

## Politically-critical reflections on educative leadership research

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*This article reports a review of the author's research projects since 1980 related to the concept of educative leadership. The concept was originally defined as leadership intended to improve learning. Its development was informed by action research (being an educator and educational administrator at school to university level), systematic studies intended to refine a practical theory of educative leadership, and applied research (advising reforms to education systems and university programmes). The review indicates that while the concept has served as a useful organiser for a career and research, theory building was too long restricted to education and would have been enhanced by an earlier arrival of political philosophy in the field of educational administration. It is concluded that ongoing scholarship concerning educative leadership should be related to knowledge organisations globally, applied in the sister fields of public administration and in enterprise management, and use political philosophy more explicitly to understand and evaluate the use of power in practice and theory.*

### **Introduction**

The aim of this article is to report a formative evaluation of a 27-year research programme in educative leadership integrated with a career in positions of responsibility. To clarify briefly, I trained and served as a primary school teacher in New Zealand, retrained as a secondary remedial specialist in Scotland, graduated in mathematics and then helped lead a large comprehensive school in England. After a period teaching mathematics in Western Australia, I was then seconded to lead a professional development programme for secondary principals. My masters and doctoral research projects then took me into teaching, research and leadership roles in three Australian universities, and then on to advising administrative restructurings and accountability reforms in three education systems in Australasia. My first chair was to lead a university professional development unit, prior to service as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a New Zealand polytechnic. My second chair, in strategic leadership, was to lead the establishment of a private university in the Middle East as Chancellor and CEO. Today, with a portfolio of commitments in Australasian universities and education systems, it is timely to evaluate my research and theory building concerned with educative leadership with three formative purposes in mind: it will provide me with strategic direction, it may help other leaders and aspirant leaders in education to refine their own approach to leadership, but most importantly, it will help position political philosophy central to critical reflection on the nature and justification for the use of power by leaders in education.

These purposes were addressed using refereed research publications as data and political philosophy for analysis and evaluation. This article does not aspire to the standards of effective biography (Selleck, 1982) or autobiography (Macpherson, 1986b) in educational administration. Instead, it used selected relevant publications and political philosophy to sustain critical reflection while also seeking to avoid this article becoming an apologia or a self-congratulatory memoir. Political philosophy has rarely been used in educational administration as methodology, which is remarkable given the field's close engagement with power. This longstanding oversight has been challenged elsewhere (Macpherson, 2007c) by tracing the hidden influence and potential of the discipline in educational administration and by providing three illustrative case studies where political philosophy was used to critique (a) the appointment of a ex-drug pusher and spin doctor

to the leadership of one of the largest education systems in the world (Macpherson, 2007b), (b) a judicial review of alleged Ministerial interference in academic freedom and institutional autonomy (Macpherson, 2007a), and (c) the consequences of using autocratic governance and interventions in university management (Macpherson, 2007d). This article is therefore the fourth case study in this series.

Using political philosophy to critique current political arrangements in educational administration can be problematic. A primary challenge is that 'political philosophy' has two meanings that are commonly conflated. The first meaning is as a philosophical activity of thinking critically about justifications for the use of power (Kymlicka, 2002). This activity has two general phases: an analysis of current political arrangements, followed by a critical evaluation to determine how well they are justified (Bird, 2006). The analysis phase usually identifies the credos or ideologies underpinning current political arrangements. The critical evaluation phase weighs the quality of the justification given for current political arrangements by asking if it backs up into 'the common good', or a 'social contract' between the governors and the governed, or some other form of justification, such as appealing to an ideology that is given near absolute value.

The second meaning of 'political philosophy' is that it refers to a particular political credo. It has been shown (Macpherson, 2007c) that the four main political credos have been dominant in educational administration research in recent decades: pragmatism, communitarianism, communicative rationalism and egalitarian liberalism. Each of these credos has its own priorities which become very evident when a particular 'political philosophy' is used to conduct 'political philosophy'. To briefly clarify each in turn, pragmatism has its philosophical roots in American Pragmatism that holds that "the validity of standards of meaning, truth, and value as ultimately rooted in considerations of practical efficacy" (Rescher, 2005). Pragmatist evaluation therefore focuses on what works best in practice. The second main political credo, communitarianism, centers on the social life, identity and relationships in organisations, with collectives providing rights and obligations to individuals, and values the integrity of traditional practices used to socially construct meaning (MacIntyre, 1984). Communitarian evaluations of institutions and practices weigh how well they serve the community, the 'public good', and exemplify co-operative values such as reciprocity, trust and solidarity. The third main credo, communicative rationalism, focuses on understanding human control systems with a view to emancipation, how communicative rationality is created (as opposed to instrumental rationality), the disruptive effects of market and bureaucratic systems, how inter-subjective notions of practical reason develop along with the discursive procedures used to justify universal norms (Habermas, 1984-87; 1992). Formative evaluation towards communicative rationalism seeks the development of an open, participative and deliberative democracy for a complex modern world that uses the values of the Enlightenment, and where legitimate law and discourse ethics provide a defense and critique of institutions using public practical reason. The fourth main credo, egalitarian liberalism, begins with a new hypothetical social contract between the governed and the governors, initially by adopting an 'original position' of not taking socially significant facts or perceptions of what 'a good life' is into account (Rawls, 1999). This 'veil of ignorance' helps avoid pre-empting people's choices and insists on an equal concern for everyone and distributive justice. Hence, formative evaluation towards egalitarian liberalism seeks the development of justice as fairness; equal liberty and equal opportunity, with inequalities only justified if they benefit the worst off. Overall, common good and social contract justifications have traditionally dominated the discipline of political philosophy, with other forms of justification emerging in recent decades that give a foundational role to a particular ideology.

