

THE LAY/PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEADTEACHERS
AND CHAIRS OF GOVERNING BODIES OF SCHOOLS
IN WALES.

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between headteachers and chairs of school governing bodies in Wales, exploring lay involvement in the governance of education. One main rationale for the thesis was the recognition that school governors constitute the biggest group of volunteers in the UK (400,000), 26,000 in Wales and are, theoretically, at least, a potentially powerful group. There have however been few studies on school governors.

A multi-methodological approach was taken. Schools were initially selected in nine Welsh LEAs with three schools in three LEAs forming the case studies. Data revealed the key relationship between headteachers and governor chairs, the most notable tension between the 'insider' identity of the headteacher, and the 'outsider' identity of the chair. Governors, and chairs in particular however, tended to be professionals themselves, their 'habitus' inclining them to act in accordance with the values of headteachers, the two speaking the same 'language'. Tensions between the chair's community leadership role and the head's professional position were also identifiable, although these were often offset by the chair's relative insider identity, potentially muting the challenge to school practice.

The study is located within a history of governors and schooling as governance. Michel Foucault, Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu provide a theoretical framework, giving rise to the following questions: What discourses are valued in school governing bodies and head/chair relationship? What are the effects of the coding of knowledge and discourse in the professional / lay interface? How are social dispositions of governors' influential in how they conduct their role – and what are the political implications of this. Ultimately, the research addresses the question concerning the extent that governors can be agents for democratic participation in the context of local politics and national systems.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACCAC	Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
ACE	The Advisory Centre for Education
AM	Assembly Member
APM	Annual Parents' Meeting
ARP	Annual Report to Parents
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CASE	Campaign for Comprehensive Education
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CWA	Campaign for a Welsh Assembly
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
ELWa	Education and Learning for Wales
ERA	Education Reform Act
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
FE	Further Education
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate in Secondary Education
GMS	Grant Maintained Schools
GOG	Governor Observation Group
GVA	Gross Value Added
HE	Higher Education
HMIe	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (for Scotland)
LEA	Local Education Authority

LGA	Local Governor Association
LMS	Local Management of Schools
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NAfW	National Assembly for Wales
NAGM	National Association of Governors and Managers
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers
NC	National Curriculum
NES	New Earnings Survey
OBE	Order of the British Empire
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
PWC	Parliament for Wales Campaign
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMT	Senior Management Team
UK	United Kingdom
VC	Vice Chair

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CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS AT STAKE IN THE LAY/PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP?

Introduction and Research Questions

School governors constitute the biggest group of volunteers in the UK (400,000, 26,000 in Wales), and are, theoretically, at least, a potentially powerful group, especially since the 1986 Education Act and the 1988 Education Reform Act that devolved powers from local education authorities (LEAs) to schools and their governing bodies. There have however been relatively few studies on school governors. This thesis examines the significance of lay involvement in the governance of education in both practical and political terms focusing specifically on the relationship between the chairs of school governing bodies and headteachers. A theoretical synthesis, drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault and Basil Bernstein, has been constructed in order to provide a framework of understanding for these issues and the selected data. This theoretical nexus has given rise to a series of questions: What discourses are valued in school governing bodies and the head/chair relationship? What are the effects of the coding of knowledge and discourse in the professional/lay interface? How are the social dispositions of governors influential in how they see and conduct their role – and what are the political implications and effects of this? Ultimately, the research addresses the question concerning the extent that governors can be agents for participatory democracy in the context of local politics and national systems.

The genesis of this thesis was a research project I completed between 2001 and 2003. This National Assembly for Wales-funded research (hereafter the NAFW project) followed an ESRC comparative project on governors in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Both projects were directed by Professor Stewart Ranson. I was also a member of the research team for this. It was during my analysis of the National Assembly for Wales research that it became clear that the

relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors was pivotal. Interviews with headteachers and chairs of governors revealed that it was often within the dynamics of this relationship that the entire governing body was shaped. This often depended upon the similarities or differences between the two in terms of their social profile and more broadly their habitus. There were noticeable recurring characteristics in the head / chair dynamic: the tendency for chairs to be politically networked, at least locally and for them to have professional backgrounds. Chairs were also more likely than other governors to be conversant with educational discourses. It became clear that these characteristics had implications for their supposed position as representatives of the community, their 'layness' and their role in acting as agents of participatory democracy. If governors were representing particular sectors of the population, what did this tell us about the structures surrounding them: the schools, the local authorities and national governments. The policy implications of the research were therefore wide-ranging, exploring questions relating to the proper nature and function of structures of education, the position of the lay, non-professional individual within these structures and the interaction between them.

As this thesis focuses upon school governors and specifically the roles of chairs of governing bodies and headteacher governors, it is important to establish the composition of governing bodies and their formally ascribed functions. This will be succeeded by a brief description of the characteristics of the Welsh education system. Following this there will be a discussion of concepts relevant to the questions posed by this thesis: these are school improvement and performativity; community; and participatory democracy. Given the limitations of this project it has been deemed necessary to at least demonstrate an appreciation of the complexity of these concepts, particularly as they are frequently drawn upon throughout the thesis. Although the focus of the thesis is headteachers as professionals as well as governors as lay members of governing bodies, a decision has been made not to explore in detail the literature on teacher

professionalism (such as Ginsburg and Lindsay, 1995, Whitty, 2001 and Calderhead, 1995) and more broadly the sociology of professions (see Freidson, 1994, MacDonald, 1995 for example).

Who are School Governors?

The composition of governors is dictated in England and Wales by ‘Instruments of Government’ and varies according to the number of pupils in the school. Instruments of Government were first set out in the 1986 Education Act; this set out the formula for the constitution of governing bodies. For example for schools with less than 100 pupils the composition should be:

- two parent-governors
- two LEA-appointed governors
- one teacher-governor
- headteacher (unless he/she chooses otherwise) and either
- two foundation governors (in the case of a voluntary or religious school where religious interest funds or partly funds the school) and one co-opted or
- three co-opted (or community) governors

(Maclure, 1992:142)

Governing bodies hold powers over issues such as the school budget, the appointment of staff in the school, teacher salaries and performance, and pupil exclusions. Such powers are collective and not assigned to individual governors. Governing bodies are answerable to a wider constituency of parents in a formal, legalistic sense. Martin and Holt (2002) summarise the statutory responsibilities of governors, listing the following:

- conducting the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.
- setting targets for pupil attainment

- deciding in broad strategic terms how the school should be run
- managing the school's budget
- making sure that the curriculum is balanced and broadly based, that the National Curriculum (NC) and religious education are taught, and reporting on NC assessment and examination results
- determining the staff complement and a staff pay policy for the school
- participating in staff appointments, particularly of the head and the deputy
- drawing up an action plan after a school inspection

(Adapted from A Guide to the Law for School Governors in Martin and Holt (2002:12))

The chair of the governing body has the following functions according to the *Governors Wales Handbook*. The emphasis appears to be upon facilitation in terms of the filtering of information to the rest of the governing body:

- to ensure that meetings are conducted efficiently following the correct governing body procedures
- to consider and approve the agenda for each meeting and to ensure that it is manageable
- to maintain communication with the headteacher and governors between governing body and sub-committee meetings
- to act as a spokesperson on behalf of the governing body where necessary
- to ensure that information and documents received are shared with the governing body.

Governors Wales Handbook: 2007

There is no legal obligation for headteachers to be part of governing bodies, although the majority chose to do so, recognizing the potential powers of governors and the position of heads as professional leaders. Out of all 72 schools in the NAFW research, just one had chosen not to be a member of the governing body. The functions of the headteacher as governor are also set out in

the *Governors Wales Handbook* and are listed as below. These include the requirement for a positive relationship between the head and the chair of governors, the onus appearing to be on the headteacher to initiate this:

- report to governors but also involve governors closely in the running of the school (without, of course, avoiding their own responsibilities)
- be honest, direct and open with governors
- establish a good rapport with the chair person of the governing body
- use simple and direct language rather than technical educational jargon
- create a climate where governors feel welcome in the school and not just when governors' meetings are held.

Governors Wales Handbook, 2007

There were attempts to clarify the respective positions of the headteacher and the governors by the NAFW in Circular 34/2000. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 preceded this. It included a section (38(2)) updating and clarifying the duties of governing bodies in Wales and England. The Act set out governors' 'overarching responsibility for the conduct of schools' with duties to: set the schools strategic direction, secure accountability, and to support and challenge the school as its 'critical friend' by monitoring and evaluating its progress. The Act emphasised the duties of governors as stemming from their responsibility to conduct their schools with a view to promoting and raising standards of education achievement. The NAFW Circular 34/2000 Guidance on the School Government (Terms of Reference) (Wales) Regulations 2000 provided guidance to clarify the particular roles of the headteacher and governors. The guidance in the NAFW Circular required governing bodies to review their decision-making and delegation arrangements providing a 'decision-planner' suggesting a decision level for each function: decisions made by the governing body (level 1), decisions made with advice from the head (level 2), decisions delegated to the head (level 3) and decisions made by the head (level 4).

The emphasis on the relationship between the headteacher and governing bodies in the legislation underlines the importance of this dynamic in schools: it is described by Gann (1998:101) as ‘the most fundamental, and the most demanding’ within schools. Here he details the complex nature of this lay/professional dynamic, particularly following changes to governing body powers in the 1980s:

(the headteacher is) Both member and servant of the board-and possibly the longest-serving member; the often visible daytime leader, with (at least statutorily) much reduced powers; the only senior professional in a sea of ‘amateurs’; the person who traditionally holds the final word, with very little accountability, in an organization of up to 2000 people-whose decisions and practices are not just open to interrogation, but to setting aside, by a group of people with no formal education training.

The NAFW Circular 34/2000 Guidance on the School Government (Terms of Reference) (Wales) Regulations 2000 attempted to clarify the complexities of the respective roles and relationships between the governing body and the headteacher. In doing this reference is made to the following objectives:

- Setting the school’s strategic direction:

setting suitable aims and objectives, agreeing policies, targets and priorities, and monitoring and reviewing all of these. Governing bodies should take advice on all of this from the head teacher before making their own decisions. As ‘lead professional’ the head is responsible for implementing the policies, for leading the school towards the targets and for discharging many responsibilities on the governing body’s behalf.

- Securing accountability:

the head teacher and professional staff are accountable to the governing body for the school’s performance. The governing body must be prepared to explain its decisions and actions to anyone who has a legitimate interest. This may include staff, pupils, parents and the press; as well as the LEA, the school’s foundation or the Welsh Assembly Government. Governing bodies and head teachers should work together in partnership to develop key policies, and heads should involve governing bodies at an early stage when formulating policies.

- Monitoring and evaluating, and supporting and challenging (‘the critical friend’):

a critical friend offers support, constructive advice, a sounding board for ideas, a second opinion on proposals and help where needed. But a critical friend may also challenge, ask questions, seek information, improve proposals and seek to arrive at the best solution for all concerned.

These guidelines emphasise the accountability of the professionals to the governing body and the role of the governors to challenge the professional lead of the headteacher. An additional level of accountability in Wales is that of the Welsh Assembly. This constitutes one of a number of differences in school governance in the country. Although schools in England and Wales teach according to the same broad curriculum, there are differences in the Welsh education system. Such differences have some effect on decision-making in school governing bodies. The most notable of these relates to bi-lingual education. Many students in Wales are educated to some degree at least through the medium of Welsh. Lessons in Welsh are compulsory for all students to the age of 16. Furthermore, Welsh-medium education is delivered comprehensively, from nursery level to higher and adult education. In the period leading up to the research for this thesis, BBC news online (1999 (1)) reported that there were more than 450 primary schools where Welsh was the main or sole medium of delivering the curriculum. This represented around 27 percent of the total of primaries in Wales. Welsh-medium education at secondary level had also increased with around 22 percent of secondaries teaching Welsh as a first and second language. Furthermore, in 50 secondaries, more than half the foundation subjects were taught in Welsh, either wholly or in part, with the exception of Welsh but including religious education. Welsh-medium education has increased in popularity in more recent years; for example the number of Welsh-medium secondaries increased from 49 in the period 1996/1997 to 54 during 2005/06 (Welsh Language Board website, 2010).

The inspection regime for schools in Wales comes under the auspices of Estyn - the office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. This is the equivalent to the Office of Standards in Education (OfStEd) in England and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in (HMIe) in Scotland. Estyn inspects all schools in Wales at least every six years. Inspectors will

hold meetings in the school to report what they have found. Where it is decided by Estyn that improvements to a school are needed, the governing body are required to write an action plan to demonstrate how changes will be made to action improvements. The engagement of governors in the active improvement of schools is part of a broader discourse demonstrated in the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act Section 38(2) referred to earlier. This legislation emphasised the duties of school governing bodies in terms of their overarching responsibility to conduct their schools. This was with a view to promoting and raising high standards of education achievement.

The 1998 Act attempted to clarify governors' role as part of the government's agenda of improving schools and pupil performance. For example, the Act states that 'The governing body shall conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school' (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, para 38). This Act along with the Estyn inspection regime contributes to a phenomenon described by Ball (2001) as 'performativity'. Ball (2001:210) relates performativity to a 'discourse of power'. This he believes is 'the emerging form of legitimation in post-industrial societies for the production of knowledge and its transmission through education'. Specifically, performativity refers to processes such as inspections, audits and record keeping. Such activities describe a 'technology' of performances representing the worth of an individual or organisation. Ball draws upon Foucault for this analysis with surveillance operating through the expectations of teaching professionals to continuously perform and be judged in different ways. Ball (2001:211) describes how this process is 'productive as well as destructive' as professionals' identities are shaped and re-shaped by these processes. This thesis will consider the discourse of school improvement and how this operates as the dominant agenda; this was found to be particularly pertinent in Wales where there was the tendency for a close relationship between LEAs and their school governing bodies.

Professional Versus 'Lay' Perspectives

Whilst essentially the educational professional in schools leads discourses of performativity, they are set against governing bodies' 'outsider' identity. The position of the chair as 'lay' non-professional, with a 'real world' perspective is of particular interest here. In this thesis the term 'lay' is used to define school governors with reference to their position as non-educational professionals in the school. It is interesting in this respect, to consider the case of lay inspectors of schools. Since 1992 when OfStEd was established, lay inspectors have been employed to carry out school inspections, along with educational professionals. Whilst such individuals differ from school governors in that they are paid for their time, they hold a similar position as they are appointed for their status as non-educational professionals. Records from the Select Committee on Education and Employment from June 1999 include a memorandum from the Association of Lay Inspectors. This made several points about the role and function of lay schools inspectors. The first of these was that layness implied 'externality', layness referring to what an individual is not, rather than what they are: 'The essential quality of layness does not reside in ignorance, nor in inexperience of the education system, but in an externality of view. That externality is protected by the fact that lay inspectors cannot have been members of the teaching profession' (Parliament website, June 1999).

The Association of Lay Inspectors maintains that externality is essential to counterbalancing the exclusivity of professional activity, an enduring quality: 'Any profession tends to form its own carapace through the common language and shared understanding of its members. This is gradually built up by detailed, practical experience, as well as by the acquisition of specialist professional knowledge and competence. It is very durable. Lay perception can sense this. And exposure, even prolonged exposure, to others' particular professional environment, including

teaching, does not destroy lay perception' (Parliament website, 1999). The idea that the inner world of professionals was in need of penetrating and curtailing was a controversial one. This is noted by Millet and Johnson (1999) in their research on lay inspection. They describe how the inclusion of a non-professional onto OfStEd inspection teams was regarded by some as politicized in its presentation, 'sold as bringing the professionals into line'. As Millet and Johnson explain: 'There was a presumption that the wilder excesses of the professionals who embraced fashionable theories about education needed to be balanced by the 'commonsense' views of the man or woman in the street and that this would result in more objective evaluation' (1999: 64). These echo attempts to empower school governors at the expense of educational professionals in the 1986 and 1988 Education Reform Acts, denoting a right-wing distrust of teachers and their over-domination of the management of education systems (see chapter five).

School governors and lay school inspectors are both therefore examples of the politicisation of lay status, layness used as a vehicle to temper the activities of professionals. In this context, the 'key requirement' of the lay person was that they were '*not* educational professionals' (Wilcox and Gray, 1996, p. 38). Millet and Johnson's (1999) exploration of the views of lay inspectors found that in practice this lay function was less than straightforward. This was a process of negotiation, 'a source of tension and lack of clarity' (1999: 73), themes to be found in the experience of school governors described in this thesis. Hustler and Goodwin's (1999) study on headteachers' views on lay inspectors found that heads were uncomfortable with lay individuals commenting on aspects of pedagogy (1999:64). Again this echoes the experiences of some of the headteachers in the case study schools in the research for this thesis (see chapters 9-11). Furthermore, despite the Association of Lay Inspectors' assertion that distance between professional and lay perspectives could be maintained, 'layness' could be compromised by continued involvement in the process, as Millet and Johnson describe, this inspector '... was fully

aware of the contradiction of being 'lay' but perhaps becoming 'not lay' through experience. She wanted to 'maintain her "layness"' by making sure that she tried to avoid inspector-speak and held on to a different standpoint and a different viewpoint' (1999:73). This resonates with Bourdieu's concept of 'bureaucratic habitus' (see chapter three) whereby assimilation into the domain and discourses of the bureaucracy are inevitable, despite initial motivations and perspectives.

For school governors, or chairs of governors at least, assimilation into the bureaucratic habitus was unlikely to have been a significant shift. As will be shown (see survey analysis, chapter seven), many governors were highly qualified professionals. In notable cases chairs of governors were or had been involved in the education profession themselves. Furthermore the survey data indicated that governors had a tendency to be middle-class, middle-aged and were frequently involved in other volunteering: chairs, in particular, tended to be more likely to be this 'type', many involved in local political networks. Chairs thus frequently had access to both current professional and current political discourses. As a result it was found that chairs tended to follow the advice of headteachers and to act in accordance with the values and practices of headteachers. They were, on the whole, speaking the same 'language', chairs frequently having had professional experience of education. It was also found however that there were limitations and boundaries at work in the lay/professional relationship. The identity of the headteacher in schools and the powerful discourses of education surrounding these engendered these boundaries. These were found to exist between the professional position and function of educational professionals and those of lay members of the governing body.

Governors as Representatives of the ‘Community’

A frequently cited positioning of chairs of governors in the research was that of their function as representing the voice of the ‘community’: an integral constituent of the discourse of school governance but a complex term with varying meanings according to when and where it is used, by whom and in what context (Delanty, 2003). ‘Community governors’ are those co-opted onto the governing body by those already serving as governors at the school and are drawn from the surrounding geographical area of the school. References to ‘community’ are however frequently to be found in official guidance for school governance. The *GovernorsWales* guidance for example refers to community as a constituent of those who governors represent: ‘(The governor) represents those people with a key interest in the school, including parents, staff, the local community and the LEA’ (*GovernorsWales Handbook*, 2007). As this thesis focuses upon school governance, ‘community’ is a term regularly drawn upon in descriptions of the work of school governors, local education officers and headteachers. References to community are identifiable in the research instruments themselves and from the subjects of interviews. An example from the research instruments is in the survey. When asking governors to indicate their motivation for joining the governing body one option set down in the questionnaire was ‘to give something back to the community’. Another example also in the questionnaire is the question asking if governors think that their governing body reflect the ‘social and linguistic mix of the community’ (see chapter seven).

The reference to the ‘community’ here broadly indicates the school catchment area – the parents and carers of the pupils of the school, but more widely those living close to the school, although this is not merely a geographical entity as individuals such as governors and LEA advisors for example may also form part of the school community. The definition of community could also

depend on who was responding to the survey or interview questions. Whilst governors and headteachers may have drawn upon a catchment-area definition of community, LEA officials may have been more inclined to draw upon a broader definition, encompassing those living within the geographical borders of the community of the local authority. The issue is further complicated when we consider that most chairs of governors were also councillors in the local authority. They were therefore likely to relate to a notion of community of those electing them to office, the voting community. School governors and headteachers were conscious of belonging to a Welsh community. This could be aligned to the ability to speak the Welsh language and/or involvement in Welsh cultural activities such as the eisteddfod¹. Moreover, all the groups mentioned – headteachers, governors and local authority officers- were also likely to have a sense of belonging to communities of educational professionals and governors, or in the case of the latter, a community of volunteers. The matter of what they belong to, and the nature of this belonging, presented further complexities.

From this brief outline of the possible interpretations it is clear that the term community belies a complexity of meaning. As Hill (1994:3) points out, ‘community may be based on the shared experience of place, on attitudes and loyalties or on common interests. Individuals are members of a number of communities in these different senses’. Here Hill points to positive and negative connotations of community: whilst communities may be reflected upon nostalgically, as a favourable condition of the past, they could also be associated with mechanisms for social control. Anderson (1983) addresses the need to recognise the dynamism of different notions of community: its movement within and between groups, places and ideas. For Anderson community is variable by nature and not simply reducible to particular groups, place or idea. These need to be positioned in terms of social relations, discourses and history. Delanty (2003:3-

¹ The National Eisteddfod of Wales is a festival celebrating the Welsh culture. It has been held annually in the country since the twelfth century.

4) attempts to organise these differing conceptions, offering a useful summary of four broad definitions of community. The first defines community in terms of small social organisations such as neighbourhoods or small towns. This definition is most commonly cited by sociologists and is typically associated with disadvantaged urban localities.

Delanty's relates his second definition of community to cultural identity. Within this analysis communities are defined by a reference to the self as distinct from those beyond this identity, defined as the 'other'. Delanty's third definition refers to community identity based on shared political consciousness and collective action. Concepts associated with this are citizenship, self-government, civil society and collective identity. According to Hill all 'communities' have potential for such political activity, although those on the left and right of politics have defined community very differently. Those on the right dismiss as naïve the idea that community implies citizens working together for common ends, particularly within a society marked by contractual relationships and anonymity. Obligations only arise, it is asserted, if people chose to belong to certain groups and accept the associated rules, therefore community in this context is often limited in its scope and often defensive by nature, for example in the case of 'neighbourhood watch' groups. In the 1960s and 1970s those on the political left rejected the term 'community' on the basis of social determinism, suggesting that it sought only to conflate space with lifestyles (Delanty, 2003:4). Hill identifies how more recently the left embraced concepts of community with a view to combating market individualism. Hill links this to attempts to sustain and rejuvenate community as the backdrop for participatory or representative democracy.

Delanty's fourth definition of community relates to the emergence of global communications. In this environment 'community becomes cosmopolitanised and constituted in new relations of proximity and distance' (2003:4). Here technology becomes key to shaping communities beyond

the traditional concept of community as space. This resonates with Mabileau, Moyser, Parry and Quantin's (1989:191) questioning of the traditional association between locality and community, deeming this as irrelevant in modern societies. They assert instead a more 'virtual' conceptualisation of communities constituted by people linked through class, status or profession and by interests defined as 'communities' in non-spatial ways. Further to this, Plant (1978) describes how communities should not be separated from values – liberty, equality and fraternity for example. As Hill (1994:33) explains communities are about more than space, existing through communication making them simultaneously social and spatial: 'they are not merely territorial units but consist in the links that exist between people sharing common interests in a network of social relationships'. Although resulting from social, cultural and political developments, community is in transition, far from becoming an irrelevance. Delanty asserts that community is becoming increasingly important in the context of a worldwide search for roots of identity and belonging in the insecure conditions of modernity.

Both Hill and Delanty refer to 'loss' in their analysis. The modern state has led to a loss of community as politics has been removed from social life, confining all that is political to the state. The rhetoric follows that community needs to be recovered. As Hill asserts community has a utopian, nostalgic appeal, 'an assertion of what should be rather than what is' (1994:3). Delanty relates this to the decline of institutions in the middle ages and the growth of commercialisation and capitalism. This led to a decline in the autonomy of cities and the growth of the modern centralised state resulting in the disenchantment with community. Rousseau refers to the alienation of the individual and loss of political autonomy resulting from the development of modernity. In this context, it is argued, how could modern institutions realise community? Hegel refers to the failure of modern society to embody in its institutions what is referred to as 'ethical life': by this is meant a sense of community as a civic and symbolic entity. Hegel envisaged the

ideal of the marriage of state with community in a relation of mutual benefit. Nancy's (1991) analysis of community in western political thinking focuses upon the mythical 'original community' and Hegel's ideal state. This denotes a lost way of life, a harmonious way of existing directly opposed to the destructive characteristics of contemporary difference. Though lost or broken, the idyll persists in accounts and images of the village, the family, the polis and the republic. In the school governing body case studies reference is frequently made by chairs to 'service to the community' and the desire to 'give something back'. This is particularly pertinent for chairs in close-knit areas who may have long associations with the location, having worked and volunteered in the area for many years. This conceptualization of community resonates with Delanty's and Hill's description of community as nostalgic but not always realistic.

Agents of Participatory Democracy

The chair's supposed community leadership role - a conduit between the school and community - is complicated by the fact that chairs are frequently so much inside the professional discourse and habitus associated with the school and the headteacher. As a result, the role of challenging the practices of the school on behalf of the community may be muted. This has implications for the positioning of governors as agents of participatory democracy, functioning as representatives of those in their communities. Reflecting on recent historical developments of school governance and democratic participation, Ranson (2000:273) refers to the 'vacuum' created the 1980s as local democracy was undermined. This, he explains, followed the restructuring of the education system following the 1986 and 1988 Education Acts and the resulting weakened position of local authorities. In an attempt to rectify this, neo-liberal governments assigned power to active consumers through choices offered in public services. This represented an attack on educational professionals by a Conservative government and was accompanied by the ostensible empowerment of parents through their increased presence on governing bodies. The education

reforms allowed for this at the expense of LEA influence in schools. Although research by Radnor, Ball and Vincent (1997) suggests that despite the rhetoric headteachers have tended to reject a market approach to schooling, it is questionable whether governors have developed a significantly distinctive democratic participatory approach, or if this was ever the intention of the legislation.

In his review of approaches to school governance Brehony (1994) defines the democratic participation perspective as one where citizens are invited to participate in decision-making. Citizens are presumed to be motivated by the public good of state education with involvement leading to empowerment, an educative process in itself. The most notable proponent of this perspective is Ranson (1998) whose participatory democracy approach positioned school governance as a key institution, enhancing the practices of schools, authorities and governments. His position is predicated upon the need to challenge widespread social exclusion. Ranson and Stewart (1998: 259-260) refer to the requirement for individuals to 'enter a discourse in which the voice claims for their identities and interests to be recognized and accommodated in the public space', school governance lending itself to this practice. Whilst traditional models of citizenship have sought to impose understandings of 'universal' values, excluding voices of the 'other', Ranson and Stewart draw upon Habermas's notion of 'communicative action' in order to develop notions of communication that construct and influence social action. For Ranson (1994) recognition of different voices coupled with fair distribution of resources would provide the conditions for equal participation, for 'inclusive citizenship'.

Ranson (2000) argues that the education system is positioned to play a key role in moving to a 'culture of learning', developing 'learning communities' with governing bodies taking a key role. He asserts that schools need to become 'learning schools', drawing in voices in a dialogue to

develop understandings and institutional purpose. For this to happen, it is argued, schools need to be positioned as a resource for the community, whereas they may have traditionally ‘closed ranks against the community’: ‘The task for education is to cross the boundaries between school and the home, and the boundaries between education and other services’ (2000: 271). This thesis will assert the limitations of this proposition – the tackling of lay and professional boundaries, throwing doubt on Ranson’s positioning of governors as agents of participatory democracy. This follows Thody’s (1994:17) description of the ‘illusory democracy’ of school governing bodies and Golby’s (1992:165-172) dismissal of the ‘democracy’ metaphor of school governance as over simplistic and unrealistic.

Organisation of Thesis

The thesis is organized into 12 chapters. Following the introduction, chapter two sets out the aims and objectives of the thesis as well as the research methods and methodology. It describes the origins of the research and the focus of this thesis: the relationship between chairs of school governing bodies and headteachers. The chapter also sets out the research methods employed for the thesis as well as the epistemological, ontological and ethical issues. Chapter three sets out the theoretical framework for the thesis, the key protagonists being Pierre Bourdieu, Basil Bernstein and Michel Foucault. The theories of each that are pertinent to the thesis will be described in turn. For Bourdieu these relate to the school’s position as a site of cultural reproduction and conceptualizations of habitus and ‘cultural capital’. Bernstein’s focus is upon cultural transmission in schools, systems of inclusion and exclusion. Theories of ‘restricted’ and ‘elaborated’ codes and the ‘classification’ and ‘framing’ of knowledge are described. Foucault’s theories of discourse, power and ‘governmentality’ will also be discussed as they pertain to the lay/professional dynamic. Chapter four attempts to locate the study within a history of governors in state sponsored schooling, with a wider sense of the broad history of schooling itself as a form

of governance or population management. The chapter describes and analyses key historical events as they pertain to the development of school governance from the mid 19th century to the mid 1980s. Chapter five then focuses on the 1986 and 1988 Education Acts: the implications and effects of these on school governors and research focusing upon this.

