have vanished. The term ‘Permanent head’ itself is clearly a misnomer in that at least three of those mentioned were given their marching orders arbitrarily with little or no notice.

A full account and chronology of the events related to the Hunt restructure is given in Frazer, Dunstan and Creed (1985). Creed (1991) provides a comprehensive account of the restructures from 1979-1990. The major events are outlined in the following pages.

Following the release of the *White Paper on Strategies and Structures for Education in Victorian Government Schools* in December 1980 a series of events occurred which saw continual restructuring efforts take place. All were intended to achieve a more decentralised organisation responsive to community needs and canvassed, to varying degrees, school community participation in school decision making.

5.3.1 Green Paper

In order to rectify the problems identified by Hunt in his preliminary reviews of administrative arrangements of the Education Department a consultation process was initiated. The Director-General (Dr. Lawrie Shears) gleaned information from within the Department and a consultative group from outside the Department was established to review submissions from the public. A report entitled *A Statements of Aims and Objectives of Education in Victoria* was tabled in Parliament together with a Ministerial statement on 12th December, 1979. Mindful that a general election was due to be held in May 1982 and committed to completion of reform in his first term as Minister, Hunt

aimed to have a Green Paper completed in May 1980 and a White Paper completed in the following December. The Green Paper entitled *Strategies and Structures for Education* was tabled in Parliament in May 1980. It stressed the desire of the government to transfer power from the central bureaucracy to local and regional instrumentalities to enhance the responsibility of schools and school communities.

The Green Paper was deliberately released as a discussion paper and not a draft of the White Paper. The process of public participation resulted in major changes in thinking.

5.3.2 The White Paper

The *White Paper on Strategies and Structures for Education in Victorian Government Schools* was published on December 10, 1980. Creed (1991) outlines the six key themes present in the White paper as:

- devolution and decentralisation of power and responsibility where appropriate to local and regional units;
- increased participation by parents, community members, teachers and principals in education governance at all levels;
- improved consultation;
- effective coordination of functions and policies; and
- appropriate mechanisms for internal and external reviews of schools.

Not surprisingly, according to Rizvi (1984, p.25) it retained the philosophical characteristics of its predecessor. As such the key themes of devolution and community participation were “juxtaposed, somewhat uncomfortably, next to such centralist notions as efficiency, accountability and system-wide coordination.” However, Hunt (1985, p.31) indicates that both the Labor and National parties supported the broad thrusts of the document and hence “became committed to support for the general tenor of the reorganisation it envisaged.” This bipartisan support contributed to a climate in which

reform could be undertaken with confidence and it created certainty that reform could proceed despite the possibility of a change of government.

5.3.3 The PA Report

Following the release of the White Paper an Implementation Steering committee was formed comprising both Education Department personnel and representatives from the private sector. The Committee's initial task was to recommend the use of "outside" consultants. Personnel Australia (PA), a firm of systems engineers, was given the task of designing a structure to enable the White Paper reforms to be implemented. Rendell (1985, p.191), a consultant with PA, outlines the three clusters of themes, the 3R's, evident in the white Paper. These were:

- Reorganisation - with a major emphasis on strengthening regional offices, as well as considering the roles and responsibilities of districts/schools with concern for key issues of more effective coordination and greater efficiency and economy;
- Redistribution - which would address the aspects of devolution that foster participation in educational governance and improved consultation;
- Review - which envisions ongoing internal evaluation within schools, and periodic external evaluation of education programmes or schools or both.

The PA Report, *The Rationale and Definition of the Proposed Organisation Structure*, was published in September, 1981. According to Rizvi (1984, p.25) the employment of private consultants may have been predicated upon Hunt's perception of Education Department inefficiency as compared to some "idealised form of private enterprise." The employment of private consultants was controversial and it is therefore not surprising that their recommendations, which emphasised managerial control and line authority, caused much discussion and dissension. However, before these reforms could be fully implemented, a general election was held and a Labor Government took office on April 3, 1982 after twenty seven years in opposition.

5.3.4 The Ministerial Papers

Robert Fordham (former Shadow Minister for Education) was appointed Minister for Education. He immediately undertook a review of the administrative structures and decision making processes inherited from the previous government. Not surprisingly, in line with the Labor Party philosophy of “genuine devolution of responsibility by Government, and active participation in our education system by parents, teachers and the wider community” (Fordham, 1985, p.58) the themes in the White Paper were modified.

The results of the review were published in a series of Ministerial Papers. Fundamental to all six of the papers released from 1982-1986 were the principles of:

- genuine devolution of authority and responsibility to the school community;
- collaborative decision making processes;
- a responsive bureaucracy, the function of which was to serve and assist schools;
- effectiveness of educational outcomes; and
- the active redress of disadvantage and discrimination.

The papers were entitled *Decision Making in Victorian Education*, *The School Improvement Plan*, *The State Board of Education*, *School Councils*, *Regional Boards* and *Curriculum Development and Planning in Victoria*.

Paper One identified the goals of education which schools were to achieve by making as many decisions as possible at the school level in keeping with the Government’s commitment to the implementation of devolution and wider participation. Paper Two represented the commencement of an initiative aimed at assisting schools to improve the learning experiences of all children. The *School Improvement Plan* encouraged school communities to reflect on their experiences, to discuss problems and solutions with stakeholders and to embark upon a one-to-two year cycle of activities involving evaluation of existing practices, planning of new approaches, implementation and evaluation. Paper Three outlined the function and composition of the State Board of

Education. Paper Four continued the theme of devolution and collaborative decision making by outlining the framework for the operation of school councils. The powers of school councils were to be increased and responsibility for deciding upon the educational policies of schools was devolved. Paper Five outlined the principles and procedures for regional collective decision making and planning through Regional Boards. Paper Six was produced as a result of guidelines from the State Board of Education and emphasised the general principles of democratic governance, access and success for all students, approaches to teaching and learning and developing areas of learning for the total school curriculum.

5.3.5 The Ministry of Education

Labor was re-elected in 1985 and Ian Cathie became Minister for Education. He announced the formation of a "Ministry of Education" in November, 1985. Two reasons were given for this decision - to improve the coordination of policy, resources and planning and to facilitate the process of devolution of functions, authority and resources to schools i.e.. to promote self-governing schools. Watkins (1991, p.23) argues that the emphasis under Cathie shifted to a corporate model of education and was indicative of the Minister's autocratic style of leadership. The Chief Executive Officer also reflected this approach when he termed principals "line managers."

A Ministry Structures Project Team was appointed in February, 1986 which ostensibly commenced a restructuring exercise comparable to that of Alan Hunt (Creed, 1991, p.11). Among the reports released at this time was *Taking Schools into the 1990s*. The Ministry Structures Unit - an implementation team - released the strategic plan entitled *The Structure and Organisation of the Schools Division* (December 1987).

Like Hunt, Cathie chose to employ the services of a management consultant. A consultant was seconded from the Public Service Board which intimated that the

Ministry of Education would be subjected to a similar restructuring to that of other public sector organisations. Creed (1991, p.14) states that:

In essence this approach called for increased responsibilities to be given to personnel at senior and middle levels, but for considerably strengthened accountability provisions. These accountability features included corporate planning, the specification of outcomes expected and evaluation against these outcomes. For individual officers, accountability meant the development of performance improvement plans and performance pay scales within a Senior Executive Service.

The position and role of Director-General was abolished and replaced by a Chief Executive Officer who was responsible for coordinating the education portfolio. Among the numerous changes agreed to by the Government was the formation of a School Improvement Branch which would have responsibility for, inter alia, school council services. The most significant changes occurred at the regional level. The seven metropolitan regions were reduced to three and the number of regional administrations was reduced from twelve to eight. A reduction in both central office and non-school based staff was foreshadowed.

Whilst this restructuring program was being planned and implemented several changes of Minister occurred. Minister Cathie was replaced by Minister Hogg in a Cabinet reshuffle. Minister Hogg was subsequently replaced by Joan Kirner after Labor was re-elected in 1988.

5.3.6 The Ministry Structure Under Kirner

Creed (1991, p.16) notes that Kirner preferred to employ the term “fine tuning” in relation to the changes proposed to the Ministry structure. There were several changes of note. The Regional Boards of Education, after six years of operation, were to be phased out due to a perceived duplication of functions. A new Chief Executive, Ann Morrow (not a teacher professional) was appointed. The Corporate Management Group, formed as part of the Cathie restructure was disbanded as Kirner believed that it posed a threat to participatory decision making. Seven small units responsible to the chief General

Manager were created, these being Audit and Review, Legal Office, Regional Information Services, School Improvement, Integration, School Councils and Participation and School Reorganisation Units.

5.3.7 The Ministry Structure Under Pullen

When Joan Kirner became Premier, Pullen became Minister for Education. Due to an enforced budget cutback he was compelled to undertake further restructuring. This was similar to W.A. where expenditure on education was to be reduced. Creed (1991, p.20) reports that in 1990 Pullen announced a reduction of 1150 full time non-school positions and 1600 school teaching positions (to be achieved through natural attrition). This would assist with a \$92.3 million reduction in Ministry expenditure. For the first time a restructuring exercise was undertaken primarily to reduce expenditure.

The findings of a regional profile study recommending an increase in regional staff to promote devolution were ignored. In November 1990 the Minister announced that the State Board of Education would no longer be an associated administrative unit of the Ministry. The Board's operation, budget and personnel would be subsumed into the Schools Programmes Division.

5.3.8 School Councils

The White Paper on *Strategies and Structures for Education in Victorian Government Schools* renewed expectations for a more incisive role for school councils in school governance. Although legislation for school councils was enacted in 1975 the councils had little more than an advisory status (Marsh, 1988, p.175). Both Bates (1985, p.292) and Kirner (1985, p.361) stress the greater role proposed for school councils. Kirner states:

In contrast to the Labor Government's support for wider participation in education decisions, the previous Government's structures for the school system was based on involvement: all people had the right to have a say, but only a few had the final right to make the decision. The people's say

or the people's advice may or may not be taken into account by those few.

The Labor Party, once elected, moved quickly to increase the power of school councils. Ministerial Paper Four (*School Councils*) outlined the rationale for the new role for school councils. For the first time school councils were to have a responsibility in determining the educational policies of their schools. The paper distinguished between "policy" and "operations" stating that school councils had a fundamental responsibility in policy matters but that the education professionals should choose the most appropriate means of achieving the council policy.

On February 8, 1984 the Education Act was amended giving effect to the government policy. Membership of the councils, covered by this amendment, would comprise:

- principal;
- parents - to constitute no less than half a primary school council and one third a post primary school council;
- teachers - to constitute no more than half a primary school council or one third a post primary school council;
- students - provision was made for student membership of post primary school councils;
- community - provision was made for up to one-fifth of the total membership to be coopted by elected membership, thereby enabling local community representation.

The general thrust of Labor's plans was to enfranchise a wider section of the community which possessed legitimate interests in decision making. The Labor Party philosophy of a more collaborative approach to decision making clearly underpinned the Fordham initiatives. School councils provided an important means by which the process of devolution could occur and bear testimony to Labor's commitment to greater participatory decision making.

5.3.9 Regional Boards

Regionalisation had been a feature of the Victorian education structure prior to 1979. Macpherson (1987) provides an account of regionalisation for the period 1955-1979. The Labor Government's manifesto, outlined in the Ministerial Paper entitled *Regional Boards of Education*, was to establish regional boards as the "mechanism through which regional, collective decision making and planning was to occur" (p.6). Thus the Regional Boards were to facilitate devolution at the regional level. Angus, Rizvi and Watkins (1987, p.259) note the contradictory expectations of the role and functions of regional boards and conclude:

Within such circumstances, it was clear that, in the attempt to establish a definition of a regional board, there would be much uncertainty, negotiation and contestation among board members and other sections of the education structure about the part to be played by regional boards in educational governance and policy making.

The structure of regional boards was contrived to ensure that school councils would be accorded a direct link to the boards. The membership was to total between twenty and thirty - the majority of which were school council members elected from clusters of school councils of primary and post primary schools. Each cluster was to elect one or more parents and one or more teachers (including principals) from the group of school councils. There had to be one representative from each of the three teacher unions, two parent organisations and Federation of Victorian School Administrators. Hence Angus et al. (1987, p.256) indicate this composition, which was intended to reflect the government's concern that the boards encompass both regional interests and statewide perspectives, was problematic. The board members would have both complementary and contradictory interests.

The role of the Regional Director was also complicated in that there was responsibility to the Education Department (through a line of authority to the Director-General) and the Board through the role as executive officer. The Regional Director would head a board which would be constrained by the central authority yet be expected to assume

regional autonomy and work independently. This highlights a recurrent paradox in the devolution process in Victoria. Regional Boards would have no access to resources, finance or personnel, having to rely upon allocations from the centre. The boards were intended to serve as a “buffer-zone” between the central Education Department and the schools. This assertion is supported by Macpherson (1986, p.225) who indicates that it was at the regional level that budget cutbacks were most severe. However, Regional Boards were eventually abolished in the Kirner restructure.

5.3.10 The State Board of Education

The formation and function of the State Board of Education was outlined in Ministerial Paper No. Three entitled *The State Board of Education*. It was apparently formed in response to a recognition of the need for a formal organisation which specifically provided for parent and community participation on educational policy concerns and was to operate independently of the Education Department.

The Board would consist of fourteen members chosen for their variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The membership was comprised of a chairperson, two full time deputy chairpersons and eleven part-time members. In addition, the Board was to be supported by highly qualified and experienced educational policy analysts with a financial capacity for research and evaluation. The function was to examine and report on aspects of the operation of the Education Department, making recommendations for change in policy, structure and process. The Board’s recommendations and conclusions were to be published and advice provided to the Minister and to Parliament. The State Board of Education was touted as a unique development in education in Victoria by introducing the process of collaborative planning at the State level.

The State Board of Education Act (1983) established the Board as independent of the Education Department but responsible to the Minister. The Board had legal access to all

Education Department data. Fordham (1985, p.65) commented that the State Board of Education was:

an example at the highest level in the structure of the Government's determination to bring together in a partnership the community of interests whose voices should be heard in the resolution of major policy issues.

The State Board of Education became a casualty of the curriculum review of the Pullen restructure. Remembering that this restructure was driven by the necessity to achieve budget cuts, the Board's operations, budget and personnel became part of the School Programs Division in November, 1990. In a time of budgetary restraint the State Board of Education became a luxury the Government could no longer afford.

5.4 Issues

Recurrent structural change due to a succession of Ministers with differing ideologies and agendas witnessed the emergence of several issues. The following is an outline of the issues impinging upon the central theme of community participation in school decision making.

One issue was that of devolution of authority whereby certain decision making functions are removed from the central authority in order to render the bureaucracy more responsive and accountable. The theme of devolution was fundamental to all six Ministerial Papers. Collaborative decision making procedures, at all levels of the hierarchy, were to be introduced in order to achieve devolution. The theme of devolution introduced the notion of school community participation in school decision making in line with Labor party philosophy.

Related to devolution and emerging as a second issue in this controversy is power redistribution. This issue is fundamental to any organisation restructuring involving devolution of authority. New frameworks established to achieve the objectives of

decentralisation and devolution change traditional power relationships which may not necessarily be congruent with the new structures.

Corporate management initially emerged with the PA Report. This issue involves the dual notions of community participation in decision making and economic restraint. As the 1980s progressed, and economic imperatives began to infuse Governmental decision making in Victoria, concern for genuine participation diminished. Contemporaneously, concern for efficiency, accountability and effectiveness grew. Whilst devolution of authority implies a shift of decision making responsibility from the centre, corporate management implies that the major decision making functions remain at the centre with the "body corporate". Thus the paradox of centralisation and decentralisation emerged in government rhetoric.

A fourth issue is that of the implementation of the reforms and the incessant restructuring which plagued the Victorian education system during the 1980s. Both political expediency and economic imperatives influenced the haste with which reforms were introduced. In most cases inadequate resources were allocated to facilitate effective implementation of new structures and procedures. In addition, frequent changes of Minister for Education precipitated new enquiries into education which resulted in new reforms being introduced. Therefore, no sooner had the organisation attempted to accommodate previous reforms, than new reforms were introduced.

The preoccupation with structural change to achieve the desired outcomes is problematic. Each Minister for Education considered structural change to be the most apt response to perceived system dysfunction and there was a greater chance of rendering the organisation more attuned to the Minister's requirements. Counter arguments are centred on the extent to which structural change of the magnitude experienced in Victoria was necessary to effect change. The efficacy of such strategies as the only means of accomplishing organisational change is questionable.

Whilst espousing a commitment to devolution, the Ministers for Education were primarily concerned with cost-cutting as Victoria's economic predicament worsened. Inadequate training and provision of support for school councils, together with the demise of regional boards and the State Board of Education lead one to question the commitment of the Labor Government to devolution of decision making. The progressive increase in centralist decision making responsibility, particularly in areas such as curriculum and finance, is evidence of economic imperatives propelling educational policy making in Victoria. The arguments presented to the electorate in defence of educational policy were couched in economic viz. accountability and efficiency, rather than in educational terms.

The fifth issue in this controversy is the politicisation of education. This has been alluded to during the discussion of the issue of implementation. As indicated, successive Ministers for Education each conducted enquiries into education and wrought changes to the structures and procedures of the education system. Whilst such powers have always been associated with the Minister, under the Westminster system of government, the Ministers took full advantage of these powers and single-handedly determined the direction and ideology of the Victorian education system.

5.5 Arguments

The arguments presented in this controversy share similarities with those presented in both Western Australia and New Zealand. This is not surprising given the similarity of the issues in relation to school community participation in school decision making.

5.5.1 Devolution of Decision Making

It is interesting to note that both the Liberal and Labor Ministers for Education discussed above espoused a commitment to devolution. Bates (1985, p.287-9) argues that the Liberal Party's plans consisted of two competing metaphors. The first was based on the politically appealing notion of organisational devolution whereby those

whose lives would be affected by the decision may take part in the formulation of that decision. The second was based on the premise of organisational efficiency and economy. There is general agreement that the Liberals did not have a true commitment to devolution for, as Bates (1985, p.289) comments, there was:

a confusion of incompatible political myths implicit in Hunt's proposals. This took the form of a conflict between the proposals for devolution of control of education - which implied a notion of participatory democracy - and proposals for a system of corporate control and accountability - which implied a centralisation of decision making power allied with a notion of representative democracy.

Several arguments in support of devolution were implicit in the rhetoric of the Ministerial Papers. Through the implementation of organisational democracy by the installation of participatory processes in schools, a degree of compatibility with Labor Party ideology was effected. Watkins (1985, p.111; 1991, p.28) states that this becomes a means by which the political system is legitimated through community participation. The participation of a wide range of individuals in the school decision making process utilises the considerable degree of expertise within the school community. Conflict between the school administrators and the remainder of the school community can be reduced by collaborative decision making. In response to this argument Watkins suggests that a more subtle form of control may be achieved through cooperation rather than the threat of coercion.

A third general argument given in support of devolution is the belief that participation in decision making will improve the motivation, performance and morale of the school community. Their commitment to decisions is also increased. Counter to this is the argument that many teachers and community members do not wish to be involved in decision making. The time and effort which must be expended far outweighs any perceived benefit from participation. Watkins (1985, p.111; 1991, p.28) indicates that school democracy may be viewed in a sceptical fashion as a covert means of controlling militant unions. Hence increased participation is a way of curtailing union discontent for, if teachers are actively involved in decision making, there is less likelihood that they

will act in opposition to the decisions reached. The industrial harmony so created is a considerable plus for politicians.

Participation in decision making is argued as a means for rendering the bureaucracy more responsive. By locating decision making nearer the point at which the decision takes effect, the bureaucracy would become more decentralised, this being equated with greater responsiveness. As public concern at the perceived failure of schools increased, there was a need for schools to become more efficient, effective and accountable. The argument that schools could become more accountable, through the use of corporate management procedures, would quell public discontent and create the impression of a Minister in control of the education portfolio. As Rizvi (1984, p.27) explains, failure to develop a responsive bureaucracy would preclude the success of any policy of genuine devolution. However there was no attempt directed towards an explanation of the meaning of the term "responsive bureaucracy" or what would be entailed in practice. Implicit within the notion of a "responsive bureaucracy" is the transfer of control of financial resources from the central administration to the regional offices and schools. Rather than relinquishing such control the reverse occurred with a tightening of central fiscal control. Constrained economic circumstances contributed to this trend.