This article has three parts. First is this introduction, to set the scene regarding context and methodology, although wider epistemological implications are beyond the scope of this article. The next section provides summaries of research projects related to educative leadership, highlighting political credos in passing. The final section briefly evaluates the summaries, discusses some implications, and provides tentative advice regarding future practice, research and theory building.

### **Educative leadership research**

In this section I summarise key research projects to clarify the genealogy of 'educative leadership' with special reference to the nature and justification of power in roles I either researched or served in as an incumbent.

#### *Being a Deputy Principal*

My masters research into the role of deputy principals of senior high schools in Western Australia showed that their justification for their use of power depended on the gendered nature of their roles and their career orientation, and was reflected in the levels of role conflict they experienced (Macpherson, 1980). Female deputy principals were expected to sustain the pastoral care of students and give special attention to the needs of girls. Male deputy principals were expected to organize the school timetable and give special attention to the maintenance of discipline. Four career orientations were found.

1. The 'veterans' (about 50%) made a virtue of the social norms of the school's staffroom and community, avoided promotion or change, and tended to value loyalty and the achievements of the past. These communitarians regarded external policies and initiatives by new appointees as temporary phenomena and stressed the value of experience in, and dedication to, their particular school. They had the least role conflict.
2. The 'executives' or 'bureaucrats' (about 20%) were the embodiment of their school's mission, rules and adaptive and maintenance mechanisms as determined by the principal. Largely disconnected from staffroom and community cultures, these pragmatists saw 'the system' as a benign guarantor of a professional administrative career and had low to moderate degrees of role conflict.
3. The 'upward mobiles' or 'stepping stoners' (about 20%) had instrumental rather than caring attitudes, solved problems to demonstrate the ability to get things done (rather than to create longer term organisational learning capacities or efficiencies) and looked ahead to a principalship close to home in Perth, the state's capital, as soon as possible. They suffered from moderate to high degrees of role conflict due to disparate perceptions about the legitimacy of their power in context of teacher militancy.
4. The 'educators' (about 10%) stressed the broad goals and philosophies of education, service to students, reconciling colleagues' and students' interests, the facilitation of people-growth through professional development, organisational development through organisational learning, and the auxiliary nature of educational administration as regards learning. They exhibited a blend of communitarian, communicative rationalist and egalitarian liberalist assumptions, an unrealised mix of common good and social contract justifications, and had the most role conflict of all deputies.

This fourth, troubled yet inspirational minority of 'educator' deputy principals gave me preliminary clues about what truly educative leaders might be. They were the deputies who questioned the distribution and use of power in everyday 'professional' actions, such as classroom tyrannies revealed by 'discipline problems', displayed a greater concern for rightness than consensus, collegial

norms or compliance, and were strategic in their interventions, often seeking to improve what they and their co-professionals took for granted.

### *Being a Principal*

In 1982, 24 of the 85 secondary school principals in Western Australia volunteered to participate in peer process consultancy triads in order to facilitate action research in their schools (Macpherson, 1983). After reading introductory research and participating in preparatory workshops, five self-selected triads formed. Each principal had a pair of peers available to facilitate a six-stage action research process in each school. The changing pairings in each triad meant that each principal experienced being a client once and being a consultant twice. School improvement projects were developed by each triad in consultation with the professionals in each school. A number of improvements were achieved by the one-year pilot before unrelated industrial action led to a formal direction by the Department of Education that all principals were not to be out of their schools.