Chapter six describes the development of the National Assembly for Wales and the particular development of education structures and school governance. Chapter seven then describes and analyses the data collected from the survey administered to all governors in 72 schools. Analysis in this chapter is divided into four broad thematic areas. These are: the demographic profile of governors, the skills and knowledge brought to the role, the networks, motivations and accountability of governors and the workload and training of governors. Following this, chapter eight introduces the case study work at local authority level. It begins with a description of the socioeconomic and geographic features of Wales and continues with analysis of interviews with officials in the eight participating local education authorities. Chapters nine to eleven then introduce the case study work at school level, setting out the analysis of the three schools in each of the three case study LEAs, drawing upon the theoretical framework. Chapter nine will discuss 'Reithshire', chapter 10 'Llanethshire' and chapter 11 'Blenarth'. Each of these chapters begins with an overview of the socioeconomic and geographical features of the county followed by analysis. Chapter 12 then concludes the thesis.

For confidentiality purposes, the local authority areas, schools and governors have all been anonymised in this thesis. LEAs and schools have been given pseudonyms and governors, headteachers and other individuals involved in the research have not been named. It has also been necessary to anonymise a number of documents that were used during the research process and to refer to these resources generally as to do otherwise would identify particular LEAs, schools and

governors. Therefore census data, local authority ESPs (Education Strategic Plans), other reports/plans authored or commissioned by LEAs and Estyn inspection reports will be generally referenced with exact documents not specifically identified.

CHAPTER TWO

QUESTIONING ASSUMPTIONS: THE TECHNOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Introduction

This chapter will set out the aims and objectives of the thesis and the research methods employed. At the outset it is important to make clear the distinction between the foci of the analysis for this thesis and that of the broader NAfW Project. Whilst the NAfW-funded project was specifically concerned with the link between school governance and school improvement, this thesis has focused on the relationship between headteachers and chairs of school governors: the lay/professional relationship. With this in mind this chapter will set out and discuss the research methods employed for the thesis as well as related epistemological and ontological issues. Firstly the employment of interviews will be considered, this being the method forming the main thrust of the research. Secondly, observation methods will be discussed followed by a discussion on the methods used to analyse the interview transcript data derived from the principles of discourse analysis. Following this, the employment of the survey will be the focus. Crosscutting themes pertinent to the research carried out for this thesis will form the remainder of the chapter. These include: a reflection upon epistemological and ontological issues, the quantitative/qualitative dichotomy and ethical issues.

This thesis developed during a two-year research project (2001-2003) directed by Professor Stewart Ranson and funded by The National Assembly for Wales (NAfW). I was the lead researcher on the project focusing on schools and governors in Wales. The project was essentially a response to increasing interest in the role of school governors in the early 2000s. The roles and responsibilities of school governors were being questioned by the UK government. This included concerns related to the boundary between governance and management of schools, and the

expectations of governors' time and responsibility, given their volunteer status. The Department of Education and Employment's 2001 Consultation Paper attempted to field views relating to such issues and included proposals for reducing governing body members and lessening their powers. In response to this and the lack of research on school governance more generally (see chapter three) the NAFW project had four aims: to explore and describe the demography and practice of school governance, to report on the strengths and weaknesses of current practices of governance, to identify the contributions made by governors to school improvement and to prepare guidelines for future 'good practice' in school governance. By focusing on Wales the NAFW project also aimed to complement the study of English governing bodies undertaken by Scanlon, Earley and Evans (1999). It also built upon the UK-wide ESRC study of School Governors as Volunteer Citizens (ESRC, 2003) also undertaken by Professor Ranson at the University of Birmingham.

The Head/Chair Relationship

For the purposes of this thesis, I was interested in the specific relationship between the headteacher and the chair of governors. The data gathered in Wales was therefore analysed with this focus in mind. This meant an ontological approach focused upon what it meant to be a governor, in particular the 'leaders' within governing bodies- chairs and headteachers. This interest developed during the course of the NAFW project as it became clear that the relationship between the headteacher and the chair was key to the functioning of the governing body. The key point of reference for the headteacher was the chair. There would be meetings between the two at least weekly, with more frequent conversations likely to take place more informally. Contact with other governors tended to be during official governing body meetings only. It was the chair that the headteacher would often call upon as a link between him or herself, other governors and the rest of the community. Furthermore, given the links the chair was likely to have with the local

authority through work as a local councillor for example, the head was able to draw on the his political capital by encouraging lobbying on the school's behalf. Individuals bringing specific cultural capital were particularly welcomed as chairs of governing bodies. Such capital included political connections as well as professional background, particularly skills in business such as accountancy. By embodying such characteristics the habitus of chairs was more likely to conform to the habitus of headteachers. By focusing upon the relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors therefore, it was possible to gain an insight into the broader lay/professional relationship and the particular discourses deemed valuable in the governing body. These characteristics appeared to be embodied within the particular relationship between the headteacher and the chair.

The Case Studies

The emergence of this focus occurred during intensive case study work conducted in Wales. This work formed part of a research design proceeding in phases according to a principle of 'progressive focusing' (Scott, 1996:64) where theory building and data collection continually affected and reflected each other. Initial consultation took place with nine Welsh LEAs with a view to interviewing officials in Education departments and establishing contact with schools: eight schools in each LEA with a final figure of 72 schools willing to be involved in the research. The case study research was extensive, taking place in two stages. During the first stage, occurring from Autumn 2001 to Spring 2002, interviews were conducted with officials from the nine sampled LEAs selected from the 20 Welsh authorities. These were classified according to their geographical characteristics: there were three 'rural' LEAs, three 'industrial valley', one 'urban' and two 'borders'. This thesis draws upon three of these LEAs and three schools within them and includes, one industrial valley, one rural and one border LEA. Interviews during the first stage of the research were with officials such as the director of education in the LEA, or with

his/her deputy depending on availability, with Schools Officers, Governor Support Officers and the chair or other representatives from the LGAs. During these initial meetings the sampling of schools for the research was discussed. Early in 2002, one day was spent in each of the eight schools. During this time interviews were carried out with the chair of governors, the headteacher, a parent-governor, an LEA governor and a co-opted governor.

This thesis draws upon the broad body of data making it possible to garner experiences of school governance in a wide range of schools: 72 in nine LEAs across Wales. Four case study schools in each LEA were selected for closer analysis in Spring 2002, including semi-structured interviews with further members of the governing body and observations of governing body meetings. These schools were narrowed down to nine schools in particular, three in each of the three LEAs for the purposes of the analysis for this thesis. Semi-structured schedules were used in all interviews to explore the participation, practice, contribution and influence of governors, although the analysis of the thesis case studies focused specifically upon the dynamics of the relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors. This stage of case study work also included interviews with other national and local governor representatives working with and for governors. This provided a wider context to the issues of governance, although this has not been written up in detail here. Alongside the case study work a survey was sent to governors in all participating schools in the nine LEAs. This was administered through chairs of governors or clerks of governing bodies during the Autumn of 2001. The function of this survey was to develop understanding of patterns of governance. It also provided data on the distribution of practice and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Interviews

The utilisation of a number of different research methods, a multi-method approach, allowed for the gathering of a number of sources of data. The key source for the purpose of this thesis was the transcripts of interviews. As previously described, these were carried out at a number of levels: with LEA officers, headteachers and with school governors. The interviews were semi-structured. Although there were a number of questions to be asked, there was room for elaboration by both interviewer and interviewee. There was also scope for probing into topics and areas not specified on the interview schedule. This depended on the particular conversation and its progress. May (1997) identifies different types of interviews in social research ranging from structured to unstructured broadly corresponding to the quantitative-qualitative spectrum. In this analysis May aligns structured or focused interviews to quantitatively-oriented researchers and unstructured interviews by researchers with a more qualitative bent. Structured interviews often draw upon a questionnaire as a data collection instrument with questions asked systematically, notionally avoiding bias. Using this tool sees respondents given direction as the interviewer draws upon a particular schedule, allowing for little clarification or expansion. In this scenario the interviewer is expected to remain neutral, acting as a vehicle for the collection of specific information with no improvisation during the encounter. The obvious advantage of this method is comparability arising from the uniform structure of the questioning. Data can be generalised to a wider population. The success of this method however depends on appropriate pilot work, ensuring that all possible responses are included in the questionnaire and that interviewers are appropriately trained to be consistent in their technique, asking questions in a uniform, non-directive manner.

Difficulties arise in the employment of structured interviews when there are disparities between those involved in the interview process. Benney and Hughes (1984:216) describe how cultural –

including sub cultural - differences between interviewer and interviewee can have a negative effect as can the inflexibility of structured interviews:

Where languages are too diverse, where common values are too few, where the fear of talking to strangers is too great, there the interview based on a standardised questionnaire calling for a few standardised answers may not be applicable. Those who venture into such situations may have to invent new modes of interviewing.

The unstructured or focused interview may overcome such difficulties. Open-ended in character, this technique of interviewing is qualitative in that it allows the interviewer to explore the meanings of their subjects' words, enabling the interviewee to respond to questions within their own frame of reference. Although such interviewing may be charged with being directionless, much can be gained from this technique, as Bryman (1988:47) explains:

a phenomenon like rambling can be viewed as providing information because it reveals something about the interviewee's concerns. Unstructured interviewing in qualitative research, therefore, departs from survey interviewing not only in terms of format, but also in terms of its concern for the perspective of those being interviewed.

'Rambling' may therefore be precisely where the interviewee reveals most as they are unconscious of purposive intention and explicit or formal rhetoric.

In an attempt to draw from the strengths of both ends of the scale the research for this thesis employed a semi-structured method. These interviews aimed to gather factual information relating to the organisation of governing body meetings for example. This was along with the more subtle nuances of the relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors, decipherable through a number of questions, probing beyond the interview schedule. By drawing on this technique it was possible to record qualitative data, seek clarification and elaboration on the answers given and allow the interviewer the latitude to probe beyond the answers, given the extended dialogue. In his research on police socialisation, Fielding (1988:212) describes how his employment of semi-structured interviews organised thematically with 'probes and invitations to

expand on issues raised', allowed analysis of the resulting data in terms of the cultural resources available to police recruits, enabling an understanding of 'the conventions and devices recruits use when asked to offer accounts of action and belief'. Analysis for the research for the thesis was similar to Fielding's, although rather than focusing on the devices interviewees used in response to particular questions, my interest was how their position as governor or headteacher, for example, inclined them to draw upon particular discourses and what these revealed about the relationships within the school governing body. It was therefore useful to have an unstructured format so that analysis of the data was possible on a number of levels. Factual information relating to meetings and time spent as a governor, for example, was complemented with as opinions and beliefs about the role of governor.

In conducting the interviews I was mindful of May's (1997) assertion of the importance of the researchers' ability to appreciate the dynamics of interviewing, to sharpen the use and understanding of the different methods of conducting interviews and the subsequent analysis of the data gathered. Moser and Kalton (1983:115-116) usefully point out three conditions for the successful completion of interviews. These are: (1) Accessibility of the interview: The need for interviewees to be able to provide the information required by the interviewer and to be willing to do so. Reticence to share information may be apparent for any number of reasons. (2) Cognition: the need for interviewees to have an understanding of what is required of them. In social encounters with expectations on both sides, those involved need to be aware of what is expected of them, otherwise there is a risk of discomfort. For Moser and Kalton clarification is therefore a practical, ethical and theoretical consideration. (3) Motivation: this is the final condition for a successful interview, with the interviewees' responses demonstrably valued with interest in the conversation maintained on both sides. Although it is difficult and perhaps unreasonable to expect that these conditions are always present in the interviewing process, they should perhaps

stand as an ideal. It is not possible to know whether interviewees are answering questions with complete honesty, although in interviewing for this thesis I took the view that if interviewees were sufficiently motivated -(Moser and Kalton's third condition)-and were made aware of the information required-(the second condition)-'cognition', this should lead to the accessibility of appropriate data-(the first condition).

An important element of encouraging accessibility is through the rapport created between the interviewer and the interviewee. There is a balance to be struck in this relationship due to the tension between subjectivity and objectivity: whilst the aim of the interviewer is to evoke information free from prejudice or bias, an awareness of the interview situation has to be maintained in order to facilitate the 'flow' of conversation. Gearing and Dant (1990:115) give a useful account of this:

There is a tension in the biographical interview between, on the one hand, the need of the interviewer to establish and maintain a rapport and a trusting relationship where the interviewee will disclose significant personal information and, on the other, the practical demands and constraints of any research enquiry...what transpires is inevitably something of a balancing act.

In my interviews with governors who were by definition volunteers, and with headteachers who were invariably busy people, it was sometimes difficult to build-up a rapport if time was limited. This was at times an inhibitor for information gathering. Attempts were made to overcome this through the multi-method approach whereby observations of governing bodies, data gathered through the questionnaire and other interviewing opportunities allowed for the cross-checking of information. Interview technique was also influenced by the type of analysis to be employed once the data was gathered. As the focus of this thesis was the relationship between the headteacher and the chair, analysis centred upon the language employed, the discourses of the head and chair and how this related to issues of habitus, 'governance' and power. The nature of the data collected needed to be substantial so that these issues could be deciphered. This resulted in a

more unstructured interview method and the employment of some of the principles of discourse analysis. This will be discussed later.

Observation

As well as discerning the dynamics of the relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors during interviews, some observation of governing body meetings (full governing body meetings and smaller committee meetings) took place throughout the case study work. Gold (1958) describes four types of observation relevant to this: complete participant, complete observer, participant as observer and observer as participant. The aim of my presence in governing body meetings was as an 'observer', with no intention to participate in the proceedings in any way. As Pole and Lampard (2002:71) indicate this form of research can potentially provide an insight into other 'worlds': 'By observing, the researcher is attempting to gain entry to the world of the researched, to witness the activities which constitute their world, either by actively taking part by being there or watching'. The observation of governing body meetings had a number of specific purposes. These included the development of a 'feel' for governing body meetings, their structures and practices. Observations also provided a check on data collected during interviews, establishing congruence (or not) between the experience of individual governors and the actual nature of the meetings. Observations also helped develop an understanding of the relationships within the governing body, specifically that between the headteacher and the chair of governors. In this respect observations could focus upon the use of language or discourse and ask questions such as: Who was listened to? Which discourses were valued? Whose meeting was this? The formal structures and procedures of these planned meetings eased my presence in these discussions and I could remain relatively inconspicuous. Consent was also relatively easy to obtain through discussions with the headteacher and chair

who, once provided with information about the project, were asked if I would be permitted to attend in advance.

Although access and observation of governing body meetings was relatively uncomplicated, there were some difficulties. Firstly, although data collected was done according to a proforma, it was tempting to record all activity, particularly at the earlier stages of the research when the research questions and theoretical framework were at the developmental stages. Perhaps, a video-recorded meeting would have provided deeper analysis but there were confidentiality issues excluding this as an option. The instinct to over-record events was partially overcome by referring to pre-arranged agendas and other supplementary documents tabled during meetings. A further occasional difficulty related to my identification as a researcher. Despite my expectation of remaining inconspicuousness, there were times when I was aware of my presence disturbing 'natural' behaviour. A particularly pertinent example of this was in a school where the governing body meeting followed an interview between the headteacher and I where he had described the governors as 'lively'. The subsequent meeting was however quite low-key leading the headteacher to turn to me and remark, 'We're usually more talkative!', my presence obviously encouraging heightened self-consciousness in us both. Goffman (1959:79) alludes to the intricacies of this issue, describing the appropriate approach for the observing researcher to take: 'Learning how to look is about adopting an appropriate role allowing the researcher to get behind the 'best behaviour' and become part of what is happening. This involves a careful management of self and others as the researcher seeks to establish a rapport with the participants and to develop their trust'.

Analysis of observational data was important for understanding structures and procedures in governing bodies. This research method allowed me to see the relationships amongst governors

‘in action’. It also allowed for the checking of data gathered in interview. It was the interviews themselves however that formed the basis of the analysis for the thesis. As a key focus of the thesis was the shared experiences of the headteacher and the chair of governors, their habitus in Bourdieu’s terms, the analysis of the interview transcripts was particularly important. For this purpose, the principles of discourse analysis were drawn upon to help explore a number of issues: the commonalities in language use – shared discourse, the acceptable and unacceptable in the discourse of school governance, and meanings extrapolated from this. For this purpose interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and then analysed as conversations. The use of a tape-recorder was a potential inhibitor to conversations but was essential for the analysis of the data. This assertion draws upon Bourdieu and Wacquant’s (1992:127) proposition that analysis of talk requires more than linguistic analysis, requiring an explanation of the position of the speaker in terms for example of factors such as race, class, gender and occupational position: ‘The analysis of interviews focuses not only on motivations and reasons, but also social identities and how these are constructed within the social settings in which people live and work’. The social identities of school governors related to habitus. Social class was part of this but their cultural capital and use of certain discourses were also important sites for the ‘playing out’ of identities. Furthermore, analysis of discourses that were valued and those that were ‘silenced’ was part of the perpetuation of certain positions within the school governing body. Techniques deriving from ‘discourse analysis’ were used to explore these issues, discourse analysis being a generic term referring to a wide spectrum of methods and methodologies, including those aligned with political motivations. This method relates to the analysis of discourse beyond the interview transcript applicable to a number of forms of language use.

Discourse Analysis

For the purposes of this thesis a broad approach to discourse analysis has been taken, seeking to draw upon a number of principles and characteristics of the approach, some of which are aligned to the theoretical framework, most notably those relating to power and discourse. Particularly pertinent to these themes is Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA. This has a number of key principles as described by Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter (2000:147) who refer to this approach as openly ‘politically involved’ and critical of social practice and relationships. According to Titscher et al (2000:146), CDA is concerned with the ‘linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures’. Drawing upon Foucault and Bourdieu the assertion here is that power relations are central to forms of discourse, requiring the analysis of language to be based upon its ideological use. Titscher et al (2000:147) draw upon Fairclough and Wodak (1997:55) to describe discourse as a social practice, implying a dialectical relationship between the situation, institution and social structures surrounding discourse. Fairclough (1993:138) elaborates upon this point describing language use as ‘always simultaneously constitutive of (1) social identities, (2) social relations and (3) systems of knowledge and beliefs’. As discourse is loaded with such meaning and potential, CDA is often taken to be an emancipatory approach. Whilst issues of social position and power are a key element to my use of CDA however, this thesis was not intended to be overtly emancipatory.

Referring to discourse analysis more broadly, May (1997:128) refers to its employment by those rejecting the positivist position that interview transcripts reveal the ‘truth’, as well as the realist position asserting the relationship between the position and utterances through which individuals act and interpret events and relationships. In discourse analysis ‘the focus of analysis moves beyond the performance of the speech itself, to how such discourses order a domain of reality which has repercussions beyond those understood or intended by the speaker’. The effect of the

discourse may be to render particular voices unheard by creating channels of communication authorising only certain individuals to speak at particular times. Discourse analysis aims to discover, as May (1997:128) describes, 'how such discourses order a domain of reality which has repercussions beyond those understood or intended by the speaker', focusing on how they have the ability to silence certain voices through the construction of channels of communication or 'circuits of power' (Clegg, 1989) authorising only certain persons to speak.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996:85) focus upon 'metaphors' in their account of the analysis of discourse. Referred to as a 'device of representation through which new meaning can be learned', metaphors describe the similarity or dissimilarity of two linguistic forms. Metaphors are of interest as they indicate shared vocabulary and knowledge in social groups, the analysis of these allowing the researcher to understand how they are functioning. This includes an understanding of the cultural context of the metaphor, the range of meanings it may carry and the purposes of the speaker. It is therefore possible, claim Coffey and Atkinson, for the analysis of discourse to reveal something of the motives of the speaker and the interests being served. Coffey and Atkinson divide metaphors into two strands: 'domains' and 'accounts'. Domains analysis considers the 'linguistic symbols', or 'domains' utilised for the development of shared meanings in particular social groups. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) work on metaphors is also pertinent here. Their fundamental assertion being that metaphor is inherent in language. Although Coffey and Atkinson deem such analysis useful they also warn against losing the original definition derived from the social setting whilst admitting that an exact reproduction is unrealistic. Their analysis of 'accounts' describes the way social actors draw upon particular devices to describe motivation and is regarded as useful as it is revealing of the characteristics and norms of particular cultures with the accounts differing according to the social situation. Broadly speaking therefore, metaphors and their usage during interviews can potentially lead the researcher to

unpack what is taken-for-granted amongst particular social groups. This was evident in interviews with headteachers and chairs of governors in particular who tended to occupy a similar habitus. There was a tendency for example for heads and chairs to refer to ‘giving something back to the community’ as a motivator for governorship. This phrase served as a metaphor for a number of assumptions around the perceived value of volunteer work and of working towards ‘improving’ the lives of those in the school and in the locality.

The Survey

May’s (1997) description of discourse analysis as an essentially anti-positivist, qualitative approach alludes to epistemological and ontological issues inevitably permeating the practice of research. The use of the survey for this thesis demonstrates how research method issues collide with issues of research methodologies. Pertinent to this is the long-running qualitative/quantitative dichotomy. For example, although the survey distributed to school governors was essentially a quantitative research tool and provided statistical data, some of the analysis of the data was drawn upon to support the qualitative analysis carried out on the interview data. Analysis of the survey data for example was revealing in terms of the identification of the typical school governor, inclined to inhabit a white, middle-class, middle-aged profile. Governors were also inclined to draw upon similar discourses appropriate to school governance. The purpose of the survey for the NAFW project was however broader than this. It was designed to collect three kinds of data. The first of these was the collection of data on the demographic characteristics of governing bodies, assessing the extent of participation of governors. An example of this was data concerning membership of governing body committees. Secondly the survey allowed for analysis on the contribution of governors to school improvement through for example, effective communication between themselves and the school ‘community’. Thirdly, analysis of the survey reflected upon differences according to local authority, school and

type of governor. The characteristics of governors and governance formed the backdrop for the particular relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors. In addition to the analysis conducted for the Wales project, some analysis was conducted comparing the particular characteristics and practices of chairs with their governor colleagues.

The survey produced useful data, serving as a contextualising resource for exploring the ontology of governance. It is important to reflect however on this research tool and consider its limitations as well as its advantages. Pole and Lampard's (2002) observation that historically much survey research has been implemented by powerful groups such as government bodies is relevant here as the data analysed for this thesis drew upon a questionnaire devised for the NAFW-sponsored project. It is clear that some questions in the survey reflected the interests and concerns of a political agenda. For example there were questions on the extent governors were effective for school improvement (the focus of the broader project) and questions relating to recent debates regarding the impact of the excessive workloads of volunteers. This difficulty should not be overstated however, as the analysis of data for this thesis centred upon the case study work. It focussed on the interview data as the key source for the analysis of the headteacher/chair relationship. Further difficulties relate to how concepts such as 'social class' operate as well as issues about the congruence of understanding of ideas between the researcher and those responding to the questionnaire. Whilst the researcher for example, is likely to have established a set of criteria for the constitution of particular social classes, i.e. salary level and occupation, respondents may vary in the perceptions of their class positions. Furthermore, as the survey was delivered by hand in many cases, in situations where a relationship between respondents had been developed, it is also wise to reflect on the effect of human interaction on the survey data.

Validity

Questions of validity and the extent to which data was representative relate to assumptions regarding existing theory and data as well as the awareness of the discourses at work in specific contexts. An example from thesis data relates to the identification of the 'ideal type' governor characterised by social, political and age profiles. Previous research gave credence to this profile (e.g. Earley 1994; Bird 2002). Theories and discourse surrounding schools and schooling, such as those espoused by Bourdieu, Bernstein and Foucault added weight to the assumed connection between positions of power in education and a particular social identification of habitus. These factors influenced assumptions made about the validity of the data. Reflecting on the validity of their own research Deem and Brehony (1994:154) focus on their use of a survey and the risk of charges of 'idiosyncrasy' and lack of representativeness. Such criticisms could also be directed at the research for this thesis. The reliance on qualitative and interpretative case study research could leave it particularly vulnerable to the question of validity: how can a case study focusing on only a handful of sites produce valid data? In Deem and Brehony's case these arguments are countered by their reference to the theoretical origins of the research. Before beginning, theories relating to power and educational organisations had already been developed, the aim being that these would be refined as the investigation progressed. In the case of the research for this thesis, the selection of particular case studies drew upon the broader NAFW project with a database of nine LEAs and 72 schools. Although focusing upon case study schools in three of these LEAs, nine schools in total, the development of the theory and analysis drew upon data from a wide range of schools and personal contact with 24 schools in total. This wider participation in the NAFW project over two years therefore enabled the emergence of the theoretical framework that guided the case study work for this thesis. This methodological approach drew upon Glaser and Strauss's (1967) 'grounded theory': themes emerged, as the research was being conducted and fed into the analysis of the data at a latter stage.

Methodological Approaches

What the discussion so far has demonstrated is that coherence between research method and methodological or theoretical approach is a complex one. In this context it is important to remember that research methods refer to the instruments of research, for example interviews, questionnaires or observations. The methodological framework however, determines the way we use and interpret this data. When reflecting on this, Hammersley (1992:172) uses the analogy of a maze 'where we are repeatedly faced with decisions, and where paths wind back on one another'. Analysis of interview transcripts drawing upon the principles of discourse analysis lends itself to a more qualitative stance. The term 'qualitative' carries a certain amount of epistemological 'baggage' and describing the research in this way implies an anti-positivist, interpretative approach. If we consider the aims of the research it can be argued that these descriptions are accurate. My focus was the specific relationship between the headteacher and the chair as I had a 'hunch' that this was a key aspect of the dynamics of the governing body. Like Deem and Brehony (1994), I believed that the use of qualitative case study research was necessary to explore the dynamics of power in governing bodies. My focus was upon the relationships between social actors and their social situations, learning about the meanings behind these. Cohen, Manion and Morris (2000:19) detail how for anti-positivists the individual is autonomous, their meanings and values important. This implies an active rather than a passive view of social actors. Research situations are 'fluid' comprising individuals actively constructing their world. This contrasts with a positivist construction of research where meaning would not be a preoccupation.

There are those who are however dubious about dividing research into the crude camps of 'qualitative' and 'quantitative'. Hammersley (1992:162-3) for example argues against 'pigeonholing' research in this way, claiming it 'obscures the breadth of issues and arguments

involved in the methodology of social research'. Referring to ambiguities between quantitative and qualitative approaches in interviewing, Hammersley describes the misleading division between 'natural' qualitative research settings and 'artificial' quantitative research settings. He asserts for example that the interview is essentially an artificial situation, specifically set up by the researcher and therefore open to manipulation and use for purposes that may not sit well with a qualitative approach. If we accept this then, my description of myself as a qualitative researcher could be called into question, as interviews were an important element of the research. Furthermore Hammersley disputes the assumption that qualitative research seeks to discover meaning and quantitative to discover behaviour. In this thesis for example I have attempted to analyse both meaning and behaviour. Combining description and theory in their analysis, I have attempted to describe the profile and behaviour of school governors and headteachers whilst drawing upon the theories of Foucault, Bourdieu and Bernstein. Although it is correct to question the erroneous distinction between qualitative and quantitative research, Scott's (1996) assertion that whilst different paradigmatic positions may use similar research methods, they will always adapt these according to their specific interpretations, is an apposite observation.

Ethics: Access and Identity

All researchers, regardless of research method or methodology employed, face ethical questions throughout the course of their research and should reflect on these accordingly. In the research conducted for this thesis ethical issues will be divided into two types: those relating to access to research settings and those relating to researcher identity. Access to the case study sites was an area where ethical issues in the research were particularly pertinent. At the early stages of the NAFW project, LEAs were the initial 'gatekeepers' to the schools. The hierarchical nature of the education structure necessitated this line of action. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with LEA officials, as an initial stage of the research so requesting that they suggest schools for case

study work was a natural progression of the study. There were difficulties with this however. As we were relying on LEA officials to negotiate access to the schools in all nine authorities, there was a danger that choices made would be influenced at least in part by the nature of relationships between LEAs and particular schools. Some schools for example may have been regarded as more inclined to participate in research in the past. Furthermore there was a risk of LEAs 'showcasing' examples of their 'best' schools and of schools feeling obliged to take part if 'leaned on' by their employers. It was hoped however that the initial large number of schools selected for the research would counterbalance this. From these a smaller number of case study schools could be identified, following an initial round of interviews and observations of headteachers, school governors and governing bodies. Furthermore, schools were given the choice (at least by the researchers) to participate or not.

Access to schools was a constant concern. As the research was conducted over two years, there was a process of continual negotiation with the school governing bodies as a number of visits to interview governors and observe governing bodies were made. Pring (2001:407-408) emphasises the deep ethical issues involved in this aspect of research, referring to the difficult decisions faced by the researcher when negotiating access to the research site. At one end of the scale he refers to the 'undercover' researcher who reveals nothing about his identity or purposes. As the other is the 'democratic researcher' who shares all purposes and research findings to those being studied. This relationship is dynamic, subject to continual negotiation. It is interesting to note that the 'democratic researcher' in Pring's example does not complete a research report as no data as such is collected. This was not seen as a problem however as the 'democratic researcher' regarded the research process as a valuable exercise in itself. It allowed those being studied to reflect on their behaviour. In the research for this thesis neither of these roles applied. Research was carried out openly and with permission and the researchers did not regularly share findings with the

participants. However, issues of access did apply. It was important for example to ensure all participants were aware of the broad purposes of the research. It was also important to explain how the data they generated would be used and stored.