The approach to the reorganisation could be described as "top down" as opposed to the "bottom up" philosophies the reorganisation was intended to address. By imposing apparently "participatory" structures from above, the bureaucracy, it was posited, would become more responsive. Streamlining of the central office to achieve a "flattening of the organisational hierarchy is commonly cited as a method to achieve this responsiveness and cutting bureaucratic "red tape."

The paradox of centralisation and decentralisation which emerged in the policies enacted by the Victorian Government is clearly related to the arguments presented in support of devolution and the actions of the Ministers for Education in support of these

policies. Harman (1985, p.183) believes that the attraction 'o the notion of decentralisation is a natural reaction to the high level of administrative centralisation and concentration of effective power in government departments. However, despite the rhetoric and posturing of successive Ministers for Education, strong centralist tendencies emerged. As budgetary constraints came to predominate as an influence on educational policy making, the power of the "purse strings" operated to effectively negate efforts towards real devolution of power. Macpherson (1986), drawing from the work of Davies, indicates that there is a strong inbuilt predilection for centralisation of administrative arrangements in the Australian psyche. While demands for decentralisation occur periodically, centralisation dominates.

5.5.2 Corporate Management

Addressing a national seminar in 1991 - "Improving the Quality of Australian Schools"

- Joan Kirner (then Premier of Victoria) reinforced the philosophy of the Labor Government as outlined in the Ministerial Papers. She stated:

These principles are the headland of Labor government education policy. We allow the theory of corporate management, and the campaign of the instrumentalists to triumph over these principles at our peril.

In direct contrast to Kirner's statement, an analysis of education policies from 1979 shows a growing predilection for a corporate management approach. Bessant (1988, p.6) comments:

The introduction of corporate management to the Victorian public service has been closely associated with a period of economic recession and financial stringency. It was seen as most appropriate to a background of pressure to contain or cut public expenditures, where rationalisation of services was required and where the public was seen to be demanding more accountability from the public service for government expenditure.

Whilst rejecting most of Hunt's White Paper recommendations and the PA Report, the Labor Government did not reject the corporate management model outlined. The discourse of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness came to govern educational policy making in Victoria. Whilst the rhetoric of devolution and participatory decision

making is still pervasive, corporate management has become a reality for education professionals in Victoria. It should be noted that other public service organisations underwent similar restructuring.

It may be argued that an administrative configuration based on the notion of corporate management is not one which facilitates community participation for, as Rizvi (1984, p.30) indicates "the notion of collaborative decision making involves a value orientation which is fundamentally opposed to the values of hierarchical accountability and corporate control."

By opting for administrative structures to enabling corporate managerialism, devolution and collaboration become incompatible. Rizvi (1984, p.30) says that "in essence, the anomaly of community participation in Victoria is that democratic expectations have been imposed on governmental structures that were never designed to function democratically."

Duignan (1988, pp.126-7) cites Bares' argument that the rhetoric associated with increasing community participation and control and, on the other hand, a corporate management approach created a "confusion of incompatible political myths." To elaborate Duignan (1988, p.127) cites the following from Bares:

The related modes of political authority are clear: on the one hand notions of participatory democracy and on the other that of representative democracy. The forms of administration are clear: on the one hand a devolved system of decision making, and on the other a decentralised system of control. The interests to be served by either model are clear: on the one hand those of the local community, and on the other those of a dominant oligarchy. The form to be taken by the management of knowledge and culture in each metaphor is also clear: on the one hand a standardised, universalised package of behaviours and skills required by the central authority, and on the other the possibility of celebrating some form of differentiated cultural tradition.

In 1986, *Taking Schools into the 1990s* recommended that school councils be given greater responsibilities and control over resources through an extension of their power to school finances and the appointment, transfer and promotion of teachers. A single

school grant would provide the means by which the functioning of the school would be determined. Under a corporate management approach these powers assumed a different complexion than had they been premised upon notions of participatory democracy.

Bessant (1988, p.9) explains:

At first glance this would appear to have been a genuine attempt at devolution - the vital powers over finance and appointment of staff so necessary for full freedom in local curriculum development were to be handed over to the school councils. But the reality was very different. These powers were subject to "State-wide guidelines" and the significance of the "guidelines" was spelt out very clearly in the "proposal." The schools were to "operate within a regulatory framework made up of state-wide guidelines in areas such as curriculum, personnel, finance and facilities", and would be required to report regularly to the Ministry as to their performance with respect to these guidelines. The "proposal" emphasised "public accountability to the Minister, the Schools Division and the community for educational outcomes, budgetary performance, and adherence to State-wide policies."

As the economic climate continued to deteriorate and public institutions were held to account for their expenditure of public monies, it is not surprising that a Labor government should be attracted by corporate managerialism. This approach was favoured as a worldwide shift to the right in political thinking occurred. The general perception was that schools were failing to perform and by applying the discourse of corporate management viz. efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, such disquiet could be quelled. Seddon, Angus and Poole (1990, p.43) note that the Ministry of Education in 1987 indicated in *The Structure and Organisation of the Schools Division* that participation was to be reduced and "encouraged" within tighter central guidelines. The efficacy of corporate management was not questioned. Rather, Ministers favoured this approach in the belief that education should be run as a business. This was premised upon the notion that the private sector always runs efficiently because of the need to return a profit. Graham Allen (Victoria's first Chief Executive Officer) is quoted by Berkeley (1990, p.207-8):

The application of management principles and techniques of the harsh and unforgiving world of large business corporations to the gentler and more cerebral environment of schools, TAFE Colleges and institutions of higher

education...and...as a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to planning across all education sectors; or the removal of barriers between sectors which inhibit flexibility in the matching of resources to sectors; or improvement in the capacity of the education system to anticipate and respond to changes in the economic, technological and social environment in which it operates.

As Berkeley states, if corporate management is capable of achieving the above, then surely its implementation should be both hastened and encouraged.

The discourse of corporate management came to pervade the Victorian Ministry of Education with titles such as Chief Executive Officer, General Manager and so on. Implicit with such name changes is the notion that professional educators have not necessarily been effective managers. That the Chief Executive Officer is no longer necessarily drawn from the ranks of teacher professionals adds credence to this assertion. Corporate management assumes that managerial expertise is transferable. Bessant (1988, p.6) indicates that selection of managers “emphasises general management and policy performance rather than experience within a particular area.” This, Bessant asserts, is based upon the assumption that a “quick staff development program” could readily equip the manager with the necessary expertise. Traditional educators would argue that the culture of educational organisations is not so readily learned and that necessary experience can only be gained through extensive service within the organisation.

The preceding discussion has sought to highlight the contradictions inherent in the policies of the Ministers for Education throughout the 1980s. Whilst espousing a commitment to devolution and community participation in decision making, policies aligned with a corporate management approach based on accountability and tighter government control of expenditure were implemented.

5.5.3 The Politicisation of Education

Creed (1991, p.2) describes the restructuring of the education system in Victoria as a “story about the preferences of a succession of Ministers for Education.” Bessant (1988, p.5) observes that all restructuring efforts were directed to the establishment of clear lines of authority from the Minister to the schools. The Ministers for Education - Hunt, Lacy, Fordham, Cathie, Hogg, Kirner and Pullen - each fully utilised the powers granted to their position by the Westminster system of government. Whilst this power always existed, the Director-General was the traditional power-broker of the education system and set the general policy agenda. The Ministers for Education, through the process of restructuring, incorporated clear lines of authority from the central office to the schools. Control over budgetary considerations remained firmly entrenched in the hands of the Minister, whilst potentially damaging decisions could be devolved to the school level. It could be argued that in difficult economic times tight fiscal control needed to be maintained by the Ministers as evidence of their control and accountability to the electorate i.e. the strength of corporate management.

In the reverse, it may be argued that the Minister (usually with the advice of a coterie of advisors) does not necessarily always have the best interests of the education system in mind when determining policy directions. Rather political expediency - being seen to be attending to all that ails the education system - coupled with the short term view of politicians who think in short time frames between elections are not considered effectual determinants of educational policy.

The demise of the role of Director-General and replacement by a CEO selected by the Minister is indicative of the power exercised by the Minister. The CEO has not assumed the role of Director-General viz. “autonomous educational philosopher” but rather acts according to the Minister’s will being “more responsive to political contingencies” (Macpherson, 1991, p.59).

Shears (1985) provides an account of the decline in the power of the position of Director-General in Victoria. Prior to 1979 reasons had to be tabled in Parliament for a Director-General to be dismissed. An amendment of the Education Act by Hunt removed this protection. Dr. Shears was the first Director-General dismissed in this way. The passing of the new Education Amendment Act saw the locus of control shift from the Director-General to the Minister for Education.

Several authors have commented on the decline in the power of the Director-General (Connors and McMorrow, 1990, pp.84-5; Berkeley, 1990, pp.208-9; Macpherson, 1991, p.55) and have observed that this situation is not unique to Victoria. The demise of the role of Director-General is directly linked to the adoption of corporate management.

Badcock (cited by Berkeley, 1990, p.209) comments:

Both [Liberal and Labor Ministers] viewed public servants as more respectable than teachers; both elevated laymen, to the denigration of professional educationists, both made educational objectives subservient to administrative structures.

The perceived lack of management expertise of professional educators may have contributed to the Ministerial appointment of non-teacher professionals to senior Ministry positions. It may be argued that their wealth of expertise in “business” adds a new, much needed dimension to the Ministry of Education.

The title “Director-General” being replaced by “Chief Executive Officer”, in addition to the emphasis placed on the managerial role of the CEO, is indicative of the disillusionment with the management effectiveness of educators. To counter this argument, the lack of empathy for teachers, students and educational goals that these new executives possess is considered a major drawback. Traditional educational values became subsumed as a succession of Ministers and CEOs charted the course of education in Victoria.

5.6 Protagonists

Any controversy involving an organisation of the magnitude of the Victorian education system necessarily involves many diverse individuals and groups. The protagonists in this controversy include Ministers for Education Hunt, Lacy, Fordham, Cathie, Hogg, Kirner and Pullen; the Director-General/Chief Executive Officers Shears, Curry, Morrow and Allen; Teacher unions - the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association, Victorian Teachers' Union, Technical Teachers' Union of Victoria, Victorian Association of Teachers; parent groups - the Victorian Council of School Organisations and the Victorian Federation of State Schools Parents' Clubs; school council members; regional board members and Regional Directors; State Board of Education members; academics; principals and students.

The role of two categories of pressure groups, as participants in this controversy, will be considered in further detail. The first are the teacher unions comprised of the Victorian Teachers' Union (VTA), the Victorian Secondary Teachers' Association (VSTA) and the Technical Teachers' Union of Victoria (TTUV). The second are the parent groups comprised of the Victorian Council of School Organisations (VICSSO) and the Victorian Federation of State Schools' Parents Clubs (VFSSPC).

5.6.1 Teacher Unions

The teacher unions refrained from participation in the planning of the Hunt restructure. Despite an invitation from Hunt, the presence of the Victorian Association of Teachers (VAT) in the planning process precluded the participation of other teacher unions due to ongoing industrial matters. It was not surprising, therefore, to find that Hunt's reforms were met with disapproval from the teacher unions. In contrast the Labor Party enjoyed qualified support. Macpherson (1986, p.222) states:

The Melbourne Age reported, for example, that in return for a \$50,000 donation to the Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party, the VSTA had received four assurances: proper consultation and agreement prior to any changes; establishment of an acceptable system of industrial relations; the

staffing of schools on the basis of need; and the provision of enough money for buildings and maintenance. All three teacher unions openly declared their support for the ALP in the 1982 state elections; together they donated \$160,000 which constituted one quarter of the total ALP campaign expenditure. Further, the three unions encouraged members to contribute as ALP campaign workers. On 3 April 1982, their new era of influence began with the election of the Cain Labor Government of Victoria in which nearly half of the newly-elected ALP MP's were ex-school teachers.

It was not surprising that the teacher unions believed that there should be a conflation of their agenda with that of a Labor government. Immediately the three teacher unions gained access to representation on all policy making committees and enjoyed privileged access to the Minister for Education. Blackmore (1990, p.256) believes that during the first years of the Labor Government in Victoria there was a "temporary and partial convergence between the ideological justifications for school based decision making and management" as being the most apt form of school governance.

The range of agreements between the unions and the Minister contributed to greater centralisation, thereby hindering the process of devolution. Chapman (1990, pp.239-40) observed that devolution effectively constrained the union's centralised bargaining power and hence compromised their interests. With deteriorating economic conditions and the resultant need for budgetary restraint the Government's agenda changed to one of corporate management. The role of teachers as participants in school decision making became more problematic. The demands of participation on committees and so forth in terms of time, together with a reduction in real wages resulted in many questioning the merits of devolution. Blackmore (1991, p.65) states:

There is a widening rift between the Labor Government and schools, as there continues to be the expectation that teachers voluntary participation should continue while their material and professional conditions are undermined in terms of increased work hours and performance indicators.

The time and energy required to both develop and utilise skills in participatory decision making enervated the commitment to devolution of decision making as corporate management intensified the requirements for accountability and efficiency.

To conclude, it was unlikely that the teacher unions would compromise their centralised bargaining power with the Ministry of Education. As corporate management predominated Government policy making and efficiency, effectiveness and accountability dominated the teaching profession, greater disharmony between teacher unions and the Ministry was likely to eventuate.

5.6.2 Parent Groups

Parents, traditionally excluded from school decision making, have assumed responsibility for fund raising activities to support school programmes. Their lack of expert knowledge has been used to justify this exclusion. Both Hunt and Fordham envisaged a greater role for parents in school decision making. VICCSO and VFSSPC welcomed the commitment given in the White Paper to participation by parents as well as teachers and principals at all levels of decision making (Kirner, 1985, p.351). However both groups opposed the proposals presented in the PA Report. Kirner (1985, p.355) commented on the disadvantage of parent groups in influencing policy making at the state level:

Early in the organisational change process, VFSSPC discovered that parents and teachers were at a disadvantage in influencing change because they had less knowledge than the administrators of what had to change and what was being changed.

The VFSSPC was particularly active in attempting to influence the change process undertaken by Hunt. With the election of the Labor Government parent groups had greater influence being participants in both the review of the proposed Liberal structure and the development of Labor's own programme of reform. With the Labor Party manifesto reflecting a more collaborative approach to decision making parent groups recognised the opportunity for a stronger influence on educational policy making.

The release of the Ministerial Papers foreshadowed a role for parental participation at the State level (State Board of Education), regional level (Regional Boards) and the school level (school councils). The mounting concern of parent groups and teacher

unions at the apparent loss of centralised bargaining power as devolution progressed has been noted. Creed (1991, p.7) notes that Kirmer, a long time parent activist, on gaining election in 1982 exerted significant influence on the development of the Ministerial Papers. Hence her philosophical commitment to devolution and participatory decision making was evident in those documents. On becoming Minister for Education these principles were pursued with renewed vigour.

5.7 Constraints

A number of factors emerged as constraints in this controversy. The implementation process itself may be construed as one such factor. Employment of outside consultants was greeted with derision from education department personnel and truncated their commitment to the success of the reform process. Inherent within most education systems is the enduring belief that these systems are inherently different from other government departments and that their administration should remain firmly within the hands of education professionals. Deeley (1985, p.223) enunciates several arguments presented in opposition to the use of outside consultants. Firstly, the knowledge of the senior education personnel of education, the people involved and the dynamics of the task was superior to that of outsiders. Secondly, it was purported that senior and middle managers would react negatively to the consultant's proposals and their perception that they were being told how to do their jobs would lead to a decline in morale. Thirdly, there were departmental personnel who would eventually have to make the new structure work but had a better chance of gaining the commitment of the staff of the organisation. Finally, their knowledge of the department meant that they could accomplish the task more quickly and at less expense. It is obvious that commitment and willingness to change are paramount to the successful implementation of new structures and processes.

Whilst it may be argued that the need for reform was acknowledged by both the central office of the Education Department and the schools (Harman, 1985, pp.157-8) the

implementation process was problematic. The implementation of structural change was characterised by a succession of Ministers who each modified the structures of their predecessors. In each case the approach was to impose supposedly participatory structures in a manner “that typifies and underlines the dispassionate and remote one-directional, hierarchical nature of bureaucracy” (Angus, 1984, p.48). Chapman (1990, p.240) indicates that, given the immensity of the education system in Victoria, significant momentum is required in order to effect change. She states:

Changed administrative arrangements require that an entirely new communication network be established. The new ‘appropriate’ people must be identified, working relationship must be built up. New values require that the heritage, the folklore, the understandings of people must be reassessed; this within a context where many people are experiencing some personal and professional threat and insecurity.

Clearly this did not occur. With few support systems in place to assist staff to adapt to the new organisational structure it was simply much easier to adhere to the ways of the past. Whilst it is a relatively “simple” task to change the structure of an organisation, it is more difficult to change the attitudes and behaviours of the people working within that structure.

The changes affected the relationships between members of the education hierarchy. Considerable role ambiguity is inherent in the role of the principal (Chapman, 1990, p.227). Being required to consult with younger members of staff and held to account for decisions which would not have been countenanced previously are two potential frustrations in the new order. In addition Chapman indicates the problems faced by principals in “balancing collaboration with supervisory duties” (p.228). Difficulties are experienced if principals must discipline teachers in one context and yet participate with those teachers in a collaborative manner in another.

Sarros and Carruthers (1990, p.6) argue the role of principal as “power broker.” With principals formerly responsible for the outcome of the decisions made, the new role ascribed to the position undoubtedly caused confusion as to who should bear this

responsibility in the new structure. The empowerment of school councils resulted in these bodies having an important role in school policy making. Therefore, as Sarros and Carruthers indicate, some doubt existed as to who has legal responsibility in schools.

Watkins (1985, p.107) citing a study by Gronn, highlights the manner in which certain principals developed techniques of coercion and manipulation against the school community to maintain their ascendancy. Such conduct is in direct contrast to the expectations of school councils reflected in the advertisements for principal positions as outlined by Watkins (1991).

Teachers also experienced changes in their professional lives through decentralisation with an upgrading of Regional Offices; the changing role of the school council whereby their power and that of parents and students increased; greater demands for accountability; performance appraisal; the demands for schools to develop policies reflecting community needs; and the Union agreements giving teachers a mandatory role in school decision making (Pitt and Jennings, 1984, p.237). Whilst the intention of the strategies was to enhance their professional lives, the absence of any in-service education added to teacher stress. With the installation of participatory structures changing the relationship between members of the school community, the lack of in-service constrained the extent to which the structures could facilitate participation. In order for people to work in a collaborative setting, new skills need to be developed. Being afforded the opportunity to participate in school decision making does not result in all teachers availing themselves of that opportunity. Chapman (1988), in a study of teacher participation in decision making, found that some teachers, whilst not accepting the decisions made in their school, did not choose to become involved in decision making. They were of the belief that the benefits of such participation were far outweighed by the costs. Chapman and Boyd (1986) found that younger and more politically active staff most commonly applauded the redistribution of power for they were able to exercise some control over the direction pursued by their school.

The preceding discussion has highlighted the lack of in-service training for teachers as a constraint in the development of collaborative decision making. At all levels of the organisation, members were required to operate within a new framework. At the school level many principals experienced difficulty in coping with new role expectations. The diversity in the role added to the job satisfaction of some principals but their lack of training in participatory decision making and failure to accept their new leadership role hindered successful devolution.