The greatest effects on the participating principals were achieved through *giving* rather than *receiving* advice. Systematic diagnosis with a peer partner and then giving feedback in a host school, prior to contracting to support an intervention, had, in most cases, already been deeply internalised and partially implemented in the consultants' own schools. When these triads were viewed in retrospect, as temporary political arrangements, this project was seen to suspend positional authority in favor of action research that engaged educative leaders and professional colleagues in an political culture of both communitarianism and communicative rationality, all justified as being in the interests of students, parents and other stakeholders, that is, in their 'common good.' In a few cases the justification for use of power simply shifted from a designated position to a group. This project led me to doubt consensus in the staffroom plus an intuitive notion of the 'common good' as a reasonable basis for critical professionalism.

### *Being a Regional Director of Education*

In the early 1980s I designed then-novel doctoral research to examine what it was to be and become a regional director of education in Victoria, Australia (Macpherson, 1984), including 'Boswelling' these elite administrators by living and travelling with them (Macpherson, 1985a). The ontological data collected over a year through shadowing and interaction showed that they campaigned incessantly to embed ideas as 'policy' for implementation, and to refine structures in order to sustain policy implementation (Macpherson, 1985b). The political data collected during this doctoral project showed that a legitimacy crisis in public education had precipitated radical and recent regionalisation (Macpherson, 1986a). The historical data collected showed that the enhanced powers given to these leaders had a long gestation in the public education system (Macpherson, 1987b). The biographical data collected from the 12 incumbents showed that that the different political styles of these powerfully reformist administrators dated from their first significant political success. It was therefore concluded that their power to influence was only partly reliant on their positional authority, as assumed by many in their role set. In addition to the sources already indicated, it was also to do with their intellectual sophistication and coherence, managerial skills, and imaginative and resilient attitudes across each phase of policy making (philosophy, planning, politics) and implementation (mobilising, managing and monitoring) (Hodgkinson, 1981). This array of capacities enabled them to 'talk up' major improvement projects while creating and controlling knowledge about being organised using the arts of structuration (Macpherson, 1988).

Looking back, these powerful men had all been selected to reform and restore public faith in public education through regionalisation. The most common political philosophy evident was egalitarian liberalism; they had each developed a passionate (albeit slightly different) belief in a new

social contract between the incoming state government and the people of Victoria. Their shared intention was to deliver high quality public education as a form of distributive justice, principally to ensure equal opportunity, with special support for the disadvantaged. Being pragmatic, communitarian and socially-critical was not enough for these reformers. Most of them came from very modest upbringings and they were driven by an abstract Australian notion of a 'fair go' in terms of personal freedoms and opportunities, with any special help going to the worst off.

### *Being an educative leader*

In 1986, the three public school state education systems in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria commissioned a project to develop five sets of professional development materials to encourage the development of educative leaders (Duignan & Macpherson, 1987). Each set was to summarise the latest research in one of five designated areas in the lead chapter of a text that included additional illustrative chapters, along with a stimulus video, an audio taped lecture and other professional development materials. The design of each set was moderated by a team of expert practitioners nominated by the three systems who collaborated with leading Australian researchers and theorists. A practical theory of educative leadership was induced from their recommendations (Duignan & Macpherson, 1992).

In retrospect, a blend of political philosophies is evident in the published synthesis of the findings (Duignan & Macpherson, 1993). To explain, the research linking educative leadership to the quality of teaching explored why and how educative leaders should facilitate the development of constructivist pedagogies, explicitly from a communitarian perspective (Northfield, Duignan, & Macpherson, 1987). The case for ethical educative leadership stressed rule consequentialism in an implied context of egalitarian liberalism (Evers, 1987). The case for the constructivist facilitation of curriculum development by educative leaders was argued in a way that was consistent with egalitarian liberalism (Walker, 1989). The case for educative leadership in a multi-cultural society explicitly employed communicative rationalism as a practical method of challenging racism (Rizvi, Duignan, & Macpherson, 1990). The recommended role of educative leaders in the reorganisation of the delivery of educational services implied a pragmatic blend of communitarianism, communicative rationalism and egalitarian liberalism (Pettit, Duignan, & Macpherson, 1990).

Follow up studies then extended the system-sponsored project. The first example reported the bereavement processes created by an English head teacher to help a school community come to terms with a staff member committing suicide (Macpherson & Vann, 1996). An educative micro-political intervention generated long-term learning about death and enhanced the cooperative problem-solving and knowledge production capacities in the school community. It was pragmatic, yet employed communicative rationalism to unpack perspectives and arbitrate emergent interpretations, insisted on egalitarian liberalism in processes, and as bereavement processes wound up, reinforced communitarian norms. A second example was a philosophical evaluation of educative leadership itself. This traced many of the concepts about educative leadership above to John Dewey's democratic and educative pragmatism which stresses scientific experimentalism, rejects dualisms in favor of mediating ideas, and combines fallibilism and optimistic progressivism (Macpherson & Cusack, 1996). This suggested that educative leaders should properly be concerned with the development of democratic communities committed to inquiry-based learning, that is, to a strongly communitarian agenda in addition to their commitment to pragmatism, communicative rationalism and egalitarian liberalism. In retrospect, it is now clear that, by the mid 1990s, I was becoming increasingly resistant to any particular political credo or ideology being allowed foundational status in the analysis or evaluation of current political arrangements, a position that

hardened with the development of a non-foundational, coherentist and pragmatist epistemology in educational administration (Evers & Lakomski, 1991).