Issues such as these leads us to the question of who the research was for, whose ‘truth’ was valued? Sikes (2000:257) underlines the tensions between epistemological perspectives in the consideration of truth. She refers to qualitative researchers who describe data as ‘reflexive and socially constructed’, and quantitative researchers who would regard data as being essentially related to the truth. The research carried out for this thesis would arguably conform to the ‘qualitative’ construction suggested by Sikes in that a pragmatic approach was taken in terms of discovering the ‘truth’. The focus of the thesis was the dynamics of the lay/professional relationship, the ‘truth’ in this sense related to the value of certain forms of cultural capital and the acceptability of certain discourses above others. In their own research on governors, Deem and Brehony (1994) rejected the ‘democratic researcher model’ on the grounds that governors vetoing prospective publications would hamper their efforts to question the status quo. The governors involved in the research for this thesis however were aware of the aims of the NAFW project. These related to the link between school governance and school improvement. The focus for the analysis for this thesis however was more complex and potentially critical of the structures of governance. This presented potential ethical concerns. Although as all LEAs, schools and governors were anonymised, it is hoped that these concerns were minimized.

Further ethical concerns relate to the identity of the researchers themselves: an aspect of the process potentially facilitating the research whilst also presenting concerns. Academic credentials facilitated access to schools, particularly as the research was being conducted under the auspices of a School of Education. My identity as a relatively young, white, middle-class female

researcher was important, carrying with it advantages and pitfalls. Deem (1994a) describes how gender had an effect on her research experience in schools. She found that she was referred to as 'assistant' to her male colleague even though her position as professor and co-director of the research had been made known to the schools involved. In this case gender identification implied a particular position in a power relationship. Although this is not directly comparable to my experience, my identity as a young female researcher may have led to an assumption of lesser experience than an older male colleague for example. This is difficult to surmise however and was not something I was aware of experiencing. The issue of status as a researcher rather than a professor for example, is perhaps more significant, particularly when coupled with gender. As Deem (1994a) discovered, being regarded as insignificant has the potential to enable female researchers to be a party to confidential data that male colleagues may have missed. Again this is something difficult to ascertain but does highlight ethical concerns regarding the extent researchers are honest about their purposes and the potential exploitation of subjects. Pring (2001) makes a similar point by warning against researchers engineering situations in order to create desirable research outcomes.

Ethical concerns relating to class identity were also pertinent in the research for the thesis. Due to my background I was likely to identify with white, middle class, confident and articulate governors. As Deem (1994a: 151-174) warns, this 'over-identification' could mean that certain assumptions and opinions would go unquestioned. As the focus of the analysis of interviews was the language or discourse employed by the governors particularly, this issue was not a major concern. It was exactly this habitus I was interested in. Moreover, with respect to all the facets of my identity as a researcher and the process of research, an ability to be continuously reflective has been vital. Hammersley's (1992:172) analogy of a maze 'where we are repeatedly faced with decisions and where paths wind back on one another' is useful in this respect. It underlines the

difficult task for researchers, the complexity of issues and the never-ending discussion. Sikes (2000:258) suggests that ‘acknowledging that we are involved in philosophical enquiry means acknowledging different possibilities concerning what knowledge is considered to be; how it is obtained, recognised and related to the ‘truth’ and the extent that ‘truth’ reflects ‘reality’. To help navigate a path through the ‘philosophical enquiry’ of this thesis I have drawn upon the theories of Bourdieu, Bernstein and Foucault. These theorists are germane in terms of reflections on research methods and methodology as they emphasise the symbolic dimension of social interaction and the relations between meanings and material realities. These themes are pertinent to earlier reflections on metaphor for example, allowing for the ‘unpacking’ of discourse and a reflection upon meaning. It is in the next chapter that the theoretical framework alluded to here will be described in more detail and its application to the research questions will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

CRITICAL BEARINGS

Introduction

Foucault, Bourdieu and Bernstein form the basis of the theoretical framework for this thesis. These particular theorists have allowed an exploration of themes intrinsic to the relationship between the headteacher and the chair of school governors, their position within the school and the broader context of structures of institutions and practices of education. A concern with the function of the school is a preoccupation for Bourdieu and Bernstein and to a lesser extent, for Foucault. For Bourdieu schools are essentially sites of cultural reproduction working to perpetuate patterns of status and privilege. Bernstein was also interested in how schools define social identities, his specific preoccupation being the role played by speech and language in the transmission of culture through education. For Foucault the development of the school was part of a broader ‘modern’ project of the dispersal of power, surveillance and ‘governance’ sometimes referred to as biopower and governmentality. For the rest of this chapter Bourdieu, Bernstein and Foucault will be discussed with reference to their relevance to a number of themes running through the thesis. Specifically these relate to the nature of discourse in governing bodies, particularly those valued in the relationship between the headteacher and the chair; the effects of coding of knowledge in the lay/professional interface and the social dispositions of governors and how this effects their conduct and the political implications of this. A crosscutting theme is the extent governors can be agents for participatory democracy. Not only will this be considered in the context of local politics, it also requires consideration in terms of the role of education in contemporary nation states.

Bourdieu: a Generative Approach

As a sociologist and anthropologist, Bourdieu's work was eclectic covering topics spanning cultural theory, including gender, psychoanalysis and film and media studies. He was interested in the relationship between structure and agency and keen to challenge the grand theories of objectivism and subjectivism. As Wacquant (1992:3) described, Bourdieu's work 'throws a manifold challenge at the current divisions and accepted modes of thinking of social science by virtue of its utter disregard for disciplinary boundaries'. Bourdieu advocated a 'reflexive' sociology, indeed reflecting on his own position in the intellectual field and the formation of his own ideas therein. His analysis was dialectical, drawing upon empirical work to enhance theory. Harker, Mahar and Wilkes (1990:3) describe Bourdieu's method of analysis as 'generative structuralism' in that he attempts to describe and analyse how people, social structures and groups are generated in terms of their social identities and behaviours, and how they interact. Bourdieu believed that the complexity of social reality required a complex approach to analysis. A generative approach attempted this by seeking to understand the origins of social structures and dispositions of the habitus of the agents living within such structures. Bourdieu draws upon a number of conceptual tools in this analysis; key amongst these is 'habitus'. This is a particularly useful concept for the analysis for this thesis as it helps to describe and explain the social profile of school governors and the effect this has on their practice. In this research governors were found to be predominantly middle-class, middle-aged and to have experience in professional occupations. Amongst chairs of governors this trend was more notable, with the most successful headteacher and chair relationships constituted by individuals demonstrating a similar habitus.

Habitus

Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus is drawn upon to describe the way individuals develop attitudes and dispositions inclining them to behave in certain ways. An individual's habitus encompasses their beliefs and understanding of the world. As well as ways of 'seeing', acting and feeling it can be identified in ways of behaving: in language and physical movement, as well as in cultural choices, associations and ways of thinking about the world. Habitus is perpetuated through the practices of actors and their interaction with one another and their environment, forming a mediating link between individuals' subjective worlds and the cultural world they are born into and shared with others. Habitus therefore has a dual function. It is as Bourdieu and Passeron (1977a: 205) describe 'the site of the internalisation of reality and the externalisation of internality'. As habitus is established more or less in early childhood it constitutes behaviours and habits. As Bourdieu (1984:466) explains these are largely unconscious, it is from this characteristic that the habitus derives its power:

The schemes of the habitus, the primary forms of classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control of the will. Orienting practices practically, they embed what some would mistakenly call values in the most automatic gestures or the apparently most insignificant techniques of the body - ways of walking or blowing one's nose, ways of eating or talking - and engage the most fundamental principles of construction and evaluation of the social world, those which most directly express the division of labour...or the division of the world of domination.

Although essentially inflexible, the dispositions or 'dispositifs' of the habitus do have elements of interchangeability, having meaning in contexts beyond those where they were originally acquired. The habitus is therefore open to change, for example in response to fluctuations in the objective conditions of the material and social environment. Such change is however biased as altered conditions are realised through the particular interpretation of the habitus as it mediates rather than determines the environment. Bourdieu therefore describes a dialectic process between the collective history inscribed in objective conditions and the habitus inscribed in individuals:

practices are produced in and by the encounter between the habitus and the field where the actor is moving. This analysis has been criticised by Jenkins (1992:83) for its tendency towards circularity whereby the subjectivities of the habitus and the objectivity of the social world reproduce one another. The suggestion here is that reliance on functionalist and determinist perspectives seek to explain social change with reference only to external factors. Bourdieu (1990:116) defends his position however by explaining how habitus is capable of producing a variety of practices depending on the nature of the social field: circumstances and aspirations can alter as the result of an ‘awakening of consciousness and socioanalysis’. As Wacquant (1989:270-81) elaborates, Bourdieu’s analysis does allow scope for actors to consciously effect change, although ‘strategising’ is bounded by the habitus:

The lines of action suggested by habitus may very well be accompanied by a strategic calculation of costs and benefits which tend to carry out at conscious level the operations which habitus carries out in its own way...but, and this is a crucial proviso, it is habitus itself that commands this option. We can always say that individuals make it, as long as we do not forget they do not choose the principles of these choices.

Field

Bourdieu describes the habitus as operating within the context of its ‘field’. Fields produce and authorise discourses and behaviours and are constituted by a number of institutions and rules. The ordering of fields is based upon hierarchies and networks of objective relations of power between social positions. For example political declarations or works of art, and in the context of the analysis for this thesis, the field of education. In his analysis of fields, Bourdieu refers to ‘social space’ to describe the social world where multiple fields relate to each other. These relationships are between symbolic points and allocation of ‘capital’. What is valued as capital in the field is the subject of conflict, capital referring ‘to all goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation’ (1977b: 178). The analysis of the governing body located within the school, the ‘field’ of

education allows for the focus upon certain discourses that will be valued above others in the governing body: certain forms of cultural capital will be more highly prized than others. Those who are able to successfully engage with the more valued discourses have what Bourdieu refers to as a 'feel for the game'. Entering the 'game' means accepting the 'rules' although competence will be inconsistent amongst actors. At the subjective level, such competence is equivalent to habitus and the possession of 'capital' (1984:13).

Capital

Wolfreys (2000) describes how competition characterizes activity within fields: '...each field within society is structured according to what is at stake within it (educational, cultural, political etc) and is comprised of antagonistic elements who struggle to acquire and preserve capital – economic, cultural, scientific or otherwise'. Competition for capital is reproduced and transformed. The latter refers to the way, 'the subjective hope of profit tends to be adjusted to the objective probability of profit' (Bourdieu: 2000:216). Transformation occurs as agents adjust expectations according to their limitations in the field, for example educational and social background. This leads to a reproduction of symbolic domination, as Bourdieu (2000:217) elaborates: 'The realistic, even resigned or fatalistic, dispositions which lead members of the dominated classes to put up with objective conditions that would be judged intolerable or revolting by agents otherwise disposed...help to reproduce the conditions of oppression.' Forms of capital are wide-ranging and include 'material capital', this holds symbolic value, and 'cultural capital' referring to patterns of consumption and taste for example and characterised by relationships with education, the arts and language.

The concept of capital is instructive when considering the social profile of governors, many of whom have high standards of education and are politically networked and therefore have

considerable cultural capital. For Bourdieu (1977b: 178), capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange. In particular, it is the habitus of dominant groups that seeks to proliferate forms of capital. These groups constitute 'symbolic capital'. As Webb, Shirato and Danaher (2002:52) explain capital is symbolic in situations when 'like money or status, it legitimizes differences in social class and social importance' yet is misrecognised as 'we tend to see it as being someone's natural or inherent quality, rather than something that a person has acquired through competition, inherited from their family, or learned in school'. The concept of symbolic capital is pertinent to the analysis of school governors who are likely to be middle-class professionals. The symbolic capital associated with this class position naturalises and legitimates those appointed as governors in their positions. By drawing upon this form of capital, intellectuals establish a separate economic field and position it against all other fields. Bourdieu refers to this in terms of 'relative autonomy'.

Symbolic Power and Symbolic Violence

The symbolic power of such agents conceals actual power relations and the authority of the economic field. Dominant classes therefore assert indirect control through for example, their access to education and life-style. Symbolic capital is culturally significant by way of its prestige and authority: it carries with it the power to create what is referred to by Harker as (1990:13) 'the official version of the social world'. Bourdieu describes how the conversion of other forms of capital to symbolic capital carries with it significant power and is most evident in the field of law. It is through the field of law that the state enforces its particular vision of the world. This operates through 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 2000: 142-3). This refers to the misrecognition experienced when highly assimilated agents in the field find alternative explanations for particular practices an anathema:

...the coercion which is set up only through the consent that the dominated cannot fail to give to the dominator...when their understanding of the situation and relation can only use instruments of knowledge that they have in common with the dominator, which, being merely an incorporated form of the structure of the relation of domination, make this relationship appear as natural. (Bourdieu, 2000: 170).

The law secures the state's domination over property, the professions and institutions and in social contexts more generally. In schools examples of symbolic violence include the determination of negative identities through grading systems. These include the hierarchisation of achievement through the exclusion of 'cultural materials' from the curriculum: the determination of what is seen to count as history and literature for example. The ordering of time in schools also exemplifies symbolic violence at work. This activity can be seen to be replicated throughout the institution amongst staff also subject to hierarchical structures, timetabling and ordering of language. This can also be seen to be at work amongst school governors albeit subtly as they operate on the periphery of the school.

In turn this affords certain individuals economic and cultural capital. In the struggle for symbolic capital state-named experts such as doctors or teachers, have the power to legitimise activity. Applying this analysis to the school governing body positions the headteacher as potentially powerful. Such power is based upon relations of power between the expert and layperson. This has resulted from the structure and functioning of the field of education, a field defined by the state through processes of symbolic violence. Aligned to this is Bourdieu's broader analysis of the state. This is focused upon in works such as 'Language and Symbolic Power' (1992), 'Practical Reason' (1998a) and 'Acts of Resistance' (1998b) where the state or government is described as a 'cultural field' and a 'field of power'. Whilst the former refers to the constitution of government in terms of ministries and their associated discourses and practice, the latter alludes to dominant or 'meta-fields' referring to their dominance over the behaviour of other fields. In this thesis the focus is upon the operation of the school governing body within the

institution of the school dominated by the meta-fields of the institutions of local government (LEAs). These in turn come under the auspices of central government, in Wales the NAFW as well as the UK government in Westminster. Bourdieu's analysis of the field of government and bureaucracy forming the largest institution within government is pertinent to the study of school governance. It engages with questions concerning the possibility of school governors' position as agents of participatory democracy.

Bureaucratic Habitus

Bourdieu describes how the outward objectivity of bureaucrats operates to obscure their function of serving the interests of dominant groups. Bourdieu (1991:216) describes this 'bureaucratic habitus' as impressing upon its members a commitment to the regulation of society, this becomes acceptable to those embodying this habitus as it encompasses all aspects of identity: 'the fundamental law of bureaucratic apparatuses is that the apparatus gives everything (including power over the apparatus) to those who give it everything and expect everything from it because they themselves have nothing or are nothing outside it'. The disposition of the bureaucratic habitus inclines bureaucrats to conform to the principle of majority control by the few. Therefore whilst structures such as committees and boards may present a front of participatory democratic structure, this belies a process whereby those appointed on the basis of their representativeness abandon their allegiances to the 'community'. This occurs as the habitus of members of bureaucratic structures adjust to fit that of a bureaucrat. The ideologies and discourses of the government eventually override those of alternative viewpoints. Bourdieu explains how even when members attempt to resist the capture of the bureaucratic habitus, affecting change is too difficult. The highly structured nature of bureaucracies makes them resistant to change. For example an appointment of someone with characteristics at odds with other members of the committee may be regarded as a 'token' representative and therefore authorised only to speak on

issues relevant to them, thus further excluding them. The bureaucratic habitus of government committee and board members as described by Bourdieu can also be applied to the analysis of governors. This analysis is especially pertinent when focusing on the relationship between headteachers and chairs. Over time chairs are likely to take on the characteristics of the bureaucratic habitus, accepting the dominant educational discourse at the expense of any notions of allegiances to the 'community'.

Exclusion and Inclusion

It is evident that the themes of exclusion and inclusion and the structuring of this are key to an understanding of Bourdieu's work. This is particularly pertinent in his analysis of education, a field playing a significant role in the distribution of privilege and status. It is also a key theme in analysis of bodies governing the schools where social profile points towards the inclusion of particular 'types' of individuals and the exclusion of others. For Bourdieu it is schools that represent the principal sites of the production, transmission and acquisition of cultural capital. By instilling dominant forms of classification and producing forms of symbolic power, education maintains inequalities by normalising the acquisition of academic and occupational achievement through inherited cultural difference. In his analysis Bourdieu (1977a: 190) identifies three specific functions of education: 1) cultural reproduction: the conservation of cultural heritage, 2) social reproduction: the reinforcement of unequal cultural capital and 3) Legitimation: the consecration of cultural heritage deflecting from the social reproduction function. In particular the social reproduction function emphasises the relative autonomy of the field of education and the mediating role played in the maintenance of power relationships. By analysing these functions, (specifically in the context of the highly centralised French educational system) Bourdieu's (1973:71) aim was to determine the contribution made by the educational system to the reproduction of the structure of power relationships and symbolic relationships between

social classes. He develops this account in *Homo Academicus* (1988) and *La Noblesse d'Etat* (1989), where he focuses upon higher education in France, describing the way those acquiring economic and cultural capital – the dominant class, come to be differentiated. The favouring` of the culturally advantaged is however masked by the outwardly meritocratic approach of higher education in France. This is in parallel with ongoing rhetoric in relation to western style education systems and expressed in many interviews with school governors during the course of this research.

The meritocratic principle is belied by the mastery of privileged status, or habitus. Instead of being driven purely by academic ability, life chances are guided by identification with dominant classes, a pattern reproduced throughout the education system. Bourdieu gives the example of the process of the selection of educational institutions or subjects for study by students to illustrate how decisions on these issues are likely to be directed by the dispositions of individuals. Bourdieu also describes how the selection of students for entrance to educational institutions is largely class-based with a close correspondence between the subjective hope of individuals and their objective chances. Expectations are for example largely structured by parental experiences of education. This, it is argued, results in those lacking the appropriate cultural capital - broadly those from the working classes, internalizing the limited expectations bestowed upon them. The opposite effect would apply to those from more privileged classes. Swartz (1997:194) explains how Bourdieu's description of how such class bias translates in the practices of schools where emphasis and value is given to certain forms of knowledge and cultural ideals. These resonate with the language of those with access to cultural capital, most accessible to those in families of dominant classes. Style is also a mechanism for reinforcing cultural privilege. Traditional oral and essay examinations favour those most able to call upon cultural capital resources to express themselves in required linguistic forms.

For Bourdieu therefore education is essentially a mediator of the effects of class, although this varies according to the stage of education individuals are engaged in. Whilst at the lower levels of the system class differentials are clearly identifiable, at the higher levels differences fade. Forming a sub-group are those from lower classes acquiring cultural capital through extraordinary academic success. Such individuals are however destined to remain disadvantaged as they lack breadth of cultural knowledge. This is clear from the mismatch between their scholastic abilities and their lack of cultural style. This reveals the complexities of the relationship between educational structures and social stratification: inequalities linked to social-class and cultural capital are perpetuated by internal processes in the schools. The contrast between subjects where success is apparently determined by talent and those depending upon hard work illustrates the way this occurs. With reference to the French education system, Bourdieu (1977:204) describes how students from literature, language, philosophy and mathematics tend to be of a higher social class, benefiting from cultural capital.

Cultural Reproduction

Cultural advantage is misrecognised as natural ability. Schools therefore consecrate social distinctions by constituting them as academic distinctions. As elaborated by Swartz (1977:204) this analysis describes the acceptance and employment of academic labels as occurring without conscious reflection of the consequences. This is the justification of social class reproduction. As an institution embedded within the school, governing bodies are instrumental in processes of cultural reproduction. Bourdieu's analysis is therefore applicable to an examination of their structure and practices. Governors have responsibilities for monitoring issues relating to the curriculum for example, ensuring the NC is delivered. Governors are unlikely to challenge the NC, as they are likely to sustain a position of submission to its authority either positively or

negatively, depending on their own cultural capital. There are however questions surrounding the extent governors can influence how teaching and learning operates within schools, this depending somewhat on the cultural capital acquired through education and professional status. This is however likely to confirm governors' attachments to the dominant values, rhetoric and practices of schooling and its meritocratic mythology. Governors are therefore entwined within an education system favouring those with privileged backgrounds, those possessing valued forms of capital, characterized by a particular habitus. The relationship between social status and positioning within the education system will be explored further in the next section as attention turns to the work of Bernstein and his concern with codes, and the division of labour.

Bernstein: Language and Cultural Transmission

Bernstein's focus upon language and cultural transmission also drew attention to class differentiations in schooling. Bernstein's preoccupation in particular was the transmission of culture through education and processes through which individuals become assimilated into certain classes. In common with Bourdieu therefore, Bernstein was interested in exploring how individuals and particular social groups become included or excluded in education structures. Bernstein focused upon the formation of identity in relation to the social division of labour and how this related to 'code' - this referring to the field of deployment of meanings. Bernstein's concept of code is strongly analogous to Bourdieu's notion of habitus – both refer to an ingrained disposition allied to being or belonging. As has been emphasized, this theme is pertinent to school governance. Similar processes appear also to be at work as governors with certain social profiles are valued above others. Bernstein relates these processes to the broader context of social structure in the production of language and speech. These are analysed in the context of modern industrialised society characterised by the division of labour, specialised decision-making roles and the pressure for explicit channels of communication relating to policies and practices.

Against this backdrop, Bernstein describes how speech responds to strong cultural pressures. Language is a symbolic system and speech codes serve different purposes, including directing and maintaining social class positions. As Bernstein (1971:124) explains:

different speech systems or codes create for their speakers different orders of relevance and relation. The experience of the speakers may then be transformed by what is made significant or relevant by different speech systems. As the child learns his speech, or... learns specific codes which regulate his verbal acts, he learns the requirements of his social structure... From this point of view every time the child speaks or listens, the social structure is reinforced in him and his social identity shaped.

Bernstein identifies two types of social control in his analysis. These arise from differing speech codes and relate to social class: speech codes are inclined to be either 'mobile' or 'fixed'. Bernstein refers to the tendency for the mobile middle-classes to be inclined to be subject to individualising control. In this context language positively works to produce and reproduce the social order. The predominant speech code within this class is described by Bernstein as the 'elaborated code'. This broadly reflects the pursuit and expectation of self-improvement translating into a privileged educational position.

Code Theory

Bernstein associates the elaborated code with the middle-class family-type where mothers (sic) are more inclined to equip their children with the necessary verbal skills to negotiate their futures. Such skills dovetail with the cultivation of individualism required to make progress at school and in the workplace. This is realised through the wide-ranging, flexible syntax available through the elaborated code. Requiring careful planning, this speech form works to elaborate and clarify intention and for Bernstein is essentially an expression of the mobility of the middle-classes. Conversely, the restricted code operates to act as an expression of the social solidarity and 'fixed' disposition of working-class families and low educational aspirations. The differentiated speech

codes characteristic of these family types relate to the organisation of social relations: in families drawing upon the elaborated code, social relations are negotiated verbally. In restricted code family types however, they are played out through the roles assigned to individuals, as Bernstein (1964:63) explains:

In the case of a restricted code, what is transmitted verbally refers to the other person in terms of his status or local group membership. What is said reflects the form of the social relation and its basis of shared assumptions. Speakers using a restricted code are dependent upon these shared assumptions. The mutually held range of identifications defines the area of common intent and so the range of the code. The dependency underpinning the social relation generating an elaborated code is not of this order.

An example given by Bernstein (1971:154-160) of the unambiguous nature of identities experienced by those drawing upon the restricted code is the taken-for-granted positioning of individuals according to gender and age. Bernstein describes how the acceptance of gender-specific tasks in the home and the assignment of bedtimes according to age demonstrate this. In such 'positional' families there is little scope for contesting status positions. Bernstein describes how such families are able to draw upon their own repertoire of language. This works to buffer relationships unburdened by the purpose of establishing positions through speech, as is experienced in families drawing upon elaborated codes. A key characteristic of the restricted code therefore is that speakers can draw upon common assumptions. The use of speech can be limited. This can be contrasted with elaborated speech forms where speakers do not take-for-granted one another's thought processes. Speech works to clarify individual perceptions and not to tie-up different initial assumptions. In the restricted speech code therefore, language is limited and works to augment an existing social order. Bernstein refers to these families as 'person-oriented families'. The differentiation between codes according to class described here resonates with the experiences of school governors who are more likely to engage with the elaborated code required in the middle-class dominated governing body. Such experiences may not be solely

based on class however, but are complicated by relative power within the governing body and alignment with a particular habitus. There may also be differentiations within the governing body itself where the use of the elaborated and restricted code varies according to the assignment of roles. This is particularly pertinent to an analysis of the role of the chair of governors.

Classification and Framing

Bernstein's code theory was more broadly applied to education structures in his analysis of how speech codes in families related to those operating in school. *In Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity* (2000) (PSCI), Bernstein draws upon his theory of 'classification' and 'framing' of educational knowledge established in earlier analysis (1971). 'Classification' (power) and 'framing' (control) shape the symbolic division between and within discourses, agents and locations within the classroom. The strength of classification and framing depends upon the mediating position of actors: weak regulation leads to the possibility for transformation of power relations whereas strong regulation would imply their reproduction. For Bernstein power works to validate and recreate such divisions, for example between different types of students based on gender, class or race and different ways of teaching. It is at these boundaries, through 'pedagogic discourse' that social hierarchies and the social order are legitimated. Whilst conventional meanings of 'pedagogy' broadly refer to the practices and application of teaching, Bernstein refers to the 'pedagogic discourse' to explore the production and distribution of 'official' knowledge and how this relates to structurally determined power relations. Narratives defining what is allowed to be thought and what is of value constitute pedagogy. Such narratives not only define the curriculum, they also define individual experience within an education system that differentiates. Sitting within the structures of the school, governing bodies are embroiled in narratives of pedagogic inclusion and exclusion. Furthermore the strength of classification and framing of different knowledge and discourse affects the way in which governing bodies operate.

Such have an impact of the relationship between headteachers' professional knowledge and discourse and the lay knowledge and discourse of the governors. This has implications for relations of power, depending on the extent that knowledge and discourse are bounded.

Horizontal and Vertical Discourses

Bernstein's analysis of the organization of knowledge and its relations with 'code' resonates with Bourdieu's association of specific forms of knowledge with forms of social distinction. In his analysis Bernstein (1999:159-160) specifically differentiates between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' discourses, referring also to two differing types of knowledge: horizontal discourse drawing upon 'commonsense' and vertical discourse upon specialized, explicit knowledge. The knowledge associated with horizontal discourse is usually context-specific and local by nature. Knowledge is 'segmentally differentiated': 'A horizontal discourse entails a set of strategies which are local, segmentally organised, context specific and dependent, for maximising encounters with persons and habitats'. Although 'horizontal', Bernstein points out, the segments of the discourse are not necessarily equal, some are more important than others. A connection is also made between horizontal discourse and the structuring of social relations. Whilst social relationships generate forms of discourse, discourse structures particular forms of consciousness. This in turn generates social solidarity: 'Horizontal discourse, in its acquisition, becomes the major cultural relay'. Vertical discourse has by contrast a clear structure and hierarchy such as that associated with the sciences for example. This form of discourse may also be constituted by specific languages, 'with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts'. Here the example of social sciences and humanities is given. A distinction is also made between the 'modes of acquisition' of 'horizontal' and 'vertical' discourses, the way particular discourses are procured. In horizontal discourse, knowledge is functional and related to what is

described as ‘segmental’ pedagogy. This is characterised by ‘face-to-face’ relations at the local level, amongst family, friends or community; these may be transmitted tacitly.

According to Bernstein (1999:161) the pedagogic process associated with horizontal discourse may last no longer than the context it takes place in, as the essential purpose is uncomplicated: ‘In general, the emphasis of the segmental pedagogy of horizontal discourse is directed towards acquiring a common competence rather than a graded performance’. This differs from the ‘institutional’ pedagogy of vertical discourse. As opposed to a segmental organization, the pedagogy of this discourse is constituted by ‘specialised symbolic structures of explicit knowledge’. Procedures of this discourse are linked to other procedures hierarchically. This is a continuous rather than a contextual process. Vertical discourse is also further complicated by Bernstein’s (1999:163) description of two modalities, namely ‘hierarchical knowledge structures’ and ‘horizontal knowledge structures’. Hierarchical knowledge structures are described as being produced by an ‘integrating code’ whilst horizontal knowledge structures are constituted by specialised languages and texts. Whilst the development of theory that is ‘more integrating’ than the theory that it proceeded counts as hierarchical knowledge structures, the same cannot apply to horizontal knowledge structures that are not translatable: ‘Their capital is bound up with the language and, therefore, defence of and challenge of other languages’. Hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures therefore differ in their struggle to acquire ‘linguistic hegemony’ and its ‘gaze’ within the latter, and the competition for ‘integration of principles’ in the former.