Local selection of principals was both welcomed and criticised by principals. Complaints about the time required to write individual applications to each school is endorsed in a study conducted by the Victorian Teachers' Union cited by Watkins (1991, p.32). This survey indicated that the majority of applicants spent up to twenty hours in the preparation of their applications. Because each had to be tailored to the requirements of each particular school, applicants reduced the number of schools to which they applied. Further negative factors, given by Watkins, were the apparent disadvantage of women and existing principals, the lack of expertise by applicants in the interview process and the lack of interviewing expertise of school councils. Chapman (1990, p.230) adds that the emphasis on "intuitive judgement" and issues of principle such as confidentiality and equity are process issues of concern which emerged.

The haste with which the implementation process occurred enervated Ministry staff and placed enormous pressure on their time. Chapman (1990, p.240) explains that:

Sources of power and authority that were evident under the traditional bureaucratic arrangements were not precisely transformed or delegated, and new sources of authority and power were unclear. School personnel could no longer act with the certainty of the past. In addition the advantages of a school-based approach were at no time adequately communicated in sufficient detail to enable school-based personnel to fully understand and accept the policy. People's fears of the new and unexplained were never significantly allayed.

Genuine devolution failed to occur, in part, due to the lack of “real” autonomy accorded to school councils. The failure to provide these councils with a revenue raising capacity inhibited their ability to act independently. Rather they became increasingly regulated as the central office tightened its fiscal control. The incompatibility of corporate management and genuine devolution leads one to question the true commitment of the Ministers to devolution. As control of costs in education became a priority so too did favour with corporate management as the appropriate solution.

The Education amendments increased the power of school councils. However, it has been noted that the 1987 document *The Structure and Organisation of the Schools Division* indicated that participation be reduced and ‘encouraged’ within tighter central guidelines. Both the State Board of Education and Regional Boards were abolished.

The politicisation of the Ministry of Education is a further constraint in this controversy. The appointment of “outsiders” to senior Ministry positions reduced staff morale and led to a blurring of traditional career paths. Staff commitment to restructuring was further diminished.

The lack of expertise of parents as participants in school councils and the failure of councils to be truly representative of the community are also constraints. This issue is problematical and does not appear to have been acknowledged by the Ministry of Education. Perhaps it was assumed that school councils and regional boards would automatically be representative of the communities from which their members were drawn. In addition, there was an absence of strong demand for greater participation in school decision making emanating from the grassroots. As Blackmore (1991) indicates, the notion of “community” was central to the Ministerial Papers yet no attempt was directed to a definition of the term.

Members of both regional boards and school councils were expected to represent a collectivity inclusive of all stakeholders within their region or school. The extent to which the individual council or regional board members actively represented their “community’s” interests or their own self interest is questionable.

In a study of regional boards, Angus, Watkins and Rizvi (1987) concluded that the boards were not representative of the community. The boards were predominantly male, Anglo-Celtic, middle class and generally articulate. This parallels the findings of a similar study by Chapman on school council membership. Thus there is under-representation of some groups such as women and those from minority ethnic groups. Chapman and Boyd (1986, p.47) found that the most powerful bases for influence on school councils were “possession of ‘expert’ knowledge”, access to information about the school and the functioning of the Victorian Education Department, confidence in meeting proceedings and fluency in the English language.” These sources of influence are not equally distributed among council members or across councils.

Through their role in the appointment of principals it is apparent that the personal preferences of school council members have significant bearing on the principal selected. Moreover, if the membership of the council changes, the principal may find that his/her philosophy is incompatible with the new council members. This could create difficulties for schools. The failure of school councils to be truly representative of their community exacerbates this dilemma. The general perception of the “apathetic community” may be given credence by the failure of many parents and other community members to display interest school council membership. However, given the traditional exclusion of the community from participation in policy making in schools, it is not surprising that only the more articulate and assertive members of the community have welcomed the augmented role of school councils.

Blackmore (1990) indicates that as budgetary constraints became prominent considerations in educational policy making so too were the advances of teachers as decision makers viz. devolution constrained. Teachers and their unions experienced a decline in power under corporate management. While budgetary restraint exists and more teachers choose to opt out of participation in school decision making, the process of devolution would be further thwarted.

5.8 Consequences

The instigation of administrative reform and the installation of new structures is a controversial exercise. Macpherson (1986, p.216) defines administrative reform as a “process of organisational change to achieve a new valued condition.” Whether members of the Victorian education system would consider that such a condition was reached as a result of the restructuring is debatable. Johnson (1989, p.65) states that:

It seems incredible that in less than two decades the Victorian education system has gone from being the leading system in Australia, to its current run down, structureless condition where structures and responsibilities are constantly changing, with morale at rock bottom, and with support systems which are completely inadequate for the needs of schools.

Citing a comment made by the President of the Institute of Senior Officers of Victorian Education Services, Creed (1991, p.1) states that regardless of the organisational structures adopted, the outcomes have been “needless expenditure of scarce funds, loss of valuable programs, projects and services, loss of productivity, loss of morale and the inevitable loss of talented and conscientious staff.”

The Labor Party was elected in 1982 with an education mandate including an “education system that focused on a collaborative model with a powerful central unit” (Kirner, 1985, p.358). The Ministerial Papers, as outlined, stressed the development of collaborative decision making processes and genuine devolution of authority “rather than the rhetoric” (Ministerial Paper No, 1, p.7). Regional boards, school councils and the State Board of Education were touted as the means by which devolution would

occur. On reflection it is apparent that this has not occurred. Chapman (1990, pp.239-40) provides some insight as to why this may have been so:

On coming to power, the Labor Government faced the problem that there was no strongly articulated majority sentiment for devolution and school-based management. At the grass roots teachers and parents seemed to be ambivalent or only mildly supportive, whilst many principals were openly opposed. Moreover, when the time came to devolve further powers to schools, even the unions and parent leaders became less enthusiastic when they recognised that school-based management ran counter to the interests they had developed in centralised bargaining power.

The Ministerial Papers clearly expounded a philosophical commitment to the principles of participatory democracy. Consideration of the Victorian situation led Duignan (1988) to the conclusion that a higher degree of community participation in school decision making was achieved in Victoria than elsewhere in Australia. The role of the school councils is cited as an example.

The process of devolution gave greater powers to school councils. It would appear that the general thrust of Labor's plans was to enfranchise a wider section of the community which possessed legitimate interests in decision making. The Labor Party philosophy of a more collaborative approach to decision making clearly underpinned the approach of the Fordham initiatives. However Creed (1991, p.10) observed:

The outcome of this policy change was that the primary teachers' union mounted a vigorous campaign to ensure that teachers took up the total number of places available. The effect was that primary school councils which had been composed almost entirely of parents lost members of the community from the councils. Technical school councils were particularly affected. Their association protested strongly against the loss of expertise from business, industry and local government that had been available to councils.

Chapman and Boyd (1986, p.46) indicated that this loss of expertise from school councils also occurred at the primary and secondary levels. The increased responsibilities associated with being a school councillor was a concern expressed by parents for an increased in participation was accompanied by an increase in commitment, accountability and responsibility.

Whilst representativeness and lack of expertise of council members are amongst the constraints in this controversy, there were a number of positive outcomes. Chapman and Boyd (1986, p.46) report that schools became more open and responsive to parents and more attuned to community concerns. The responsibilities associated with council membership elevated the job satisfaction of some teachers. The benefits which are generally thought to accrue from participation in decision making have been reported.

Connors and McMorow (1990, p.92) view school councils as a means of “operationalising the devolution of power from central authorities, accompanied by restructuring and decentralising of traditional bureaucracies.” There is no doubt that the structural changes promoted greater participation by interested parents and teachers in school decision making. Whilst some school personnel found this participation to be positive this was not the case for all Victorian schools. A decline in the status and power of principals and extra work accruing from committee membership was reported by teachers. Creed (1988, p.18) noted that the specificity and scope of industrial agreements between the Teachers’ Federation and the Minister was a “disturbing reversion to a highly centralised system.” The agreements debar school councils from consideration of important educational matters in schools. Whether the powers of school councils continue to be eroded is problematic.

It is apparent that both parent groups and teacher unions in Victoria were afforded a greater opportunity for participation in decision than their counterparts elsewhere in Australia. Creed (1991, p.22) makes several points with regards to the effect of devolution on pressure groups. The degree of devolution in the system during the last decade is seen as a function of the balance of influence of pressure groups who were politically active during this period.

With a commitment to self-governing schools it is likely that both teacher unions and parent groups will continue to have some participation in school decision making.

Direct participation at the regional and state levels has been reduced. The lack of public outcry at the demise of the State and Regional Boards adds credence to the belief that the pressure groups mentioned were more preoccupied with maintaining their centralised influence on the Minister for Education.

Given the trends elsewhere during the period of this controversy it would seem that, irrespective of which party holds power, devolution will develop further as self-governing schools remain a government concern. The persistent problem of insufficient funding precluded real devolution of power. Ministers were keen to devolve some functions to schools but failed to provide school councils with a revenue raising capacity. This guaranteed Ministerial control of the education system. The new roles and functions thrust on educational personnel, for which no training was provided, added to the stress already created by restructuring. The outcome was a reformation of power relationships. Power bases and authority networks underwent revolution. The upshot was organisational confusion and stress as individuals attempted to define their position in the new hierarchy. The number of restructures and the changed political context contributed to a very disordered situation for education personnel in Victoria.

While Creed (1991, p.21) notes that schools were able to remain “somewhat isolated from the turmoil” created by incessant restructuring, corporate management and the associated demands for accountability and efficiency changed conditions for schools. The extent to which the “real” work of teachers in the classroom and the educational experiences of students were enhanced by the restructuring is equivocal. If there was no improvement in student outcomes then one may question who benefited from the organisational change and its intended outcomes.

5.9 Closure

Closure of some issues related to devolution occurred. Participation by the school community at the state and regional levels through the State Board of Education and

Regional Boards reached closure by force through the actions of Government to subsume functions into the Schools Divisions, in the first instance, and to abolish functions in the second. School council functions and jurisdictions were defined through amendments to the Education Act and were thus closed by force. The issue of representativeness of school councils failed to reach closure. Closure through loss of interest may occur due to the time consuming nature of school council membership.

Closure on the broader issues of devolution may have been partly achieved by force through the inadequate provision of funds or structures to enable the process to occur effectively. If devolution is to continue to form part of the landscape of educational policy, possible changes of government and/or Minister are likely to result in a continuance of this controversy with little prospect of closure in the near future. Corporate management procedures, currently still favoured, will render the issues related to participatory decision making closed as the government is preoccupied with centralised control and the issues of accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

The issues relating to corporate management may be deemed closed by the predilection of current governments for this approach. Whilst aspects of accountability through such initiatives as performance indicators, have been enacted and hence closed by force, the broader issues of this organisation form as an appropriate form for educational organisations remain open and subject to conjecture.

Closure of issues related to parent groups, to a large extent, will occur through loss of interest or the emergence of new issues. Policy turbulence creates a dynamic context which makes it difficult to focus attention on a specific problem over time. Teacher unions may attempt to use force to bring certain issues related to power distribution, staff cutbacks and school closures to closure. A “battle of wills” may ensue between increasingly militant unions and the Minister for Education. Closure through negotiation may be appropriate, yet, closure through the use of force may be more likely.

CONCLUSION

Examination of the controversy of community participation and reform of the Victorian education system during 1979-1991 has demonstrated the incessant restructuring during this period. Recurrent themes were devolution, corporate management and increased community participation. As in W.A., a constrained economic climate saw the notions of devolution and community participation juxtaposed with concerns for accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

Unlike W.A., the Labor Government initially displayed greater commitment to increased community participation through the establishment of the State Board of Education, regional boards and increased powers for school councils. This was to afford parents a voice at the local, regional and state levels. However, both the State and regional boards were eventually abolished. School councils were given the added responsibility for the selection of principals. In contrast to W.A., Education Act amendments were more quickly introduced but still centrally determined. School councils in Victoria gave parents a greater voice in school decision making than their counterparts in W.A.. However, they had no financial autonomy and operate within centrally determined guidelines. Their failure to adequately represent the local community is a recurrent problem.

The preoccupation of both teacher and parent groups with maintaining their central bargaining power undermined community participation at the local level. Whilst parents, through school councils were afforded greater opportunities for participation, corporate management imperatives precluded genuine democratic participation. The need for strict financial control dominated all other concerns. As in W.A., Ministers for Education assumed a dominant role in policy making. With economic imperatives prevailing there appears to be scant opportunity for more democratic participation by the community in school decision making.

Chapter Six

CONTROVERSY : SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE NEW ZEALAND EDUCATION SYSTEM 1987-1990

INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand education system has undergone dramatic restructuring in recent times. These changes, wrought by the Labor Government under the leadership of David Lange, have had far reaching effects. The educational policy direction pursued by this Government during its first term (1984-1987), whilst not without incident, provided little intimation of the restructuring programme to follow. The Picot Committee's 1988 report stated (p.36) that "tinkering with the system will not be sufficient to achieve the improvements now required. In our view the time has come for quite radical change." These words must sound prophetic to New Zealanders working within the new system.

The following is an account of the controversy arising from the educational reforms purporting to increase school community participation in school decision making undertaken by the Lange Labor Government during 1987-1990. The controversy framework is being applied to New Zealand in order to provide comparisons with W.A. and to further understand the properties of this model.

6.1 Stimulus

The Lange Labor Government was re-elected in 1987 and Lange assumed control of the education portfolio. In doing so he declared the important position that education would occupy on the Government's agenda. Prior to assuming control of education, Lange's intentions were clear for he established a small committee under the chairmanship of Brian Picot. The Committee had the brief of recommending measures to reform the administration of education. From his consultations with the public, Lange obtained clear, yet conflicting, messages. Firstly, there was the desire for greater autonomy by schools from the constraints of the bureaucratic Department of Education. Secondly,

there was the need for increased central authority in certain areas such as the resolution of disputes between school staff and their Board of Governors. Given the apparent mandate for change presented to Lange, the stimulus for this controversy is deemed to be his assumption of control of the education portfolio.

6.2 Context

Whilst this controversy is viewed in terms of the period following the release of the *Administering for Excellence* (1988), hereafter referred to as the Picot Report, a consideration of the historical factors which have contributed to the evolution of the present system is beneficial.

In 1877 New Zealand's provincial administrators relinquished responsibility for education to the newly formed national government. The 1877 Education Act was modified in 1914, resulting in the formation of a centralised inspectorate and system of curriculum development. On the whole the structure and practices of the administration of education remained largely unchanged. Successive governments added to the levels in the central Department of Education bureaucracy without altering the overall structure of the system.

A unique feature of governance in New Zealand has been the importance of regional or local decision making, with both Maori and non-Maori politics being regional in character. New Zealand governments have strived to obtain political and administrative systems responsive to public opinion with a strong dislike of centralism in government. This unique political culture compelled public institutions to be cognizant of local conditions or face calls for active participation in governance or for the reform of local management (Macpherson, 1989). Hence, formal provisions for parental and lay participation in school decision making are, according to Barrington (1981, p.66), as extensive as would be found in any Western country. A further source of lay participation and involvement also exists at the parliamentary level where the Minister

for Education supposedly had ready access to what is occurring in schools and offered an "open door" to the well organised pressure groups to which he became increasingly responsive (Barrington, 1981, p.68).

Despite this degree of lay participation in school governance, the 1970s witnessed unprecedented demands for greater involvement in educational decision making and more autonomy in schools. Acceptance by the professionals for community participation in school decision making had steadily diminished. It was believed that the public no longer possessed the degree of competence necessary to contribute to meaningful decision making. Barrington highlights the contradiction which emerged regarding public involvement in school decision making in New Zealand. Whilst channels for extensive involvement both at the primary and secondary levels existed, there were demands to increase this involvement further. Public dissatisfaction led to participation by the community in education administration emerging as a policy issue. Long serving parliamentarians commented that half of their mail concerned problems in education (Macpherson, 1989). Crucial to the resolution of this situation was the location of where the real power and authority resided. The evolution of the New Zealand system provides some of the answers for, as stated, by creating a small central Department of Education with school committees, education boards and Boards of Governors responsible for the management and control of primary and secondary schools, the public seemingly had ample opportunity to participate in school decision making. However, as these local authorities suffered an erosion of their power, the size and dominance of the central Department of Education increased and assumed control of major decision making responsibilities. The balance of power shifted to the central department with the school instrumentalities being left with very minor responsibilities. The secondary school Boards of Governors appeared to retain more of their original powers than their primary school counterparts. They had responsibility for control and management of the school, appointment of teachers, keeping accounts and providing general direction to the principal in areas such as discipline. In practice their

participation could be regarded more as shared responsibility with no role in what may be adjudged professional matters such as curriculum direction, allocation of duties among staff and day-to-day student discipline. Ultimately the principal was responsible to the board in most matters.

Prior to 1976 both teacher and student groups could be represented on secondary school boards of governors by invitation only. A statutory obligation was eventually granted for a teacher representative on every board and some boards invited student representatives to attend their meetings.

Codd (1990, p.192) observes that:

When the fourth Labor government was elected on 14 July 1984, the New Zealand state was already undergoing a severe crisis of legitimation brought about by the total failure of interventionist policies to produce any signs of economic growth or sustain any confidence that such policies, if they worked, would have fair and equitable outcomes. The Muldoon government had come to be perceived by many as epitomising some of the worst authoritarian features of a welfare capitalist state in which highly centralised forms of public administration had become blatantly and intolerably undemocratic.

As in many Western countries from the mid-1970s growing concern with falling educational standards, ineffective bureaucracies, unemployment and so on, became manifest in the public impression that schools were failing society. Following the change of government in 1984, Treasury became the most powerful influence in state policy making and its monetarist solutions were preferred as the most apt response to the problems confronting New Zealand. Codd (1990, p.191) contends that an analysis of the policies of the fourth Labor Government reveals “deep-seated contradictions” between “a democratic imperative for more community participation in decision making” and an “economic imperative for tighter controls over public expenditure.”

6.3 Events

The events surrounding this controversy are related to the release of various reports (*Administering for Excellence*, 1988; *Tomorrow's Schools*, 1988) throughout the tenure of the Lange government. Clearly a major restructuring of the state education system was intended. Whilst no longer Prime Minister nor Education Minister the changes instigated during Lange's term in these positions continue to have a significant impact upon those working in and involved with the New Zealand state education system.

6.3.1 Re-election of the Lange Labor Government

The Scott Report (1986) into the quality of teaching concluded that three major problems existed in the New Zealand system: "provider-capture" i.e. where the providers of education captured the terms of their service; a grossly elaborated structure, so complicated that information flows and lines of accountability were both confused and confusing; and obsolete administrative practices and attitudes. The Opposition effectively utilised this report during the 1987 election campaign, but the Lange government was returned, albeit with a reduced majority. Lange himself, in a reshuffled Cabinet, took control of the education portfolio and declared that education would assume a prominent position on the Government's agenda. Macpherson (1989, p.31) describes the situation at that time:

Overnight 'consultation' became a spent word. The power phrases were 'provider capture', 'responsiveness' and 'client satisfaction'. The change was also reflected in the terms of reference for a Taskforce to Review Education Administration (the Picot Committee) announced on the 21 July, 1987. The Government made its intentions clear. Summarized they wanted:-

- a review of functions to maximise delegation
- an evaluation of governance to accelerate devolution
- a redirection of administrative services to enhance client satisfaction, and
- a reorganisation of structure to achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency and equity.

This is evidence of the shift from community-school interaction and participation to a customer focus with an emphasis on the free market.

6.3.2 Administering for Excellence (1988)

When any committee of enquiry is appointed there is a tacit assumption that something is amiss (Moss, 1990, p.139) and it is the committee's role to discover the problems. According to Moss, the Committee viewed the New Zealand society as a "collection of cohesive communities each characterised by the commonality of the interests of its members." The school had an important role in both satisfying the needs of the community and ensuring its continuation. It was therefore contended that control of schools should lie with the community. As a consequence of the "system" viz. the Department of Education and the education boards (regarded as extensions of the system wresting control from the community) schools were seen to serve the ends of the system rather than the community. This, in turn, threatened the "organic integrity of communities." The Committee was therefore primarily concerned with liberating communities from the central administration.