*Being an administrative policy advisor in New Zealand*

My research in the politics of New Zealand education in the mid 1980s advised that a 'high politics' intervention into the administration of education was imminent, and indeed, could be justified by a new policy myth of 'equal power in adversity' (Macpherson, 1987a). The Department of Education, the teachers' unions and the education research community, otherwise known as the 'Education Establishment', appeared to be indifferent to the belief among New Zealand's politicians concerning their social contract with the people. They ignored the bipartisan call by the members of Education and Science Select Committee of Parliament for fundamental reform in order to achieve more equal outcomes (Scott, Fraser, Gregory, Marshall, & Richardson, 1986). Studied inaction by the 'Education Establishment' then led to an electoral backlash in 1987 that nearly unseated the Lange Labour Government. The Prime Minister took charge of the Education Portfolio and established the 'Picot Taskforce' to challenge 'provider capture' and improve the governance and performance of schools (Macpherson, 1987a). The State Services Commission contracted me to help provide advice. In May 1988, the Taskforce to Review Education Administration (Picot, 1988) recommended a reconstruction of the power relationships between schools and the state by devolving governance powers to boards of trustees, having school communities and a new Ministry negotiate budgets as contracts for service, and that school operations and resources be self-managed, all at direct cost to the size and power of 'the Centre' (Macpherson, 1989a). After a period of consultation, the refined proposals entitled *Tomorrow's Schools* were accepted by the Government and implementation followed (Macpherson, 1989b). The Department of Education was replaced by a compact Ministry, the Education Review Office was established to monitor outcomes and provide accountability, and the terms of professional service, leadership and governance in education were redefined (Macpherson, 1992c). The Education Establishment understandably but erroneously attributed the intervention by politicians primarily to the wider context where public administration was being reformed to support a New Right reconstruction of New Zealand's economy (Macpherson, 1992d). However, follow up research (Macpherson, 1991b, 1993b, 1999g) found that the decentralised and neo-pluralist political arrangements established by the reforms were enabling schools (Macpherson & Morrison, 2001), and later polytechnics (Howse & Macpherson, 2001), to diversify, develop local governance and management capacities, and more actively recognise the *Treaty of Waitangi*.

Reflecting today on the radical change to political arrangements in education from 1987 it appears that the initially bipartisan intervention by New Zealand's politicians was an example where egalitarian liberalism had eventually and successfully contested the uncritical communitarianism of three symbiotic systems that comprised the Education Establishment, through the workings of liberal democracy. The communicative rationalism promoted heavily by the education research community in the 1980s and 1990s tended to be limited to discourse analysis that bundled and attacked all reforms as variants of New Rightism. It is salutary that the technique of discourse analysis has since been co-opted by the Te Kotahitanga Project to identify cultural impediments to success for Maori students, and thus provided a pragmatic basis for the design of systematic interventions that are beginning to have an empirically measurable and statistically significant effect (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007). This pioneering breakthrough regarding the success of Maori students in secondary schools exemplifies egalitarian liberalism, and might be built on in a number of ways. One possibility is that this and other projects using the same theory base (Gorinski & Shortland-Nuku, 2006) might be calibrated and integrated to help refine interventions

in specific schools. Another is that the same empirical techniques might be used to investigate cultural impediments to success in other minority groups and to customise the reconciliations in each school as teaching and learning policies. A third possibility is that measured effects gained through cultural interventions might be related to and then integrated with those gained through non-cultural interventions in order to multiply effects.

The key point here is that these research strategies could put scientific wheels under a national agenda of egalitarian liberalism that seeks to achieve more effective teaching and learning by diverse students (Alton-Lee, 2003) with special reference to the under achievement of the bottom 20 percent (Hattie, 2003). It would help deliver on New Zealand's national education policy, part of the social contract between the Government and the people, although it will need to be extended into a fresh post-Picot administrative policy that clarifies the educative role expected of team, school and system leaders.