Repertoire and Reservoir

Related to this are rules regulating access, transmission and evaluation of discourses. These are strict in vertical discourses: circulation of knowledge is described by Bernstein (1999:157) as occurring through 'explicit recontextualisation and evaluation'. In horizontal discourse there are also rules determining knowledge circulation, behaviour and expectations. These are based on status and determine social relations and practices. It is not clear however how new knowledge escapes the local context. Bernstein attempts to determine this by drawing upon the concepts of 'repertoire' and 'reservoir'. Repertoire signifies the range of competences within a social field possessed by an individual whilst reservoir refers to the whole range of competences available for the community, a common stock, although this may not be equally distributed through the 'community'. Social relations are partly configured around the relation between repertoires and reservoirs but also between the different repertoires of individuals as they 'meet' in the social field. The social field is however not static: new strategies, competences and practices arise and come into play. Bernstein examines the rules for this process and asks what determines the circulation of strategies and or competences. He concludes that this depends on the degree of insulation between members of the community, the degree of individualization. The more sharing, less insulated and more communal the community, the more circulation and the less rigid the social distinctions. Conversely, the more restricted circulation consequences, the greater the privatization, classification and stratification of community. The analysis of reservoir and repertoire links with the binary vertical and horizontal in terms of knowledge and discourses of knowledge as discussed.

Horizontal and Vertical Discourses in the Lay/Professional Dynamic

The distinction Bernstein makes between horizontal and vertical discourses can be drawn upon in the analysis of governing bodies. Amongst governors the lay/professional dynamic sees the more horizontally inclined discourse of the lay governors operating alongside the more specialized, vertical discourse of the teaching profession. In the relationship between the headteacher and the chair this distinction is likely to be less marked - perhaps a condition of the 'successful' functioning of this relationship. Furthermore Bernstein's description of the rules regulating the access and circulation of knowledge are also pertinent, in this case in the relationship between the school and its community. Whilst the school may be predicated upon specialized, vertical discourses, the catchment of the school or at least sections of this, will be more conversant with the common-sense knowledge of horizontal discourses. Bernstein's descriptions of 'repertoire' and 'reservoir' are applicable to the operation of the governing body. Different governors can be described as bringing different repertoires of cultural capital to the governing body. Such differences may be overridden in terms of collective reservoir. In other words as an aggregated body governors may collectively have the resources necessary to function so questions of distribution don't arise. There are likely to be questions relating to the lay and professional dynamic in governing bodies however. These particularly pertinent in the case of working-class parent governors whose disempowerment in the governing body may go unrecognized as it is compensated for by the middle-class chair, for instance, who is likely to have insider educational knowledge.

Foucault: Discourse, Power and Governmentality

Such analysis demonstrates how Bernstein's differentiation between types of discourses and knowledge are useful in the examination of school governance and the consideration of structures of inclusion and exclusion within and between different 'communities'. These themes are also

attended to in the work of Foucault whose theories of discourse, power and governmentality are particularly useful tools in the analysis for this thesis. Foucault's redefinition of the relationship between the subject and discourse is asserted through his positioning of the subject as the product of discourse and power relations. As such the subject is predisposed to take on a number of different characteristics according to the subject positions available within a particular socio-historical context. Foucault's conceptualization of the dispersal of power through institutions is instructive, especially in his focus upon the school as an instrument of 'governance' and the operation of 'governmentality'. This provides a context for the operation of the school governing body, and the relationships and discourses therein, specifically those between the chair of governors and headteachers, the site of considerable power.

Discursive Practices and School Governors

Foucault's position differs significantly from a traditional approach to the history of ideas. Rather than gather themes from documents, the 'archaeologist' seeks to examine the structure of the documental discourse as it stands, regardless of its origins or future application. Driven by the belief that knowledge is essentially the outcome of linguistic practices, Foucault is keen to explore the process of 'discursive formation' whereby discourses and 'disciplinary formations' come into being and therefore where areas and objects of knowledge come into being. These can be usefully investigated, it is asserted, through the analysis of 'statements' constituting a discourse. Statements represent the permitted elements of linguistic practices ruled through their discursive formation. These rules are identified as 'discursive practices'. These are noted by Foucault (1972:15) to be sets 'of anonymous and historical rules -always specific as to time and place and which, for a given period and within a social, economic, geographic or linguistic zone define the framework within which the enunciative functions are exercised'. Foucault's particular concern here was the relationship between these systems of rules, especially in cases where they

clash as contradictions. Foucault's emphasis upon how and why certain discourses come to be valued or discarded is instructive to analyses of the relationship between the headteacher and the chair of school governing bodies. The dynamics that drive this relationship are embedded within an environment of competing discourses: those of the headteacher as educational professional, and those of the governor as disinterested outsider on one hand and interested community member on the other. This relationship sits within and is reflected by particular rules or 'discursive practices' of the school and is intrinsically linked to power relationships.

Discourses consistently function in complex power relationships such as these. For Foucault (1979:93-4) this interaction is more than an effect of pre-existing power or owned by a specific person or group, power is dynamic in the way it relates to discourse:

Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere...Power comes from the low; that there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between ruler and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix-no such duality extending from top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. One must suppose rather that the manifold relations of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole.

From Sovereign Power to Biopower

The compelling notion of 'biopower' emerges in relation to the rise of modern institutions and practices. Biopower refers to practices that seek to work systematically on the capabilities of the human body and the behaviour of individuals and collectivities of individuals. According to Foucault (1977:139) biopower focuses 'on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimisation of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls.'

Foucault refers to two forms of biopower (1977:152), these illustrating its simultaneously subjective and objective nature. The first of these is ‘anatomy-politics’. This is described in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) where an ‘anatomy-chronological schema of behaviour’ is defined:

The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are defined an aptitude, a direction, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power.

The second form of biopower is biopolitics of the population, described by Rabinow and Rose (2006:197) as a ‘focusing on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanisms of life: birth, morbidity, mortality, longevity’. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault refers to the shifts in discourse surrounding punishment between the ‘classical age’ (mid seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century) and the ‘modern age’ (late 18th century to the present). During this time change centred upon the proliferation of professionals and their preoccupation with the definition and measurement of the human body. Foucault identifies this period as demonstrating the beginnings of greater emphasis upon the state’s role in efficiently managing its resources. As human populations were increasingly identified as one such resource, there was an increase in state intervention in the lives of individuals. This form of productive governance was, asserts Foucault, intent upon producing person-types with dispositions useful and applicable to the dispersed state. This has had the effect in the modern era of creating the self-regulating, self-managing, aspirational individual as citizen: the ideal product of governmentality.

The emergence of ‘biopower’ in late eighteenth century Europe gradually eroded but did not completely replace, dominant forms of sovereign power. This is powerfully illustrated through the analysis of punishment in mid seventeenth century France, the classic era, through to the emergence of new forms of discipline and punishment in the late eighteenth century and

persisting in the present, 'modern' era. . Biopower replaced explicit punishment with productive disciplinary techniques.

Discipline, Surveillance and School Governance

Foucault's descriptions of the control and regulation of human bodies in prisons is summarised by Merquior (1985:96-99) as being on a continuum of 'disciplinary apparatus'. The prison as 'the purest form on the continuum of disciplinary approaches' was a stark exemplar of the 'disciplinary society' developing in the late eighteenth century and ubiquitous in nineteenth century modern culture. Schools, hospitals and the army were also sites where techniques of discipline were at play. Surveillance was characterised by the supervision and imposition of 'regularity on behaviour down to the very movements of the body' (1985:93). The control of the activity and movement of the body was evident in the meticulous instructions for handwriting in schools, loading a rifle in the army or operating machinery in a factory. In schools detailed observation and classification of pupils led to their transformation into 'cases' with extensive personal records. Their separation into classrooms characteristic of the 'cellular' organisation of individuals within numerous institutions such as barracks in the military, the organisation of workers in factories and of criminals in prisons. The school was identified by Foucault therefore as one of a number of institutions functioning as an instrument of governance. This permeated the architecture and organization of the school, the timetabling to activities and the design of the classroom with the all-seeing schoolmaster.

The metaphor of the panopticon to illustrate the inescapable gaze in a society increasingly under surveillance is drawn upon. Borrowed from Bentham, the panopticon is a prison designed with a central tower where all within can be seen. It is the knowledge of potential surveillance that encourages individuals to internalize, to self-regulate their behaviour. In their analysis of the

1988 Education Reform Act, Powell and Edwards (1988:96-106) offer a Foucauldian account of how legislation legitimizing 'choice' for parents and positioning 'power' within schools encouraged close surveillance and enforcement of morality and educational practice in the UK. Referring to the 'school technologies' of 'assessment' and 'inspection' they describe how analysis drawing upon Foucault can lead us to focus on the question of how power is exercised, by what means and to examine the effect. Positioned within the organization of the school, governing bodies are the object of and subject to the wider project of 'governance'. In their official capacity school governors are assigned to oversee activities within the school, the preoccupation being examination results, contributing to the broader observation and classification of pupils. Governors also ostensibly monitor the behaviour of professionals. More recently this has been through the procedures of 'performance management', although the identification of teacher as 'expert' is likely to inhibit this. In turn, teachers are themselves operating within institutions characterized by disciplinary techniques. These include the imposition of timetabling in schools, the enforcement of physical co-operation through 'lining-up' and sitting down properly and the self-regulation of pupils in the classroom environment. Such techniques are characteristic of forms of biopower.

The 'Carceral' Network

In *Discipline and Punish* (1971) Foucault describes how such behaviours in institutions like schools are part of the development of systems of surveillance. This it is asserted led to the development of the 'carceral network' of those charged with examining and judging human behaviour. Teachers were among the growing number of 'experts' who alongside doctors and social workers worked upon the 'normalisation' of individuals. The institutionalisation of prisons, Foucault's particular focus, was accompanied by the development of professionals such as doctors and psychologists, called upon to make judgments on the guilt of potential criminals.

Expertise in the social sciences was also seen to flourish at this time as interest grew in examining and explaining ‘criminal’ behaviour. The incarceration of particular undesirable individuals institutionalized the ‘delinquent’, identified by Foucault as ‘politically harmless and economically negligible’ (1977:278). The identification of this potentially threatening ‘other’ provided a powerful rationale for the widespread surveillance of the population:

The workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (lateness, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body (‘incorrect’ attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency)’ (1977:178).

In his analysis Foucault identifies a connection between the perpetual desire for knowledge of the human body- characterized by the phenomenon of the ‘caring’ professional- and the widespread diffusion of power. The teacher for example is one of a number of ‘agents of normalcy’ working towards the ‘universal reign of the normal’, a position affording them considerable power. As Foucault (1977: 27) explains, power in institutions and society more broadly are steeped in social and psychological mastery. Power relations permeate this:

We should admit that power produces knowledge...that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

The nature of power in the modern age is therefore one that corresponds to master and servant relationships. Such relationships are ubiquitous, a key feature of the social body. Examples are those within the family between men and women, at work between employer and employee or between doctor and patient. In schools the master and servant relationship is at work between the teacher and the pupil. Relationships are centred upon strictly defined norms of achievement as well as stratification according to age. Similar processes are identifiable in the school governing body. Here the lay/professional dynamic positions individuals with ‘expertise’ (the headteacher),

who exercises considerable power in relation to lay governor colleagues. Although as shall be discussed, in Foucault's account, structures of power are by nature fluid and dynamic. They are therefore subject to movement and change.

Governmentality

Foucault's analysis of power draws upon his specific conceptualization of 'government'. This is most usefully described as a continuum extending from political government to the regulation or 'technologies of the self'. Specifically 'governance' is the point between power and domination, where individuals are driven by others, and is essentially the link between this and the way individuals conduct themselves, the 'conduct of conduct'. In governmentality therefore 'subjectivity' and 'power' are synonymous. This two-fold conceptualization is reflected in Foucault's analysis of the destruction of forms of identity in modern societies in the West, and new modes of subjectivity linked to governmental technologies (Lemke, 2002). Governance can be seen to be at work in the increasing regulation of institutions and their discourses by the state. This can take on a number of forms: it may be political, philosophical, religious, medical and pedagogic and is identifiable in prisons, schools and the workplace where, as discussed earlier in this chapter, techniques of normalisation are at play. It is also evidenced by the increase in self-governance, the self-monitoring of behaviour. Foucault describes how these processes are ubiquitous. They are identifiable in for example: 'patterns of guidance for the family and children and the management of the household' (2002:2). The description of governmentality as a technique for the 'direction of the soul' (2002:2) points to the deep-rooted experience and internalization of self-governance. This is a powerful tool in the mastery of human behaviour.

Foucault's (1991:99) description of the preoccupation with population during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provides a vivid account of the beginnings of techniques of governance so

ubiquitous in modern society. He describes how during this period population became the subject for extensive organization and measurement, for the first time it was identified as having 'its own regularities, its own rate of deaths and diseases, its cycles of scarcity etc'. The ordering of individuals within populations therefore, became the focus as an object and subject of governance:

In contrast to sovereignty, government has as its purpose not the act of government itself but the welfare of the population, the improvement of its conditions, the increase of its wealth, longevity, health etc...the population is the subject of needs, of aspirations but it is also the object in the hands of the government' (1991:100).

The 'Shepherd-Flock Game'

This demonstrates that whilst populations were the object of techniques of governance through perpetual measurement and ordering, they were also positioned as the subject of needs, of welfare. Foucault refers to the welfare of the population as an expression of 'pastoral power'. Elements of this are identified as emerging as sovereign power became dislocated. Specifically, pastoralship encourages the individual to examine their behaviour, to refer to matters of conscience. As Foucault describes, pastoralship represents: 'a link between total obedience, knowledge of oneself, and confession to someone else' (1981:239 in Hindess, 1996:122).

Pastoral power is elaborated through Foucault's reference to the 'shepherd-flock game' (1981). This form of government seeks to promote the wellbeing of its subjects in return for the detailed regulation of their behaviour. This description is pertinent to the school, an institution designed to regulate behaviour but characterized by its promotion of wellbeing. Embedded within this structure, school governors can also be characterized in terms of pastoral power on two levels: whilst they are party to ensuring the school operates according to the rules of the institution, based upon pastoral power, they may also be subject to the 'shepherd-flock game'. In this respect

they are inclined to be ‘shepherded’ by the lead professionals – the headteacher, and to varying degrees by the chair of governors. In response governors are inclined to internalise forms of governance, regulating their own behaviour.

The Theoretical Framework: Providing a Compass

As I have hoped to demonstrate during this chapter, the theoretical framework - drawing upon Bourdieu, Bernstein and Foucault - provides a language and framework for understanding the patterns that emerge through the gathering together and analyzing of discursive data in contexts of practice. Specifically, the intention is that this framework will provide a compass for navigating the route through questions concerning the lay/professional relationship and more broadly the function of governors as agents of participatory democracy. Drawing upon Bourdieu’s notion of habitus for example is particularly valuable when examining the profiles and practices of school governors, as is the notion of symbolic violence in terms of illuminating processes of legitimisation. Drawing upon a description of behaviours with intersecting influences often modulated by social class, the particular habitus of governors was initially notable in the survey data; certain social profiles were to be found amongst school governors. Bourdieu’s exploration of the differentiated cultural capital associated with habitus in the field of education was also instructive in examining interview transcripts: chairs of governors for example, tending towards particular political networks. More broadly, Bourdieu’s notion of meta-fields is instructive in terms of the relative domination of governing bodies, to varying degrees, by local government, the NAFW and the UK government (fields of bureaucracy).

Bernstein’s focus upon code theory resonates with Bourdieu’s notion of habitus as both allude to the disposition of individuals and groups. Bernstein’s specific interest in language codes as an indicator of social class mobility are particularly valuable for an analysis of school governance as it allows a focus upon the differentiated use of these. Through the analysis of interview

transcripts and observation of governor meetings, different codes are drawn upon according to the role of governors. Chairs of governors for example, are inclined to draw upon the elaborated code associated with middle-class identities. Bernstein's notion of the classification and framing of knowledge and discourse is also instructive in the examination of the lay/professional relationship in governing bodies and the extent to which knowledge and discourse are bounded. Closely related to this are Bernstein's concepts of horizontal and vertical discourse and the notions of reservoir and repertoire. The latter used to describe the extent of 'competencies' within communities and how these are negotiated – this resonating with Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital.

Foucault's focus on the dynamics of discourse and power-knowledge also allow for an exploration of the positioning of school governors and the socio-historical context of this. Foucault's proposition that the subject is engaged with a number of competing discourses at any given time is useful for exploring how the position of governor has evolved. By drawing upon this perspective, the issue of discourses shaping the position of governors and their responses to this can be explored. It will be argued for example that the conduct of governors is largely dominated by the discourse of the educational professional, a response to the historical development of education and school governance (explored in the next chapter). The pastoral power operating in governing bodies is indicative of this. Through interview data in particular it is seen how the relationship between the headteacher and the chair operates in an environment of competing discourses. His or her relationship functions according to the 'discursive practices' and resulting power relationships within the school. Foucault's notions of biopower and governmentality are illuminating when considering the official function of governors to have an overview of the school, the preoccupation of late being examination results. Governors also, albeit symbolically perhaps, are involved in the observation and classification of pupils and to an

extent of teachers, thus contributing to Foucault's broader description of the ideal self-regulating, self-managing citizen.

This chapter has attempted to provide a theoretical framework for linking specific research data gleaned from interviews, observation and the survey, with the following chapter, which will focus upon the socio-historical context of the governance of schools and education more broadly. The intention here has been to contextualise the characteristics of school governance and the structure of education in the UK in terms of changing socio-historical circumstances. Due to the limitations of space, a decision has been made not to include in particular the historical development of education in Wales. A further reason for this is that until recently legislation in Wales has been dictated through legislation applied to both England and Wales. Chapter five will discuss how the development of the National Assembly for Wales has in more recent years sought to carve out a distinctive education structure in the country. The implications of this on Welsh school governance will also be explored.

CHAPTER FOUR

GOVERNORS, MODERNITY AND GOVERNANCE

Introduction

To explore governing bodies and the role of headteachers and chairs within them, it is necessary to consider the literature on the history and development of education. This chapter seeks to do this, focusing on key moments in the history of education and how these affected the dynamics of school governing bodies. The position of governing bodies has, and continues to, reflect the position of the teaching professional, schools and more generally of education. These in turn reflect the social and political environment at any given time. This chapter therefore charts the history of school governors and the themes emerging as school governance has developed. The origins of governing bodies will first be explored, followed by a review of the key education acts until the mid-1980s and the resulting consequences of these for schools and their governing bodies.

Although their existence has been identified as dating back some 600 years (Sallis, 1988:100), their powers have waxed and waned according to changes in government and education policy. The focus here will however be the period following the 1870 Education Act and the beginnings of universal state-sponsored education. This provided one of the vehicles for the development of biopower as defined by Foucault, and the accompanying development of forms of governmentality. To summarise then, key moments in the history of education were: the 1870 Education Act which saw the installation of elementary education through the 1870 Education Act, along with School Boards. Little changed during and between the wars, until the 1944 Education Act. This established secondary education for all, establishing the so-called tripartite system. This Act also established the principle of school governance for all schools, although

governor powers were varied and often weak. Ranson (1994) refers to this period (1944-1970s), perhaps nostalgically as ‘the age of the professionalism’ as the teaching profession controlled much of the activity within schools and lay involvement was not a priority. The mid-1960 saw the next significant change in education thinking with the introduction of the comprehensive system and community school principle. Significant structural change occurred in the 1980s most notably through the 1988 Education Reform Act. By the 1980s changes in the economy and the development of the consumer movement saw the power of professionals deteriorate as parents were cast in the role of consumers. Scepticism around the teaching profession developed through the 1970s. These were capitalised upon following the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 whose education reforms in the 1980s attempted to impose market principles into the education system. This period also witnessed an invigoration of school governors who were granted significant powers during the 1980s.

Origins of School Governance

Much has been written about the history of education in the UK (see Jones, 1977; Mann, 1979; Lowndes, 1969; Lowe, 1997) but less about the part played by governing bodies. There is evidence that school governors have existed in some form for the last 600 years. Sallis (1988) refers to Winchester School, established in 1382, as having a system of school governance ‘to provide some independent oversight of its affairs’ (A.F. Leach, *Educational Charters*, Statutes of New College Oxford, 363 in Sallis, 1988:100). These ‘governors’ took the form of the Warden and two Fellows of New College, Oxford University and visited the school annually ‘to scrutinise the teaching and progress in the school of the scholars...and the quality of the food provided for the same...and shall correct or reform anything needing correction or reform’ (Leach, A. F, 1911, quoted in Sallis, 1988:100). By the fifteenth century the principle of involving lay individuals in schools was more firmly established as responsibilities for the establishment and management of

schools was shared between laymen and clerics. For example the establishment of Macclesfield Grammar School in 1503 saw an assortment of laymen being made trustees. In fact the principle of ‘trusteeship’ was a typical model in the establishment of schools in succeeding centuries, especially in schools for older pupils.

Following concern in the nineteenth century about the inadequate provision of schools and of neglectful trustees, two Commissions of Enquiry were established. The Clarendon Commission on the nine public schools (1861) and the Taunton Commission on the grammar schools (1864). Both recommended that all schools should have governing bodies. The Commission’s recommendations for the practice of school governance provided a model for the maintained sector in the future. Governors were described by the Clarendon Commission as ‘the guardian and trustee of the permanent interests of the school’ (Report of the Clarendon Commission, 1864:6; 1988: 102). It was recommended that the ideal governor would be ‘conversant with the world, with the requirements of active life and with the progress of literature and science’ (1864:6; 1988:101). The assertion was that governors would have knowledge of matters beyond the life of school, in the ‘wider world’ as well as having an interest in the standards agenda, directly relevant to the school. As in the guidance for school governors today however, there was a separation between the respective roles of the headteacher and the governors. While the Head should have as much freedom as possible on matters of discipline and teaching, ‘the division of classes, the school hours and the school books...the measures necessary for maintaining discipline and the general direction of the course and methods...,’ the governors would have responsibility for the content and balance of the curriculum, ‘what should be taught, and what importance should be given to each subject are therefore questions for the Governing Body; how to teach is a question for the Head Master’ (1864:6; 1988:102).

This immediate prehistory of modern universal schooling ostensibly laid the foundation for school governance. In this context, it is interesting to compare the perception of the division of labour of school governors and headteachers (as just described) in the nineteenth century with that prescribed in recent years where the situation has reversed. Governors are now expected to assist with the general direction of the school but to have little input into ‘what should be taught. A similar comparison can be made in relation to the Taunton Commission, succeeding Clarendon. The report expressed concerns that schools were teaching subjects parents would not necessarily deem appropriate to their children, as the report put it, schools gave ‘undue prominence to what no parents within their reach desire their children to learn’. In this respect therefore, governors were regarded as having a task ‘to adapt the schools to the work which is now required of them, by prescribing such a course of study as is demanded by the needs of the country’ (Report of Taunton Commission, 1864:567; 1988:102). Like Clarendon, the Taunton Commission can be contrasted to the situation in schools today. The curriculum is largely one dictated from the central government and governor decisions are focused upon practical areas such as finances, with implications for issues such as school hours and school books, areas of concern that were deemed inappropriate for governor attention in the 19th century. There does remain however in guidance for school governors and in conversations with headteachers in the research for this thesis (as will be discussed later), a definite limit of governor involvement, this emphasises the boundary between the professional knowledge and skills of teaching and the governor’s status of a lay, ‘non-professional.’

The Birth of Universal Schooling

Whilst Clarendon and Taunton had focused on the governance of schooling, there was an increasing focus in the nineteenth century on bringing children into the education system and curtailing their employment in dangerous environments. This took the form of a series of

parliamentary acts. The 1833 Factory Act introduced a compulsory two hours of schooling per day for children signifying the first time children from all backgrounds could access education. Alongside this came the first signs of a profession of teaching. The opening of the first teacher training college, St John's was founded in 1839 by John Kay-Shuttleworth, a notable figure of the time who campaigned against poverty and for universal schooling. James Donald (1992) identifies a mistrust of the teaching profession as early as the 1850s and 1860s with the imposition of a 'payment by results' system. This also reflected concerns about rising costs of education at this time. These measures culminated in the 1870 Elementary Education, or Forster Act. This realised Kay-Shuttleworth's aspiration for universal schooling with the establishment of elementary schools across the nation. These were created to supplement schools already run by churches or guilds for example. The Act widened access to education on an unprecedented scale, creating a national system of state education, a dual system of voluntary denominational schools and nondenominational state schools. The School Boards, established following the 1870 Act had the power to open new schools in their districts and fund the education of the poorest children. They also had the power to oblige children between five and 13 years old to attend school, employing attendance officers to enforce this. The school leaving age was brought forward to 10 years in 1880 and then to 14 years in 1918. The local organisation and administration of schools changed at the turn of the century as the 1902 Education Act established Local Education authorities (LEAs). These replaced School Boards and had the function of administering funds, dealing with pupil admissions and employing teaching staff.

1870 Act: a Foucauldian Approach

James Donald (1992:17-45) applies Foucault's theories around power, knowledge and surveillance when analysing this period of education history. For Donald there were a number of motivators leading to the 1870 Education Act, not all of these relating to the benevolent call for

education for all and the recognition of the inadequacies of voluntary schools. According to Donald, the Act was a response to changing technologies and the challenges to England's industrial supremacy at the time: the country needed to build up its workforce to retain its position in the world. This required regaining control of the population with education a key tool for this. Control was particularly needed of the radical working-class, whose widespread illiteracy and criminality was seen as a threat, especially as the male suffrage had been extended. Education of the poor would need to be of a standard tempering social ills and radical tendencies, yet not too extensive as to threaten the social hierarchy. The development of systems of surveillance within the education system were part of this project of population control. Donald identifies the development of the monitorial system of teaching in this respect. This system was pioneered in the early nineteenth century by Dr Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster and was indicative of the increasing surveillance of the individual. This was identifiable in the architecture of the 'Bell-Lancaster' or 'monitorial' school. In these schools, the classroom was designed to maximize surveillance: desks were arranged around the room with children facing the wall. The headmaster's desk was also against the wall, positioned to enable a view of all pupils who were placed in groups of 30. Each group would be led by a pupil or monitor who in turn would receive instruction from the headmaster. The 'teacher-educator' notion as introduced by Kay-Shuttleworth in the 1870 Act enabled the enactment of Foucault's pastoral/disciplinary roles, as teachers were to be close in social status to their pupil charges, effectively engaged in bonds of sympathy. Furthermore, the practice of hierarchical observation, operated to instill self-surveillance, tempering behaviour. This resonated with Foucault's allusion to Bentham's panopticon (see chapter two).

Donald's (1992) description of the historical development of education structures draws upon Foucault's analysis of the development of techniques of government. This was part of the

production of regimented and self-policing subjects or docile bodies in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. At the level of the school, the position of the classroom teacher as moral leader gave credence to their authority and the pupil's need to conform and to internalise methods of governance, self-governance. This was reinforced through the hierarchy of the headteacher directing the teaching staff. There was an increased interest in pedagogy as this became a specialism in university departments. Accompanying this was an increasing classification of children in terms of biological / psychological development. Donald explains how such classification was symptomatic of a wider-spread regulation of the population with each pupil having a 'record' (as within the police force). The 'educators as police analogy' can be identified through so-called 'visitors' who were charged with counteracting truancy by liaising between schools and families. The development of a standardised curriculum (Revised Code), examinations and testing was also part of a developing culture of regulation. Donald refers in particular to the struggle over what should be included in the curriculum, this representing a struggle between discourses, between what should be valued in schools. Donald points to calls in some quarters for a curriculum focused upon Geography and History with the jingoistic promotion of British citizenship. Others favoured a curriculum emphasising exercise and 'drill' with a view to preparing children for potential international conflict. Such conflicts came in the shape of World War I (1914-18) and II (1939-1945) the experiences of this paving the way for the 1944 Education Act. According to Sockett (1980:5), it was in the late 1930s that education was first identified as a 'tool of social reconstruction'. An educated nation a significant weapon for combating the threats of fascism and totalitarianism.

The Tripartite System

The experience of the Second World War gave further credence to the position of education as a tool for change. Outlooks of British citizens had been challenged. Widespread evacuation had

seen different social classes thrown together heightening awareness. War work gave people aspirations and expectations were raised. Amongst the post-war social and economic reforms, it was education legislation, according to Ranson (1994:15), that held the highest status. Ranson describes how this legislation aimed to promote social mobility, dissolving what was regarded as a rigid, outmoded, class-divided society. Education in particular was seen as ‘the agency through which people, pupils and parents would move towards participation in the benefits of a richer, fairer and more civilised society’ In post-war Britain hopes were that a strong state would promote an open and modern society. The Education Act, led by Butler represented a key element of these hopes by, for the first time, establishing the principle of free secondary education for all and access to grammar schools. This theoretically at least, broadened the scope for access to higher education, enhancing the meritocratic principle, again in principle at least. The Education Act established three progressive stages of education: ‘primary’, ‘secondary’ and ‘further’ with the leaving age for pupils rising from 14 to 15 years. Centralising the system, the newly established Ministry of Education replaced the Board of Education, amalgamating branches to form a Schools Branch and a Further Education Branch within the Ministry. This strengthened the role of Westminster although LEAs retained significant providing powers. They remained responsible for school meals, milk, transport to and from schools, clothing and scholarships. LEAs were also responsible for the school curriculum, the appointment of headteachers, advising, inspection, staffing and resources.