The Committee chairman was Brian Picot, a wealthy director and chairman of companies. His committee met part-time for nine months and made contact with over 700 individuals and organisations. Macpherson (1989, p.32) describes the climate prevailing at the time of the taskforce enquiry:

It was a confusing time for the 90-odd interest groups. New interpretations of the situation and coalitions were talked up and down with bewildering speed. The implications of the questions being asked by the taskforce were the focus of attention. It gradually became clear that lobbying and alliance building were irrelevant in an unusually philosophical climate where fundamental educational and administrative purposes were being canvassed.

Treasury favoured reduced government intervention, efficiency and a user-pays service for all but the most basic of education services. The role of the State Services Commission in New Zealand ensured the effectiveness of all government departments. The terms of reference for the Picot Committee indicated that the Government intended radical reform of both the structures and practices of education in New Zealand. An interesting feature of this exercise was the bipartisan support for reform. The Committee believed that through the process of devolution the balance of power

between the teacher professionals and their clients would be altered leading to a more responsive system (Macpherson, 1989, p.33).

The Picot Committee reported on May 10, 1988. The Committee found the existing structure to be overcentralised and overly complex. Effective management practices were lacking and there was a paucity of information available to the people in the system which inhibited their capacity to make informed choices. These “serious weaknesses” were grouped under the following headings (*Picot Report*, 1988, p.22):

- overcentralisation of decision making;
- complexity;
- lack of information and choice;
- lack of effective management practices; and
- feelings of powerlessness.

The report noted that virtually all decision making and power emanated from the centre with very few decisions made at the local level. This rendered the system vulnerable to the interests of pressure group politics and, “at best paternalistic” to those unfamiliar with “prevailing professional and bureaucratic norms” (p.24).

The system was also experiencing “sectoral fragmentation” for decisions were made in isolation with no concern for their impact on other sectors. Duplication of services resulted from complex administrative arrangements. Lack of information and choice restrained clients from making informed choices. This placed greater importance on administrative rules and reinforced a “culture of dependence.” The Department of Education, whilst not blamed directly for all problems outlined, was held together “because of the personal integrity of the management and their collective commitment to education rather than through any sound management structure, systems or practice” (p.29). The committee also highlighted blurred responsibilities, lack of priorities at the centre, a lack of accountability, rule-bound procedures and few incentives to manage

effectively. The themes of low efficiency and effectiveness throughout the organisation were associated clearly with the client dissatisfaction, disaffection and the powerlessness expressed in submissions to the task force which concluded that “this kind of clustering of failure is certain to lead to personal, social and economic catastrophe. It cannot be allowed to continue” (p.36). Whilst “positive features” such as the dedication and professionalism of teachers was noted, radical change was proposed.

The new administrative structure was to be based upon eight central features: simplicity, decisions made at appropriate levels, national objectives, coordinated division making, clear responsibilities and goals, control over resources, accountability and openness and responsiveness. The learning institutions - viewed as the basic “building block” of educational administration - were to run as a partnership between the professionals and the community. The Committee asserted that school personnel should make the majority of decisions affecting their institution and only where it was considered appropriate should decisions be made elsewhere. The mechanism for this was to be a Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees would initially have the task of negotiating its own “Charter of Objectives” (similar to a school development plan) intended to reflect the local needs within national guidelines. The education boards were to be abolished and the central Department of Education replaced with a leaner Ministry of Education which assumed responsibility for policy making. A separate Education Review Agency would be responsible for school inspections. Each school was to be inspected every two years. The Review and Audit Agency, reporting directly to the Minister, would review and audit the performance of every institution in terms of their attainment of the objectives within their charter. Furthermore, this agency would provide independent comment on the “quality of policy advice and on how well policies are being implemented at the national level” (p.60). The review of schools was to be conducted by a multidisciplinary

team comprised of specialists in curriculum and finance, a coopted principal and a community representative. Should a school have serious deficiencies a follow up visit, one term later, would be made. If, six months later, improvements had not been made the trustees could be dismissed.

In addition to these two central state agencies, two new institutions were to be established. An independent Parent Advocacy Council, with responsibility to advise community groups on educational provision and to mediate between institutions and clients or clients and the Ministry, and local education forums to provide arenas for community debate. These two initiatives together with the Board of Trustees ostensibly handed power to the community, yet the powers of the state were also strengthened. The state relinquished control over such areas as staffing and discretionary expenditure whilst strengthening control in others such as educational expenditure.

The Committee perceived no need for a formal structure at the district level. Instead the Committee (p.53) proposed:

an administrative system in which each institution receives its funding directly from a central agency, undertakes responsibility for defining its objectives within national objectives, and has control of the resources available to it. Institutions will nevertheless require some professional and administrative services which - if they are not purchased from the private sector- can be more efficiently provided to a local cluster of institutions.

A “loose structure” consisting of education service centres (providing essential administrative services) and community education forums was proposed for the district level.

The Committee concluded that the proposed changes would be “positive, beneficial and exciting.” Community members would have the opportunity to provide input into their own and their children’s education and there could be greater responsiveness to changing educational needs. Thus, while the reforms carried an element of risk the Committee considered that these would be outweighed by the benefits.

6.3.3 Tomorrow's Schools

Following the release of the *Picot Report* (1988), the Government commenced an information and consultation exercise. A few weeks later, Lange reported that 20,000 responses had been received. Most accepted the need for reform. Whilst Nash (1989) was sceptical as to how thoroughly the submissions were analysed, he acknowledged that there was no convincing opposition to the proposed reforms.

Tomorrow's Schools outlined the manner in which the *Picot Report* reforms would affect primary and secondary schools. In the introduction to this report, Lange commented that "Tomorrow's Schools outlines the most thoroughgoing changes to the administration of education in our history (p.1)."

Tomorrow's Schools set out the details on administration at the school level, the functions of central agencies, explained the Government policy on equity, Maori interests, national guidelines, teacher training and the disposal of assets. It also described the new arrangements for special teaching groups, resources and practical management at the institutional level and summarised the implementation process.

In an address to the Post Primary Teachers' Association - who vehemently criticised the proposed reforms (Macpherson, 1989) - in August 1988, Lange, in his endorsement of *Tomorrow's Schools*, affirmed his government's commitment to reform.

6.3.4 The New Zealand Education Act 1989 and Education Amendment Act 1989.

Following the Government's White Paper, legislation was enacted in 1989 giving effect to the many recommendations made in *Tomorrow's Schools*. Under these Acts the administration of schools would be conducted by a Board of Trustees comprised of six parents (these parents must have students in attendance at the school), a principal, one staff member (elected from among their number), one student representative (elected by the student body) and other coopted members as the Board required. These members

should reflect the socio-economic and ethnic diversity of the school population and be comprised of equal numbers of males and females. The trustees would have a one year tenure and elect a presiding officer. The principal, school staff and student members would not be eligible for election to this position.

The Board of Trustees was to ensure that each school had a charter of objectives (in accordance with national directives). The local Maori community had to be consulted before Ministerial approval of the charter would be granted. In addition, the Board needed to ensure the attendance of enrolled students. The Board had responsibility for the appointment and dismissal of staff. The principal, acting as the chief executive officer of the Board, had responsibility for implementing Board policies but still retained discretion in terms of the day-to-day operation of the school (in accordance with Government regulations). In order to ensure the operation of the school the Board receives two grants - for staff salaries and for operations. Annual financial accounting statements were to be prepared by the Board in order to indicate the performance of the school in relation to achievement of the aims and objectives outlined in the charter.

6.4 Issues

A number of issues emerged in this controversy. Firstly, the influence of the New Right philosophy on education arose as a central element. Much of the criticism levelled at the *Picot Report* concerns the adoption of the New Right ideology.

A second issue is the influence of the Treasury on educational policy making. In New Zealand the primary source of the New Right ideology was the Treasury whose major publication *Government Management: Brief to the incoming government Vol II: Education Issues* outlined the agenda for reform of the education system.

A third issue, which is inextricably linked to the two aforementioned issues, is that of corporate management, as an administrative strategy, whereby economic restraint and

community participation are incorporated in order encourage public favour. Devolution of authority implies a shift of decision making responsibility from the centre whilst corporate management implies central control of decision making responsibility. This paradox was noted by Lange in his initial consultations with the public.

Power redistribution emerges as a fourth issue for a shift in the distribution of power accompanied the reform process. The traditional power bases were no longer congruent with the newly established frameworks. Finally, the process of implementation is a further issue for political expediency warranted the rapid implementation of the proposed changes.

6.5 Arguments

The arguments presented in this controversy share a number of similarities with those extant in both Western Australia and Victoria.

6.5.1 The New Right

The arguments related to the New Right and education concern the influence of this ideology in the policies of the Lange government. In recent times New Right philosophies have exerted increasing influence over both economic and social policy in a number of Western countries. The basic tenets underpinning this theory include an emphasis on individual choice and a limited role for the state in the defence of individual liberties and property rights. The welfare state is regarded as a negative influence which intrudes excessively in people's lives. In contrast New Right theories emphasise the more positive, competitive and possessive nature of individuals. Education is regarded in economic terms as a commodity. Lauder (1990, p.1) comments:

Since its election in 1984 the Labour Government has created a New Right revolution in New Zealand which has sought to change the relationships between the state, the economy and the civil society. The intention behind these measures has been to effect a Thatcherite enterprise culture in New Zealand.

The prime agency for the promotion of these policies has been the Treasury which, through a series of publications has advocated some of the most pristine New Right policies to be seen anywhere in the world.

Lauder contends that the New Right has developed a standard set of “ideological strategies” to undermine the existing social design and to provide a framework for the introduction of its own policies. The first move in this strategy is to publicly attack the existing institutions or policies creating the impression that they are failing the public. The education system could be faulted for falling standards of literacy and numeracy, lack of discipline, inequity, lack of accountability, failure to provide students with work skills and inflexibility. The second phase is for the New Right “think tanks” to publish research which supports its criticisms and presents the New Right alternatives. Finally the New Right presents social policies as if they were economic policies for which no credible alternatives exist. Therefore, the New Right expounds the view that it possesses the only logical solution to economic problems. The “free market” is high on the New Right agenda and provides the mechanism for maximising individual choice through the ability to adjust to different circumstances.

The educational policy of the New Right is based upon two fundamental notions. Firstly, education is regarded as a private good and, as such, should be paid for by the individual. A person will naturally wish to pursue a course of education which will facilitate the opportunity for wealth, status and power. The second precept concerns competition. From the New Right perspective a problem with education is the lack of competition which leads to inefficiency resulting in a mismatch between the skills produced by schools and those required by the labour market.

The solution to the problem is to introduce competition and to privatise where possible. In order to achieve this a voucher system is favoured whereby a voucher buying a place at a primary or secondary school would be provided to parents with school age children. This permits parental choice of schools. To attract students schools must be more oriented to what parents want i.e. the market, and hence a greater degree of efficiency is

community participation are incorporated in order encourage public favour. Devolution of authority implies a shift of decision making responsibility from the centre whilst corporate management implies central control of decision making responsibility. This paradox was noted by Lange in his initial consultations with the public.

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thought to be introduced into the system. The market model changes the school-community relationship from one of community participation in school decision making to parents as customers who choose educational service providers according to the quality or promised outcomes/commodities.

6.5.2 The Influence of the Treasury

The second issue to emerge concerns the influence of the Treasury. As stated, in New Zealand the major source of the New Right ideology was the Treasury. The notion that education is a public good to be provided through a public system was challenged. Instead, consistent with the New Right philosophy, education is regarded as a commodity in the market place. In addition, the Treasury argued that the numerous benefits of education are more subject to “individual capture” (Grace, 1990, p.22) rather than necessarily contributing to the social or public good and that the government’s previous role in education in New Zealand was “counterproductive to its declared commitment to greater social equality.”

According to Lauder, Middleton, Boston and Wylie (1988, p.18-19) the Treasury was confused over the precise role education plays in relation to the economy. The Treasury therefore decided to “cover all its bets” by expressing anxiety at the apparent lowering of standards. The Treasury claimed that, despite an expansion of resources, improved educational outcomes had not ensued. This argument is flawed, for the numbers of working class students enrolled in secondary and tertiary institutions had increased. In addition Lauder et al, (1988, p.20) indicate that the Treasury failed to acknowledge the wider constraints imposed on the education system by the social structures of gender, class and race.

The Treasury identified the following as problems confronting the secondary education system in New Zealand: a general decline in standards, a widening gap between the performance of upper and middle-class students and their working class counterparts, an

increase in alienation from education among working class students, and a lack of accountability by the providers of education to the consumers. The Treasury's solutions lay in setting minimum standards of attainment, teaching the core curriculum, introducing parental choice of schools through zoning and increasing subsidies to private schools. Furthermore, decision making about educational expenditure should be devolved and more efficient management practices, in accord with micro-economic management precepts, should be introduced into school administration.

However, it is noted that the Treasury's position is fraught with contradictions and dubious claims regarding the decline in educational standards. At the centre of the Treasury's position is the claim that increases in educational expenditure have not necessarily led to improvements in learning, improved educational attainments do not inevitably lead to economic growth and finally increased education expenditure does not produce greater equality. Nash (1988, p.36) disagrees with the Treasury's arguments:

because the system in New Zealand seems not to be producing the social and economic benefits once expected of educational systems...it does not follow that in other respects the account is entirely in debit. Nor does it follow in the least that the problems of the system we have identified are entirely, or even largely, a consequence of the effective state monopoly of educational services.

Grace (1990, p.29) contends that there is a distinct Treasury agenda which assumes the status of an "ideological position" rather than presenting an even-handed public service review. He has termed the change in the conception of education as the "commodification of education" because of the application, by the Treasury, of the "language and discourse of economics" to education (1990, p.30). In particular education is viewed from the stance of inputs, outputs and production functions with these terms being introduced into the discourse of education. The notion is that these concepts provide a more systematic and rigorous way of thinking about education. Educationists are subsequently encouraged to engage in research which utilises such language and theories.

The Treasury was indicted for selectively citing research, both international and from New Zealand, which demonstrated that publicly provided systems of education failed to provide equity. Rather, they served to reproduce the existing social divisions of class, race and gender. Bates (1990, p.47) states that “what is so breathtaking about this attack on the existing system is the total lack of any empirical grounds on which its proposals could be justified.”

The role of the Treasury in shaping both economic and social policy in New Zealand since the election of the Labour Government in 1984 is an issue deserving of more thorough analysis than can be provided in this thesis. However it is necessary to at least acknowledge the impact of the ideology, espoused in arguments by the Treasury, on education policy and its contribution to the controversy which has arisen.

6.5.3 Corporate Management

The arguments in favour of corporate management may be affiliated with those presented in relation to the New Right ideology and were presented by the State Services Commission. Whilst ostensibly favouring devolution and community participation, corporate management requires that decision making responsibility for policy resides at the centre. Managers at the school level have the responsibility for maximising productivity within centrally determined guidelines. The central Department of Education (and the Minister of Education) retained crucial decision making powers at the expense of the local Boards of Trustees. Corporate efficiency, it is argued, would result from the restructuring of the education system. The appointment of a wealthy businessman to chair the committee investigating the administrative structure of education is indicative of the esteem accorded to entrepreneurs and their business methods. The Picot Committee argued for a flatter organisational structure and clearer lines of accountability. Whilst schools have greater control over their administrative functions, the centralisation of policy making has increased accountability and efficiency requirements. The centre, through the utilisation of review and audit

procedures, curriculum control and maintenance of financial control reduced the capacity of schools for self-determination.

Proponents of corporate management argue that increased community participation in school decision making ensues as a result of the adoption of this method of management. In the reverse, it is argued that a strengthening of central control is the most significant outcome of such a system. The tradition of community participation in school decision making in New Zealand should guarantee the adequate function of the Board of Trustees, yet their capacity for independent policy making is fettered by the strong central decision making powers retained by the Minister. The Government preference for tight fiscal control in a constrained economic climate limited the extent of genuine devolution of decision making.

6.5.4 The Implementation Process

The arguments relating to the implementation of the reforms concern the speed with which the changes were introduced and the lack of consultation with all protagonists. Political expediency and the need for the Government to be seen to be attending to the “crisis” in education is most generally indicated as the reason for the rapid implementation of the changes. Conversely, the lack of consultation with the stakeholders and the failure to reflect on possible implications of the reforms is argued in opposition to the implementation programme pursued by the Government.

6.6 Protagonists

This group includes all disputants in the controversy: the Treasury, teachers, principals, academics, politicians, teacher unions, Review and Audit Agency, principals’ associations, students, school administrators, education boards, school auxillary staff, Ministry of Education personnel, Minister of Education, Parent Advocacy Councils, school boards of trustees, taxpayers and industry. This list may not be exhaustive but scrutiny will reveal that most New Zealanders are represented.

6.7 Constraints

Numerous factors emerged as constraints to increased community participation in school decision making in this controversy. The lack of consultation with many of the stakeholders may be construed as a constraint. The *Picot Report* (1988) and *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) provided the blueprint for the reform of the New Zealand education system. Furthermore, the lack of an upper house in parliament may be deemed a constraint and therefore there is no effective forum for opposition at the parliamentary level.

The haste with which the reforms recommended in the *Picot Report* (1988) and *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) were to be implemented has been noted by Nash (1989). Codd believes that this provides strong support for the existence of a hidden agenda. Both the Treasury (favouring the New Right ideology) and the State Services Commission (favouring corporate managerial structures) played major roles in the formation of *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) for a Treasury Officer was seconded to the Picot taskforce as one of its part-time secretaries. It is from a comparison of the text of the *Picot Report* (1988) and the 1987 "Treasury Briefs" that the most compelling evidence of collusion may be obtained according to Codd (1990, p.201).

The ability of education to be considered a commodity in the market place and the ability of markets to freely adjust to changing circumstances aroused much comment and may be construed as a constraint. New Right theorists accept the premise that markets provide the mechanism for maximising individual choice and hence one is led to believe that markets are natural (Lauder, 1990, p.7) and that all individuals enter these markets on an equal footing i.e. that markets are "ungendered, classless, free of ethnic considerations and without limiting cultural assumptions." However this is not the case in the "real world" where white male members of the upper and middle classes have superiority. The New Right insists that any intervention by the state to restore equality in the market place is unwarranted and inhibits the individual's freedom to choose. To

the contrary, Olssen (1996), adopting Polyani's (1969) perspective, argues that the rise of state intervention in the market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was to combat the inherent weaknesses and "excesses and failures" of the unregulated market. Bates (1990, p.43) states that the notion of freely adjusting markets is a "mechanism for the avoidance of social responsibility." He continues (pp.44-45):

The current proposals for reform in the United Kingdom, some Australian states and New Zealand suggest that such articulation and a sense of membership of a wider educational community which collectively serves the public interest are to be replaced by a system of fragmentation and competition with little or no articulation between schools - even where they serve the same community. Rather a commodity is to be created with schools competing to deliver 'most wanted' services and products to individual students and parents who will presumably shop around for the best buys.

The fragmentation of the education system is apparently justified in the name of community. Both Bates (1990) and Moss (1990) question the use of the term "community" in the *Picot Report* (1988). According to the report a community is comprised of a group of parents whose children attend the same school. The term is employed in a manner which implies both a commonality of interests and a unity of purpose. The taskforce did express concern at reports from some curriculum committees that had difficulty in finding people to represent a "broad-based" community view. However, rather than treating as problematic the possibility of there ever being such a view, the committee simply took it for granted that such a thing could exist. The taskforce believed that power was equally distributed within communities and their commonality of interests would ensure that, given the opportunity, they could come together and express similar views. In reality it is difficult to justify this stance.

The naivety of such a position is also apparent in the discussion on pressure groups. The Committee believed that pressure groups would not experience the same degree of success at the local level as had been achieved at the national level, for such groups would confront a strong like-minded community. In addition there is no mention of the relationship of the school to a "wider educative community" (Bates, 1990, p.45). The

structure advocated prohibited the voicing of community concerns into the national political process by failing to provide a mechanism through which this could occur. The Education Boards and Teachers' Unions, in the new structure, were excluded from the decision making process - Education Boards being abolished. In their place were two control mechanisms - individual school charters which the school community negotiates directly with the Government, and the Review and Audit Agency which ensures quality control.