*Being an administrative policy advisor in New South Wales*

In March 1988, the people of New South Wales were promised a Ministerial Review of Management in Education by the incoming Greiner Liberal Government. One of five commitments made was to enhance the quality of public education, especially to the disadvantaged people of Western Sydney. Dr Brian Scott was commissioned to recommend how administrative structures and practices could better serve the development of teaching and learning. He spent the latter half of 1988 consulting on how effectively and how efficiently administrators were helping teachers teach and learners learn. He then assembled an eight-person team, including the author, to analyse the data, debate options, and draft policy proposals (Macpherson, 1990).

We found an extreme case of dynamic conservatism in the system's 'Head Office,' bitterly adversarial industrial relations that were helping to prevent reform, and a governance vacuum and symbolic leadership in schools. The proposals for reform (B. Scott, 1989a) assumed that 'the school, not the system' was the key organisational element providing teaching and learning, that every school was different and had different needs, and the best judge of needs were the school's teachers and its community. He also assumed that schools would best meet their needs if they self-managed within general guidelines and that they would become more effective if system administrators focused on providing support to schools and their leaders. A similar set of proposals were made with regard to the TAFE sector (B. Scott, 1989b). Scott persuaded the Greiner Government to guarantee funding continuity for the reform of both systems. The Department of Education agreed to adopt a decentralised and school-centered approach and to become both responsive and accountable at all levels. Parents and local school communities were asked to provide more active and constructive support for their children in schools across the State, but, ultimately, were not given any political power.

Looking back through the lens of political philosophy, the Greiner Government came to power committed to an agenda of egalitarian liberalism. Scott's assumptions about schools and TAFE colleges were primarily pragmatic and communitarian. His proposals initially attracted bipartisan political support and steady state funding guarantees in real terms in difficult economic circumstances, and mobilised the Departmental personnel selected to assist with implementation. On the other hand, the Minister's blunt style, stress on professional responsibility and accountability at institutional level, and his difficulties with the neo-pluralist nature of federal politics (Macpherson, 1991a), gradually created counter-forces that triggered teacher militancy (Macpherson & Riley, 1992). The Minister's eventual decision not to make school councils mandatory led to few being established and denied school communities a local source of communicative rationality, legitimacy

and political power to resist regionalisation and recentralisation, in a context where most other Australasian education systems were trialing various forms of school-based management and devolved accountabilities (Macpherson, 1993a, 1993c). His decision not to establish the recommended Ministerial Council of Review eliminated a potential guarantor of policy fidelity during implementation. His interventions resulted in the gradual fragmentation of Scott's administrative policies despite the substantial degree of system 'surgery' and 'genetic engineering' achieved (Macpherson, 1993d). The Minister's unchecked autocratic style gradually reaffirmed the residual bureaucratic centralism in the Department of Education and the adversarial centralism of the New South Wales Teachers' Federation, until his departure from the portfolio. Echoes of such Ministerial idiosyncrasy were heard again recently, as noted above, when an ex-pusher and spin doctor was appointed Director-General of Education and Training in NSW. Such actions raise doubts about a 'social contract' regarding public education ever being delivered by one of the largest and most centralised education systems remaining in the Western world.

*Being an administrative policy researcher in Tasmania*

By the early 1990s, the general strategy of improving the performance of schools by devolving power to school communities and building self-management capacities was occasionally resulting in near-feral and politically embarrassing outcomes (Macpherson, 1992a, 1992b). In Tasmania, the home of the 'self-managed school' (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988), the concept of professional accountability was becoming 'politically incorrect' (Macpherson, 1996a). An international search began for educative forms of school accountability that were systematically summative, demonstrably formative and politically effective. The Tasmanian Department of Education commissioned policy research intended to reconcile community, school and systemic needs for accountability, despite the collective wish in some Tasmanian school staffrooms not to participate (Macpherson, 1995c). Focus groups were used in volunteer school communities and in the Department to clarify the concepts of accountability in use, clarify differences in perspectives and to identify common ground that could serve as the basis for policy making. The common ground was then expanded in three ways: through consultations with system and school leaders and executives that would have to implement any new policy (Macpherson, 1995a), through collecting advice from international accountability policy researchers in education (Macpherson, Cibulka, Monk, & Wong, 1998a), and by surveying and consulting principals regarding policy options, proposed performance indicators and competencies, and professional development required (Macpherson, 1995b; Macpherson & Taplin, 1995). This process deconstructed largely summative forms of accountability using student test scores and then constructed an accountability framework comprising summative, formative and educative processes using qualitative and quantitative measures of student achievement and school performance (Macpherson, 1996b, 1996c, 1996e).