The principle of education for all is viewed with some scepticism by Maclure (1992:162). Whilst acknowledging the enduring principle that education ‘was a good thing in itself’ a philosophy lasting until the mid 1970s, Maclure describes the perceived optimism of the time as ‘naïve in the extreme’. He refers in particular to the notion of a common agreement about the purpose of education, or in his words ‘the benign assumption that people were generally agreed about the

aims of education, vocational, cultural, personal – and the belief in some Adam Smith-like divine hand which would miraculously add up to the essential aims of society’. As Ranson (1994:15) concedes, the 1944 Act was essentially a compromise between parties with an interest in education including: the Church of England, the non-conformist churches, the Roman Catholic community, local administrators and teachers, this ‘post-war settlement’ characterized by co-operation and compromises. The education system was essentially a partnership between central government, the teaching profession and LEAs. As Deem (1995) points out, it is clear that these relationships were unbalanced. Central government formulated education policy but LEAs oversaw its implementation. In the 1960s, for example, comprehensive schools were introduced but this was at the discretion of local authorities.

Educational Expansion: Governor Weakness

One important and persistent imbalance of power was between those providing education and those consuming it. At a time when teachers were given relative freedom to run schools, school governors and parents were somewhat side-lined. The 1944 Education Act dealt with the position of school governors by requiring that ‘for every county school and every voluntary school there should be an instrument providing for the constitution of (a) body of managers or governors of the school’ (Education Act 1944, Section 17 (1)). Baron and Howell (1974) suggest that the recognition in law of the individuality of each school and therefore the need for an individual governing body resulted from considerable pressure from the independent and grammar school sectors. There was however no requirement that each school should have a separate governing body. In fact it was not uncommon at this time for schools to be governed in this way, effectively diluting governor influence. There was also no stipulation for parental involvement. Ranson (1994) describes the quasi-autonomous status of governing bodies at this time. The articles of government of the 1944 Act determined ‘the functions to be exercised in relation to the

(secondary) school by the local education authority, the body of governors and the headteacher respectively' (Section 43/1 in Ranson, 1994: 21). These would have to be approved by ministers however. The chain of power in schools appeared to be: government ministers – local councillors – school governors and headteachers and finally parents whose responsibilities were given scant mention in the Act. The input of parents was limited to ensuring the regular attendance of their children to the full curriculum available at school. Functions of governing bodies varied at this time but were often limited to overseeing the workings of the school, with LEAs dominating the operation of schools.

The weak position of school governing bodies persisted as, supported by a healthy economy, the welfare state developed during the 1950s and 1960s. This included the education department whose government minister held considerable power. Ranson (1994:25) refers to a triumvirate partnership in education at this time, consisting of the Secretary of the Association of Education Committees, the General Secretary of the NUT and the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Education. The following objectives characterized this partnership: eliminating the all-age school, reducing class sizes, expanding higher education, extending teacher education and improving school buildings. Ranson refers to this period in terms of T.H. Marshall's vision that civil and political rights should be realised through the key principles of the social democratic state: the rights of citizenship, sharing of common dignity, self-respect, culture and status within the community. As citizenship presupposes equality of opportunity and influence, the role of education and community governance were according to Ranson regarded as central to citizenship in the social democratic state. It was hoped that education would provide the human capital to fuel economic growth, undermining class domination. However, whilst the 1944 Education Act had proposed the idea of an 'opportunity society' (1994:27), methods of learning actually reinforced a pre-war class system. Selection was central to the system. This had been

established by the 1943 Norwood Report. This identified three types of child suitable to three types of educational career, depending on their performance in the 11 plus examination. Grammar schools were suited to the more academically-minded destined for university, the civil-service and the professions. Technical schools catered for those with more 'applied' minds with a view to working in technical careers. Modern schools however took on the education of those with a more 'limited' scope, suited for unskilled, manual labour.

Comprehensivisation and Consumerism

This education system was called into question in the 1960s. Comprehensive education began to be recognised as a fairer system for delivering educational opportunities for all, to 'revolutionise school life' (Rubinstein and Simon, 1969: 105). Anglesey, the first LEA to introduce comprehensive schools, underlined the purpose: 'comprehensive education was for the greatest good for the greatest number, for the greatest good for all' (*New Society*, 1 November, 1979:200 in Ranson, 1994:28). Comprehensive schools were to be comprehensive in terms of entry requirements, age of pupils and curriculum offered. The schools were to engender child-centred learning and to teach in a more relaxed classroom and school environment. Flexible teaching groups rather than streaming, along with team teaching and project work, were also part of a proposed new regime. A greater prominence would be given to aesthetic subjects. Teachers and educational researchers were also at this time beginning to articulate the contribution played by parents in the success of children at school. This appeared to be the case, regardless of social class. Community involvement was also becoming increasingly acknowledged. Influenced by Henry Morris's development of 'village colleges' in Cambridgeshire in the 1920s, Stewart Mason introduced the principle of community colleges in Leicestershire in the 1950s. Key principles of the community school are neatly summarised by Halsey (1972:79): 'the community school seeks to obliterate the boundary between school and community, to turn the community into a school

and the school into a community'. As far as the input of the parent community was concerned, the 1967 Plowden Report, asserted simply that: 'If the parents are involved the children may be helped'. Becher, Eraut, and Knight (1981) point to the distinction here between arguments for the benefits of knowing what is happening in the day-to-day life of the school, and the right to this information. The emerging debate around the rights of parents was set against the backdrop of a growth of the consumer rights movement. This included the proliferation of pressure groups, consumer protection and advice agencies. The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) was one such group that established in 1960 provided information for parents of school children. The group gave a clear message of the lack of confidence in advice from schools, local authorities and colleges. Also active at this time, The National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM) were arguing for a greater role in schools for governors and parents to enhance democratic administration.

A prominent campaign group founded at this time was The Campaign for Comprehensive Education (CASE), its foundation reflecting the failure of the Labour government to deliver on its promise in 1965 of introducing comprehensive education. Although by the late 1970s 72 percent of secondary pupils were being educated in comprehensive schools, around 15 percent of pupils were attending selective or private schools (Ranson, 1994:29). Furthermore, as Ranson points out, even where state schools had the title 'comprehensive', this didn't always translate into what and how learning was taking place. Whilst there was great emphasis upon physically reorganising schools into comprehensives, there was a lack of emphasis on their pedagogical reorganisation, the comprehensivisation of the learning process. Campaign groups such as CASE were part of more widespread calls for a greater voice for consumers of education. More broadly they were part of a rising tide of scepticism about the costs and appropriate role of public services in the 1960s and 1970s. The 1974 local government reorganisation was an attempt to respond to the

need for more open government, obliging committees of local councils to face their electorate by holding public meetings. Although this would include education committees, the translation of increased powers did not appear to occur at the level of the school as governors and parents continued to be marginalised. Whilst the Weaver Report (1966) had proposed a social democratic approach to strengthening the local governance of education, the emphasis was upon local professionals rather than parents and governors. This focus meant that little changed in governing bodies at this time. Many LEAs chose to have one governing body for a number of schools. In fact between 1965 and 1969, one quarter of English and Welsh LEAs had one body for all their schools (Deem, 1991:63).

Baron and Howell (1974) note a varying commitment on the part of LEAs to the development of governing bodies in the post-war period. In their 1967 research of secondary schools in County Borough local authorities, it was reported that whilst 20 local authorities had established individual governing bodies for each of its schools. Thirty-seven of the County Borough LEAs had grouped schools together under fewer governing bodies. In the County Council more than half of the 45 LEAs had established individual school governing bodies for secondary schools. Baron and Howell blame history and inertia for the disparity at this time. Deem (1994a) describes similar stagnation in governor activity at this time, noting their focus on overseeing the internal organisation of the school such as its finance and premises issues (1994a: 63). As far as the official framework for school governance was concerned, the point of reference for this continued to be the 1944 Education Act. Schools remained under the control of local authorities. Governing bodies had minimal control, rarely to be seen in their schools and meeting only occasionally. The key catalyst for change was the election of a Conservative government in 1979. This led to a radical restructuring of relationships between elected councillors, professionals and the parents/clients whom they served. The Conservatives sought to wrest power from local

authorities generally and in particular of LEAs. One aspect of this was the reduction of LEA control over school governing bodies.

Disempowering Professionals, Empowering Consumers

The election of Margaret Thatcher hailed the beginning of radical changes in public services, particularly in the education sector. Changes were broadly focused upon the restructuring of power relations between LEAs, professional bodies, central government and the ‘consumers’ of the services they delivered. Although under the auspices of a Tory government, the backdrop to such fluctuation was several years of wrangling from all angles of the political spectrum. This centred upon the proper purposes, methods and management of education. Of direct relevance to school governing was the 1977 Taylor Report commissioned by the Labour government. This was charged with considering the management and government of schools. Specifically the Taylor Committee focused on the functions and composition of governing bodies. It was also interested in governors’ relationships with local education authorities, head teachers, teaching staff and the local community. The commissioning of the report was a reaction to a number of concerns. In a wider context it represented an early sign of shifting moods within the education arena. These issues gathered momentum in 1976 following Prime Minister James Callaghan’s speech at Ruskin College sparking the Great Debate. During his speech Callaghan aired his views on the curriculum, centralization, vocational education, discipline, work and teachers.

These issues had been catapulted onto the public agenda by the crisis at William Tyndale Primary school in Islington in 1975. This school had been thrown into controversy following its application of progressive teaching methods. The scandal nourished the perception that parental confidence in education was waning. Added to this were concerns that parental involvement in the running of schools was inadequate. As Sallis (1988) points out, the momentum of this issue had been building since the 1960s and 1970s. Research at this time had established the link

between the home and the success of children at school. The need to balance parental influence on governing bodies was made particularly potent, as the domination of party politics had been seen to lead to abuses of power on school governing bodies. Attempts were made to balance out the LEA dominance of governing bodies. By the late 1970s two thirds of LEAs had parents and teachers on their governing bodies (1988:113). Despite this however the position of the school governing body continued to be limited to that of supporter.

A Partnership Approach

The Taylor Report, *A New Partnership for our Schools* (1977) did not significantly challenge the marginal position of governors. It did however seek to increase parental voice by recommending changes to the composition of governing bodies. This represented an attempt to loosen the professional grip on schooling. Furthermore, attempts were made to improve the status of governors, allaying concerns around governors' perception of their work and their relationships with others. As Golby (1992) and Sallis (1988) suggest, Taylor was attempting to move the role of governors to one beyond the ceremonial, extending their position beyond that involving superficial, occasional duties. For Sallis (1988: 129) a key message was 'partnership' (1988:129). To this end the report suggested an equal composition of interests on governing bodies. It was advised that there should be no less than two but no more than six governors from each group of parents, LEA representatives, co-opted members and teacher-governors. It was also suggested that governors should sit on no more than one school governing body of the same age group and should serve terms of four years. Further recommendations were that LEAs should have discretionary powers over the position of teacher-governors and their re-election after two years. It also called for LEAs to provide training for governors. The principle of one governing body for each school was put forward, the report calling for the end of single bodies presiding over a number of schools. This practice, reported Taylor, discouraged a personal identification and in-

depth knowledge of the school and its local community. For Sallis this aspect of the report gave credence to the need to guard against the isolation of schools. It also was seen by Sallis as a sign of the positive encouragement of governor inclusion in all areas of school life.

The general principle of governors' wider involvement in decision-making was according to Sallis central to the Taylor report recommendations, as was its attempt to alter the composition and function of school governors. This led to questions about the identity of governors: their specific role and the relationship between the headteacher, staff, parents and the community. The report suggested that such relationships be characterised by openness, through for example the displaying of agendas and minutes of meetings in staff-rooms. It was also suggested that heads should encourage open debate in governing bodies. As far as the relationship with the local authority was concerned, it was suggested that delegations of powers from the LEA to the school should revolve around the general aims of the school and reviews of policy. It was advised however that LEAs should furnish governors with information to carry this out. Curriculum issues were ultimately in the hands of professionals. A similar recommendation applied to the appointment and dismissal of school staff: governors would have an input into these processes but LEAs would have a casting vote. It was suggested however that governors should bring to bear the views of parents over decisions over pupil suspension.

Reaction to the report from education professionals was not favourable. The National Union of Teachers described the Taylor Report as a 'busybodies' charter' (Golby, 1992:165). The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) warned it would inappropriately give governors powers to participate on matters of discipline, details of school organisation and teaching methods. The NASUWT stated their defiance thus: 'we must register our complete opposition to what is nothing less than an attempt to give lay people the right to

dictate to professionally trained and experienced teachers how the teachers should carry out their tasks' (1992:165). Written in response to the Taylor Report and precursor to the 1980 Education Act, the 1977 Green Paper 'Education in Schools' selected aspects of the report for their purposes. With the election of a right-wing government in 1979 came an increasing desire to temper professional control of education and to apply market approaches. The paper asserted that like other public services, education should be answerable to the society it served and which paid for it. The Green Paper referred to the increasing need for schools to demonstrate their accountability. This required a coherent and soundly based means of assessment for the education system as a whole, for schools and for individual pupils. Research published by Bacon (1977 and 1978) at this time called into question the possibility of accountable governing bodies. According to Bacon teachers would be denied the possibility of exercising their representative powers by the presence of the head in school governing body meetings. Furthermore the possibility of partnership with parents was unlikely to be realized. This would be the case, claims Bacon, due the co-opting of parents by the professional and establishment view. In other words, parents would wish to support the professionals within the school as well as locally in the authority.

A Step Towards Governor Empowerment?

Although Sallis characterizes the 1980 Education Act as a 'delayed and diluted response' to the Taylor Report (1988:133), the Act was undoubtedly the beginning of a shift in power from educational professionals and the LEA to school governing bodies. 'These little known, semi-invisible, institutions would move into prominence, making school governors a force to be reckoned with in the control of schools' (Kogan, 1984:1). The position of parents on governing bodies was strengthened, albeit balanced out by a reduction in the number of teacher governors. A few years following the 1980 legislation Sir Keith Joseph attempted to bring the role of parents on governing bodies to the centre stage by proposing in his 1984 Green Paper: Parental Influence

at School that they should have the majority share of positions on the governing body. In proposals that would prove too radical for the government, Joseph, as Secretary of State for Education and Science, proposed a model of school governance where so-called 'consumers' of education would outnumber the 'producers. This proposition would effectively create a 'consumer council' (Sallis, 1988:146). Furthermore Joseph attempted to operationalise parental choice by calling for a voucher system. This enabled parents to choose how money was spent on their child's education. The proposals reflected the Conservative government's long-term plans for the reconstruction of the education service. The broad agenda of the Tories was the restructuring of powers and responsibility in education, with the emphasis on market formation and the consumer at the expense of the professional.

Joseph's more radical proposals were broadly dismissed. The National Confederation of PTAs and CASE, along with LEAs and teachers, stated a preference for the partnership model proposed by the Taylor Report model. Maclure (1992) suggests overall that the effect of the Joseph Green paper was to rally support around the Taylor proposals, as there were fears that such a governing body constitution would risk harming relationships between the LEA, governors and headteachers. In the event, Joseph's proposals never went beyond the Green Paper stage and although the 1980 Education Act did not significantly enhance the powers of governors, the changes were a definite recognition of the interests of parents and teachers. Specifically, the Act introduced the following changes: the requirement of governing bodies to include at least two parents elected by parents of registered pupils at the school and the requirement for there to be at least one teacher on the governing body elected by colleagues with the headteacher automatically becoming a governor by virtue of his/her office unless s/he decided otherwise. The grouping of governing bodies, other than two primary schools, would terminate and governors would be able to serve on no more than five school governing bodies. Three governors could request a meeting

of the whole body and all governors could be involved in debates unless there was a financial interest. This latter stipulation aimed to guard against attempts by the LEA or headteacher to limit the role of teacher-governors. The position of the chair altered as the 1981 Statutory Instrument required the annual election of this role, the aim being to curtail the domination of LEA representatives (Sallis, 1988: 133-134).

Marginalization of Teacher-Governors

Like Bacon, Sallis is skeptical about the success of attempts to balance out the powers in governing bodies. Sallis describes how at the time the voices of parents and teachers continued to be limited as bodies were persistently overwhelmed by interest groups. Research into this issue specifically, points to the tendency for teacher-governors to be marginalised within school governing bodies. This is particularly pertinent given the positive link between effective teacher-governors and the performance of schools as reported by Creese and Bradley (1997). Felicity Taylor's 1983 study of 15 teacher-governors from seven secondary schools in two LEAs found them to be uncertain about the role. Furthermore headteachers were suspicious of the teacher-governor position, concerned that conflicts within the governing body would be made known to outsiders. They were also mindful of the danger of teachers using their position to follow personal agendas. Taylor also reported that teachers themselves felt powerless and irritated by their fellow governors' lack of expertise. They also noted that feedback between teacher representatives and the rest of the staff was usually only on an informal basis. Ten years on, Deem's (1994a, 1994b and 1995) four-year study of 10 school governing bodies found teacher-governors to be marginalized. The emphasis here was upon the attitude of lay governors by whom they felt 'effectively silenced' (New, 1993:76). Deem and her colleagues describe a limited role for teacher-governors in meetings. Their contribution appeared to adhere to a restricted professional model, offering advice only when called upon to do so. Some teacher-

governors felt unable to express their views, inhibited by the fact that others may not agree. Deem relates this to the position of teaching at this time, a maligned profession.

Research by Earley and Creese (2000) in 150 secondary and 350 primary schools reported similar findings. Reviewing the background of teacher-governors they found their predominantly female sample tended to be considerably experienced, most holding senior posts: nearly two thirds had been teaching for 15 years or more and around half for more than 10 years. Three-quarters of the teacher-governors had management positions and 90 percent were members of professional associations, one-fifth serving as representatives for these (2000:478-485). In later research Punter, Adams and Kraithman (2007) also noted the tendency for teacher-governors to occupy senior positions in the school. Scanlon, Earley and Evans (1999) however reported that teacher-governors spent less time than other governors on duties: 11 hours per term compared to 20 hours respectively (1999:48). Scanlon et al also found teacher-governors to be less likely to have taken part in induction training, compared for example to 80 percent of parent and co-opted governors (1999:17). In Creese and Earley's study, most governors agreed they were able to play a full and equal part in the work of the governing body, that they could make a distinctive contribution. Most also agreed that they could also help with improving understandings of educational issues. Furthermore most felt that other members valued their contribution.

Despite this however Creese and Earley (2000:481-484) found a significant minority of teacher-governors harbouring feelings of marginalisation: 22 percent reported they felt excluded and 24 percent felt inhibited at meetings by the headteacher's presence. Furthermore 35 percent of teacher-governors felt that the headteacher and chair of governors dominated the governing body. Some teachers also felt there was a lack of clarity surrounding their role. There are differing opinions on this. The Institute of School and College Governors' (1998) description emphasises

the teacher-governor role as positioned as part of the broader governing body, above that of their constituency:

Teacher governors are there to bring the experience of being a teacher to the governing body's deliberations. Their role is to present the views of the teaching staff faithfully and reasonably. But, as governors, their first responsibility is to the school governing body' (1998:2).

Sallis (1996, in Creese and Earley, 2001: 325) describes the multiple roles of teacher-governors. This included the representation of the views of staff, providing information on educational issues and improving the relationship between the governing body and the school. Despite this guidance, confusion amongst teachers appeared to persist. Creese and Earley's research in 2000 reported that around one quarter of respondents were unclear about their role (2000:477) and 48 percent believed their colleagues to be feeling the same (2001:329).

Creese and Earley align the teacher-governors in their research with three models of practice amongst teacher-governors: the 'watchdog', the 'communication link' and the 'minimalist'. Forty percent of teacher-governors were found to be 'watchdogs', typically male members of the SMT (Senior Management Team) who often had trade union links. Watchdogs were characteristically suspicious of the governing body, keen to protect teachers' interests and unafraid of conflict with the headteacher. Around one third of teacher-governors acted as a 'communication link' between the governing body and the staff-room. Again there was a tendency for these teachers to be at management level but their role was strictly one of expressing views and reporting back, challenge was avoided. The 'minimalists' accounted for 17 percent of teacher-governors who were unwilling recruits lacking confidence and typically giving way to the head's dominance (2001: 332-333). Earley and Creese conclude by highlighting the need to clarify and develop the role of teacher-governors with headteachers taking a lead with this. The significant minority of marginalised teacher-governors and those feeling the role was ill defined was of concern.

Legislation in the 1980s, most notably the 1986 and 1988 Education Reform Acts led to the weakened position of teacher-governors and more broadly professionals at LEA and school level. This period witnessed the wresting of power away from education professionals at LEA and school level - the 'producers' - and placing it in the hands of 'consumers' (parents and school governors). The next chapter will explore this legislation in detail, beginning with an exploration of the issue of accountability drawing on the work of Kogan (1984) who develops a number of models of governing bodies in his work. This is of particular relevance to the lay/professional relationship in governing bodies and wider local political networks. Themes preoccupying researchers following the radical reform of education in the 1980s will also be discussed. These have broadly focused upon: the nature of governor powers, governor profiles, and relationships with other 'stakeholders' in education. An overriding theme emerges as the extent to which governors can be agents of participatory democracy.

The Lay / Professional Relationship: Historical Context

The tension between lay and professional interests is a consistent theme in the history of education and development of governance – a theme resonating in school governing bodies analysed for this thesis. In the post-war period the desire for a strong state formed the backdrop for the establishment of free for all secondary education. However, whilst the reform was predicated upon the political will to improve lives, the proposition, most notably expressed by Ranson, that it was an expression of the realization of social democratic principles, is an unrealistic one. The tripartite system, supposedly promoting schooling based upon meritocratic principles, was essentially based on selection. It was characterized by the separation and classification effect Foucault recognizes as part of the biopolitical project. The comprehensivisation of schooling in the 1960s and experimental community schooling attempted to alleviate the consequences of a selective system. These initiatives had proposed a more child-

centred approach and the development the community relationship, including parent. School governing bodies however continued to lack lay involvement. Local professional domination (from the school and the LEA) on governing bodies continued to marginalize non-professional voices.

Challenges to professional power came in the 1970s as a radical Tory government in the 1980s reined in LEAs under the auspices of empowering the ‘consumer’. Attempts (such as the Taylor Report) to equalize the constitution of governing bodies were treated with scepticism by teacher unions. There were concerns about the involvement of non-professionals, concerns echoed by headteachers in case-study schools in the research for this thesis. Studies in the late 1970s by Bacon (1977, 1978) suggest that even when parents were involved in school governance they were likely to become co-opted by the professional view. This finding resonates with Bourdieu’s ‘bureaucratic habitus’ (see chapter two). This phenomenon also echoed in the relationship between the headteacher and chair of governors in the current research. The early 1980s saw professional interest groups continue to dominate governing bodies. Teachers were similarly marginalized, their position often undermined by the presence of the head as lead professional. More recent research shows this has persisted. As will be discussed in the next chapter, legislation in the mid to late 1980s saw a radical restructure of schooling which attempted to further loosen the perceived grip of the ‘producers’ of education, and to promote accountability.

CHAPTER FIVE

JURIDICAL AND VERIDICAL (RE) FRAMING

Introduction

Although the 1980 Education Act saw the beginning of the de-valuing of the teacher voice in school governance. The Act also began the process of the acknowledgement of links between parental involvement and pupil performance (Plowden Report, 1967). Many schools were for the first time introduced to parent-governor elections. The Act also reflected an interest in obliging LEAs and schools to be more responsive to their parent communities. This was demonstrated by the requirement of LEAs to provide parents with more information on individual schools and their policies. Parents were also given the right to send their children to the school of their choice, regardless of county and borough boundaries. Sallis (1988), with a particular interest in the needs of parents (see also Martin et al, 1996, Munn, 1998 on the issue of parental involvement in school governance) reports how responses to the new powers of governing bodies in schools varied. Whilst some welcomed firmer structures of accountability, others had concerns about the erosion of professional responsibility. Others still, welcomed the potential for a partnership approach to governorship. This was seen as an additional support for the schools, particularly useful in an increasingly financially unstable climate and changing demographics. The management of schools was also changing as an increasingly centralized curriculum threatened the local organization of schools. In this climate, governing bodies were deemed to be valuable by some who welcomed the support and advocacy of a committed parent and community interest group. In this way, asserts Sallis (1988), school governing bodies could be drawn upon to defend the

education of their children: schools could benefit from a process of public pressure on their behalf.

Accountability as Partnership

In a faltering economy, notions of accountability in education carried particular currency at this time. Sallis (1988:25) defines accountability as

a requirement to have one's work tested, debated and judged within some more or less formal structure...there is an obligation to give reasons for action, to review outcomes and to submit to judgment on the performance, in all the circumstances, of the task which one accepts is one's own.

Although rejecting the Tory-driven market approach to accountability emerging in the 1980s, Sallis acknowledges the need to open the school up to public scrutiny. Her analysis of accountability is framed around the needs of parents. For Sallis (1988:26-7) parents need reassurance that there is a system for reviewing and monitoring performance within the school:

all that most parents want is a system in which they routinely get simple explanations of school policies and methods, a chance to question and even doubt without making a meal of it, some assurance that if a problem develops they will promptly be told and encouraged to help, and that they themselves can similarly approach the school if they have worries.

For Sallis accountability was also about having structures in place where explaining, questioning and listening are encouraged to be routine. Such structures would need to develop and grow. As well as ensuring the role of parents in the school, these would also afford protection for teachers in disagreements with senior colleagues. They would also guard against excessive political interference with teachers' work, since their judgment would have the consent of others and their policies would be the subject of debate.

In her analysis Sallis (1988:44) also underlines the important pedagogic role of parent communities in schools governance. For her successful learning is a

shared responsibility between school and home, not a service for which a passive client can look to an active provider...accountability must to some degree be mutual. The key to a child's success therefore is a partnership between two active participants: the hope of improvement comes from the possibility that parents will acquire a sense of identification with schools in place of alienation. This in turn can only come from a feeling that in the school, if nowhere else, they matter...the sense of their value has been a conspicuous feature of schemes in which parents have been successfully involved in their children's learning.

Analysis of Governor Accountability

Kogan (1984) is less optimistic about the school governing body as an effective tool of accountability, underlining the role-confusion of governors as a barrier to this. He demonstrates the stagnant state of governing bodies in his review of the research in this area. In doing so Kogan refers to three research studies (Baron and Howell, 1974; Bacon, 1977, 1978; and Kogan (ed) 1984). Whilst these show some improvement in the practice of school governing over time, in general they demonstrate a notable stagnation in practice. Kogan believed his own Brunel University research, conducted over three years from 1980, did nothing to undermine the pessimism expressed by the preceding studies. In reviewing the quality of governing bodies a number of shortcomings were identified. Firstly it was found that governing body uncertainty over purpose, behaviour and performance led to a lack of identity and purpose (1984:5). The roots of these uncertainties lay in fundamental confusions about their functions, professional-lay relationships and their legitimacy and power. Governing bodies defined their authority as located within a wide variety of issues: of political affiliation, parenthood, local residence, or employment in the school. There therefore appeared to be no model of the school governor that could form the basis of their behaviour (1984:6). Governors were not clear whether they were representing particular interests groups to whom they could be accountable, or whether they should act corporately, detached from their sources of membership.

The second shortcoming was governors' variable mandate. Kogan found them to lack appropriate knowledge of their schools and the aspects of the school deemed important to the local community. Advisers did not provide regular information to governors and information received from headteachers varied widely. Schools also varied in the extent they evaluated themselves, and that such information was made available to governors as a basis for debate (1984:6). The third shortcoming related to the position of local authorities that are criticised by Kogan for their typically weak support. Although LEAs may have asserted the importance of governing bodies, this would not necessarily translate into appropriate support. The danger in this situation would be that education professionals would simply reassert their control. What governing bodies could do therefore, tended to derive from the views of the head teacher, the chairperson or the clerk, or all three. Factors such as custom or individual school policy dictated the operation of governing bodies, rendering their operations of power disparately organized. The focus of governing bodies also varied. Some were preoccupied with administrative matters for example. All governing bodies did however have in common a lack of control over their future membership and composition. In some instances, notes Kogan, governors were unable to determine their own agenda, the operation of governing body meetings, and the nature of their decision-making.

The fourth shortfall identified in Kogan's research was the failure of governing bodies to be effective forums for deliberation between professional and lay interests, although some exchange existed between certain individual school governors. Kogan found therefore that overall governors were largely excluded from discussions focusing on professional interests in the school, these tending to occur directly between teachers and the LEA. The fifth shortfall relates to persistent exclusionary practices in chair of governor elections. Whilst the 1981 Statutory Instrument attempted to challenge the party political domination of the position of chair, Kogan

found the role varied considerably according to individuals and local political cultures. Furthermore, the position of clerk to the governors (traditionally held by LEA staff) was becoming problematic as it clashed with the emerging principle of strengthening governing body autonomy. Finally Kogan found a variance in reactions of headteachers to their governing bodies. Whilst some asserted professional authority over their governors, rendering them weak, others welcomed them as an asset for themselves and the school.

Modelling the Governing Body/LEA Relationship

Variations in relationships are a theme Kogan returns to in his analysis of the tension between governing bodies and local authorities in the early 1980s. This is important for Kogan as he regarded LEAs as having a key position at this time. LEAs were simultaneously accountable for the local education service but also charged with its development and the review. The considerable power of LEAs at this time affected the formal relationship between the local authority and the governing body. This was shaped by the fact that the authority to a large degree controlled the existence, status, functions and composition of the governing body. The Articles of Government specified the formal functions of government; in the Instrument of Government local authorities made decisions on the representation to be allowed to different categories of governors. Kogan's research identified a number of roles taken by LEAs towards their governing bodies. These reflected political characteristics of the local authority, a key dimension being the extent of party political control of policy-making.