Failure to adequately resource the reforms is a constraint. Whilst the principal, staff and community members were to act as trustees many of the functions which they were required to perform were new and training was necessary. The Picot Committee was cognizant of the enormity of the changes proposed and was aware that the education professionals would have to "think and work in new ways" (*Picot Report*, 1988, p.81). They were committed to treating everyone in a fair and equitable manner and ensuring that all were informed as to the changes to be made. The changeover date of October 1, 1989 gave fifteen to eighteen months to implement the report. The lack of comprehensive planning, giving full consideration to all aspects of implementation, and the contentious nature of the reforms acted as a constraint in this controversy.

The Boards of Trustees are subject to constraints, in terms of their degree of autonomy. The school charter was touted as a key element in the restructuring of the education system and school administration. However as Codd and Gordon (1991) contend, during the implementation of policy a number of significant changes were made to the charter framework. The charters, initially conceived as a mechanism through which state power would be devolved, were to be a contract between the state and the school and between the school and the community. In May 1989 the charter framework contained the following clause:

The Minister for Education upon approving the charter undertakes to provide services and funding to a formula to be determined by the Minister

from time to time to enable the board of trustees to meet the requirements of the charter.

However in August the Education Act 1989 (Section 79) removed the funding clause and stated that:

1. In each financial year a Board shall be paid, out of money appropriated by the Parliament for the purpose,
 - a) A teacher salaries grant; and
 - b) An operational services grant.
2. Each grant shall be determined by the Minister.

Thus the May 1989 charter framework had intended greater partnership and, in so doing, “had opened up a number of arenas for potential contestability of government decisions by school trustees” (Codd & Gordon, 1991, p.29). The state reinforced its power and control at the expense of the school community. Haynes (1997, p.6) argues that:

One point that this consideration of the school charter makes clear is that deregulation achieved by removing bureaucratic controls involves reregulation by the imposition of contractual relations which did not previously exist (some of which are in the form of legal obligations to be pursued in the courts).

Therefore whilst ostensibly possessing considerable power, the strong central policy determination together with the lack of any autonomous revenue raising capacity constrain the function of the Boards.

6.8 Consequences

Significant consequences arose from the reforms. Nash (1989, pp.113-114) argues that the reforms should be viewed:

as part of a wider strategic restructuring of the machinery of the state driven by Labour’s electoral need to satisfy popular demands for community participation and by its own governmental need for enhanced powers in certain crucial areas of state government. The devolution we are experiencing has a dual character: ‘community participation’ and state control are not opposed but complementary. A managed devolution of authority through ‘participation’ serves the ends of a government confronted with an endemic crisis of political legitimation in two respects. First it enables the functions of central departments to be concentrated around the essential ones of policy making and fiscal and managerial control; and second, it serves to check popular demands on the state by lowering (or at least redirecting) expectations about the capacity of the state to satisfy them.

Clearly, as a result of restructuring, some protagonists would experience a diminution of power whilst others would strengthen their position. The Minister and the Department of Education enhanced their position for the prime responsibilities of fiscal control and curriculum determination are centrally located. By linking education to the economy and arguing that a more streamlined and accountable education service was the means by which New Zealand could be extricated from difficult economic circumstances, the location of crucial decision making functions at the centre could be rationalised.

Whilst the general community welcomed the appealing notions presented in the *Picot Report* (1988), the teachers' unions, academics and Education Boards expressed opposition. Capper and Munro (1990, pp.150-1) acknowledge the objectives outlined in both the *Picot Report* (1988) and *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988) yet assert the existence of a hidden agenda. This concerned the labour market reforms which were imposed on the state sector. The new management structure prevented the participation of the teacher unions in professional decision making, this function being devolved to the Board of Trustees. The new model favoured enterprise bargaining whereby individual workers and their employers negotiate work practices whereas the collective action of unions was regarded as an unwarranted interference.

The reforms regarded the school as a free-standing business, the Board of Trustees as the board of directors and the principal as the managing director. The boards have the capacity for appraisal and discipline of staff and the authority to vary salaries according to perceived competence. Capper and Munro (1990, p.158) conclude:

It is our view that the sum total of these proposed industrial reforms will do nothing to assist the objectives of community empowerment and collaboration espoused by the Minister of Education in his preface in *Tomorrow's Schools*... it would seem that the whole democratizing intent to educational administrative reforms has been subverted to an entirely different purpose.

Treasury gained representation on some of the committees considering fundamental changes in educational policy and thus the New Right perspective was thrust into

educational policy formulation. Nash (1989, p.116) gives the following comment on the changed rules for government departments:

One important administrative change was effected before Picot was released. In a clear move to gain greater political control over the major departments of the state the State Sector Act replaced the Westminster system of permanent heads with contract appointments. The Department of Education which has produced several powerful long-serving Director-Generals deservedly renowned as educationists, found itself with a Director-General much experienced in the management of state forests. The government was clearly determined to reduce the power of the department for autonomous direction.

The administrative system was altered such that school governance became a partnership between the school and the community through the establishment of a Board of Trustees. The central Ministry of Education assumed control of policy making and the Education Review Agency control of school inspections. The losers in the reshuffle were, according to Nash (1989, pp.116-7), the Education Boards (abolished), the teachers and teacher unions. One of the most conspicuous consequences was the decimation of the central Department of Education.

Teachers are now subject to perhaps the closest scrutiny ever encountered by teachers in New Zealand and it is most likely that they will err on the side of conservatism. Innovations will not be attempted lest their efforts be deemed inconsistent with their school's Charter of Objectives. Dismissal could easily result if teachers do not abide by this charter. The devolution of powers to the school Board of Trustees was not met with complete approval. More traditionally inclined Boards may appoint only male, white principals at the expense of female or non-white applicants.

Whilst the community, at first glance, appears to be a significant winner through the reforms, the Parent Advocacy Council had no real power and the community education forums would have little impact upon educational policy. The existence of numerous pressure groups each holding steadfast to their own agendas was likely to stultify any meaningful outcomes from the community education forums.

Failing to emerge from these reforms was significant opposition from the general public. One may therefore assume that the public is supportive the reforms or is apathetic. It should be noted however that, in general, teachers do not enjoy comprehensive public support. The arguments levelled at educationists - falling standards in literacy and numeracy, breakdown of school discipline, lack of work skills and so on - generally ensure that schools (and teachers) bear the brunt of comment from the disgruntled public.

In line with the commitment to enhanced community participation in school decision making the Boards of Trustees have a significant parental component supposedly ensuring representation of community interests. The implementation of the legislation viz. the New Zealand Education Act 1989 and the Education Amendment Act 1989 clearly outlines the functions of the trustees. The Boards ostensibly have significant powers yet, being responsible for the implementation of centrally determined policies and subjected to the biennial scrutiny of the Review and Audit Agency, limits their potential for autonomous action. Ramsay (1993, p.277) indicates that whilst there was never an intention to “completely devolve” responsibility to the Boards, parents, trustees and principals, who had expected “considerable autonomy” were “surprised when they discovered the large number of mandatory requirements issued by the new Ministry of Education for the schools charter.” In addition the absence of a capacity for independent revenue raising further deprives the independence of the Boards.

In terms of the composition of the Boards some efforts were made to guarantee the representativeness of the Boards. Section 99 of the Education Act, 1989, ensures that the Board of Trustees reflects:

- a) the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the student body of the school or institution; and
- b) the fact that approximately half the population of New Zealand is male and half female.

The principal is prevented from becoming the chairperson of the Board and staff are permitted only one representative. The school administration and staff are required to implement the policy of the Board. By ensuring that the Board's composition reflects that of the wider society domination by white, well educated males is curtailed. Both the school teaching and administrative staff is accountable to the Board which is, in turn, accountable to the Central Office. The administration of the school grant is a notable function of the Board.

6.9 Closure

Closure of some issues in this controversy had occurred by 1990. Force has effected closure on the issue of the implementation of the *Picot Report* (1988) with the influence of the New Right being asserted. The Government legislated for enactment of the recommendations. The New Zealand Education Act 1989 and Education Amendment Act 1989 effectively closed the issues arising from the report. This was particularly so in the assertion of state fiscal control through legislation relating to boards of trustees and school charters. The corporate management model favoured by the Lange Government was generally favoured by political parties of all persuasions at the time and hence the issues which have arisen appear to be closed for some time.

Closure of issues related to the working conditions of teaching professionals have been closed by force through the implementation of legislation for enterprise bargaining. A change of government is perhaps one avenue for the re-opening of these issues.

Dale (1993, p.251) gives two reasons for the failure of the Boards of Trustees to exert a more "powerful and directive" influence in school affairs. Firstly, the administrative nature of the functions of the Boards of Trustees were very time-consuming. While they were able to make recommendations, this aspect of their function was not stressed or encouraged by the Ministry of Education. This indicates the strengthening of ministerial

control provided by the reforms. Secondly, the absence of any major concerns of parents and Boards of Trustees about how and what is taught in schools.

The Lange government swiftly legislated for the enactment of the reforms which effectively closed the issues surrounding the controversy. A groundswell of public disapproval may lead to a reconsideration of the issues.

CONCLUSION

The controversy in New Zealand bears similarities to and differences from those which developed in Western Australia and Victoria. Structural change was viewed as the panacea to the perceived inadequacies of the education system. The public sector was restructured on a corporate model “with the cabinet and ministers setting broad policy goals but the State Departments advising and overseeing its implementation” (Ramsay, 1993, p.263). Community participation in school decision making, which had a stronger tradition in New Zealand, was featured in the restructuring proposals. The Board of Trustees, at the school level, Parent Advocacy Councils and local education forums were the means by which the community was to be given greater input into educational decision making. Legislation was swiftly enacted. The parameters of the Board of Trustees were outlined. These boards were to administer the school grant (in line with centrally determined guidelines) and had the power to hire and fire teachers. The role of the teachers and principal in school decision making was reduced in comparison to their counterparts in Western Australia and Victoria. The role of the School Charter in being representative of the school community’s priorities was progressively overridden as the National Education Guidelines, National Administrative Guidelines and the National Curriculum came to determine the functioning of the school.

In contrast to both Western Australia and Victoria, the role of the teacher unions in New Zealand was curtailed by the New Right agenda leading to their exclusion from participation in policy determination at the national level. Through corporate

management, the Ministry of Education controls review and audit functions, curriculum control and, most importantly, financial control. School boards function within centrally determined guidelines and have no capacity for independent policy making nor an autonomous revenue raising ability. The speed with which the government introduced enabling legislation prevented the teacher unions and parent groups from providing input. This is in contrast to Western Australia where the SSTUWA was involved in determining the role of SBDMGs. Teacher unions in New Zealand have progressively gained greater prominence, as compared to other unions, and prevented certain proposals, such as those related to teacher appointments, from being implemented. Truly democratic participation was precluded with the role of the community determined by the Government rather than through a consultative process. As with Western Australia and Victoria, the commitment of the Government to genuine democratic community participation in school decision making was questionable.

Chapter Seven

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a more detailed comparison of the controversies outlined in this thesis. A summary of the controversies is presented in table form in the appendix. Particular attention is focussed upon contextual factors, bureaucracy and corporate management, school community participation and power. This chapter will analyse, discuss and draw conclusions as to the major issues extant within each of the controversies in order to answer the first of the two research questions proposed in chapter one:

In what ways did the reforms conducted by the governments in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand change the participation of the school community in school decision making in state schools during the period 1985-1993?

Secondly, the efficacy of controversy as a framing device for educational policy analysis is examined in order to draw conclusions in relation to the second of the research questions:

How effective is controversy as a framing device for educational policy analysis?

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Contextual factors played a significant part in the three controversies surrounding school community participation in school decision making in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand during the period 1987-1993. Both local and external factors were extant.

Change is endemic in all societies during the late twentieth century. At the school level the ability to change in response to demands from central policies or demands from

parents for new education products means that all school leaders require the capacity to manage change. The emergence of dynamic contexts required that school administrations shift from hierarchical, bureaucratic and centrally controlled structures to being flexible, responsive and enterprise driven. In such environments there must be the capacity for a vigorous, continuing process of school improvement and continual professional learning by school leaders and staff.

Apple (1988) argues that whilst many may perceive a crisis, they do not necessarily perceive it in the same way. Hence radical educators may see the crisis in terms of withdrawal of funding for various educational and social programmes offered by schools, a lowering of real wages, increased unemployment and increased poverty. Conversely, conservative groups perceive this crisis “simply as an economic and ideological one” (Apple, 1988, p.273).

Knight (1990) indicates a number of trends which occurred during the 1980s. These trends provided the context in which the restructuring of the three educational systems occurred. Firstly, the end of the post-war boom conditions signalled a reduction of financial resources available to the states. The Australian economy experienced a reduction in demand for farming and mining produce and hence the revenue derived from the sale of these goods declined. Constrained economic conditions also influenced the manner in which certain issues within the controversies reached closure. Much of the impetus for greater community participation in school decision making occurred during the late 1970s and early 1980s. When governments introduced measures professing greater community participation, economies were in or approaching recession. This climate forced stringent allocation of resources to schools and schools became more accountable for the use of such resources.

Secondly, the demand on the states to fund initiatives correspondingly increased as reduced levels of revenue were granted from the federal government. The move to a

“performative state” (Lingard and Blackmore, 1997, p.13) signalled an emphasis upon the “efficiency principle” being the basis upon which all decisions are justified. Thirdly, retention rates in secondary schools rose due to increased youth unemployment and the demands for a better trained and more skilled workforce. In response to federal policies, students were encouraged to remain at school as Australia endeavoured to become the “clever country”. Fourth, the emergence of “economic rationalism” as the dominant form of thinking led to a recognition that the wide range of services could no longer be met by an increase in taxes. An approach more consistent with “user pays” was associated with this thinking. Fifth, the new approach in public sector management termed “corporate management” derived from the private sector led to a greater push for efficiency, quality and effectiveness. In each of the controversies, enquiries into the education system, such as the Picot committee in New Zealand, revealed an unresponsive and inefficient bureaucracy. The principles of business were considered a better platform for the organisation of the public sector. Bureaucratic organisational structures were flattened in a move intended to produce greater devolution of decision making. Sixth, in cooperation with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and the corporate sector, the Australian federal government embarked upon a programme of restructuring industry in order to render it more efficient and competitive. The ACTU, through its alliance with the Australian federal government, was also involved in determining the direction of industry restructuring. Industry imperatives exerted an influence on the direction of education. Reports such as *Young People's Participation in Post-compulsory Education and Training* (Finn, 1991) had a significant effect on education policies. Finally, the teaching profession was blamed for increased youth unemployment, falling standards, lack of commitment and so on. Standards of literacy and numeracy among school leavers were perceived to be deficient and the teaching profession was indicted for this. These trends came from other Western capitalist economies and were used to fuel the debate in Australia and New Zealand.

Despite a federal Labor government and a majority of state Labor governments, a significant shift to the right in Australasian politics occurred during the 1980s. Federal governments in Australia and New Zealand sought to exert far more influence over educational policy with “the chief goal of the state at the national level” being “the need to ensure the international competitiveness of the putatively national economy (Lingard and Blackmore, 1997, p.13). Given the power deployed at the federal level, through taxing and revenue raising, state governments were unable to curb the intrusion of the federal government into their policy making jurisdictions. Economic imperatives (and perhaps mistrust of state governments) perhaps provide the motivation for an augmented federal role. The establishment of the Schools Commission in 1973 by the Whitlam Government is indicative of the earlier challenge to the state level of centrality of school decision making. Lingard, O’Brien and Knight (1993, p.231) note that:

corporate federalism was the major Dawkins strategy for increasing commonwealth influence over policy formulation for Australian schools. The rationale for its development was the need for the commonwealth to have a greater say in schooling policy, given its reframing as a component of economic policy, and given the responsibility of the commonwealth to manage the economy.

As noted by Birch and Smart (1989) the Australian federal government increased its involvement in education policy and demanded stronger linkages between the sectors of education, training, employment and business. The globalisation of the Australian economy with tariffs being reduced or abolished and the need for the economy to be more competitive and open to free market forces drove the perception that the workforce needed to be more efficient and skilled. Australia needed to become the “clever country.” Reactions by the Australian education system to the pressures for it to respond to such economic imperatives were stressed by John Dawkins who became Minister for Employment, Education and Training in 1987 (Sweet, 1989). This precipitated the establishment of the Department of Employment, Education and Training in 1987 which amalgamated the departments of Education and Youth Affairs with the Department of Employment and Training. The capture of educational policy making by those whose primary interests do not necessarily reside with education is a significant trend which

emerged during the 1980s and directly influenced the context of the controversies.

Intrusions by groups such as the ACTU and Ministers responsible for overseeing and combining the interests of education, employment and training into educational policy making signified a new direction for education. School community members did not enjoy a similar increase in their influence in educational policy making at the federal, state or local levels.

In relation to the role of the teacher unions the situation in Australia differs from that which was evident in New Zealand. The teacher unions in Australia were able to exercise far more pressure. In Western Australia, for example, a Memorandum of Agreement was negotiated between the Ministry of Education and the SSTUWA after a protracted industrial dispute resulting from opposition to the implementation of *Better Schools* (1987). This agreement assisted the Union's participation in setting the pace of reform and provided the basis of salary increases for teachers.

Mahoney (1991) indicates that the "new" economics in Australia was accompanied by distinctive features rendering it more attractive than its manifestations elsewhere. He argues that under the programme initiated by Dawkins there was no accompanying downgrading of public education and its increasing privatisation, teachers received comparable salary levels and equity issues at all levels reflected much official concern. This contrasts sharply with conditions in New Zealand. Certainly whilst one can talk of massive and incessant restructuring in Victorian and Western Australian education systems it has been on a scale far less extreme than that which occurred in New Zealand. The New Right influence was less pervasive in the restructuring efforts described in the controversies in Western Australia and Victoria with less emphasis on issues such as privatisation in education. This is in contrast to England where Thatcher's Education Act 1988, widely described as the most important government initiative in English education since the 1944 Act, produced a considerable increase in central control and an expanded role for governing bodies. Previously both local and central authorities had

played an important part in the deliver of a national, yet locally administered, service and the teaching profession controlled the curriculum. The values of “parental choice in a market place of differentiated schools” (Ranson, 1990, p.103) pervaded the reforms. In the United States of America President Reagan, in April 1983, released the National Commission on Excellence in Education’s report entitled *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The report clearly equated falling academic standards with the ability to compete in international markets. In assessing the consequences of these reforms Hawley (1988) commented that the discretionary decision making powers of school boards, school administrators and teachers suffered a reduction. Authority for educational policy making was centralised thereby increasing rules and regulations. Thus, in both the USA and England the federal governments sought greater control over education and stressed the link between a well educated work force and economic prosperity. These influences were evidenced in the controversies in WA, Victoria and New Zealand.

The preceding discussion has sought to evince the interrelatedness of overseas and interstate trends in Western Australian educational reform. Community participation in school governance has been the central issue in the controversies presented in this thesis and it is to this issue that the discussion will now turn.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Australian state education systems have traditionally been highly centralised, bureaucratically organised enterprises largely controlled at the state level. During the 1960s and 1970s there was growing opinion that the control of education should not reside entirely in such a system for there were “several legitimate partners with an equal right to be involved in setting the policy and assessing the outcome of schools” (Beare, 1990, p.15). It will be recalled that Victoria, at this time, was seeking more formalised participation by school councils. The reforms of the Whitlam era were driven by a “strongly interventionist preoccupation with social needs” (Pusey, 1991, p.164).

The release of the Karmel Report (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973) argued that devolution of decision making could allow more effective decisions to be reached and hence more effective schools. The themes inherent in the Karmel Report were adopted at state level where various inquiries were initiated and a number of reports released. For example, the matter of school governance was addressed in the *Keeves Report* (Committee on Enquiry into Education, 1981, 1982) in South Australia and the *Hughes Report* (Assessment Panel, 1982) in Tasmania. In Western Australia the Beazley Committee (Committee of Enquiry into Education in Western Australia, 1984) recommended greater community participation in school decision making. In Victoria, the release of the Ministerial papers advocated devolution of responsibility and collaborative decision making at the school level with an enhanced role for school councils. The school community could rightly have envisaged a more prominent role in school decision making.