The framework and developmental process offered to Tasmanian school communities was found to compare favorably with the English OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) model at the time and to respect three principles of government highly valued in Tasmania: co-operative pluralism, liberal democracy and subsidiarity (Macpherson, 1996d, 1998a). Follow up studies during implementation in volunteer schools showed that the Department leaders and schools principals played a key educative role when they moved from command to neo-pluralist political arrangements (Macpherson, 1997c). This move also gradually convinced politically active parents and teachers that the system and their schools were moving from symbolic politics into contracted and reciprocal accountabilities with the intention of boosting school effectiveness (Ewington & Macpherson, 1998). The most comprehensive examples of educative accountability policies and practices occurred



where (a) the system and school stakeholders suspended status at workshops, openly and critically debated policy options, then cooperatively built and legitimated a new customised policy, and (b) where the new school policy was put into operation by in-school professional teams coordinated by the principal (Macpherson, 1999a).

In retrospect, it appears that the most educative accountability policy making processes at school level in Tasmania accommodated and blended pragmatism, communitarianism, communicative rationalism and egalitarian liberalism, while stressing communitarian norms during policy implementation. The parallel policy reviews by international researchers showed that progress towards more educative forms of accountability had to deal with additional dilemmas that were unique to the politics of education in each jurisdiction, that is, in each of the other states of Australia (Cuttance, Harman, Macpherson, Pritchard, & Smart, 1998), in the United States and in Hong Kong (Macpherson, 1998b; Macpherson, Cibulka, Monk, & Wong, 1998b) and in England (Macpherson, 1997b). The common ground between all strands of the policy research findings were educative accountabilities that were simultaneously summative, formative and politically effective in that they delivered on national and institutional social contracts - once again highlighting the importance of liberal democratic governance and educative leadership in each school community.

#### *Being a professor of professional development*

The Centre for Professional Development at the University of Auckland was established in 1996 to provide professional and organisational development with an emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning and on pedagogical research (Macpherson, 1997a). The controversy over students evaluating the quality of lecturers' teaching gradually gave way to research-led organisational learning as more sophisticated evaluation policies and methods were introduced, and as human resource management policies were refined to reward demonstrated improvements in the quality of teaching (Macpherson, 1999c, 1999f).

By mid 1999 it was reported publicly (Macpherson, 1999e) that pedagogical research in the University was (a) displacing internal and public myths of poor teaching, (b) the University had developed research-based performance indicators of its teaching, (c) teaching and assessment were demonstrably improving, and that (d) the Evaluation of Teaching System was boosting organisational learning. The students were reporting that less than 15% of teachers were not teaching well, less than 20% were 'borderline' and that more than 65% were teaching well, very well or superbly. Simultaneously, various organisational development projects were maturing. For example, the 'turn round' of the Elam School of Fine Arts had been achieved through collaborative strategic planning and self-managed reforms (Macpherson, 1999b, 1999d). Another example was the exploitation of information and communication technology for teaching and professional development purposes, with international benchmarking (Macpherson, 2000a, 2000b; Macpherson & Frielick, 2001; Macpherson, Pashiardris, & Frielick, 2000).

In retrospect, the political arrangements in the University of Auckland exhibited the characteristics of a liberal democracy (Finer, 1970). By this I mean that the legitimacy of policies relied on the critical awareness and informed consent of academic staff, with academic leaders expected to create workable degrees of consensus through persuasion rather than coercion. Leaders were also expected to avoid interfering in teaching and research in ways that offended the principles of 'academic freedom' and 'institutional autonomy'. It was assumed that university governance was derived from and accountable to community stakeholders and would operate at the margin of university life. Any interventions into the largely self-managing, self-creating and

voluntary nature of academic units would be the exception and justified. University managers were expected to protect minorities and promote accommodations between plural views as they managed with a 'light touch' in the 'common interest' within Departments, with less frequent reference to the 'social contract' that was presumed to exist between the university community and its wider society. Leaders were expected to facilitate change through orderly and systematic policy making processes and to champion 'due process' during collaborative strategic planning rather than through rapid decision making at corporate levels. It appeared to me that educative leadership was appropriate in such a neo-pluralist liberal democracy mainly due its capacity to (a) accommodate communitarianism, communicative rationalism and egalitarian liberalism, (b) respond effectively to active representation from stakeholders, (c) accept corrections from internal social and political checks and balances, and (d) achieve demonstrably pragmatic improvements.