According to Kogan, the roles taken by LEAs positioned governing bodies as either: an intermediary between schools and themselves; an executive body (acting to judge appeals against suspension, or appoint staff for example), or as forums working to ensure local accountability. This latter model was favoured by Kogan as it assumed that the governing body would allow the

views of the local community to be known. It would bring together and transmit views to the school and provide a dialogue with the professionals (1984: 28-9). This model claims Kogan, would enable the governing body to provide feedback to the local authority on proposed policies. Governors would also constitute part of the authority's network of consultation, and a system of support for the school. Kogan also noted how the clerking system reflected different models of governing body roles. The treatment of resolutions and minutes differed in LEAs, in some authorities the clerk would send specific requests to particular officers, whereas in others copies of all minutes would be circulated to all senior officers. The extent to which governing body requests were made to councillors also varied.

The organization of the clerking system and relationship with councillors exemplify Kogan's broader point about lack of consistency in school governance. Kogan concludes that the relationship between governing bodies, those they represent, and political administrative structures were unsystematic and indeterminate (1984:13). The research conducted in the early 1980s, found governing bodies to be on the edges of the political network; they lacked linkage with any structure except the local authority. Kogan explains how the lack of engagement between pressure groups in the local political-administrative system was indicative of their weak political position. The range of functions between local authorities and schools made school governing bodies vulnerable to varying control by LEAs. School governing bodies lacked clear organisational identity and their functions were open to negotiation. The key issue for Kogan was that local authorities could determine the composition, functions and modes of relationships of the governing body. Kogan does acknowledge however that governing bodies could assert themselves, exploiting their access to resources of power and remain a potential source of conflict with the local authority or school.

Modelling Political Control and Governing Bodies

Kogan describes the relationship between local authorities and governing bodies as aligned to differing forms of political control. These were reinforced by the culture and style of political activity in the authority. In his analysis Kogan identifies three types of political control: 'strong political control'; 'party control with a viable opposition' and; 'limited party control' (1984:44). In an authority with strong political control decision-making is centralised in the hands of the ruling political elite. Within this system governing bodies are regarded as an extension of the Education Committee of the authority, dominated by governors appointed by the ruling party. Any pressure group activity would take place within party lines. Within the 'party control with a viable opposition' model the political elite would involve governing bodies in consultation. Even if nominated governors were the largest single group they would not necessarily have a formal relationship with the party machine. They also may take up an independent line on issues. Where party political control was strong there was a large number of local authority nominated governors allocated strictly on the basis of party allegiance. Such governors were expected to implement local authority policies and were held accountable to the nominating political party. The governing body was thus a political mechanism between local authorities with school governors involved in consultation with the political elite. Governors could take an independent line on issues even if nominated governors were the largest single group. In this model governors may not have a formal relationship with the party machine whereas under a 'limited party control' model, this relationship is non-existent: 'The governors are not expected to represent sectional views but to act as trustees for the community' (1984:44).

The relationship between governing bodies and the local political structure is crucial for Kogan, as he asserts, '...the local education authority determines the boundaries within which governing

bodies work' (1984:19). He does however attempt to identify four normative models of school governance: the accountable model, the advisory model, the supportive model, and the mediator model. Within the first of these, the accountable model – which was favoured by Kogan - the governing body works to ensure the school is operating satisfactorily within prescribed policies. This served the interests of the local education system. The main emphasis of the governing body here would be upon the political and lay role the professionals would be administratively subordinate to. The focus of the advisory model however is professional activities in the school. These are legitimised and tested by the governing body that also acts as a safeguard against failure. This model is essentially responsive to professional leadership. The supportive model takes this further. Whilst promoting the school's interests its essential focus is to respond to professional or managerial leadership. The final model, the mediator model of governance, takes its reference from the local education system rather than the school. It sees its role as negotiating different interests in education. This is with a view to safeguarding against failure in that part of the system. There is a clear emphasis in this model upon the importance of articulating different viewpoints and achieving agreement on a strong pluralist model.

More than ten years after Kogan's research, Farrell and Law's 1996 research in five schools in south Wales found little evidence of governing bodies operating according to Kogan's 'ideal' accountable model. They found instead that governing bodies tended to operate according to a mix of the advisory and supportive models. Accountability operated in the five schools on a top-down basis with headteachers giving an account of their actions to the governing body rather than the governing body holding the headteacher to account. There was an absence of 'objective' information available to governors. This was a key factor limiting the power of governors to hold professionals to account. The most common notion of accountability amongst governors was found to relate to that operating between governors and parents. There was lack of clarity around

the issue however. Although the statutory accountability mechanisms –the Annual Parents’ Meeting (APM), Annual Report to Parents (ARP) and school prospectus were in operation, these were deemed ineffective and largely led by headteachers. Farrell and Law conclude therefore that although legislation in the 1980s had increased the power of governors, diminishing that of LEAs, this had had the effect of empowering headteachers rather than governors. This being the case, headteachers operated to ‘manage’ their governors, limiting their involvement in the day-to-day running of the school. Farrell and Law suggest that more effective accountability depended upon a heightened governor involvement and participation in decision-making. A reassessment of the operation of the APM and ARP could contribute to this with governors taking a stronger role in these mechanisms. The research also concluded that the relationship between LEAs and schools could also be re-considered with governors taking on more significant roles.

Kogan (1986:21) refers to the relationship between schools and local authorities in some detail in his analysis. Specifically he notes how model-building around accountability in governing bodies demonstrates how the problems for them are not those of ‘scientific principle’ but of ‘becoming clear upon the political principles which are to be involved and endorsed’ (1986: 21). In particular Kogan identifies principles relating to the structure and distribution of power. He specifically refers to the tension between two modes of government. These are the ‘traditional top-down’ mode of local government based on the right to rule and the ‘bottom-up’ mode of local government. In the former the local authority sets rules for its institutions

within a framework of distribution which takes account of the needs of everybody in its area and not just those who receive benefits through individual institutions. In such a model the school may well have strong discretion when work and value formation are delegated to the professionals in the schools. In such a pattern the governing body can be no more than of second order significance, either supporting the professionals, or representing client wants and need, but without the power to penetrate the local authority professional line of authority.

A Way Forward?

Kogan is critical of this persistent model established in the 1944 Education Act. He believed it failed to engage ‘clients’, affording professionals considerable power despite the fact that their ‘qualities are as variable as the individual professionals themselves’ (1986:22). In this system such professionals vary in the extent they allow governors to share authority. Conversely, the ‘bottom-up’ mode of government insists that legitimacy should be continually renewed ‘by a constant appeal to those affected by work in the school’. Client interests are important in this configuration of governing body, especially those of parents with lay councillors giving way to lay governors’ (1986:21-22). Kogan is critical of this model however in terms of its vulnerability to ‘closed parochialism and lack of concern for the over-arching policies which local authorities are elected to sustain’ (1986:22). Kogan’s fears that parent-governors’ lack of constituency and legitimacy in the bottom-up model would lead to an unsuccessful aggregation of parental views. He relates this to the tendency for active parent-governors to represent the articulate middle-class with minorities failing to be represented. The focus on parental needs, or ‘clients’, and how this can be linked to professional activity is strongly asserted by Kogan. He describes the role of the client in determining the ‘content and organisation of education’ as indisputable, either on democratic grounds or on functional ground. It is asserted here that more committed clients enhance the quality of education. His description of the purpose of governors underlines the specific role of clients:

that the core activities of the institution, and notably the curriculum, but other functions as well, are permeable to the expression of client needs. At its strongest, a governing body can play a part in the conversion of client norms, needs and wants into professional action (1986:23).

The Taylor Report and the 1984 Green Paper considered how the involvement of ‘clients’ might be more successfully achieved. A persistent barrier however has been the tendency for parents to approach teachers directly with difficulties, rather than school governing bodies. This was

‘because they are interested in their child’s education and not the education of the neighbourhood at large’ (1986:23). The relationship between professionals and clients was a key issue for Kogan, a difficulty he applies to both models of government: ‘for the most part the top-down model strengthens professional power and delegation whilst the bottom-up model favours client as against professional power’ (1986:22). As a conclusion Kogan (1986: 24-25) suggests that an improvement to the traditional top-down model would be the ‘best solution’ to a complex problem:

this would allow strong delegation from the local authority to the school. The local authority would continue to settle main frameworks the school operates according to, including the size and character of the school, the resources it receives and the general nature of schooling.

In this context the LEA’s responsibility for evaluating performance could be strengthened to ensure education standards are enhanced in schools. An alternative to this, suggests Kogan would be professionals assessing client needs, the governing body scrutinising the outcomes.

Further to this Kogan (1986:24-25) suggests that LEAs should seek to clarify the position of governing bodies: ‘local authorities need to become much clearer about the purposes they see for governing bodies and then to make their objectives clearer and to give close attention to the machinery and provisions by which these purposes can be fulfilled’. Kogan does appear resigned to the dominance of professional control in the meantime however, especially in the context of the time of his writing on this issue when rapid change was afoot, as he concludes:

it seems right to assume that the professionals will make the educational policy for the school, but that these will be subject to scrutiny and evaluation by the governing body, with the assistance of professional advice from the local authority. In more abstract terms, clients have an equal right with teachers to set the social values for a school, but the interpretation of values and the selection from the world of knowledge in creating a curriculum is the business of the teachers. If within the governing body there is a dispute between the teachers and lay governors the matter must be referred to the local authority for resolution.

1986 / 1988 Acts: the Repositioning of Governors

The rapid change in the position of school governance came in the form of the 1986 Education Act followed by the 1988 Education Reform Act. Many have written accounts of this period: the imposition of the 'market' on the education service (see Jones, 2003; Lowe, 1997; Chitty, 2004) and the comprehensive attack on local authorities -particularly councils displaying 'loony left tendencies'. Sallis (1988:138) refers to the unwritten agenda behind the legislation. She highlights the Conservative government's attempts to curtail the powers of education professionals, increase Westminster control and severely weaken the powers of local authorities and their spending on education. Ranson (1994:69) describes how the radical reconstruction of education by the government at this time was designed 'to create a new polity that expresses and organizes an alternative vision of education and society'. In his analysis of this period Ranson (1994) refers to a reassessment of the principles of social democratic politics established in the post-war era, namely those based upon justice and equality of opportunity. Under the auspices of a neo-liberal government, the structure of LEAs and schooling were called into question. Under Margaret Thatcher, the principles of the rights and agency of the individual were the guiding principles: the enhancement of the individual consumer empowered at the expense of the professional provider. Applied to the education service, the agenda of the government centred upon the reconfiguring of the local governance of education, restructuring its power and responsibility. The main thrust of the agenda in the 1986 and 1988 Acts therefore was the emphases upon market formation, local management and the national regulation of the curriculum.

Kogan's analysis of government legislation at this time, or at least of the 1986 Education Act, draws attention to the undermining of local government and as a consequence of democracy, as he explains:

traditional democratic systems, as sanctioned and reiteratively tested by general and local elections, could not ensure that schools and other public institutions would adequately reflect the needs and wants of clients. Hence the strenuous search for more immediately participative devices (1986:2).

The government attempted to fill the vacuum left by their attack on local authorities by altering the constitution and functions of school governors in the 1986 and 1988 Education Acts. The 1986 Act reduced LEA influence on governing body with a reduction of LEA nominees to less than one third of their constitution. The position of parent-governors was strengthened by the 1986 Act however. Schools with 600 or more pupils were required to have two to five parent representatives to be elected by secret ballot. Furthermore parents would be permitted to stay in post once their children had left the school. The weakened position of LEA representatives was made more significant by the method of the selection of co-opted governors. These members were to be chosen by all governors rather than consisting of political candidates ushered in by the 'back door' (Sallis, 1988:141). The change in the selection method of co-optees also reflected the perceived need for more business people to be governors. This was part of a general drive to improve the calibre of governors. It included the LEA's obligation detailed in the 1986 Act, to provide a training programme for governors as well as their expenses. No compensation was offered for governors forfeiting paid work to fulfill their role however. Furthermore, local authorities were given the option of removing LEA appointees (with good reason) from governing bodies. As Deem (1994c: 64) points out, the regulation of the LEA influence on governing bodies was potentially controversial at this time. Discussions over issues such as Grant Maintained Status (GMS) and Local Management of Schools (LMS), introduced in the 1988 Education Act, had the potential to be politically potent.

Prior to this however, the 1986 Education Act had extended governor powers in a number of areas. Governors now had a say in the content of sex education in their school for example

(although there were limits set by the 1988 Local Government Act (Section 28) and the outlawing of the promotion of homosexuality). Stipulations such as ‘Section 28’ represented what Sallis (1988:139) refers to the ‘ideological gulf’ between the devolution of powers to governors and a broader concern to devolve power away from LEAs. This related to the fear of ‘extremists’ lurking in the education system threatening family life and morality. A further example of this was government’s attempt to ban ‘partisan political activity’ in schools (Deem, 1990: 156). These initiatives reflected a broad distrust of the education profession. This had intensified following the teacher strikes in 1985 over pay. The 1988 Education Reform Act led to a further erosion of trust between government and those working in education at the local level. This was demonstrated through the National Curriculum (NC), extensive testing and league tables, along with the principle of LMS. This devolved 85 percent of school budgets directly to individual schools. From 1990, 90 percent of this funding depended on pupil numbers (Radnor, Ball and Vincent, 1997: 207).

The LMS agenda and that of the NC were somewhat contradictory. Whilst LMS aimed to free up schools, supposedly empowering them to have more of a stake in recruitment and financial decisions, the NC meant increased control from central government over teaching and learning in schools. The NC’s stipulation of subjects to be taught and how this was to be done resonates with Foucault’s notion of biopolitics (see chapter three). It evidences the function of governmentality through the specific structuring and ordering of the school. Governors had limited input on curriculum issues under the centrally controlled system. The 1988 Education Reform Act therefore limited the powers of both governors and LEAs in curriculum matters. Further stipulations by the Act saw governors limited to sitting on no more than four governing bodies. It also obliged them to meet and respond to parents through annual meetings and report annually to parents. LEAs continued to retain ultimate control over the appointment of headteachers

however, with representatives of local authorities obliged to sit on school governor appointment panels. As a significant concession to this, schools were given the choice of opting out of local authority control. By obtaining Grant Maintained Status (GMS), schools could choose to bypass their traditional financial and administrative link to the LEA, instead receiving all funding from central government grants.

The governing body of GMS schools would be reconstituted, assuming responsibility for the school's property and becoming the employer of the school's staff. Governors would also be responsible for the admission policy of the school. Procedures for schools obtaining GMS were set out in the 1988 and 1993 Acts and consolidated in the 1996 Education Act. These obliged governing bodies to consider annually whether or not to hold a ballot of parents on GMS status. Despite the Conservative government's encouragement of this, a relatively small number of schools took up the opportunity. By the start of 1998 just 508 out of 17,804 primary schools and 667 out of a potential 2,900 secondary schools had become grant-maintained (National Archives website). In Wales there were just 17 GM schools in 1999 (BBC news online, 1999 (2)). The incumbent Labour government finally abolished GM schools in its 1998 School Standards and Framework Act. For Deem (1990), the GMS initiative was one of a swathe of policies attempting to impose market principles on education. It sought to create an economic link between parent and teacher with a view to privatising education. By attacking public sector workers, including the teaching profession, power was theoretically in the hands of individual consumers making choices based on 'value for money'. The principle of open enrolment established in the 1988 Act was part of this agenda as parents were encouraged to 'vote with their feet'. Drawing upon a New Right agenda, open enrolment was accompanied by expectations that schools would respond to the injection of 'competition' into the system. The logic following that schools would seek to raise standards in a bid to attract more pupils to their schools.

Identifying a Governor ‘Type’

Reflecting on the radical changes in education at this time, Deem (1990) describes the 1988 Act as a cynical exercise. As legislation speedily constructed in time for the 1987 election, initiatives such as open enrolment were a misguided response to the perception of parental concern about education. For Deem, the subsequent low turnouts at annual meetings of governors and parents are testament to this. Furthermore, it is argued, the separation of the so-called ‘producers’ of (teachers, the LEA) and ‘consumers’ (parents) of education was an erroneous one. Such stereotypes reflected the anxiety of the Department of Education and Science (DES) about the perceived domination of teachers on governing bodies. This led the DES to commission research on this issue. This preoccupation was despite the fact that there was arguably a greater need for improved minority ethnic representation. As research by Bird (2003:3) demonstrated this is a trend that has persisted. Drawing on the 2001 census, the research found that in London nearly one quarter (23 percent) of governors were from black or minority ethnic groups (BME). This compared to 47 percent of BME pupils and 29 percent of BME people in the wider population of London. Despite this notable shortfall, the preoccupation of the DES, at least in the late 1980s, was with the ‘consumer’ governor. The ideal individual would conform to a particular socio-economic background:

All the evidence so far points to the view that for the DES the ideal parent governor is white and middle-class, with a strong, preferably religious moral code, is employed in industry and has a strictly instrumental interest in being a governor (their children’s education or controlling teachers).
(Deem, 1990: 165)

The focus on governor profile characterizes a number of research studies. In fact much of the research on school governors since the 1980s reforms demonstrates the persistence of the white, middle-class governor. Deem, Brehony and Heath (1995) and others (e.g. Streathfield and

Jefferies, 1989; Keys and Fernandes 1990; Ranson et al 2003) noted how governors have persistently occupied certain socioeconomic backgrounds. Ellis (2003) for example, found the persistence of the under-representation of black and minority ethnic groups on governing bodies. A larger study conducted by PriceWaterHouseCoopers (2007) gave weight to these findings reporting the lack of diversity following a survey of 3,200 school leaders. The study by Ellis also found a similar trend amongst disabled people, young people, lone parents and the unemployed. These groups faced particular difficulties associated with lack of time and financial barriers. They were also, somewhat ironically, dissuaded to participate in governance by the stereotypical image of the school governor as white, middle-class and middle-aged. Research carried out by Ranson, Arnott, McKeown and Martin (2003) in four local authorities in England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland found recruitment to be a particular challenge for many governing bodies. Interviews in this research implied that governors were often 'encouraged' to volunteer by headteachers.

Research by Ranson et al (2003) also noted a tendency for governing bodies to be typically constituted by a core group of long-serving individuals. This was likely to be accompanied by a less committed, more transient groups: 42 percent of respondents in the research had been governors for more than six years. Nearly two-thirds of governors in the survey had concerns about the recruitment of new governors and 45 percent were worried about retaining existing governors. This was despite the majority of governors (71 percent) who said they would continue in their roles (2005:4). OfStEd's 2002 internal report related recruitment problems to onerous duties. This included paperwork, long meetings and time commitment. Research by PricewaterhouseCooper (2007:113) also found workload to be a potential issue for the recruitment and retention: their survey found 46 percent of governors working more than 100 hours a year. There was other more optimistic research however. The business governors in the

Punter, Adam and Kraithman (2007) study found their work to be reasonable in terms of balancing time commitment with paid employment. The motivations of these governors were based upon ‘putting something back into the community’ or ‘making a contribution’. These governors also reported that supporting the headteacher was one of the most satisfying aspects of governorship (71 percent). This was alongside aspects such as drawing upon individual skills (71 percent) and being welcomed by the headteacher (84 percent) and other governors (70 percent) (2007:6).

The Professional Governor

Studies such as Punter, Adams and Lang (2003), Punter, Adams and Kraithman (2007) and others such as Field (1993) demonstrate how governors with particular occupational profiles were most likely to participate in school governance. Governors in the Punter, Adams and Kraithman (2007) study found the tendency for senior business people to be school governors. They also noted the tendency for governors to be individuals engaged in the voluntary or public sector. Governors with business contacts and financial expertise were found to be particularly valued in governing bodies. This was also the case for ‘community governors’ (those co-opted onto governing bodies by other governors) who were regarded valuable for keeping in touch with the school’s local reputation. Research conducted in 2007 by Industry in Education found that the headteachers and chairs in 40 schools most valued general management skills. Skills such as decision-making, team-working and problem-solving were valued above more specialist skills such as marketing, finance and strategic planning. Research focusing on 600 ‘business’ governors carried out in the same year by the Punter, Adams and Kraithman (2007) also found these skills to be valued by headteachers. These governors tended to be involved in principal tasks such as chairing committees, reviewing the headteachers’ performance, appointing new staff and sitting on the pay review panel.

Agents of 'Improvement' or Participatory Democracy?

Studies demonstrating the value of professional, and particularly business, skills in school governing bodies bring into question the role of governors as representatives of their communities, as agents of participatory democracy. Research by Dean et al (2007) found the persistence of a particular socio-economic profile amongst governors, as did the survey research for this thesis (see chapter seven). It was notable that the research conducted by Dean et al concluded that governors were compliant with the lack of representation on their governing bodies. OfStEd's 2007 annual report on the performance of schools and governing bodies also reported that lack of representation was not an issue for concern. It appeared that their overall 'good' performance overrode this issue. An earlier report by OfStEd (2003) on leadership and management also found governing bodies to be performing well with representativeness not on their agenda. Although this research was based upon school inspections and surveys and was not nationally representative, it found that over half of primary school governing bodies inspected in 2001/02 were 'good' or 'better' at adhering to statutory duties (2003: 16-17). Most school governing bodies in this research (around 60-70 percent) were also deemed to have a 'good' or 'better' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Most secondary schools (64 percent) and over half of primaries (55 percent) were found to be playing a 'good' or 'better' role in shaping the school's future.

OfStEd's 2007 report describes a link between leadership and management and the effectiveness of school governance. In 90 percent of schools where these aspects were 'excellent' or 'good', governing bodies were also deemed to be 'good' or 'excellent' at adhering to their responsibilities. In 'failing' schools governors were criticised for failing to hold leaders to account and for monitoring schools' effectiveness. Ranson et al's 2004 cross-UK study however found that governors played an important scrutiny role in schools previously identified as

‘failing’. This was found particularly to be the case in schools where the ‘social capital’ of governors from commerce and public services was enhanced. For example at one school the headteacher had called upon governors to gather support from parents to lobby the local authority for resources. The ‘social capital’ described by Ranson et al is predicated upon the possession of particular skills and background, or in Bourdieu’s words, habitus. Often relating to class position, the recognition and valuing of this operates to exclude certain individuals taking a full role in the governance. Brehony (1994:49-63) addresses this, asking how it can be possible to make governing bodies more than representative of an ‘illusory democracy’.

Four Perspectives on Governance

Brehony identifies four distinctive perspectives to governance in his analysis, relating these to the history of education policy and its impact on school governance. These perspectives are: the political science perspective, the interest representation perspective, the participatory democracy perspective, and the New Managerialist perspective. The political science perspective was for Brehony exemplified by the Taylor Report (1977). This proposed equal representation of interests on governing bodies. Within this model decision-making on resources is key, although in the time of Taylor these were controlled by central government. At this time powers were then channelled through LEAs, who are also controlled by the government. This positioned governing bodies in a conflictual relationship with LEAs thus rendering them relatively powerless. To elaborate, Brehony draws upon research he conducted with Deem and others (2005). This found that a sense of powerlessness was recognised by some governors whilst others rejected political labels of any sort, denying links with party politics and politicians. The interest representation perspective however did resonate with governors in the research. There were problems with this however, in terms of establishing a balance between producer and consumer power. In these school governing bodies, parents, teacher and LEA governors were taken for-granted and deemed

‘natural’. There were reported difficulties with co-opting governors, particularly with LMS pending and the weakening link between schools and LEAs. Schools were keen to attract the skills of accountants, solicitors and bankers onto their governing bodies. Whilst the interest representation perspective struck a chord with many governing bodies however, few were found to be operating according to the participatory democracy perspective.

This perspective posits that citizens will be inclined to participate in governing body decision-making motivated by the public good of state education. Involvement is believed to lead to empowerment and is educative in itself, leading to individual development. Ranson (1994; 1996; 1998; 2000) has drawn extensively on this approach developing this perspective in his 2004 research. This work underlined the potential of school governance to enhance democratic participation and to make a difference to practices of schools, authorities and governments. Comparing practices in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, this research found that successful schools and effective learning depended upon schools engaging with their disadvantaged communities. Reflecting on the progress of school governing bodies since their reconstitution in the 1980s, Ranson et al (2005: 357) note the persistence of their failure to represent their school communities. This is aligned to their failure to embrace a democratic participatory approach, as is explained:

citizen participation in school governance has yet to be realized in many communities...schools will not become effective learning communities until they become truly cosmopolitan communities, and they will only realize that vision when democratic governance is strengthened at the level of school and community as well as the local authority.

Reporting on his own research with Deem and Heath (1995), Brehony describes how few governing bodies adhered to a democratic participatory approach, citing the potency of professional power as a significant obstacle to its realisation. The authority of professionals was found to be sustained by their permanency in schools, this affording them an advantageous position.

This was despite Sallis's (1988) insistence that such professionals should demonstrate accountability to those they serve.

The New Managerialist Approach

The fourth position set out by Brehony - the New Managerialist position - favours a surveillance approach to school governance. Most notably aligned with the emergence of the New Right in the late 1970s and early 1980s, this perspective positions the school governing body as an instrument for keeping watch on the professionals on behalf of consumers. School governors operate as regulators and discipliners of the producers of the public good of education. Referring again to research with Deem and Heath (1995). Brehony describes how the New Managerialist perspective resonated with many governors some of which were co-opted. Brehony relates this to the emphasis on appointing governors from the business community in the 1986 Education Reform Act through co-options. Brehony highlights the promotion of the consumer perspective in this specification. Business governors were regarded as representing employers and therefore the future customers of pupils, even if the centralised National Curriculum placed constraints on this. The co-option issue represented a shift away from the Taylor Report recommendations. Its loose guidelines suggested only that co-opted individuals should be taken from the local community. According to Brehony the business model for schools advocated within the new managerial perspective and fundamental in the 1986 Act, left schools open to the same pitfalls as businesses. This, it is asserted, exemplified a significant cultural shift as the vocation of teaching found itself at odds with an 'enterprise culture'. This contradiction in one of a number of issues Brehony highlights as operating in relationships in school governing bodies within and beyond the school. Brehony's work resonates with that of Kogan's early writing (see chapter four). It identifies contradictions between the forms of representation and the purposes of school governors,

tensions between lay governors and professionals and the resulting failure of governing bodies to be locally accountable.

As a way forward Brehony suggests that the circle of accountability should be widened, with schools giving an account of their actions to the communities they serve. Increasing the number of elected governors from teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and community members could strengthen democratic practice. Furthermore Brehony suggests that school curricula should include practices of citizenship to encourage a democratic ethos. He also points out the difficulties in defining what is meant by ‘communities’ (as discussed in chapter two). These are complex by definition and difficult to fully represent suggesting that a quota system could increase representation. In grappling with the issue of who governors are and whom they should represent, Brehony engages with a prominent theme in the literature on school governance. This relates to the definition of the governor: what it means to perform the role. This issue is important in an analysis of the relationship between the headteacher and the chair, the lay/professional relationship, as governors attempt to negotiate their identities as lay contributors in the professional domain of the school. Kogan’s 1984 study identified a persistent confusion amongst governors, symptomatic of their disparate roles:

it is expecting a lot of members of any institution that they should operate as rulers, advisers, mediators and assistants at one and the same time and doubly difficult when they belong to an institution that is as spasmodic in its operation as a governing body (1984:164).

Governor Ambiguity: Educational Domination

Governor responsibilities were increased significantly in the 1980s and continued to be during the early 1990s. For example The Education Act 1993 stipulated that governors should be responsible for ensuring children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) were catered for. Despite this, the ambiguity of the school governor role persisted. Commenting on their position

several years after the 1980s legislation, Golby (1992) reports how governors continued to feel unsure about their position. He refers to Sallis' reflections on this in her 1991 Times Education Supplement column: 'Most governors who write to me say, in different ways, that they are confused about their role, whether they are in effect supporters, inspectors, ambassadors or go-betweens' (1992:165). Golby (1992:168) specifically refers to the blurred line between management and policy-making, questioning the over-simplistic assumption that governors 'govern' and heads 'manage'. This asserts Golby, fails to account for the complexities of education 'ends' and 'means' that are difficult to disentangle. In a similar vein Levacic (1995) points to the persistent ambiguity between the roles of the headteacher as day-to-day manager and executive decision-maker, and the governing body taking a broader managerial role. This was a particular difficulty as the policy-making and policy implementation distinction was typically unclear.