The groundwork for the economic and public sector reforms at the Federal level during the 1980s was laid by the Fraser Liberal government (1975-1983) (Pusey, 1991, p.3). When the Hawke Labor government, in a similarly constrained economic climate, pursued a similar economic rationalist course, there was a “bipartisan consensus without any electorally effective opposition” (Pusey, 1991, p.3). Lingard, O’Brien and Knight (1993, p.231) in a discussion of corporate federalism conclude that:

this conjunction of corporate federalism, microeconomic reform, human capital theory, economic rationalism and corporate managerialism is not fortuitous. Taken together, they represent a Labor response...to the emerging fiscal and accumulation crises of the state as Australia is integrated within the global economy.

McTaggart (1988, p.22-23) argues that out of frustration with the rigidity and inefficiencies of traditional bureaucracy two solutions emerge. The first is for greater local control by the community which is akin to the creation of participatory democracy. The second is for more “expeditious intervention by policy-makers” whereby a corporate management framework is imposed upon the system. Both federal and state

governments reduced the independence of the public sector and increased control over senior public servants (Considine, 1988; Pusey, 1991; Lingard, O'Brien and Knight, 1993; Lingard and Blackmore, 1997). The apparent capacity of corporate management to respond rapidly to change would be appealing to ministers keen to demonstrate control of their portfolios. However as Pusey (1991, p.10) notes "this state apparatus is caught within projections of reality that give primacy to 'the economy', second place to the political order, and third place to the social order." He continues (p.11):

At the boundary of what was once a friendly and intelligent Australian federal bureaucracy, and in the space that was once a 'public sphere' of constructive deliberation that the bureaucracy had itself nourished, there is instead an insulating distance that protects the political-administrative system from both intellectual and 'ordinary' culture, and so from participation, from interpretations of need, and from many of the normal and supposedly **normative** prerogatives and entitlements of citizenship in a liberal social democracy.

As witnessed in each of the controversies the inadequacies of bureaucracy were recognised and pilloried by the committees of enquiry into education. This created the opportunity for participatory democracy - countenanced by both the *Karmel Report*, Beazley Committee and in the Ministerial papers - but witnessed the introduction of corporate management. The virtues of greater community participation were expounded in policy documents such as *Managing Change in the Public Sector* (1986), *Better Schools* (1987), the Ministerial Papers and *Tomorrow's Schools* (1988). Genuine democratic participation is, however, incompatible with corporate management where SBDMGs, for example, form part of the accountability framework rather than one of autonomous policy development.

The reforms discussed in the controversies all emphasised the need for more efficient and effective use of resources and the establishment of clear lines of control. The impetus for these structural reforms was provided by politicians who, with a view to re-election, were keen to display their apparent control and comprehension of what was required for a better education system. A truly long-term vision of education was not countenanced. Bureaucratic education departments were restructured to form corporate

Ministries of Education with reforms couched in terms of accountability and decentralisation. Lawton (1992a), in a survey of educational administrative restructuring efforts around the world observed the preoccupation of reform efforts with restructuring inefficient, inflexible and out-moded educational bureaucracies. Considine (1988, p.7) indicates that "bureaucratic control...is a technology of power which resides in set rules, procedures and professional disciplines." Focussing on greater decision making at the school level redistributes responsibility for technical and political problems. School grants, enabling individual schools to determine, within strict parameters, where funds should be expended, is an example of the means by which the strictures of bureaucratic control were to be eased.

The concern for efficiency resulted from the perceived failure of education systems to deliver a "quality service" despite substantial government expenditure. School based management (such as the introduction of the school grant in Western Australia) presumably leads to more economic use of resources and permits schools to address their own unique concerns. In each of the controversies individual schools were given more control over the disbursement of resources. However schools were required to expend the grants within strict, centrally determined, parameters thereby preventing autonomous revenue raising and decision making.

Bureaucracy has long been the subject of criticism and critique. Bottery (1992, p.36) indicates that Marxist writers argue against bureaucracy as an appropriate organisational form believing that:

education systems act through their bureaucratic machinery to reflect and reproduce the divisions of society in which the capitalist class is dominant. Schools, they argue, are not built to stimulate widespread class and social mobility, but rather are there for the production of people for different jobs in a technological society, and it is this society which defines what counts as acceptable knowledge and behaviour.

A different insight into the bureaucratically organised school system is given by Hunter (1994) who argues that both liberal and Marxist theory ignores the historical reality of the school. Hunter (p.157) suggests that:

without the impersonal and expert conduct formed in the educational bureau it would have been impossible to detach schooling from the religiously driven political combat of the early nineteenth century and to establish it as a governmental problem open to administrative solution.

Bureaucracy is the means of separating the personal will of those in power and political administration and for "routinely transforming the exigencies of government into technical problems requiring technical solutions (Hunter, 1994, p.157). Bureaucracy is considered to be an appropriate organisational form for education systems which have the dual responsibilities for the moral guidance and training of students. Hunter (p.155) regards bureaucracy as a remarkable human invention stating that:

The capacity to detach governmental decision from personal loyalties and religious passions, far from representing a split in a formerly unified moral personality or public life, was a positive organisations and ethical acquisition, involving an important augmentation of our technologies for living.

Whilst Hunter extols the virtues of bureaucracy, an analysis of the history of education in Australia reveals numerous efforts to decentralise. Birch and Smart (1989, p.140) note that the regional offices created by state departments generally became yet another layer in the bureaucracy rather than facilitating greater devolution of responsibility. As witnessed in the controversies during the 1980s both Western Australia and Victoria embarked upon significant programmes of reform in order to elicit better schools. Both programmes were characterised by a significant shift of responsibility, resources and functions from the central office to district or regional offices and individual schools. Rhetoric surrounding these efforts indicated that stakeholders would be afforded a greater role in school decision making.

The preference for corporate management as the appropriate basis for organisational reform was evident in each of the controversies presented. Lawton (1992a, p.145) suggests that this "managerial revolution" and the slogan "let the managers manage"

epitomises the “contemporary view about how organisations, private and public can be more effective and more efficient.” Contemporary thinking sees the notion of organisations as social inventions. The attack on bureaucracy is symptomatic of this change in thinking. The significant influence of Peters and Waterman’s (1982) *In Search of Excellence* and the principles of management espoused therein were in vogue in various restructuring endeavours described in the controversies. In their analysis of successful companies, these authors contend that successful managers should be held accountable for achieving results rather than following rules. In moving from bureaucracy to corporate management, Considine (1988, p.8) explains that:

it is not the pattern of coordination and control which changes but the method. Where traditional bureaucratic control is characterised by the laying down of rules and the ordering of work through job specifications and job procedures, this new form of instrumental control endeavours to strip away legal obligations and rights in favour of circumscribed output contracts negotiated directly with managers. Executives may shift resources around without obtaining clearance from up the line, but they may only shift those resources into more narrowly circumscribed areas of expenditure.

Corporate management was clearly evident in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand as reformers streamlined the organisational hierarchy, drew clearer lines of accountability and introduced managerial practices (such as performance indicators designed to achieve “quality control”) and terminology into the education system. In Western Australia, for example, performance indicators were developed to judge the performance of the Ministry of Education in meeting its objective:

to ensure that our students develop the understandings, skills and attitudes relevant to individual needs, thereby enabling them to fulfill their potential and contribute to the development of our society.

(*Annual Report, 1990/1991, p.45*)

Performance indicators were developed to measure performance in terms of access, relevance, excellence, equity and cost.

Hunter (1994, p.xix) contends that:

the state only rules through specific instruments of government systems of economic management and military security, health and education systems,

bureaucratic and legal officialdoms. As the state does not invent these instruments, the exercise of power may in fact be dependent on a host of political contingencies. Once we begin to see that the exercise of power is never automatic, and requires the improvisation and maintenance of often fragile administrative technologies, we are less likely to see government as the expression of power originating elsewhere, in unequal economic relations or arbitrary sovereignty.

Citing the work of Foucault, Hunter (1994, p.xx) sees government as an array of administrative technologies which determine the dominant discourse - thereby what counts as knowledge. From this perspective these administrative technologies are not “dedicated to irrational repression” but are merely systems which have emerged to deal with a set of threatening circumstances (p.xx). Corporate management, as a new technology of government may be regarded as a means of coping with a distinct set of historical contingencies. Educational reformers, in each of the controversies, viewed structural reform as the appropriate means for dealing with the inadequacies of the education system viz. bureaucracy. The choice of corporate management as an organisational form best suited for the restructuring of the education system was not questioned.

If one accepts Hunter’s assertion that bureaucracy is an apt organisational form for the education system, a modified bureaucracy may re-emerge in time. In Western Australia, for example, the education system is still organised largely upon bureaucratic lines. The central office, whilst initially decimated in size, grew markedly. Whilst structural change was employed to overcome perceived systemic problems, changing the culture of those working within the system is a more difficult proposition. Dale (1989, p.59) indicates that the intractability of education systems to reform is less a condition of bureaucracies than the outcome of various groups within the system protecting their interests in preference to promoting those of others in the education system. As was witnessed in both Western Australia and Victoria, the teacher unions became increasingly preoccupied with the preservation and strengthening of their centralised bargaining position. In New Zealand, where the central bureaucracy was abolished, the teacher unions were severely curtailed by the New Right agenda of the government.

This leads to the somewhat tentative hypothesis that, unless the bureaucracy is obliterated (as in New Zealand) the tendency may be for the bureaucracy to re-emerge. Corporate management introduced features such as hiring and firing of staff, contracts and performance appraisal into the education system. Individuals who have only experienced bureaucracy, and wary of change and motives for reform, will resist and, where possible, revert to the methods with which they feel most comfortable.

Accountability mechanisms most certainly shifted responsibility for certain decisions to the school level and away from the Minister for Education. The restructuring programmes were characterised by the strategic positioning of Ministers at a distance from difficult decisions - these being made at the local level - whilst maintaining firm control of the education budget. However, with contentious issues such as school closures or complaints from schools or parents, Ministers could not escape criticism. In Western Australia, the document *School Financial Planning and Management: Policy and Guidelines* (1991, p.2) indicates that:

With the increased capacity for independent action that results from the provision of grants to schools comes a commensurate increase in the need for schools to be accountable. As school funds are public monies, the management of these funds is subject to the requirements of the Financial Administration and Audit Act...Schools must also operate in accordance with legislation and Ministry policy. Schools must also account to their local communities for the decisions they make. This is necessary to ensure that schools are responsive to the issues of concern within their immediate community and adapt appropriately to local circumstances.

This statement indicates the interrelatedness of corporate management, accountability and school community participation. Schools in Western Australia account for their allocation of resources to the District Superintendent through the School Development Plan and reviews by financial auditors. Accountability to parents and the local community is demonstrated through the SBDMGs. These mechanisms may create a degree of uncertainty in the minds of individuals which, in turn, may have contributed to the difficulties in bureaucratic reform.

Searle (1995) argues that "social objects" such as governments and schools are "placeholders for patterns of activities." He distinguishes between "brute facts" which "exist independently of any human institution" and "institutional facts" which exist "only with human institutions" (p.27). Institutional facts exist only by human agreement and hence may be considered social inventions. Social facts require "collective intentionality" for their existence and continuance. Returning to Hunter's assertion that bureaucracy emerged as the appropriate technology for the organisation of the modern school, it may be argued that bureaucracy was maintained because of the collective intentionality of the individuals working within the system. Searle (p.117) explains:

The secret of understanding the continued existence of institutional facts is simply that the individuals directly involved and a sufficient number of members of the relevant community must continue to recognise and accept the existence of these facts. Because the status is constituted by its collective acceptance, and because the function, in order to be performed, requires the status, it is essential to the functioning that there be continued acceptance of the status.

Bureaucracy has, in the latter stages of the twentieth century, become seen by governments as an inappropriate organisational form. The inability to respond expeditiously to modern exigencies which constantly confront educational systems is commonly cited as an inadequacy of bureaucracy. Coupled with economic rationalism, corporate management is promoted as a more responsive and efficient organisational structure for the public sector. Considine (1988, p.5) believes that the popularity of corporate management in the current context is that it has the capacity to "represent itself as a vigorous and comprehensive methodology" for reducing the uncertainties created with the role of the public sector in social and economic reform. The inability of corporate management, in an education context, to deliver certainty may be a possible weakness leading to the re-emergence of a modified form of bureaucracy. Whether bureaucracy or corporate management or market bureaucracy prevails is yet to be determined. However the repercussions each organisational form has for community participation in school decision making cannot be disputed. The failure of reformers to

countenance participatory democracy as a basis for the organisation of the education system is noteworthy.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION MAKING

In Western Australia there is no tradition of community participation in school decision making. This differs to both Victoria, where there was limited participation, and New Zealand, which had a stronger tradition of participation. Whilst being countenanced by the Beazley committee, it was with the release of *Better Schools* (1987) that this issue became more firmly posited on the educational policy agenda. The constitution of corporate management has repercussions for both the nature of community participation and the power relations extant within the participatory structures put into place. It effects the types of negotiation possible, the nature of conflicts, knowledge issues and the participatory structures put into place (Considine, 1994, p.157). The ability of power-brokers to control the educational agenda and to exclude potential issues from arising is influenced by the organisational contexts in which they are operating (Lukes, 1974).

Whilst the tenor of the discussion on community participation in the Beazley report (1984) presumed a participatory democracy framework, in *Better Schools* (1987) it became apparent that participation would occur in accordance with the principles of corporate management. Perusal of the controversies described in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand reveals that each government approached the issue of community participation from a similar perspective (although in New Zealand the economic rationalism influence of the New Right was more pronounced), the resulting structures facilitating participation varied significantly in their responsibilities and modus operandi. In New Zealand, it will be recalled, each school was to be run by a Board of Trustees. The principal had reduced powers under the New Zealand Education Act (1989) and the Education Amendment Act (1989). Legislation attempted to overcome typical pitfalls of community participation. For example, board membership

should be balanced and the board entrusted with considerable responsibilities. In Victoria, school councils were given greater responsibilities including the selection of school principal and formulation of school policy. The Education Act in Victoria was amended in 1984 giving effect to the government policy outlined in the Ministerial Papers. In Western Australia *Better Schools* (1987) foreshadowed a significant role for parents through participation in SBDMGs. However, in response to pressure from the SSTUWA this role was amended to participation in the formation of a school development plan. Enabling legislation was eventually passed in 1991.

Whilst devolution of responsibility ostensibly occurred, albeit to different degrees, re-centralisation in crucial areas of control also transpired. In New Zealand the boards were subject to increasing constraint in terms of policy making and function with curriculum control retained at the centre. In both Victoria and Western Australia the central office retained control in critical areas such as determination of the school grant and accountability as maintained through performance indicators. No government permitted genuine self-governing by school decision making bodies enabling autonomous revenue raising to facilitate performance of their functions, including that of following government policy. Whilst these groups may be entrusted to administer school grants there was no provision for additional revenue to be raised. The New Zealand Boards of Trustees seemingly have considerable responsibility, yet, closer scrutiny reveals that Ministerial approval is required for activities within schools and hence school charters must be prepared within strict guidelines. School charters eventually became largely defunct following amendments made following the election of the National Government in October 1990 (Gordon, 1992, pp.199-200).

The reforms enacted by the Lange government extended local participation in school governance. Likewise, though to a lesser extent, Victoria has been a state “with a history of experimentation in local school management” (Birch and Smart, 1989, p.141). Kirner, a long time parent activist, on gaining election in 1982 exerted considerable

influence on the development of the Ministerial Papers. Her philosophical commitment to devolution and participatory decision making is evident in these documents. As Minister for Education these principles were pursued with greater fervour. In Western Australia, however, there was no such tradition of participation. The parent group WACSSO, whilst supportive of an augmented role for parents in school decision making, lacks strong public support. The SSTUWA, through industrial action and the eventual signing of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry of Education, was able to dictate the direction of reform without significant public outcry at the demise of the SBDMGs. Whilst in principle the union is supportive of greater community participation and its corollary of greater teacher participation in school decision making, the union acts to advance the cause of teacher participation. The union also objected to any participation by the community in the appointment of principals and staff. By gaining prominence in policy formulation and implementation and in the development of enabling legislation, the union reduced the role of SBDMGs. The lack of a groundswell of parental and broad public support for a greater voice in school decision making facilitated the strategy of the SSTUWA to curtail the role of parents and promote the role of teachers in school decision making. The *raison d'être* for SBDMGs was merely to assist in the formulation of a school development plan, in accordance with centrally determined guidelines.

Whether a sufficient number of individuals within the education system accept corporate management, thereby permitting its continuance, is open to question. The ramifications of Searle's assertions for SBDMGs are perhaps more compelling. The continued goodwill of parents involved in SBDMGs may begin to wane as they see their role as one of rubber stamping decisions made by staff at the school level. With no real input into policy making it may be more difficult to attract parents to participate on school councils. Wylie (1990) in a study of New Zealand Boards of Trustees indicated that approximately two-thirds of board members were not intending to stand again at the

next elections due to the heavy demands of the job and the lack of involvement in decision making.

It will be recalled that the school community, through WACSSO, was excluded from the process of determining the parameters of SBDMGs. The SSTUWA, in conjunction with senior Ministry of Education executives contrived the legislation controlling SBDMGs. Considine (1994, p.131) contends that:

It is because of its role in generating solidarity and the continuous reconciliation of competing values inside the policy system that it is possible to argue as a first principle that all policy making must be based on the widest possible level of participation, consistent with an effective process of decision making.

The “widest possible level of participation” ensures the collective intentionality of the school community required for the existence of SBDMGs. In the absence of such a level of participation in the formulation of the parameters of SBDMGs the process is devoid of such collective intentionality. An insufficient number of school community members may consider SBDMGs worthwhile and therefore fail to participate. Coupled with the absence of a strong tradition of participation in school decision making by the school community in Western Australia the future of SBDMGs may be somewhat tenuous.

POWER

The issue of power also needs to be addressed in order to gain an insight as to the ramifications of the *Better Schools* (1987) reforms encouraging greater community participation in school decision making in Western Australia. Gordon (1992, p.189) indicates that:

the contestation that has accompanied the educational reforms in New Zealand has focused on whether it is **power** that has been devolved at all...It is precisely **what is being shifted** that is the problematic issue here. Is it power and authority which has been moved out into the regions? The difference between devolution and decentralization...lies in the question of who has the power to make decisions and make changes. Who has control of the resources? How

much autonomy is given in decision making to the devolved authorities?

Angus (1990, citing Wood, 1984, p.232) states that genuine democratic participation in decision making requires three conditions:

first, the participants must be in the position of decision-maker rather than decision influencer; second, all participants must be in possession of, or have access to, the requisite information on which decisions can be reached; and third, full participation requires equal power on the part of participants to determine the outcome of decisions.

This alludes to a fundamental, yet frequently overlooked element in any reform attempting to devolve responsibility for decision making - power relationships. Power must be considered as an essential element since devolution is concerned with the transferring of power to "legitimate practices" from the central bureaucracy to other sectors within the system (Casey and Macpherson, 1990, p.29). The governments in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand sought to alter the power relationships extant within the education system.

From Burbules' (1986) perspective, devolution is a means by which the government uses power as a means of prevention. This is akin to Lukes' (1974, p.23) notion that the most effective and pervasive form of power is extant when power is used to prevent conflict from arising. The participation of the school community in school decision making may be construed as a method of keeping the school community "on side" and limiting the emergence of potential issues. By limiting the jurisdiction of school decision making groups the status quo may be maintained. In the controversies outlined it was the Ministers for Education who largely determined the extent to which power was devolved for they initiated the enquiries into education and the terms of reference for these enquiries. The governments and Ministers for Education determined the dominant discourse and thereby what counted as knowledge. Lingard and Blackmore (1997, p.14) note that:

Increasingly, what is worthwhile knowledge is determined by the user - students in terms of their individual vocational choices; industry in terms of applied knowledge to increase profits; and the state, in terms of policy use and accountability purposes.