### *Being a Chief Executive Officer*

The most immediate difference I noted on arrival at Waiariki Institute of Technology as the new CEO in early 2002 was that the institution was strongly committed to a social justice agenda of providing opportunities for disadvantaged Maori. The second was that its management was disarray, it was operating on a shoe string, heading into a deficit and did not have an agreed operational budget. A provisional budget was quickly created and the institution's management and information systems were reconfigured. The Council, Te Mana Matauranga (Maori elders nominated by the main tribes of the region) and the Senior Management Team (SMT) agreed to focus on four priorities; the reform of governance, the reform of management systems, settle debts, and to deliver a financial turn round. Governance thereafter focused on accountabilities, risk management and growth. The reformed management systems developed new programmes and fresh methods of reconciling academic quality with course and programme viabilities. Collaborative strategic planning processes involving stakeholders then developed a new Charter and Profile in late 2002, revising them in 2003 and 2004. Budgets were signed off in October each year to allow operational planning for the next year to begin. Surpluses were achieved from 2003. In 2005, the 'turn round' was attributed to four main factors; (a) the re-integration of bi-cultural governance and management processes, (b) the new planning, risk management, scheduling and information systems, (c) the reviews that improved the productivity of support units, regional campuses and schools, and (d) the development of effective partnerships with regional schools, industries and local and regional governments that improved bridging studies and curriculum alignment. However, throughout the period 2002-2005, the national funding context for polytechnics remained precarious, extra-region entrepreneurialism was discouraged, and two wananga (Maori tertiary education institutions) were permitted to expand in the Waiariki region.

Looking back, the political arrangements at Waiariki enabled co-governance by the Council and Te Mana Matauranga. The Council comprised nominees from stakeholder constituencies, including a significant bloc of Government appointees who stressed compliance with national policy, especially financial solvency. It met fortnightly, and sought monthly, written and detailed reports from the CEO and all Directors. Te Mana Matauranga expected monthly and detailed reports from the CEO and Directorate of Maori Advancement about the projects intended to bring advantages to Maori students. The steady intensification of accountabilities, however, distracted these co-governors from the wider political context, where the Government's rhetoric encouraging cooperation between tertiary institutions was masking increasingly hostile market realities. Waiariki struggled to survive with restricted territory, fixed or falling subsidies per student and historic lows in unemployment.

The Government proved unwilling to invest in Maori trades training while simultaneously giving the two new market entrants significant market advantages. Hence the SMT focused on launching more competitive products in order to cross subsidise socially-critical services, drive up the productivity of courses and programmes, compress costs, deliver modest surpluses and sustain staff employment levels whenever possible. When I left in mid 2005 the cost controls slipped, and Waiariki moved into three years of deficits, 'resting' or devising new programmes and cutting staff numbers. In sum, while the institution's mission stressed a regional and bicultural approach to egalitarian liberalism, the national funding and employment context, the local bifurcation of accountabilities and intense internal tensions created contradictory conditions. Right sizing could only be delayed by a remorseless and an ultimately futile corporate focus on financial pragmatism until, thankfully, Government funding and territorial policies changed.

*Being a University Chancellor and CEO*

My action research into the challenges of establishing a private Middle Eastern University (MEU) showed that strategic capacity building was impaired by autocratic governance and interventions that undermined the engagement of Western-trained academic staff who expected leadership in more liberal democratic terms (Macpherson, 2007d). To clarify, as Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, I was contracted to provide the strategic leadership of the 'start up' of the university that was evidently successful: magnificent new buildings, a doubling of accredited programmes, operating administrative systems, a doubling of students and programmes, and financial trends that indicated the sustainability of the university. My job description had performance measures and targets, and when they were close to completion, I opted for separation. All but two of the executive, academic and support unit leaders also opted to leave the MEU at end of the same academic year. This level of turnover reflected the degree of discomfort felt over the current political arrangements in the MEU.

The Board of Trustees and Governors was chaired by the University Patron, a relatively young yet senior sheikh, and comprised the owners. They appointed the lead owner as the Chairman of the Executive Board of Governors (EBG). The EBG comprised the lead owner, the Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, the Provost, and the Vice Chancellor of Financial and Administrative Affairs. Governance and executive powers were therefore concentrated on the lead owner who came into the university for two days a week and often duplicated my work as the CEO. Line management and academic leadership were also increasingly subjected to irregular interventions and micro-management by the Chairman. No contact was permitted between employees and the Trustees.

Looking back, while the MEU established a University Council and management systems that used liberal democratic norms, it was increasingly operated as an autocracy, reflecting a tribal tradition in the country. When the country was formed by the federation of emirates, the places on the new Supreme Council were limited to the emirs. The Supreme Council concentrated governance and executive powers on the leading Nationals they appointed as the Prime Minister and Ministers. They also limited land ownership and citizenship to Nationals. These structures were replicated when each Emirate developed its own government, and when the laws for the ownership, governance and management of private enterprises were devised. Autocracy is, understandably, accepted as a cultural and organisational norm. Questioning autocracy was defined by Nationals as 'culturally insensitive.' Nevertheless, the radical modernisation of schools now underway, at the behest of the Minister of Education, is starting to set aside such leadership traditions and is introducing a modern blend of indigenous and educative forms of leadership for schools, and the beginnings of democratic processes in the governance of local authorities and professions (Macpherson, Kachelhoffer, &

Nemr, 2007; Macpherson & Sylvester, 2007; Macpherson & Tofighian, 2007).