Levacic describes the lack of clarity around this as being exacerbated by factors relating to governor perceptions that exposed uncertainties. These specifically related to: workload, governor training, governor responsibilities and the relationship between the headteacher as professional and the lay governor. Earley's 1994 survey of 175 chairs and 300 headteachers drew particular attention to the issue of governor workload. Chairs were particularly hardworking, spending an average of nearly five hours a week on duties. Other governors were found to be spending 40 minutes a week on these. Earley also noted that if governors attended all official meetings they would be attending around 10 meetings a year of about three hours each. Most school governing bodies were found to be reducing this workload by setting up subcommittees covering areas such as curriculum, finance, personnel and premises. Earley's research found that many governors believed their responsibilities to be too great: two-thirds of headteachers, half of chairs and one third of governors expressed this opinion. Research conducted in the same year by

Bullock and Thomas (1994) found headteachers to be uncomfortable with the enhanced involvement of school governors in their schools. Three quarters were opposed to governors having the power to determine discretionary pay for example. Despite this, Earley's research suggests that governors did not demonstrably feel ill-skilled: he reports a patchy take-up of governor training, particularly amongst long-serving governors. This was attributed however, in part, to the likelihood of governors having professional/intermediate backgrounds and therefore inclined not to feel the need for training. Deem and Brehony (1993:339-355) reported that governors tended to focus on practical skills in any case. Here reference is made to governor confidence in areas such as finances, resources, personnel, buildings, site care and marketing rather than the more 'professional' domains of staff development and teaching and learning.

Holding to Account or Acting as 'Supporters Clubs?'

Earley's research found reluctance amongst educational professionals to recognise the validity of lay points of view on so-called 'professional' issues. Findings from the research indicated that headteachers were unwilling to yield up managerial territory. This was indicative of a lack of acceptance of the accountability role of the governing body. This had the effect of governors retaining their role as supporters and little more besides. Earley's research concluded in fact that the 'supportive' role was broadly dominant in governing bodies. This was followed by the 'advisory' role with an 'accountability' role deemed less important still. Levacic (1995) was interested in exploring Earley's conclusions further. In her study of 11 schools she was keen to establish if, since 1980s legislation, the position of governors had been significantly clarified. A number of models were explored in this respect: the board of directors model, Kogan's 'accountable' governing body model and the 'supporter's club' model. Amongst these three potential constitutions of governance, Kogan's model was according to Levacic, the 'official' model of the governing body. Governors are positioned as shareholders whose powers pertain to

the budget, the staffing of the school. During the ARP and the APM governors are theoretically called to account. The goals and objectives of the accountability model centre on: school policy, resources, monitoring performance and holding professional managers to account. In this model, the headteacher is the equivalent of the chief executive for policies determined by the school governing body. He/she is accountable to the body for implementation of these policies.

Levacic (1995) refers to the Education (Schools) Act 1992 as key to the development of accountability in education more broadly. This Act established the Office for Standards in Education (OfStEd). Within the inspection regime, accountabilities to parents, the community and central government were given particular attention. As part of their remit OfStEd were charged with evaluating school governing bodies, obliging them to draw up action plans following OfStEd reports. 'Failing' schools could replace governing bodies with an education association. This would be appointed by the Department for Education (DfE) to manage and turn the school around. Furthermore, the DfE could withdraw money from a governing body deemed to be mismanaging funds. Whilst strengthening the powers of government to call schools to account, the legislation posed a threat the ability of governors to call schools to account more locally. These difficulties were reflected in the findings of Levacic's study. None of the 11 case study schools were found to be operating in full accountability mode but instead tended towards a 'supporters' club' model. This pointed towards the prevalence of acquiescent, unquestioning school governance. Governing bodies that were closer to the accountability model tended to do so as a result of the skills of individual governors. For example, an accountant appointed as chair capable of helping with setting the budget, or a chair well-networked by virtue of his position as senior manager position in another public service. Levacic also found that a determining factor in relationships between headteachers and governors was trust. Headteachers in the study referred to initial suspicion of governors, eventually replaced by trust. This enabled the relationship to be

more supportive, although it was accepted that as educational professional, the head had ultimate control.

Finding a Metaphor

Whilst Levacic found few examples of the ‘accountable’ model, she also believed that the ‘board of directors’ model was misplaced. Golby (1992) has sympathies with this conclusion. He focuses on a number of metaphors applied to the governance of education. Golby divides what he believes are inadequate metaphors into the two most commonly used: the business metaphor and the democracy metaphor. The business metaphor – similar to the New Managerialist approach discussed earlier - is dismissed as being inappropriately applied. Education, asserts Golby (1992:170), is an activity that cannot be analogised with profit-making enterprise. The description of schools as businesses therefore is a political rather than a natural assertion. This metaphor acts, Goldby explains, as a distraction from the project to improve all schools, not just the improvement of some at the expense of others. Aligned to this model is the metaphor of governors as boards of directors, a model Golby believes finds favour with headteachers and governing body chairs. Levacic’s reservations about the application of the business/boards of director’s metaphor model is premised on her doubts that schools can live up to this model: education ‘outputs’ are wide-ranging, qualitative and complex. Lack of in-depth knowledge of such complexities amongst governors, asserts Levacic, can actually hamper decision-making. Golby further notes the business model’s over-emphasis on power relations. Conversely, the democracy metaphor assumes a more balanced view of power, proposing that governors serve to represent the will of the people. Golby also dismisses this position however, claiming it to be over-simplistic and unrealistic. He argues is that school governors do not have the specialist knowledge, skills and awareness to enable a fully democratic process. Furthermore, Golby adds, if governing bodies are to be described as representing the popular will, this can only be achieved

partially. This is because only teacher-governors and parents are elected. Other governors are nominated by the LEA, recommended for governorship by current members or made governor by virtue of their position as headteachers. Moreover, whilst the governing body forms part of the machinery of local democracy, ultimately it is LEAs who have legal ownership of schools.

As an antidote to such inadequate metaphors, Golby suggests what he considers to be a more appropriate alternative: the jury metaphor. Like a jury, he explains, governing bodies constitute a group of lay individuals acting to make decisions based on expert evidence. The strength of this metaphor lies in the recognition of a lay judgment on aspects of professional work. More specifically, claims Golby, the jury metaphor acknowledges governors' monitoring role. This relates to areas such as the NC, the school prospectus and APM, all requiring collaboration with education professionals. Golby seeks to overcome the dual-function of governors through this metaphor. Governors are, according to Golby, 'janus' figures, simultaneously looking towards the professional staff for guidance but also expected to glean the views and advice of the parent community. For their part, parents and others may see governors as part of the school whilst teachers may regard governors as supervisory and disciplining. To overcome this confused position, it is suggested, governors need to focus on the promotion of education as a human good, recognising the complexities of this and drawing upon expert evidence of the educational professional. It is asserted that by conceiving their work thus governors would do justice to the specifically educational nature of their concerns. This would be preferable to adopting a business perspective or an unrealistic notion of governors conceived as agents of the popular will, the democracy metaphor.

Headteachers: Negotiating Participation and Representation

Radnor, Ball and Vincent's (1997) research provides a useful analysis of how the issues of democracy and accountability highlighted by Golby were played out in schools following education restructuring in the 1980s. Focusing on the perspective of headteachers, Radnor, Ball and Vincent note how the legislation had altered accountabilities between heads and their stakeholder partners in education: governing bodies, the LEA and parents. They suggest that given this altered context, governing bodies needed to negotiate a balance between participation and representation. This was a challenge given the environment within which they were now operating. Overall, the research found headteachers' positions on school governance to be aligned to one of accountability to the community, a 'deliberative democratic approach within an associational context' (1997: 221). This was opposed to the market approach promoted by the 1986/1988 Acts. Conducted in four schools, the research reported a number of changes in the approach of headteachers to their fellow stakeholders, particularly LEAs and governors. As previously discussed the relationship with LEAs was altered considerably following the 1986/88 Acts. Overall it was found that heads were keen to maintain a relationship with their LEAs, although not to the pre-1988 Act 'paternalistic' level. This was deemed over-bearing by many heads. Primary school heads were found to be more likely to rely on this relationship than were secondary heads. They were also more reluctant to take on an executive role as decisions over finances which were thrust upon them. Most secondary heads however were 'enthusiastic executives' (1992:212), LMS allowing them to take speedy action on decisions in areas of administration for example. Their LEA colleagues did not always share such enthusiasm however. In some schools it was found that LEA Chief Education Officers continued to retain leadership roles particularly in areas such as the curriculum. The professional and economic position of headteachers however, enabled them to be pragmatic in their responses to such demands.

Whilst the legislation widened the gap between headteachers and LEAs, it potentially closed that between heads and school governors. Radnor, Ball and Vincent's research echoes that by Golby (1992) and Levacic (1995). A persistent lack of clarity around the relationship between heads and governors is noted, the details of this negotiated at the school level in the case studies. Despite this, the picture overall was of heads retaining significant if somewhat waned powers following the legislation. The increased status of school governors and involvement in the management of the school had seen headteachers' relating to governors by turn as a potential hindrance, a threat, but at times as a resource for the school. Radnor, Ball and Vincent identify the relationship as two-sided with headteachers being at once accountable to governors and needing to educate them. This resounds with Golby's 'janus' figure metaphor. It was found in Radnor, Ball and Vincent's research however that in the event of conflict between the head and governors, it was the LEA who would take responsibility, heads particularly vulnerable in the absence of LEA support. This research also found that governors were often a resource for heads. Heads from secondary schools tended to recruit governors from business and accountancy backgrounds to cope with new responsibilities for example. Radnor, Ball and Vincent do however warn against the tendency for a particular 'type' of governor to be preferred by headteachers. This poses a threat to the supposedly democratic nature of school governing bodies. As discussed, this is a prominent theme in research on school governance and a key theme in this thesis.

Despite their own misgivings, Radnor, Ball and Vincent (1997) found headteachers to be broadly supportive of this 'ideal-type' school governance, describing the best governors to be parents or retired people with professional, managerial and business skills or self-employed and articulate women. This -Radnor, Ball and Vincent explain - only served to perpetuate the likelihood of governors representing certain social classes. Concern about lack of representation was

compounded in the research by the lack of challenge from ‘outsiders’. An example of this was in one case study school where LEA governors were so immersed in the culture and environment of the school, ‘outsiders’ were rendered largely insignificant. Alternative or political interference were not welcomed in any case, as heads preferred a non-political governing body with LEA governors regarded as a nuisance. It is concluded by Radnor, Ball and Vincent (1997: 221) that given the shortfall in the democratic representation on governing bodies, the job of governors, must be to ‘re-politicise’ and develop as a ‘double democratisation’, an alignment between participatory and representative democracy.

Dean, Dyson, Gallannaugh et al’s (2007) more recent research identified a potential ‘democratising’ role for governors, along the lines of that suggested by Radnor, Ball and Vincent. The research focused upon 14 schools in three disadvantaged areas and identified two other roles: ‘managerial’ and ‘localising’. In the case studies school governors had difficulties fulfilling the managerial role but did not believe this to be important in any case. They also found the other two roles problematic due to their lack of community representativeness and failure to link with local activist groups and policy partnerships. The research also reported that governors in disadvantaged areas were less inclined to challenge the headteacher. In some cases governors had limited access to information, relying instead on collaborative working with the headteacher and local authority. Dean et al’s research demonstrates how socioeconomic profile can intensify Levacic’s ‘supporter’s club’ model of governance. It should be noted however that despite a broad deference to the head, governors expressed a strong sense of loyalty to their school, expecting the headteachers to act in this ‘common interest’.

The Lay/Professional Relationship: a Persistent Model

This chapter has described how the juridical empowerment of school governors in the mid-1980s failed to translate into significant changes in their powers within schools. This relates to two key themes in the literature and reflected in the research conducted for this thesis. These are: continued ambiguities surrounding the lay/professional relationship, and the perpetuation of the white, middle-class profile of governors. The first theme centres broadly on the blurred division between the ‘governance’ of lay individuals on the school governing body and the ‘management’ of day-to-day issues by teaching professionals. Bernstein’s notion of classification and framing are instructive here as it offers an insight into the way types of knowledge are bounded. When applied to school governance it helps describe how the equivocal nature of the roles of lay governors and educational professionals work to perpetuate the dominance of professional control. Kogan for example notes how lack of clear roles and functions of LEAs and schools leave governing bodies vulnerable to the control of local teaching professionals. This is also exemplified in the research for this thesis where one headteacher has qualms about governor training believing that governors’ access to ‘professional’ knowledge could potentially challenge his position. Where the classification and framing of lay and professional knowledge and responsibilities remains unclear therefore, so governors remain dominated by professional discourse.

The second theme focuses on the continued and unchallenged domination of governors by those from middle-class, middle-aged, white backgrounds. The perpetuation and expectation that particular ‘types’ will dominate school governance resonates with Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic violence. This is where alternatives to practices are considered an anathema. Legislative change has solidified this - for example through attempts to encourage schools to be ‘business-minded’. Radnor, Ball and Vincent (1997) express concerns that headteachers’ preference for business-

oriented governors could threaten ‘outsider’ perspectives as individuals became immersed in the culture of the school. This implies, to draw on Bourdieu, that such an individual would be captured by the bureaucratic habitus. This could be seen to be occurring at one case study school in data gathered for this thesis where the head believed that only those with particular skills (accountancy and business) should apply to be a governor. Along with Kogan’s questioning of the possibility of accountability in governing bodies, and later studies casting governors as complying with the ‘supporter’s club’ model – the possibility of governors functioning as agents of participatory democracy is thrown considerably into doubt. The next chapter will examine whether in light of this ‘ideal’ positioning of governors, the emergence of the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) in 1998, apparently predicated on such principles as representation, participation, and accountability (Chaney, Hall and Pithouse (2001:3), have succeeded in applying these to distinctive education service.

CHAPTER SIX

STRUCTURE, CONTEXT AND PLAY

Introduction

The NAFW was in its early years when the research for this thesis took place, its creation reflecting a trend in and outside Europe towards regionalism. The creation of the Assembly presented Wales with an executive forum for the first time in six centuries despite attempts in the past to devolve powers (Chaney, Hall, Pithouse, 2001: 4). Prime Minister Harold Wilson had considered the possibility of devolving Scottish and Welsh powers through the 1974 White Paper *Democracy and Devolution: proposals for Scotland and Wales*. The formation of a Welsh Assembly was however rejected in a 1979 referendum. Despite this however, the creation of the Welsh Office (1965) and the growth of Welsh quangos in the 1980s and 1990s were setting the scene for the possibility of further devolution of powers. This was a significant challenge to the dominance of UK policy during the twentieth that positioned Wales as an ‘afterthought’. Devolution was a gradual process therefore. Rees (2007:5) describes ‘an established regime of administrative devolution’ prior to parliamentary devolution in 1998, with the Welsh Office accruing considerable powers over education and training by the 1990s. These responsibilities were administered through LEAs and quangos such as the Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (ACCAC) and the Further and Higher Education Funding Councils for Wales. Whilst the system of policy was for Rees ‘in a very real sense an England and Wales one’, it was the interpretation, modification or ‘mediation’ of policy formulated in Westminster that was important (Raffe et al, 1999).

The Road to Devolution

Chaney, Hall and Pithouse (2001) describe how the UK political mood had sufficiently developed, rendering devolution a realistic proposition. Questioning of the legitimacy of the British state was compounded by the rise of quangos and increased centralisation of political power. This helped to place devolution in Wales back onto the agenda. The party political dynamics during the 1990s also contributed to this. The 1992 Conservative victory fielded few votes in Wales reflecting a trend of Tory decline in the country. The Conservatives had seen a fall in their Welsh vote from 30 percent to 20 percent between 1979 and 1997 (2001:5). The Labour Party capitalised on Tory vulnerability, focusing upon economic and civil society in Wales as a backdrop to devolution. It was surely inevitable that such 'local' concerns would be sidelined by a London-based Tory government who dismissed devolution as unnecessary and as damaging to the unitary state. Pro-devolution campaign groups such as The Campaign for a Welsh Assembly and the Parliament for Wales focused on a number of issues. These included: economic regeneration, the representation of minorities, and democratic structures. As Chaney, Hall and Pithouse (2001:7-9) describe, devolution became an important strand in Labour Party policy, with leader John Smith pushing for this in 1993. This policy would later become part of leader Tony Blair's 'third way'. Part of this centred upon the relationship between government and the electorate, founded on the protection of minorities, partnership and pluralism. At this time the Welsh Office minister Peter Hain (1999:20 in Chaney, Hall and Pithouse, 2001: 8) aligned the prospect of devolution to the broader policy of dismantling of the elitist, secretive British state. Tory Prime Minister John Major however warned against the increased taxes and inward investment he believed would be an inevitable result of devolution.

The momentum for the Assembly continued to grow however. The Welsh Labour Party set out a number of broad objectives of devolution. These included democratic accountability, financial

control, the distribution of government, as well as the development of a prosperous and a competitive economy (Wales Labour Party, 1996:14 in Chaney, Hall and Pithouse, 2001:9). The 1997 Labour government's White Paper, 'A Voice for Wales' (Welsh Office, 1997) stressed the economic benefits of devolution in terms of: tackling low growth areas and, through European structural funds, raising the Welsh capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the UK average. The White Paper envisaged the future Wales as 'a new economic powerhouse', resulting from closer relationships between policy-makers and the business community in Wales. Other purposes of the NAFW were: the rationalisation and co-ordination of agencies, the promotion of partnerships between government and the voluntary sector, and the promotion of equal opportunities and democracy (1997:12-14). It is clear that much of the rhetoric surrounding devolution centred upon the positive promotion of participatory democracy. Although this may have been a genuine concern, the backdrop to political change such as devolution in Wales, and indeed in Scotland prior to this, is the wrangling and compromises of interest groups and factions. As Wyn Jones and Trysan (2001:25) point out, it would be foolish to assume devolution was solely driven by principles of participatory democracy. Political self-interest and expediency played a significant role. Labour were keen to pacify those presiding in patriotic north Wales, eager to exploit their tendency to support their party.

The National Assembly for Wales

The devolved Assembly was established by the Government of Wales Act 1998. This followed a referendum in the country in 1997 and created 60 Assembly Members (AMs) elected for four years through a proportional representation electoral system. The Act transferred powers from the Westminster based Welsh Office and the Secretary of State for Wales to the Assembly. The 2006 Government of Wales Act increased the Assembly's powers allowing it to make primary legislation in some areas through Assembly Measures. This was however subject to vetoes by the

Secretary of State or UK Parliament. Assembly Measures could be made in aspects or Matters in 20 'fields', including education and training, health and health services and economic development. The Act also established the Assembly Government as separate and accountable to the NAfW, a structure mirroring the UK government. In their analysis Chaney, Hall and Pithouse (2001:3) describe the broad purposes of the Assembly as centring on: the promotion of accessibility, representation, legitimacy, openness, participation, innovation, inclusiveness and accountability. At just over 50 percent, it was however a marginal victory for the supporters of the Assembly. Furthermore, this final 'yes vote' accounted for only 25.2 percent of the 2.2 million-strong electorate of Wales (May, 1999:150). This trend continued in the first Assembly elections in May 1999 which fielded a turnout of around 46 percent (Scully, Jones and Trystan, 2004:520).

Chaney, Hall and Pithouse (2001:12) reflect on the Assembly's progress in establishing governance based upon the principles of accountability and inclusiveness. They emphasise progress made towards establishing the legal duties of the NAfW. This policy led to the compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights with the First Minister calling for a written constitution. Furthermore, the relationship between AMs and interest groups was encouraged by a genuine culture of openness and accessibility. Chaney, Hall and Pithouse do however question the extent that wider participation has in practice been achieved, referring to AM scepticism on this issue in the early days of the Assembly. Chaney, Hall and Pithouse also point out the limited powers of the Assembly as compared to the Scottish Parliament for example. This issue is also underlined by Wyn Jones and Trystan (2001) who also question the lack of clarity around the relationship between Westminster and Whitehall. Plaid Cymru, the Official Opposition in the NAfW between 1999 and 2007, were also unsurprisingly, critical of the limited powers of the Assembly at its inception. They also had qualms about additional

powers provided by the 2006 Government of Wales Act. Specifically they were suspicious of the UK Labour government's attempts to garner political capital by altering the voting system in the Assembly. A poll conducted more recently by ICM for the BBC indicated that the Welsh electorate supported Plaid Cymru's call for an Assembly with increasing independence from Westminster (BBC news online, 2007). Rees (2007) also notes the development of a genuine aspiration for creating an increasingly distinctive Welsh system of policy-making.

Education: A Radical Approach

It is in the area of education, claims Rees (2007:1-2), that the Assembly has made the most progress in realizing this aspiration. As Rees (2007:1-2) points out, in this area 'divergences with English policies have been claimed to be quite radical'. Rees refers in particular to First Minister Rhodri Morgan's speech to the National Institute for Public Policy Research at the University of Wales, Swansea in December 2002. In this Morgan described the 'clear red water' between the policies of the Assembly and those of the New Labour government in London, drawing upon education policies in particular to demonstrate this. Here Morgan describes how devolution has led to the responsibility of aspects of education and training coming under the control of the NAW. The Assembly document 'The Learning Country' (NAW, 2001) proposed strategies for education through to 2010 (this was updated in 2006) (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006a). In her forward to this, Jane Davidson (2001:2), Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning at the time, asserted the benefits of a distinctive education programme for Wales' 2,000 schools, 27 colleges and 13 Higher Education institutions: 'We share strategic goals with our colleagues in England – but we often need to take a different route to achieve them. We shall take our own policy direction where necessary, to get the best for Wales'.

For Rees (2006:2-3) the rationale behind this ‘Welsh route’ was ideological, drawing upon social democratic values. These related to: equal opportunities via universal provision, the role of the state in providing this, citizenship, the associated rights and obligations played out through the ‘entitlements’ of children and young people and partnerships between the state, LEAs and professional groups. Rees draws upon Paterson’s (2003: 165-186) analysis of the political backdrop for devolution, describing how the drive towards political independence for Wales and Scotland represented the tension between the New Labour ideologies of ‘developmentalism’ (applied to education policy by the UK New Labour government) and those of ‘new social democracy’. The thrust towards devolution was aligned with the latter. Education policy-making in Wales represented this tension starkly. It was broadly defined by the methods of achieving education goals (new social democracy) as opposed to the goals themselves (developmentalism).

A Distinctive Identity for Wales?

The issues of testing and league tables demonstrated the developing division between Welsh and English education policy. In contrast with England, Wales have chosen not to publish league tables of test scores for primary and secondary schools. The rationale for this was the belief that these would create an unhelpful competitiveness. Instead, it is claimed, greater support has been offered to pupils, raising standards for all. Initiatives supporting this have included the wider promotion of continuing professional development and greater partnerships. Such partnerships referred to those between teachers, and between the Assembly, LEAs, teaching professionals and other employee organisations. This contrasts with the English approach characterised by centralisation and competitiveness. This, according to Jane Davidson, would be a mistaken route for Wales, a country characterised by ‘communitarianism’, enhanced by ‘local schools for local people’, as Davidson explains:

There would be real risks in a wholesale shift to extensive and untested measures delivered solely through the private or other sectors...We have a fully comprehensive system that we are fully proud of, and which has served Wales well. I don't believe the private sector has a role in the delivery of education in Wales' (The Guardian, 2001).

The commitment to comprehensive schools in Wales has led to the resistance of specialist secondary schools and indeed any form of selection in the country. This contrasts with the trend in England. The Assembly also abolished testing for seven-year-olds and later did the same for testing at Key Stages 2 and 3.

The abolition of testing followed the Daugherty Review (2004) that questioned the efficacy of this process. The Foundation Stage has also been introduced for three-to-seven-year-olds. In Wales, Rees (2007:3) likened this to a 'Scandinavian model'. This was predicated on the principle of delaying formal education whilst introducing schooling early, an approach sharply contrasted to policy in England and other parts of the UK. For children aged 14 to 19 years, the 'Learning Pathways' (NAfW Circular 37/2004) initiative aimed to more closely align academic and vocational activity. It also aimed to enhance students' experiences of employment and citizenship. Part of this policy thrust was the development of a Welsh Bacculaureate, this according to Davidson reflecting '...a real appetite for pulling together an over-arching qualification that is Welsh' (The Guardian, 2001). The bacculaureate provided a framework of qualifications accrediting 'core' skills and personal and social education. This qualification would in theory be characterised by its distinctive Welsh orientation. Rees draws upon Egan and James' (2003:104) assertion that such curriculum changes were an attempt to undo the damage of earlier legislation drawn up in London. These changes 'promise...to see in Wales the demise of the National Curriculum framework created by the Education Act of 1988.'

This, explains Rees (2007:3) was further evidence of the ‘re-affirmation of a traditional Labour principle’ in Wales, a system befitting of the character of the country. As The Learning Country (2001:25) advocates: ‘...we want a confident, characterful, and comprehensive system in Wales...We remain committed to non-selective, comprehensive school provision in Wales. This serves us well.’ A notable aspect of education policy in Wales has been the concern to engender links between schools and their communities. The thinking behind the Assembly Circular 34/2003 Community Focused Schools drew upon the 2002 study Narrowing the Gap in the Performance of Schools. This concluded that ‘where schools engage with their local community this has a direct impact on pupil’s attainment and raised their aspirations to progress from school to further education, training and employment’ (2002:3). Speaking in 2003, Jane Davidson recognised that the vision of community focused schools ‘present(ed) a very substantial challenge for us all’ (Speech for Governors Wales Conference, 15 November, 2003).

School Governance and Communities

The Narrowing the Gap report also underlined the link between adults returning to education and cultural changes in the wider community. Collective self-esteem was the key outcome, the school positioned as the focus for building ‘strong and active communities in which people of all races and backgrounds are valued...’ (2003:12) The Assembly’s Circular echoed these sentiments stating that

schools play an important and pivotal role in the community...not only (providing) education for pupils and creating a community spirit amongst parents, but they also have the opportunity and often the facilities to reach out to the whole community’ (2003:3).

The rhetoric positioned governors as occupying a pivotal role in this vision. Governors were encouraged to develop and organize activities reflecting the needs of the school’s local communities:

The governing body has ultimate responsibility for deciding whether the school should offer additional activities and services and what form these should take. Before making decisions, governors need to be aware of any additional responsibilities that may arise. As with existing school activities, governing bodies can delegate the practical delivery of services to others, but they keep ultimate legal responsibility. The governing body should identify one of its members to take lead responsibility in this area of work (2003:14).

The Circular reiterated for governors in Wales responsibilities facilitated by Section 27 of the Education Act 2002; this legislation

made it easier for governing bodies to provide facilities and services that benefit pupils families and the local community; provided flexibility for governing bodies to enter into agreements with other partners to provide services on school premises; enabled governing bodies to charge for some services.

The development of the relationship between schools and their communities was one aspect of changes that have been deemed beneficial. Rees (2007:9) is however keen to warn of the dangers of assessing these at face value. Specifically Rees stresses the need to consider the situation prior to the creation of the Assembly and of making careful comparisons with trends in attainment in other UK areas. Rees points out for example, the difficulties of aligning improvements in lower class involvement in education directly to the NAFW's distinctive Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) structures.

Wales: Educational Outcomes

Despite these caveats however, Rees (2007:8-9) reports how at least by conventional measures, significant improvements can be noted. Amongst pupils in the primary sector for example, Assembly targets for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 have been met or bettered. This is mirrored at secondary school Key Stages 3 and 4. The attainments of pupils in secondary schools at Key Stages 3 and 4 have also been rising. In 2004 for example, more than half of 15-year-olds (at the start of the Welsh school year) gained five or more GCSE at grades A*-C with nearly 40 percent

achieving grade C or above in English/Welsh, mathematics and science. Such improvements again trump those in England, although fall short of those made in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Wales have also seen the number of unqualified 16-year-old school leavers drop to 3 percent of the cohort, falling below that of the Assembly Government Target. There are still concerns however about the quality of education amongst this group. In the HE sector, a growing number of children are remaining in full-time education beyond 16 with the highest number of pupils ever for Wales taking at least two 'A' levels (or equivalent). Almost 40 percent of these students go into HE.

Rees also reports the higher rate of state school and working-class engagement in HE in Wales when compared to other areas of the UK. Whilst the Assembly was not permitted to abandon the tuition fees, they opted instead for a means-tested Assembly Learning Grant for FE and part-time students. This exemplifies a further attempt to follow an alternative agenda. Furthermore, the Assembly extended their funding programme to include the support of access and students at Welsh institutions in hardship. This followed the Rees Review in 2001 which reported that 'supporting people appropriately while they take up opportunities for learning in further and higher education is of great importance' (2001:11). The powers of the Assembly over post-compulsory education were strengthened by the 2004 Higher Education Act. This transferred full powers over HE and FE student finance to Cardiff. A second Rees Review followed in 2005 recommending flexible top-up fees for full-time HE students studying in Wales. This was similar to the system in England but was rejected in the Assembly, according to Rees (2007) demonstrating the politics characteristic of devolution settlements. In this case, opposition parties capitalised on the Labour's minority position forcing a final compromise. This was constituted by flexible top-up fees for all, although Welsh students attending Welsh institutions would be entitled to non-means-tested grants.

Persistent Power Structures: a Threat to Democratic Principles?

What is not in question for Rees is the increased scope for openness in policy-making provided for by the NAfW: the Assembly for example, allowed 60 AMs to potentially assert pressure on the executive. The Assembly Committees have been a further source of access for interest groups to influence policy-making. Compromises and deal making such as those associated with education policy, asserts Rees (2007) however, demonstrate the consistency of power wielded by particular groups in Welsh civil society. Rees draws upon changes in the learning and skills sector to demonstrate this. LEAs and other educational groups negotiated with the then Post-16 Education and Training Committee when this policy-making was under development. The aim of these negotiations was to affect changes to the Education and Training Action Plan and to restrict business interests in the National Council-ELWa (Education and Learning for Wales). Rees describes how in part this reflected the historically powerful position of the public sector, and local authorities in particular. It was nevertheless, asserts Rees, symptomatic of new structures allowing different interests to be influential in Wales. What Rees questions however is the extent the ushering in of the NAfW has altered the position of groups traditionally influential in policy-making in Wales. For example, drawing on Morgan and Mungham (2000), Rees points out that prior to the creation of the Assembly, debates around devolution tended to be focused upon the interests of the Labour Party rather than the electorate.