The recommendations which followed from the enquiries were in line with the preference of the Minister and reflected the discourse of corporate management. The school community was excluded from the process of power redistribution.

Further to this, Casey and Macpherson (1990) state that the two key resources important to the control of organisational reality are structure and power. In their discussion of structure they state that the New Zealand restructuring programme provides an example of the degree of power which may be invested in formal structures. They give the example of the authority of the Board of Trustees whereby if the Board fails to perform in accordance with its charter, it may be dismissed and a statutory manager appointed. They state that "structures are patterns of relationships and assumptions about practices; patterns and assumptions that can only be changed by changing people's values" (p.28). Thus the requirement to give effect to a policy of devolution means that "planning and involvement" must occur "outside the secure parameters" within which planning typically occurs. Whilst devolution involves handing power from a superior to subordinate office in the hierarchy, power can be resumed by the centre. Decentralisation involves moving functional responsibilities from the centre to the periphery with the implication that power to recentralise resides at the centre. This situation is uncontested since, in a "complex, modern, democratic state" this is "consistent with the powers of the state" (Casey and Macpherson, 1990, p.29).

In Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand power was re-centralised in corporate bodies such as ministries of education where the real power to decide was vested in the hands of a few. In Western Australia the Minister for Education retained power over educational policy making. The Chief Executive Officer, for all intents and purposes, merely acted as a conduit for decisions made at the Ministerial level. Pearce was keen to exert his influence upon the education system through his participation on the Functional Review Committee and the development of *Better Schools* (1987). The school community had limited power or opportunity to participate in the determination

of educational policy. The lack of significant outcry from parent groups during the controversy in Western Australia leads to the assumption that SBDMGs provide sufficient opportunity for participation by parents at the school level. It must also be stated that many parents are interested only in their child and not the school.

Considine (1988) argues that one of the reasons for the popularity of corporate management among contemporary governments is that it permits greater control of the public service. Efficient and rational policy outcomes can be generated in a focussed way through corporate management. However, Considine (1988, p.16) indicates that:

In placing the cabinet at the centre of a new, more highly circumscribed, steering apparatus of goals, indicators and evaluations, the purposive intent walks unstable ground. Even if one was to assume that cabinet could exercise a decisive role in managing an enormously enlarged range of policy issues, it is by no means clear that the result would be either effective or democratic.

It will be remembered that in each of the controversies schools are permitted the "freedom" to be "self determining" within the confines of centrally determined guidelines. For example, in Western Australia failure to operate within the parameters set by the central authorities could necessitate the removal of the SBDMG.

When considering the issue of power, Gamson (1986, pp.29-32) distinguishes between authorities - deemed to be those who can make binding decisions in a particular social system - and potential partisans - deemed to be those who are influenced by the decisions in some way. The potential partisans in the controversy would be the school community. Gamson examines power in a symmetrical manner for power may be exerted by the authorities on the potential partisans (social control) or it may be exerted by the potential partisans on the authorities (influence). In Western Australia the SSTUWA used its influence with the result that the Ministry of Education progressively reduced the power of the SBDMGs. Furthermore the union exerted power in order to forestall the potential influence of other stakeholder groups such as the principals' associations.

Influence, according to Markle and Peterson (1987, p.318) may take the form of persuasion where “some change is produced in the orientation of the authorities without the addition of anything to their situation.” With the Ministry of Education providing funding for WACSSO, the parent group’s capacity for more militant protest is hindered. The Ministry therefore had an effective method of control over this organisation. This is also an example of Lukes’ (1974) second face of power WACSSO was prevented from participating in decision making on potential issues such as formulating enabling legislation relating to SBDMGs.

Authorities, such as the Commonwealth and State governments, would attempt to contain rather than yield to partisan demands. Strategies such as cooptation and participation allow authorities the opportunity to “give ground” yet still remain in control. This is especially evident within a corporate management framework. Authorities typically prefer to limit the access of potential partisans hence cooptation is often used when pressure is expected or perceived from partisans. It is apparent that the SSTUWA had the potential to exert influence over the Ministry of Education and therefore gained access to the formulation of policy (through the Memorandum of Agreement). Other stakeholders were denied such access because the Ministry of Education did not believe that these groups could or would exert such pressure.

Gamson’s propositions on influence indicate that protagonists are more likely to attempt influence if they are highly affected by an issue. This is more so if the group controls significant resources and when such resources are liquid and uncommitted. One could argue that the union was the only group of protagonists to control such resources. In a discussion of solidarity groups, Gamson (1968, p.154) indicates that the more the interest group is representative of a solidarity group, the greater is the likelihood of its attempting influence. Whilst WACSSO supposedly represents parents it has little support from the majority of the parent population and the lack of resources and solidarity reduces its ability to exert substantial influence. The outrage expressed by this

organisation at the diminution of power initially pledged to SBDMGs by the Ministry (*"The West Australian"*, August 20, 1990; October 17, 1990) is indicative of the lack of influence in policy making by this group. Closure of a controversy will, according to Markle and Peterson (1987) be influenced by the extent to which the authorities accept the partisans as valid representatives of a legitimate set of interests. Chomsky (1991) would argue that the public and their interests have become marginalised because the media, being dominated by decision making elites, determines the information imparted to the public. Thus authorities do not accept that the partisans are representative of a legitimate set of interests for these interests are subsumed in favour of those of the decision making elites. In Western Australia the Minister for Education failed to countenance the views of all stakeholders, with the exception of the SSTUWA when formulating the legislation for SBDMGs.

Timar and Kirp (1987, p.311) contend that altering institutional behaviour may prove harder than altering individual behaviour for schools have been "able to respond to and accommodate almost any change or demand that is made of them." Past school reform movements have occurred without fundamentally altering the way in which schools operate. Wise (1977, p.73), in a discussion of the failure of educational policies, states that one reason lies in "procedural complexity" which arises as a result of efforts to respond to demands for sharing power. He continues:

It results when those in power wish to appear to share authority without, in fact, surrendering authority. The response is a procedural rather than a substantive change. For example, the past decade has witnessed efforts to decentralize school systems, to provide for community participation, and to allow community control. But, prior to the advent of any of these reforms, school systems have procedures for arriving at decisions. Frequently, existing procedures are not removed to make way for the new procedures; the new procedures are simply added to the old. A rational system of decision-making gives way to a hyperrational system as added procedures rather than redistributed authority becomes the response.

The procedures for school decision making, which historically, in most instances, excluded parental involvement, still continue. The authority invested in SBDMGs and

school councils in Victoria is minimal despite the requirement for their approval of school development plans. School staff also have jurisdiction in areas such as the allocation of resources. The reluctance of some school principals and teachers to surrender their traditional powers in educational policy making at the school is problematic, giving rise to speculation as to the real power community members as participants on SBDMGs or school councils will be able to exert.

The reforms discussed in the controversies failed to indicate a consideration by the reformers of the power relationships already extant within the system whilst attempting to fundamentally alter these arrangements. This may be due to either ignorance of existing power relationships or attempts by the reformers to override such power relationships. It may be a relatively simple task to legislate for such changes (although the SSTUWA was able to successfully stall and then gain participation in the formulation of such changes) it is far more difficult to ensure their operation within the system. Popkewitz (1977, p.208) believes that for those in power, processes of devolution and decentralisation “may be viewed as an intervention process to maintain a social consensus” and that the appeal of decentralisation, in part, lies in the fact that “it holds out the possibility of re-creating a linkage between the policy and the citizenry.” Thus community participation can serve as a way to “defuse political conflict, restore trust in the political system, and conserve the essentials of the status quo.” This would seem to be the outcome in each of the controversies in relation to school community participation in school decision making.

In a study of six state school councils in Victoria, Watkins (1990) indicates that the power of school councils was illusory. There was reluctance by some principals to allow the school council to freely debate and explore issues which may have implications for the administration of the school. These trends add credence to the assertions concerning the intractability of school systems to reform. Browne, Cahir and Reeve (1987, pp.197-8), all past members of the Australian Council of State School

Organisations, believe that the respective roles of parents, teachers and students and the authority residing in these roles provides a basis for their right to participate in the “structuring of the school experience.” They continue:

However the authority to act is not necessarily the same as the power to do so and, to some extent, the translation of authority into power can only happen when those who hold it recognise that they possess authority. An acknowledgement of the authority of the various parties would mean a re-casting of the traditional patterns of authority and subordination that have, and in many instances still do, characterise education practice and the process of policy making at the school, state and national levels. And since it is these patterns which determine who decides what happens in education in terms of policy and programs (or, in other words, who makes the rules), any acknowledgement of equal authority must carry with it the right to participate in an equal way in the decision making process.

With educational policy makers operating in a corporate management framework, school based decision making involves little capacity for either independent decisions to be reached without an autonomous function through a revenue raising capacity. In contrast trading units of a corporation do have revenue raising functions. The participatory structures in Western Australia, Victoria or New Zealand do not have the capacity to make autonomous decisions nor raise funds. They operate within strict parameters set by governments. Petitt (1980, p.180) indicates that the factor critical for effective local decision making is control of resources (including both financial and human) by an elected body at the school level. Such conditions are absent in each of the controversies. Governments have been unwilling to entrust the management of schools to school communities. Brady (1977, p.12) states that:

The question of devolution of financial responsibility is crucial to any discussion of the sharing or delegation of responsibility. Just as State and non-government systems may express concern that the Commonwealth's financial resources allow it to exercise undue influence in education, so within State systems parents and teachers claim that central financial powers are antipathetic to local needs.

Schools in Western Australia receive a school grant but must “manage their finances within the parameters established for the Government school system” (*School Financial Planning and Management: Policy and Guidelines*, 1991, p.1). Staffing of the school is

a further area in which participation of SBDMGs may be considered important. Whilst *Better Schools* (1987) initially proposed a role for the SBDMGs in the selection of school principal, this failed to eventuate.

In each of the controversies presented, the reforms aimed at devolution reflected the policies of the government and did not arise from “grass roots” pressure. Indeed few of the reforms were motivated by a groundswell of public support for greater participation in school decision making. The exception occurred in Victoria where the parent body did provide some impetus for change. The reforms were “top down” responses to problems couched in politically appealing rhetoric. During the 1960s and 1970s when the calls for greater community participation were prevalent, buoyant economic conditions prevailed. In the 1980s and 1990s, when devolution of responsibility became a recurrent theme in restructuring programmes, economic conditions were more constrained. In such a climate community participation became part of the movement towards corporate management with very little power invested in the participatory structures.

The controversies reveal the manner in which the governments concerned exercised their legislative capacities to forcefully lead to the closure of certain issues - especially those concerning the role and power of school decision making groups. Legislation does not of itself create the conditions by which closure of issues will occur. New rigidities may be created and disadvantaged groups within the community may be placed at a greater disadvantage. Brady (1977, p.7) states:

The interconnectedness of legislation and administrative policy or procedures should be recognised, so that if an Act is drafted to permit more extensive delegation of responsibility, it would be essential to examine and if necessary amend other legislation (e.g. Audit Acts) regulations (e.g. Treasury) or administrative procedures which might effectively prevent any effective delegation.

Whilst seeming to permit devolution of decision making through SBDMGs, school councils and Boards of Trustees the future participants in such groups had no

participation in the formulation of the conditions or legislation under which such groups would operate. Ultimate power, under corporate management, resides in the hands of a few. These power brokers, with control of the “purse strings”, determined the scope of participation of school decision making groups, allowing no consultation with those affected by their decision. Enabling legislation was subsequently formulated. The manner in which central authorities re-centralised power and introduced stringent accountability frameworks is further evidence of the unequal power relationships within the education systems investigated. Corporate management is antithetical to devolution whereby power is relocated from the central authority. Closure by force of the issues relating to the controversy is indicative of the problematical nature of power relationships within the education system. Closure of the issues by negotiation, involving all protagonists, would have demonstrated a willingness by those in power to more genuinely attempt devolution. That such volition was absent, leads one to question the true motivation underpinning the government policies investigated. Most certainly the SSTUWA was able to augment its power through negotiation of the Memorandum of Agreement. The absence of any contestation of the legislation by the school community is also problematic and may be linked to tacit approval of government policy, apathy or the lack of power and resources to campaign for an augmented role for SBDMGs.

Analysis of the controversies reveals that despite the similarities in government intent and differences in approach, the issue of school community participation in school decision making remains difficult to resolve. Despite the rhetoric it would seem that the governments concerned lacked the political will, or perhaps lacked interest, to genuinely devolve power to the school level. In Western Australia, WACSSO, during the period of the controversy, was satisfied with the in-roads made by parents into the school decision making process. This does not preclude future attempts by this organisation to increase such participation. Analysis of the controversy reveals that the parents have achieved very little by way of meaningful participation but perhaps have a

“foot in the door.” SBDMGs have scant capacity to significantly determine the direction of school policy - this being largely determined by the central office through the issue of strict guidelines. The conclusion may therefore be drawn that for all the restructuring and industrial unrest which occurred during the controversy, decision making processes within schools will accommodate SBDMGs without significant disturbance to the status quo. Similar conclusions may be drawn concerning Victoria and New Zealand.

CONTROVERSY AS A FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY ANALYSIS

The preceding discussion indicates the necessity for a consideration of power relationships in an analysis of educational reform programmes. With the reforms focusing upon devolution of authority and greater community participation in school decision making, consideration of this issue becomes increasingly salient.

The use of controversy as a framework for educational policy analysis assisted in several ways to expose the differential power distribution within the education systems considered. Firstly, this framework enabled the enunciation of the arguments and assumptions underpinning those arguments, used by both those in power to persuade the disenfranchised that they would benefit from the reform policies. Hence the manner in which the ideologies of the policy makers prevailed over those of other stakeholders in the education system could be discerned through an examination of the arguments, consequences and closure in the controversies. The school community was prompted to believe that the process of devolution would significantly empower them and produce a different distribution of power. Whilst the government policies examined in the controversies could lead to such a conclusion, a review of the ideologies informing such documents discloses a different government agenda. This agenda was primarily concerned with the installation of corporate management systems enabling closer

scrutiny of school function. In such a system, power is invested in the hands of a few and the objective was to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in school systems.

Secondly, the use of controversy as a framing device enabled an examination of the manner in which communication was distorted and certain groups were excluded from decision making. Thus controversy permits the incorporation of Lukes' (1974) second face of power (concerned with decision making and non decision making) into the analysis. This was highlighted through an examination of the events, issues, arguments and constraints in each controversy. The rhetoric of devolution and genuine community participation in school decision making in government policy differed from that which was actually witnessed in the three education systems considered. Through consideration of the events, arguments, constraints, consequences and closure of the controversy one is able to discern the manner in which policy rhetoric translated into policy practice.

Thirdly, consideration of the context in which the reforms were conducted permitted a detailed analysis of the educational reforms. The reasons which underpinned the policy directions are better understood within the broader societal milieu in which government policy is conceived. Controversy provides a structure as a means of assessing the manner in which policy makers legitimise policy and hence how the discourse of one group or actor in the policy process prevailed over others can be identified. This is necessary for a satisfactory analysis of policy to be effected. Controversy, as a policy analysis framework permitted consideration of competing arguments in the debate. Coupled with an examination of the stimulus and events of the controversy, the context directs the educational policy analyst towards a consideration of the wider societal issues impacting upon government policy. This, in turn, assists the analyst in formulating the agenda for change. The interconnectedness of international, federal and state trends in all government policy formulation must inform such an agenda.

Fourthly, the manner in which the issues of the controversies were closed is indicative of the means by which power was employed by the government and others. Not all stakeholders participated in the negotiation of the *modus operandi* of SBDMGs. That certain groups, notably the teacher unions in Western Australia, were able to gain such access is further indication of the unequal distribution of power within the education system.

The use of controversy as a framing device for educational policy analysis assisted in the investigation of the Western Australian, Victorian and New Zealand education systems and attempts to augment school community participation in school decision making. Whether the same conclusions would have been drawn without the use of this framework is difficult to discern.

The use of controversy assisted in systematically ordering the mass of information pertaining to the reforms considered. Controversy assisted in both disentangling various elements and showing the interplay between features of the policy process. For example, in W.A. schools were required to implement SBDMGs before specific guidelines were issued as to how this was to be effected. Through an examination of the issues, events and arguments the manner in which certain factors, such as the SSTUWA gaining a role in the determination of enabling legislation for SBDMGs leading to a more protracted process, may be discerned. This is evidence of the dynamic context in which public policy processes take place.

In some instances difficulty was experienced in assigning certain data to the most apt element of controversy. Allocating information pertaining to some arguments in a controversy was difficult as that information could also be construed as a constraint. For example, arguments related to the time taken to reach decisions in collaborative settings is one argument cited against the use of participatory processes. This may also be construed as a constraint to the functioning of SBDMGs. Thus the elements of

controversy should not be considered in isolation but rather as interacting elements in the policy process. Further refinement of this device, such as the elements of controversy, may be necessary to overcome such difficulties. Likewise further experience in its use may reveal further inadequacies.

In comparison to rational models of policy analysis, which adopt a linear view of the policy process viz. that the process follows a series of sequential steps, controversy provides a more sophisticated framework for examination of all factors impinging on the policy process. Considine (1994, p.259) indicates that one of the major problems of rational models is that they presume “clear goals which are thought to direct attention and resources” and assume that “policy occurs in neat episodes.” In the dynamic contexts in which policy is now formulated and implemented rational models are thus deficient due to their inability to account for the range of contextual factors impinging on policy.

“Garbage can” models of policy analysis ostensibly overcome the inadequacies of rational models by having a range of responses when problems arise in policy making. Similar to rational models these theories also have a linear approach to the manner in which policy makers deal with crises and hence exhibit the deficiencies associated with other rational models.

The Easton systems model (1965) in which the political system, viewed similarly to a biological system, was “thought to interact with its environment in a continuous struggle to adapt to new pressures and opportunities” (Considine, 1994, p.26) offers a different approach to rational models. Here there is recognition of the interplay between the various elements of the policy process. Considine (1994, p.27) points out that:

Systems are not living things which can make choices about their circumstances. Any discussion of the way systems respond to pressures must, therefore, be broken down into more specific terms so that real actors can be identified. Similarly, the notion that systems seek their own survival is impossible. Actors

within a system of relationships may seek to preserve certain aspects of these, but the system itself is merely a result: systems do not have goals, thoughts and strategies. These are properties of actors. Systems are the patterns of interrelationships between actors.

Likewise, controversy as a framing device, enables the policy analyst to consider the competing ideologies and politics of actors within the policy process. An examination of the arguments and their underlying assumptions in addition to the wider context in which the policy process takes place permits a more erudite analysis of policy.

Controversy, like Easton's model, also permits consideration of the outcomes, both intended and unintended, of a particular policy. Thus policy implementation is not considered the end point in the policy process. However, unlike Easton's model, the use of controversy allows for a consideration of issues within the process, and the manner in which these issues are brought to, or attempted to be brought, to closure by particular actors in the policy process. This provides a further element for analysis and hence contributes to a more detailed study of policy. Thus controversy would seem to offer a more comprehensive framework for policy analysis and permit what Grace (1991, p.3) refers to as "policy scholarship." Grace stresses that consideration of wider contextual factors is necessary in understanding policy for perspectives which overlook such considerations lead to a risk of ignoring:

the examination of the politics and ideologies and interest groups of the policy making process; the making visible of internal contradictions within policy formulations, and the wider structuring and constraining effects of the social and economic relations within which policy making is taking place.

Lukes' (1974) three dimensions of power underpinned the analysis of power conducted in this thesis. The bulk of the analysis of power within each of the controversies is located in Lukes' first two dimensions of power. The third face of power (concerning social relations) was not evidenced to the same extent in this thesis. The use of controversy to examine this dimension of power is an area for further research.