In sum, the key issue concerning political arrangements at the MEU was that autocracy was inconsistent with the international traditions of academic freedom and institutional autonomy in higher education and precipitated high turnover. It is notable that when these conditions of academic freedom and institutional autonomy were allegedly interfered with in recent times by the Minister of Education and his Permanent Secretary at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, they became the subject of a judicial inquiry. An analysis of that inquiry showed that such interference is ill advised from political and economic perspectives (Macpherson, 2007a) and that the doubtful legitimacy of government traces to the absence of an electoral mandate. A social contract is needed in both settings to accommodate the rapid changes in political economies that are challenging governance by either hereditary sheikhs or business tycoons within a bureaucratic polity.

### **Discussion and recommendations**

Given the very recent arrival of political philosophy in the field of educational administration, and the limits of the data reviewed above, only a provisional discussion with tentative recommendations can be offered here. The discussion will begin with a summary of developments to the original concept of educative leadership, that is, as leadership intended to enhance learning. It will then reflect momentarily on the potential application of political philosophy in the construction of theory in the field of educational administration.

The succinct role studies above imply that 'being an educative leader' requires suspending uncritical acceptance of the pragmatic and communitarian norms in schools and education systems, tolerating increased role conflict, and taking responsibility for the quality of professional and organisational learning. Taking responsibility in this sense requires reflecting critically on individual and organisational learning outcomes and then committing to strategic interventions such as action research and 'genetic' adjustments, such as educative accountability criteria and processes. It appears from the inter-system research that educative leadership is particularly evident in pedagogical and curriculum leadership that uses constructivist professional development, in moral leadership that emphasises rule consequentialism, in communicative rationalist leadership during policy deconstruction and reconstruction intended to contest unjust ideologies, such as racism, and in politically-critical leadership that seeks to improve the quality of policy making and implementation. The cases of applied research in accountability and administrative policy above suggest that political and administrative leaders can offer strategic forms of educative leadership when they use democratic means to develop or refresh the social contract between the governed and the governors, and thus drive up the legitimacy of political arrangements in human systems and the fairness of outcomes. Conversely, instances of command politics that serve an absolutist ideology contrast sharply with examples of forms of liberal democracy in governance that accommodate neopluralism and deliver subsidiarity. The general upshot of the review is that the concept of educative leadership needs to move beyond being simply educationally-critical in nature and become ethically-critical, socially-critical and politically-critical to achieve strategic relevance.

This takes the discussion to the potential role that political philosophy may yet play in the growth of knowledge about educational administration. The research programme reviewed above indicates the importance of educative leaders being able to facilitate the construction of educational policies that reflect a pragmatic blend of communitarianism, communicative rationalism and egalitarian liberalism. The review also highlighted the value of communitarianism during policy implementation, along with ongoing democratic representation by stakeholders, social and political checks and balances, and rigorous summative and formative evaluation. The cases of institutional

leadership briefly examined drew attention to the importance of strategic leaders that is politically critical of the policy and funding context, that is, able to deconstruct political rhetoric that is masking the drivers of change in the host political economy and anticipate political interventions.

The implication drawn here is that political philosophy needs to be added to the repertoire of perspectives already evident in the field of educational administration, in the sister fields of public administration, and given the growing ubiquity of knowledge organisations in the globalising economy, in management science. The first special service it can provide, as a disciplined activity, is to help leaders to describe the relativity of political credos in current arrangements, and to evaluate their justifications prior to suggesting reforms. This would help challenge political credos based on factional interests or ideological commitments being given foundational status. The second service could then follow: political philosophy could help promote political arrangements that are supportive of the growth of knowledge that are needed to achieve global and sustainable peace, compassion and prosperity.

To conclude, this case is also an invitation to other researchers to further develop the role of political philosophy in educational administration as it advances its own capacities (Miller, 1998). The discipline has been revitalised in recent decades in Western societies by Rawls' egalitarian liberalism. Marxism is in retreat, conservatism and socialism have incorporated many aspects of liberalism to boost their relevance, and communitarianism may yet prove a rival to liberalism. Liberalism may claim universal validity or present itself as an interpretation of the general political culture of the Western liberal democracies. There is therefore reason to participate in political philosophy with informed caution as it takes a more appropriate place in educational administration. Given the tentative findings of the review above, it would be judicious to further develop educative leadership as a concept in knowledge organisations in a globalising world, avoid the naive adoption of communitarianism and communicative rationalism, circumvent justifications that back up into absolutist or foundational ideologies, and explore more deeply the democratic elaboration of justifications that back up into social contracts between the state and the people.

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