Thus, as a framework for educational policy analysis, the use of controversy, at this preliminary stage, appears to have merit. Certainly it provides a benchmark allowing for

educational policy researchers to develop further techniques and further use of controversy is recommended.

CONCLUSION

The controversies discussed in this thesis centred upon attempts by the governments of Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand to implement reforms purporting to increase participation by the local community in school decision making during the period 1985-1993. Reformers turned to the business sector for guidance and inspiration and reorganised educational organisations along corporate lines. The previous "discourse of management and control" (Giroux, 1985b, p.24) inherent in bureaucratic organisations would purportedly alter under corporate management. The solutions proposed centred upon, *inter alia*, devolution of decision making responsibility and an increased commitment to the democratic participation of the community in decision making. Compelling rhetoric, which proposed that the reforms to delegate power were a move in the right direction, was used to persuade the citizenry that the government would alleviate the problems which had beset both the education sector and the economy. However, it may be concluded that if the resultant school organisations in Western Australia, Victoria and New Zealand effectively address the issue of meaningful democratic community participation and enact processes enabling such participation it would rather be counter to the intention of the reforms.

There are several reasons for this assertion. Firstly, SBDMGs, school councils and Boards of Trustees have been bestowed with little power. Their capacity to influence the administrative functioning of the school is negligible and they have no source of discretionary spending income as they are unable to hold accounts nor have any means of autonomously raising revenue. Hence there is scant power assigned in the area of finance. Whilst these groups may assist in the determination of the school's purpose and priorities there is little scope for an extension of this influence to educational policy making at a state level or national level.

The second argument centres upon the issue of power relationships. Each of the education systems examined was characterised by an entrenched form of centralised governance providing limited opportunities for participation by the school community in educational decision making. According to Smart (1988, p.13) this “active state discouragement” of such participation has “left a legacy of community and parental feelings of inadequacy” in Western Australia. That there was no widespread social action demanding enhanced community participation is also problematic. For truly democratic participation to become a reality requires the mobilisation and influence of all those who seek to be involved in such a process. Participation has, it would seem, been regarded as a “gift of management” rather than a “right and duty” of stakeholders (Bottery, 1992, p.165). Until the community at large becomes more vociferous and desirous of community participation in school decision making, the *modus operandi* of school decision making groups will continue to be determined by more powerful groups who seek to achieve their own vested interests. Perhaps with the passage of time there will be a growing realisation that the “participatory” structures viz. SBDMGs, give limited opportunity for participation and there will be mounting pressure from parents for more opportunities for meaningful participation.

The third factor operating to inhibit community participation is the nature of corporate management. Under such an organisation power is retained centrally, by the body corporate, despite the rhetoric of devolution. Community participation serves the function of maintaining social control by ostensibly granting the community a role in decision making. The community is persuaded that they indeed have a more vital role in educational decision making. Perhaps with the passage of time, those community members who have availed themselves of the opportunity to participate in SBDMGs will come to the realisation that the main function of these groups is to rubber stamp centrally determined policies. The experiences and expectations of members of SBDMGs, school councils and Boards of Trustees is an area requiring research.

Truly democratic participation requires that participants act as decision makers rather than decision influencers, have equal power and equal access to information (Angus, 1990, citing Wood, 1984, p.232). The processes enacted by the Ministries of Education to enable such participation, predicated upon the tenets of corporate management, preclude such participation by the community. It may be concluded that corporate management structures are antithetical to democratic participation. If successive governments continue to pursue corporate management, democratic participation by the school community in school decision making is unlikely to eventuate.

With economic rationalism and the emphasis upon the free market community participation is couched in terms of greater parental choice of schools. Schools are encouraged to diversify and there is a strong emphasis on competition between schools to attract students. Central control over school funding and the school curriculum prevails. Bottery (1992, pp.127-8) argues against the wholesale adoption business principles by educational policy makers:

There would seem to be a number of things that could profitably be translated from other contexts and used in education, but they are not the kind of things which can be taken down ready-made from the shelf and bolted onto the educational organisation. They must be moulded, adapted, re-invented almost. In so doing, one is refusing the quick prescription from those who should know better, and one is urging sensitive adaptation by practitioners.

There would appear to have been few attempts to evaluate the claims of proponents of corporate management that these policies have produced large scale benefits for both the schools and the education system as a whole. Research into the consequences of particular educational policies will inevitably reflect the values of the researchers (or those on whose behalf the research is being conducted). However there is a need to test the claims made by proponents of corporate management and hence research into more than simply the economic consequences of the reforms is required. Quantification of, inter alia, improvements in staff morale, experiences of members of SBDMGs, school councils and Boards of Trustees and improved student outcomes as a result of the *Better Schools* (1987) reforms also needs to be conducted.

Corporate management may be favoured by policy makers yet compelling arguments continue to be articulated in favour of more democratic participation at all levels of government. The emergence of the environmental, populist and feminist movements bear testimony to the impact that such “grassroots” groups can have on policy making. Participation in such movements, and the experience and empowerment gained from experience in more democratic processes may well be accompanied by demands for a greater influence over a whole range of decisions which affect the daily existence of individuals. Participation in a truly democratic process may well be more important than the end results of that process. Angus (1990, p.264) eloquently describes this process in terms of educators:

What is most important about such democratic participation is not merely that it may result in better decisions and commitment to those decisions, nor even that it stimulates greater democratic awareness and commitment to participation in a broader sense. It is most important because such genuine participation can raise for scrutiny a host of issues that are left dormant under the formerly accepted bureaucratic rationality. These include issues of relevance, justice, cultural discrimination in schools and the connections between education and society, economics and politics. Moreover, in collectively challenging the ‘taken-for-granted’ in education, important questions can be raised in relation to these issues, such as: What counts as education? What counts as knowledge? Whose interests are served or restricted by the selection, production and distribution of that knowledge? What aspects of society and economy are legitimated by forms of schooling? What kind of society do we want? How might schools contribute to the formation of such a society?

By confronting such issues schools can, rather than acting as a bulwark against change, begin to question institutional procedures for educational organisations have the task of preparing members of society “to develop the learning capabilities they need in order to meet successfully the challenges of their times” (Williams, 1982, p.56). The extent to which students have benefitted as result of the reforms has not been addressed by successive Ministers for Education and is an area which needs to be researched.

Bureaucratic organisations permit involvement but there is no provision for community participation. Corporate management, at the very least, promotes a nominal level of participation. Bottery (1992, p.111) states:

The free-market model, to its credit, moves the management of education from the bureaucratic and the alienated through to the personal and the motivated, and in so doing breathes new commitment into the system. However it must ultimately fail to match educational management to true educational experiences, because it can only see relationships in terms of the confrontational. If a child, if a school, if an education system is to really succeed, the watchword must not be competition, but partnership.

As more individuals gain some experience in such participation there may be greater impetus from the public to demand further participation in both school decision making and other forms of local governance. Greater appreciation of prevailing ideology and the manner in which the public is marginalised from decision making may ensue.

Duignan (1988, p.129) urges educational leaders to contribute more vociferously to the debate on education in order to help counter the corporate rhetoric which has found wide favour with the media. He believes that issues such as accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and rationalisation must be engaged by educators. If educators do not seize the initiative the direction of education will continue to be charted by others. He concludes:

Educators now have the opportunity to enter the debate on what constitutes valuable schooling. The 'high ground' in the debate has partly been taken by politicians and members of the 'new right.' Should educators become 'political realists' and counter arguments of expediency and self interest with arguments based on the educational long-term interests of children? Should they publicly argue against short-term, narrowly based solutions to complex educational problems?

While such a statement perhaps indicates a return to "provider capture", educators, as the experts in the field, should not be deemed the only groups qualified to participate in such a debate. All who have an interest in education, must engage in such a debate for such transitional periods offer the opportunity to reveal alternatives and actively pursue new directions. Society as a whole stands to benefit from the education of its children. It is only when various viewpoints are forwarded that the merits, or otherwise, of competing alternatives may be actively contemplated. The challenge confronting all with an interest in education is to ensure that children gain the necessary skills, knowledge and critical thinking capabilities to ensure their successful participation in

society. Preparation for active participation in the political processes of society is crucial. The knowledge as to who “gets in” and “how” needs to be imparted to students. The value of school community participation may be truly deemed by the extent to which it contributes to the quality of the education our children receive. Research, concentrating on more than correlations between achievement and participation, is required.

Until there is a “revolution in society” (Cavanagh et al, 1991, p.153) and the public demands a greater voice in meaningful educational decision making the likelihood of such participation remains minimal. This thesis has investigated attempts by the Western Australian, Victorian and New Zealand governments to increase community participation in school decision making during 1985-1993. In relation to the first research question it may be concluded that the school communities in each of the controversies have achieved only limited participation in school decision making. The resultant reforms have perhaps opened the door for more involvement in school decision making through SBDMGs, school councils and Boards of Trustees. However, until there is greater pressure from “below”, “top down” initiatives for community participation in the W.A. government school system will prevail. In relation to the second of the research questions, it may be concluded that controversy does offer a potentially useful framework for analysis of educational policies. Finally, it is hoped that this thesis may serve as a referent for future debate on school community participation in school decision making.

POST SCRIPT

On February 6, 1993, a Liberal Government led by Richard Court, won office in Western Australia. Norman Moore was appointed Minister for Education. The issues surrounding school community participation in school decision making were re-opened as the new government, promising better management, sought to re-vitalize the public sector. A discussion document, "*Devolution: the next phase*", was leaked from the Ministry of Education in May (prior to being read by the Minister) and prompted a vociferous response from the Union. Among the changes mooted was an enhanced role for SBDMGs. Participation was envisaged in the areas of school discipline policy, school dress code, duration and timing of the school day, the number and timing of school development days and selection of the school principal (it will be recalled that *Better Schools* also proposed this role for SBDMGs). The document included a proposed timeline for the changes. On June 10, 1993 a second document "*Devolution. The Next Phase: how far should we go?*" was publicly released. Signed by both the Minister and CEO (Greg Black) this document did not differ greatly from its predecessor. One notable change was the omission of the timeline for implementation.

The SSTUWA was outraged at the proposals, its exclusion from the consultation process and, wary of the battles to be fought with the new government on industrial relations issues, rejected the document. The Union directed its members to join a strike called by the Trades and Labour Council on June 17, 1993 because:

- i) the document was prepared and published in a way which contravened agreed consultative processes.
- ii) the content of the document included the possibility of the wider community discussing and deciding on the working conditions of SSTU members.
- iii) the Government failed to provide assurances around current working conditions and current industrial relations processes.

(*The W.A. Teachers' Journal*, September 1993, p.242)

This reiterated the Union's stance that there was no place for parents in determining industrial matters and that the devolution process had, from the Union perspective, progressed as far as it should go. Whilst the discussion document indicated that no

changes would be forthcoming until consideration of the proposals by parents and staff, the Union wished to assert its role in the consultation process and recommended that, at the annual conference:

1. That the report be received.
2. That the Conference of the SSTU reject Devolution: the Next Phase and calls for the Minister to withdraw it.
3. That the Conference of the SSTU calls on the Minister to initiate a thorough review of devolution thus far and to include teacher workloads and impact on student learning as terms of reference for the review.
4. That until the outcome of the review is determined by the SSTU members will not do more than is required by negotiated Awards and Agreements.

(W.A. Teachers' Journal, September 1993, p.242)

The Minister established a seven member panel - the Ministerial Independent Assessment Group (Devolution) to examine the issues relating to devolution. The group was comprised of representatives of parents, unions, the education sector and, interestingly, the business sector and local government. The Ministry of Education would also establish processes through which teaching staff had the opportunity to respond to the discussion paper. Feedback on the proposals would not be sought until well into 1994.

In September, 1997, the "Local Area Education Planning Framework" document was released after consultation with WACSSO, administrator associations, SSTU WA and the Education Department. Colin Barnett, the Minister for Education, acknowledged that "members of the community expect to be involved in the planning of government services, particularly those that involve their children" and that "Local Area Education Planning is about using resources better, not about cost cutting"(p.1). The document outlined the process by which local area education planning was to occur and stated that (p.5):

Local Area Education Planning involves groups of school communities planning together to provide their students with access to a better range of curriculum choices, specialist programs and quality facilities, through improved use of current and future educational resources.

The Local Area Education Planning process needed to be consistent with the planning principles outlined in the policy document. Upon submission of the Local Area Education Plan by the Consultative Committee for each group of schools (comprised of the District Director, principles, staff, students [secondary schools only] and parent representatives) the Director-General and Minister for Education will need to be satisfied that the plan adheres to the planning principles. The Minister for Education has the capacity to approve or reject the plan. The District Director and school principals have the responsibility for monitoring the outcomes of the Plan and reporting these to the Senior Executive of the Education Department. A four-year planning cycle was envisaged for most areas.

The foregoing discussion indicates that whilst controversies, or issues within the controversy may be closed at a particular point in time, various factors can contribute to their re-opening. The political milieu in which this controversy has been re-opened is likely to result in parent participation being reconstituted with an emphasis on parental choice of schools. The controversy described in Chapter Three may serve as a useful referent as the protagonists contest and negotiate the issues of this new controversy as it unfolds and a new era of quality assurance commences.

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APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF CONTROVERSIES

| Element of Controversy | Western Australia 1987-1993 | Victoria 1979-1991 | New Zealand 1987-1990 |
|------------------------|--|--|---|
| Stimulus | Election of the Burke Labour Government in 1983 and decision of Cabinet to re-structure public service. | Appointment of Alan Hunt as Minister for Education in re-elected Liberal Government in 1979 | Re-election of the Lange Labour Government in 1987 and Lange assuming role of Minister for Education |
| Context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly centralised, bureaucratic administrative structure for education. • No tradition of school community participation in school decision making. • Beazley Committee 1983 reactivated debate with recommendations for increased community participation in school decision making. • Corporate management and economic rationalism favoured by Burke government – with favour for a more entrepreneurial role by government. • Worsening economic climate • Overseas developments such as Thatcherism in England and Reaganism in the United States. • Government enquiries became more clandestine as compared to an earlier more open and participative approach. • Pressure on education to raise standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralised education bureaucracy deemed unresponsive. • School Councils Act (1976) had afforded School Councils a greater role in school decision making. • Succession of Ministers for Education each producing further reform agendas for education. • Worsening economic climate • Favour of corporate management principles for re-structuring of public service – including education system. • Perception that government school standards were falling. • Overseas developments. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater traditional role of regional and local decision making in New Zealand politics. • Public dissatisfaction led to participation in school decision making becoming a policy issue despite a stronger tradition of participation already extant. • Central department of education grew in size with concomitant loss of power of local authorities. • Treasury became most powerful influence in state policy making and favoured New Right policies. • Economic climate worsening. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater involvement of Federal Government in Education. • Linking of education standards with economic performance. • Implementation of certain Beazley report (1984) recommendations already occurring in schools. | | |
| Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Phase One Report</i> (1983) • <i>Managing change in the Public Sector</i> (White Paper) (1986) • <i>Review of the Education Portfolio – Functional Review Committee Report</i> (1986) • Financial Administration and Audit Act. (1985) • <i>The Better Schools Report.</i> (1987) • Cabinet reshuffle (1988) • Industrial unrest and the Memorandum of Agreement (1990) • Ministry of Education policy documents (1990) • Education Amendment Regulations (1992) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Paper (1980) • <i>White Paper on Strategies and Structures for Education in Victorian Government schools</i> (1980) • <i>The P A Report.</i> (1981) • Ministerial Papers. (1982-1986) • Formation of a Ministry of Education (1985). • Kirner as Minister for Education (1988) • Pullen as Minister for Education (1990) • School Councils – Education Act amended (1984) • Regional Boards • The State Board of Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-election of the Lange Labour Government (1987) • <i>Administering for Excellence</i> (1989) • <i>Tomorrow's Schools</i> (1989) • The New Zealand Education Act 1989 and Education Amendment Act 1989. |
| Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicisation of education • Devolution of authority and decision making from central bureaucracy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicisation of education • Devolution of authority and decision making from central bureaucracy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of Treasury and New Right ideology • Corporate management |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate management. • Implementation process • Power redistribution. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate management • Incessant restructuring and implementation of reforms • Power redistribution. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power redistribution • Implementation process. |
| Arguments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicisation of education • Devolution of decision making • Corporate management • Implementation process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolution of decision making • Corporate management • Politicisation of education. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Right • The influence of the Treasury • Corporate management • The implementation process. |
| Protagonists | <p>Premiers – Burke, Dowding, Lawrence. Ministers for Education – Pearce, Lawrence, Gallop, Hallahan. Director-General/CEO – Vickery, Loudon, Nadebaum. SSTUWA WACSSO High School Principals' Association Primary School Principals' Association FRC committee Beazley committee Public Service Board District Superintendents Teachers, students, Principals. Academics.</p> | <p>Ministers for Education – Hunt, Lacy, Fordham, Hogg, Cathie, Kirner, Pullen. Director-General/CEO – Shears, Curry, Morrow, Allen. Teacher Unions – VSTA, VTU, TTUV, VAT. Victorian Council of School Organisations. Victorian Federation of State Schools Parents' Club. School Council members. Regional Superintendents and regional boards. State Board of Education members. Teachers, students, Principals. Academics</p> | <p>Minister for Education – Lange. Treasury. Ministry of Education members Review and audit Agency. Principals' Associations. Parent Advocacy Councils. Board of Trustees members. Students, Teachers, Principals.</p> |
| Constraints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of consultation for <i>Better Schools</i> (1987) report. • Policy implementation before policy is written. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incessant restructuring • Employment of “outside” consultants producing less commitment by education system personnel to reforms. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haste with which reforms were implemented • Markets not able to allow all individuals to maximise choice |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of leadership/guidance from central office. • Lack of training and funding. • SSTUWA influence. • Time lag before legislation for SBDMG's. • Lack of tradition of school community participation in school decision making. • Lack of autonomy (including financial autonomy) for SBDMG's. • SSTUWA influence in determination of legislation for SBDMG's. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role ambiguity for principals • Lack of training for personnel on School Councils • Lack of financial autonomy for school councils • Employment of "outsiders" to senior Ministry of Education positions • Regional boards and school council members not representative of "community". | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to adequately resource reforms • Boards of Trustees lack autonomy and subject to tight central control. |
| Consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBDMG's, whose role was reduced from that proposed in <i>Better Schools</i>, have little capacity for meaningful decision making. • Corporate efficiency driving force for Ministry of Education. • Central control retained. • Demise of Director-General's as major Education Department power broker. • Accountability – through SBDMG's and district office – has become a key issue for schools. • Schools have greater control over expenditure through school grant. • Greater opportunity for school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater role for school councils. • State Board of Education and Regional Boards abolished. • Strong central control • Corporate efficiency • Demise in role of Director-General. • Schools seemingly more open and responsive to parents and more attuned to community concerns. • Role for school councils in selection of Principal. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong central control retained • Teacher Unions have no influence on policy making. • Central bureaucracy decimated. • School regarded as a free-standing business with the Board of Trustees as board of directors and Principal as CEO. • Treasury influence • School governance a partnership between school and community (Board of Trustees) • Lack of power of Parent Advocacy Council. • No significant opposition from general public. |

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| | <p>community anticipation in school decision making than previously existed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSTUWA retained influence. • No significant opposition from general public to role of SBDMG's. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Audit Agency. |
| Closure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue of SBDMG's closed through lack of interest. • Enactment of Education Amendment Regulations (No.3) 1991 closed by force issues related to role of SBDMG's. • Closure by force on issues of devolution. • Broader, philosophical issues related to corporate management remain open. • Closure of issues related to SSTUWA by negotiation. • Closure of issues related to WACSSO by lack of interest. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force used to close issues related to State Board of Education and Regional Boards. • Force used to close issues related modus operandi of School Councils. • Force (through lack of funding) used to close some issues related to devolution. • Corporate management issues closed at present due to predilection for this approach. • Closure of issues related to parent groups through loss of interest. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force effected closure on implementation of <i>Picot Report</i> (1988) through enactment of legislation. • Issues related to corporate management closed as this approach currently favoured. • Force used to close issues related to teacher's working conditions |