With this in mind Rees questions the extent that the Assembly has succeeded in significantly challenging power relationships in Wales. He throws into doubt the effectiveness of the promotion of equality of opportunity and democratic principles forming the central planks of the drive for devolution. Rees suggests that whilst the project of carving out distinctive policy-making has been partly successful, most notably in education, the power to pursue distinctive policies has been constrained by the very terms of the devolution settlement itself. According to

Rees there is little evidence for example, to support the assumption that new mechanisms for education policy have opened up new avenues of influence to those excluded sectors of civil society. For Rees, the development of education policy in Wales has been constituted through processes of complex mediation between political, professional and other interest groups. Rees' point here is that although the creation of the Assembly may have established new routes for negotiation, the emerging outcomes remain inconsistent. Rees suggests that to combat this a stronger relationship between civil society and the state is needed. This, it is asserted, would actively encourage wider inclusion of social groups in policy-making. This is beginning to happen, claims Rees, with a 2006 NAFW initiative to incorporate ELWa ACCAC, the Wales Youth Agency and others into the Assembly itself with the aim of improving democratic accountability in education policy decision-making.

This chapter has charted the development towards devolution and distinctive governance in Wales. Part of this has been the realization of certain principles, including those of participatory democracy. Partnership working was important to this with the proposed development of the relationship between the state, local authorities and professional groups. The rejection of League Tables and plans to restructure the curriculum saw Wales taking what Rees (2007) describes as a New Social Democratic approach to education. As Rees (2007) also points out however the emergence of the NAFW was also driven by self-interest and political expedience, as New Labour was set to garner votes from patriotic traditional Labour supporters in the north of Wales. Furthermore, whilst education policy in Wales was indeed distinctive, there were doubts whether this involved those previously excluded from civil society. In this respect Rees refers to the historically powerful position of the public sector, notably LEAs. This is consistent with the close relationship between LEAs and case study schools in this thesis. This is exemplified by the common practice of LEA-led agendas for governors' meetings and the presence at these of high

profile LEA members, or at least the possibility of this. This resonates with Foucault's notion of surveillance and operation of governmentality. Such dominance claims Rees, had not been significantly challenged by the emergence of the NAFW, itself the product of compromises and deal making. Such casts doubt on the success of the Assembly in terms of promoting democratic principles. This subject will be explored in the context of school governance in Wales over the next six chapters of the thesis. This begins with an examination of the survey data exploring the profiles, opinions and beliefs of governors in Wales.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SOCIAL PROFILES AND BELIEFS

Introduction

This chapter will explore the responses from the questionnaire distributed to school governing bodies in Wales. This will begin with an overview of the purposes of the survey and explanation of how it was designed and distributed. Following this, the data from the survey will be analysed, with tables to illustrate this. The chapter will begin with a description of how the survey was administered and the data analysed. This will be followed by the analysis of the data itself. This will be divided into four broad thematic areas: the demographic profile of governors, the skills and knowledge brought to the role, the networks, motivations and accountability of governors, and the workload and training of governors. The chapter will then be concluded.

Administration and Analysis

Responses to the survey generated an important source of data for the thesis. It was designed to develop understanding of the social profiles of governors in Wales. Demographic characteristics such as age, sex, education and employment, as well as governors' beliefs and opinions on the role and the practice of governance will be explored. The social dispositions of governors were analysed alongside the skills and knowledge deemed valuable in the governing body. This provided an insight into the particular 'habitus' of school governors. The data was pertinent to questions pertaining to the thesis. These surrounded the nature of discourse in the governing body and the relationship between headteacher and chair, the value of particular discourses over others, and the effects of coding of knowledge and discourse in the professional/lay interface. The survey data also engages with broader questions around democratic participation (see chapter two for a discussion on the definition of this) and the extent school governors can be expected to be, or

have a desire to be, agents for this. In guidance offered through online support networks such as Governonet and GovernorsWales, there appears to be an expectation that accountability and representation should indeed be key components of school governance:

Governors are the largest volunteer force in the country and have an important part to play in raising school standards through their three key roles of setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability and monitoring and evaluating school performance (Governonet).

‘(The governor) represents those people with a key interest in the school, including parents, staff, the local community and the LEA’. (GovernorsWales).

As will be discussed however, there appears to be an incongruity between these official discourses around the purpose and functions of governors and the experiences and opinions of governors themselves.

Authority Type	Governors Surveyed	Questionnaires Returned	Percentage Returns
Border (2)	224	133	58
Rural (3)	342	240	70
urban (2)	142	78	55
Industrial valley (3)	396	190	51
Total	1104	641	58

Fig 1: Questionnaire returns by type of authority

Confidential questionnaires were distributed to governors in all of the participating schools in the NafW project. In total this included 72 schools in 10 local authorities ²: three ‘rural’, three ‘industrial valley’, two ‘border’ and two ‘urban’ authorities. Six hundred and fifty one school governors from the 110 surveyed completed the questionnaire, the data from which was analysed initially using SPSS analysis. Response rates are a key source of bias in survey data, although opinions on this issue vary. Whilst Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000: 262) suggest that researchers should ‘be satisfied’ if a 50 percent response rate is achieved, they claim that response rates of at least 40 percent and ideally up to 80 percent are acceptable. Others such as Edwards and Talbot (1994:32) suggest that anything above 60 percent would be appropriate. According to these assessments therefore the response rate was reasonable in terms of balancing issues of bias. Fifty-eight per cent represented a relatively high return of questionnaires distributed. This response rate reflected the relationship developed between researchers and governing bodies prior to the survey distribution. This meant that an understanding of the project’s aims was more likely to have been communicated. This advantage is one of a number of the strengths and potential pitfalls of surveys discussed elsewhere in this thesis (see chapter two), although it is worth noting in brief the limitations of this particular questionnaire. Firstly, it is important to note that the survey was not intended as a census for all governors, but rather as a sample negotiated through LEAs in the participating authorities.

The sampling procedure was developed with reference to the broad aims of the NafW project: the exploration of a link between school governance and school improvement. In consultation with LEAs therefore, schools were selected on the basis of the ‘improvements’ they were making, at different stages, to achievement and governance. Although it is impossible to ascertain the exact interpretations of ‘improvement’ applied in the sampling process, it was clear that

² For the NafW project the survey drew upon data from schools in 10 LEAs: an additional ‘urban’ LEA was drawn from research conducted in an ESRC study conducted by Ranson et al (2003) in which the same survey was distributed to governors in eight schools.

schools were identified with at least some reference to an officially inscribed definition of improvement. To this end, LEAs made reference to readily available and measurable performances in Estyn inspections. This included test and examination results as well as inspectors' reflections on school governance. Once access to the schools had been negotiated, 'gatekeepers' were also entrusted with the task of distributing the questionnaires in governing bodies. Chairs of governing bodies, and in some cases headteachers, were relied upon to do this, as well as to encourage the completion of the survey and where necessary explaining the project's aims and outcomes.

Although the research was initially reliant on local authorities as the gatekeepers for access to school governing bodies, the benefits of this for continued relationships and fieldwork outweighed any bias. For example there may have been a tendency for LEAs to avoid the selection and thus exposure of schools deemed to be 'failing' or 'uncooperative'. Although it is difficult to measure the effect of gatekeepers on the data collected, it is clear that without their consent the research could not have been conducted both practically and ethically. Furthermore the considerable response rate to the survey can in part be aligned to the early involvement of LEAs as this gave the questionnaire official gravitas. It should also be noted that the governors responding to the survey tended to be drawn from a set of experienced, senior governors: in addition to around 10 percent of governing body chairs, a further 15 percent were chairs of sub committees and a further 33 percent were governors with special responsibility (for example, for special education needs). One reason for this over-representation could be that the obligation to complete the questionnaire may have been more keenly felt by those with relative power on governing bodies. This can be related to a particular discourse of school governance and habitus common to those with positions of power in the structures of education, a habitus 'beyond the grasp of consciousness' (Bourdieu: 1977b: 93-94). It is interesting to note that despite the

tendency for more ‘senior’ governors to respond to the survey, headteachers accounted for a small proportion of respondents to the questionnaire – just 6 percent. This has implications for the way heads relate to their governing bodies. Although this low response could indicate headteachers’ heavy schedules, it also points towards the low priority heads assign to their relationship with governors with the assumption that their views on the matter are relatively unimportant. It could also imply that headteachers in their role as professional leaders of lay governors assumed that the survey wasn’t directed at them but was more appropriately completed by their lay governor colleagues.

Before the detailed analysis of the survey data is considered, it should be noted that although there has been some comparison between chairs and other governors, this should be treated with some caution. Chairs formed a relatively small number of respondents: 58 chairs responding to the survey represented around 10 percent of the 641 respondents. There has also been some comparison according to gender, age, school type, governor category and LEA – this has been with a view to exploring how the profile and beliefs of governors varied overall. Differences are not pointed out where there is little or none between the responses of different profiles of governors and the whole sample.

Demographic Profile

There were more or less equal numbers of governors who returned the questionnaire from the primary/infant (288) and secondary (310) sectors. There were responses from 21 governors in special education schools and 19 governors in infant schools. The sample had therefore a higher proportion of secondary than primary school governors. The proportions of governor category in relation to school type were similar. Responses according to governor-type reflected the composition of governors prescribed by the ‘Instruments of Government’ a legal document

setting out the proportion of governors on bodies according to nomination (see introduction). Parents for example accounted for 29 percent of respondents, similar to the figure of one third to be expected on governing bodies. This was also true for LEA governors who accounted for 21 percent of respondents. Notable exceptions to this pattern were co-opted nominees who were over-represented amongst respondents at one quarter (compared to the one fifth to one tenth requirement depending on school type) and teaching and non-teaching staff members. This latter group represented 17 percent of respondents in total compared to their required representation on governing bodies at around one third; this included headteachers. This could be indicative of the variants in levels of commitment to school governance with staff, particularly teachers and headteachers. These groups of governors were perhaps not inclined to identify school governance as a fundamental aspect of their professional identities. Co-opted governors however may have been more likely to be engaged with their roles, inclining them to respond to a survey such as this.

There was a tendency amongst the respondents to the survey to be male, middle-aged and white with governors from black and minority ethnic groups accounting for just 10 of the 641 respondents. Governors also tended to be highly educated with the majority holding degrees and/or professional qualifications. They were consequently likely to be middle-income earners. Overall, the typical survey respondent was working full-time (around 70 percent), in paid employment (around 80 percent) and in the public sector (around 70 percent). The majority were employed in managerial (around 30 percent) or professional occupations (around 60 percent). There was some differentiation according to geographical location, with full-time, public sector employment common within urban and industrial valley authorities. Private, part-time, self-employment was most common in rural authorities: this reflected their broader socio-economic profile (see chapter seven). There also appeared to be a notably high proportion of women in

managerial and professional occupations, around 44 percent, and points to the propensity for professional women to become governors.

Despite this, there were persistent discrepancies in the incomes of male and female governors: the higher the income range, the greater the proportion of men represented. Forty-nine percent of male governors were likely to be earning over £30,000 compared to 25 percent of women. A third of women respondents were earning less than £15,000 and a similar proportion earning between £15,000 and £29,000. Women were also more likely to be working part-time in the public sector. These trends reflected the position of women in the labour market more broadly: women in Wales were found to be many times more likely than men to be working part-time: in 2001 51 percent of women were working part-time compared to 15 percent of men (Labour Market Trends August 2001 in Jones et al, 2002). Furthermore, the New Earnings Survey (NES) 2001 (Office for National Statistics), found female employees in Wales to be earning 20.6 percent less than men on a weekly basis. The earnings of chairs of governors in the sample were likely to be affected by the fact that half of them identified themselves as 'retired'. Around one third was earning less than £15,000. The remainder of the sample of chairs however were evenly split between salaries of £15-29,000 and £30-£50,000 or over.

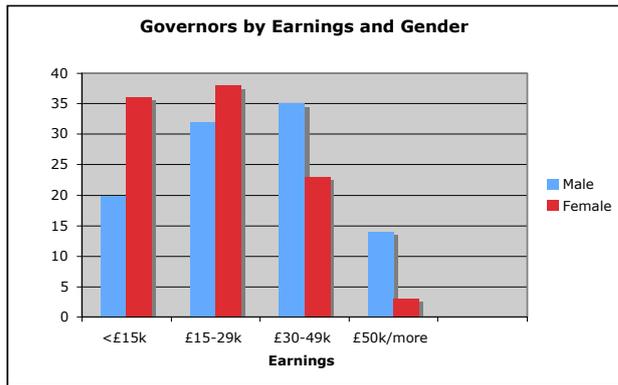


Fig. 2: n: 628 (13 non-response)

The profiles of governing body chairs represented a concentration of the typical governor amongst the respondents to the survey. Chairs were more likely than their governor colleagues to be male, to be older and to have professional backgrounds. These characteristics demonstrate how the ability to engage with a particular discourse and habitus is particularly important for those occupying this position in the governing body, as it is to a lesser extent for all those engaged in the governing body. Bourdieu's analysis of schools as sites of cultural reproduction is pertinent here. This position identifies particular subjects and discourses as embodying greater value than others. It was inevitable therefore that those engaged in the hierarchical structures of the education system, including school governors, would be inclined to embody a particular habitus. As chairs are figures of leadership within governing bodies, this position is likely to be open to those with significant cultural capital. A middle-class and professional status being central to this. Although data from the survey bears this out with the typical governor occupying this social profile, this did not appear to be regarded as problematic amongst respondents to the survey: 74 percent believed their governing bodies were reflective of the social and ethnic mix of their communities.

The incongruity between the perception of representativeness and connection to the school community resonates well with Bourdieu's concept of 'symbolic violence'. Specifically this refers to the misrecognition occurring when agents are sufficiently assimilated within the habitus of the field (the school governing body). Alternative ways of 'being' are deemed unthinkable: 'The agent engaged in practice knows the world...too well, without objectifying distance, takes it for-granted' (2000: 142-3). The implications of symbolic violence are that governors are so embroiled in the discourse of governance, including the need to be seen to promote their role as agents of participatory democracy, that the proposition that the governing body fails to operate in this way at least publicly is an anathema. It should be noted that there was at 21 percent of respondents, a significant minority rejecting the view that their governing body reflected the diversity of their community. A further 5 percent remained 'unsure'. Women, more than men, were likely to be sceptical about the inclusiveness of the governing body. The tendency for women to express concerns about this is unsurprising given the relative lack of power held women in governing bodies. Women were less likely to act as chairs for example and were more likely to be represented amongst parent-governors. This would explain a greater propensity by women to indicate they had concerns about representation issues on their governing body.

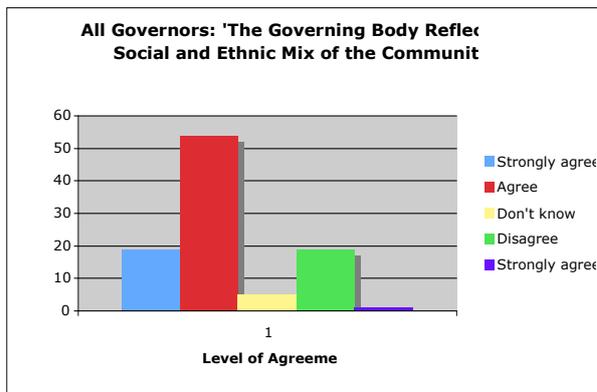


Fig: 3: n: 631 (10 non-responses)

Overall there was an even split between men and women returning the survey, with men accounting for 55 percent and women for 45 percent of all respondents. As has been noted previously however, there were gender differentiations in the data. It was clear from the sample that male governors were more likely to inhabit positions of power in schools and their governing bodies. Governing body chairs in the survey were mainly male: 73 percent of the sample of 58. Amongst the 56 VCs there was a slightly less pronounced male domination, although at 60 percent this was still significant. Amongst the headteachers in the surveyed schools, the majority were male, with women inclined to be working as heads of primary schools. Furthermore, from the 38 heads responding to the survey, 24 (63 percent) were male. Amongst governors, parent, foundation, teacher and non-teacher respondents included a higher proportion of women, while co-opted, LEA and headteacher respondents were more likely to be men. This in part reflected the high incidence of women involved in teaching and other employment within schools.

As male governors dominated leadership positions, there was a tendency for these positions to be occupied by 'male' governor types: 80 percent of chairs were co-opted or LEA governors. Such nominations afforded relatively high status compared to other governor types such as parents.

Co-opted governors for example, nominated by those within the current governing body, were likely to be individuals ‘fitting in’ to current structures and practices of governance. Similarly, LEA nominees, who derived their status from their approval by the local authority, may have been inclined to recommend individuals unlikely to challenge current practice. As many of the chairs in the research were also local councillors this afforded them approval by, and engagement with, current local political structures. Those in the position of chair therefore, were likely to derive power on a number of levels. This could be from: class position, gender status, nomination type, and political positioning. From a perspective advocated by Bourdieu, the cultural capital derived from class position and connections with political structures would be a necessary trait for the position of school governor. This is particularly the case for those in the leadership position of the chair. Individuals embodying this habitus may be less inclined to challenge the agenda of the school, and the wider education system. This system, according to Bourdieu, engenders a meritocratic approach obscuring a system favouring powerful groups within society.

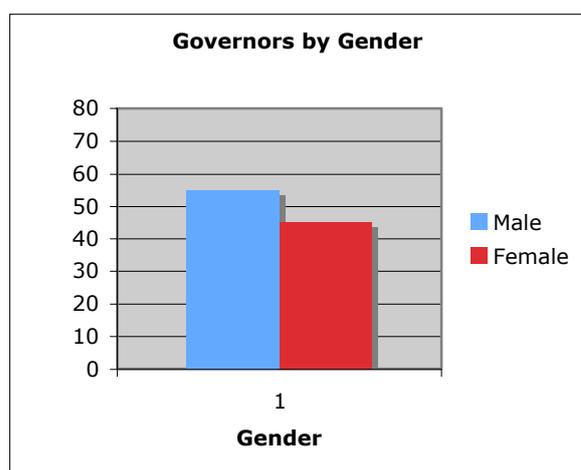


Fig 4: *n*: 641

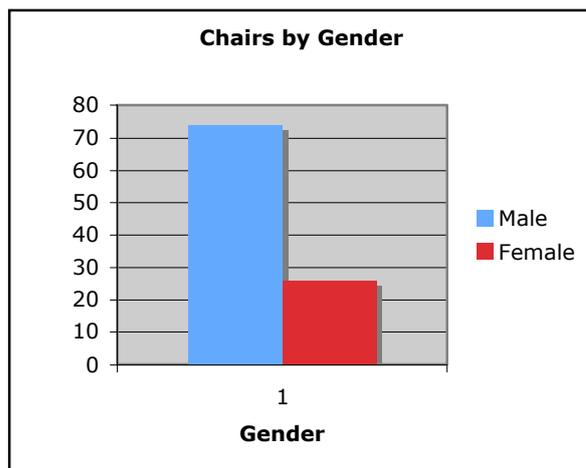


Fig 5: *n*: 639 (2 non-response)

Age was a further indicator of cultural capital amongst school governors. Governing body chairs were likely to have older profiles when compared to their governor colleagues. Overall in fact, there were few responding to the questionnaire aged under 30 and a significant proportion over 50 (47 percent). This compared to the general population of Wales one third of who were over 50 (2001 Census). Male governors were likely to be older than their female colleagues: while 66 percent of female respondents were 31 to 50 years, 58 percent of men were over 50. The predominance of older chairs of governors was indicative perhaps of the capital afforded to those perceived as having accumulated vocational experience. Governing body chairs were also likely to have been governing for longer than their colleagues: nearly 47 percent had been in the role for 10 years or more and around 30 percent had been governing for between six and 10 years. This compared to the survey data overall where 25 percent of governors had 10 years or more of service. Female governors tended to have served for shorter periods than their male colleagues: 66 percent of women respondents had served for less than five years compared to 45 percent of men. Perhaps to be expected, older governors tended to have volunteered for longer than younger colleagues.

Fig 6 and 7

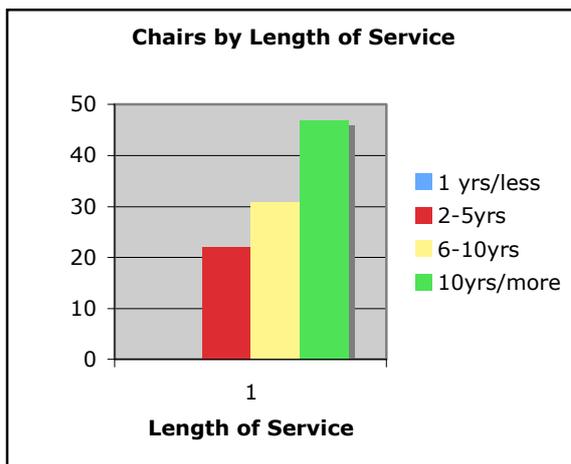
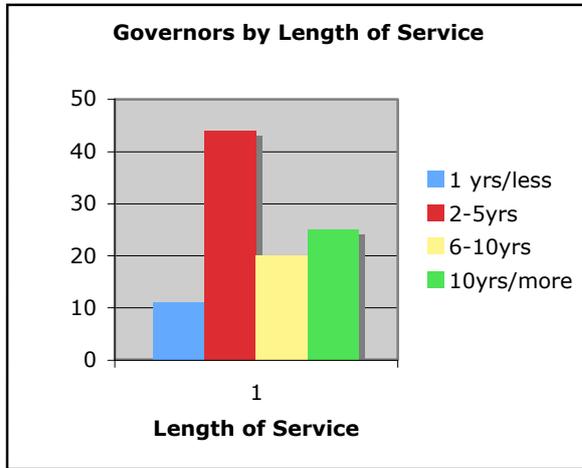


Fig 6: $n=636$ (5 non-responses)

Fig 7: $n= 58$

Skills and Knowledge

The vocational experience of governors reflected their educated, middle-class profile: 43 per cent of governor respondents had university degrees and 28 percent held professional qualifications. These figures were reversed for the sample of chairs, this perhaps reflecting the tendency, as indicated in the case study work, for chairs to be valued for their practical business skills. In the case study schools it was evident that chairs were comfortable with a particular area of expertise,

relating to the school budget or political lobbying for example. This would direct them away from the more ‘professional’ preoccupations of the school, the analysis of examination results or performance management for example. This can be related to Bernstein’s distinction between ‘horizontal’, ‘commonsense’ discourses and more specialised, ‘vertical’ discourses. The distinction in this case was that between the lay skills of the governors (horizontal, commonsense) and the professional expertise of educational professionals in the school (vertical, specialized).

Fig 8 and 9

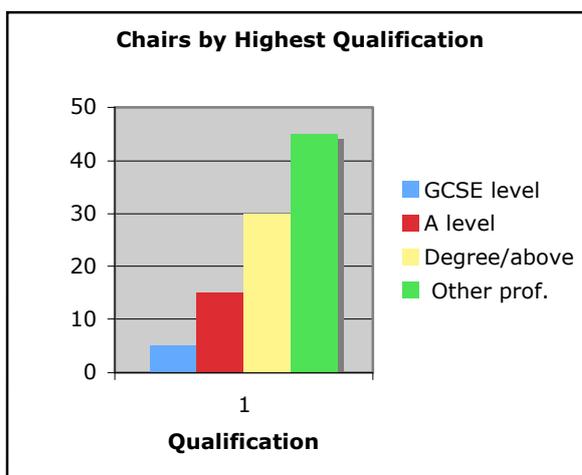
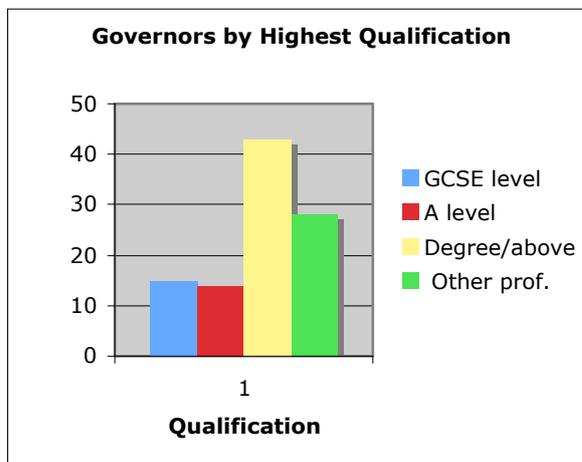


Fig 8: $n=610$ (21 non-respondents)

Fig 9: $n= 53$ (5 non-respondents)

The responses in the survey to questions surrounding power within governing bodies are particularly pertinent to Bernstein's distinction between different discourses. Whilst governors broadly rejected the proposition that local authorities should be afforded more power over schools (70 percent disagreed with this), a less strident 57 percent dismissed the suggestion that headteachers and teachers should run schools. At 43 percent, this left a substantial minority agreeing with the statement that heads and teaching staff should take a lead. These response rates point towards tensions between the professional power of the LEA and those working within schools. This can be related in part perhaps, to the competition for resources and the LEA's mediator role in this. These responses may also have reflected governor loyalty to the professionals with whom they were working directly in schools. This points to an acknowledgement of their reliance on professional guidance. Headteachers in particular were likely to be drawn upon by governors to negotiate the specialised, vertical discourses of teaching and learning. The reliance of lay governors on headteachers and other professionals in the school pointed to the prevailing dominance of the educational professional discourse within schools.

The skills governors believed they offered reflected their occupational profiles. Around one fifth to one third of respondents believed they brought financial, corporate management and human resources skills respectively. These respondents were most likely to be governing in urban and borders areas. Around one quarter to one third of respondents believed they brought experience from the community and voluntary services respectively. A greater percentage (43 percent) of governors believed they brought knowledge and experience of education to the governing body, although this left 67 percent who did not indicate this, despite their own high levels of education. This particular response could signal the recognised limits of governor involvement in educational professional issues in the school; the line drawn between the lay and professional

roles in governance. Further indications of this could be gleaned from the limited involvement of governors in 'hands on' teaching and learning activities: less than a quarter of respondents reported that they were involved in ties with teachers.

Further evidence of a 'shying away' from classroom activity was the survey result that whilst 84 percent of governors were aware of their school's comparative performance, a significant minority of governors (around 30 percent) believed their governing body's lack of understanding of their impact upon the classroom. What this data suggested was that governors appeared more comfortable with taking an overview of the school, but were less confident with issues within the classroom directly. This pointed to the limits and boundaries surrounding the lay and professional positions within the governing body. For a significant proportion of governors, specific teaching and learning issues were in Bernstein terms, defined by their 'vertical discourse'. In other words they were bounded due to their professional, hierarchical position. Also apposite here is Bernstein's reference to the classification and framing of subjects. In the case study governing bodies there was evidence that this was often strong, with definite boundaries between lay and professional knowledge. In other words, there were areas of concern that tended to be led by the headteacher (e.g. performance management) and others (such as school buildings) where governors were afforded greater scope to contribute.

Given the relative power, and potential cultural capital of the chair of governors, it was revealing that chairs in the survey were less inclined to indicate knowledge and experience of education: one third believed this to be the case (compared to 43 percent of governors overall). This could reflect an inclination amongst chairs to be more accepting of the bounded nature of the lay and the professional. As experienced governors, chairs may have been sufficiently assimilated to understand the bounded nature of their contribution to educational issues. This resonates with the

two-tier model of school governance. This model was applicable in a number of the case study schools. Within these a separation appeared to exist between the top tier of the head, chair and SMT, and the second tier of governors. The second tier was inclined to be less engaged with the realities of the structures and operation of the governing body. The alignment of governors, particularly chairs, to particular niches of expertise was also reflected by the tendency (46 percent) for chairs to indicate that they brought financial skills to the role. Chairs were also more likely to indicate that they offered corporate management and human resources skills (around 40 percent compared to around 30 percent of all governors respectively).

Networks, Motivation and Accountability

Local networks were clearly key sources of cultural capital within school governing bodies, especially for the chair. The chair's links with the community and voluntary sector (around 50 percent and 30 percent respectively) were useful in the headteacher and chair dynamic. The head was able to draw upon the chair's networking within the catchment area and beyond. An example of this were links with local politics where there was the potential for lobbying for resources for the school. This was discernible in the high incidence of multiple governorship amongst governing body chairs: out of 58, 43 percent were governors at more than one school. This was the case for just 18 percent of governors overall. Chairs were also active in local political communities: 48 percent indicated membership of local political parties compared to one quarter of all respondents. They also had stronger links with LGAs than their colleagues: 74 percent were aware of their LGA although only around 25 percent were active members. This compared to 30 percent of all governors who were unaware of their LGA and 12 percent who were active members. The lobbying role cast governors as champions for the school. This resonated with the most prominent reason given for becoming a governor: 60 percent of respondents indicated they were motivated by a desire 'to support the school' (fig.12). This indicates the dominant notion of

governing bodies functioning to support established structures: discourses aligned with school governance appeared to be somewhat averse to challenge.

Fig 10 and Fig 11

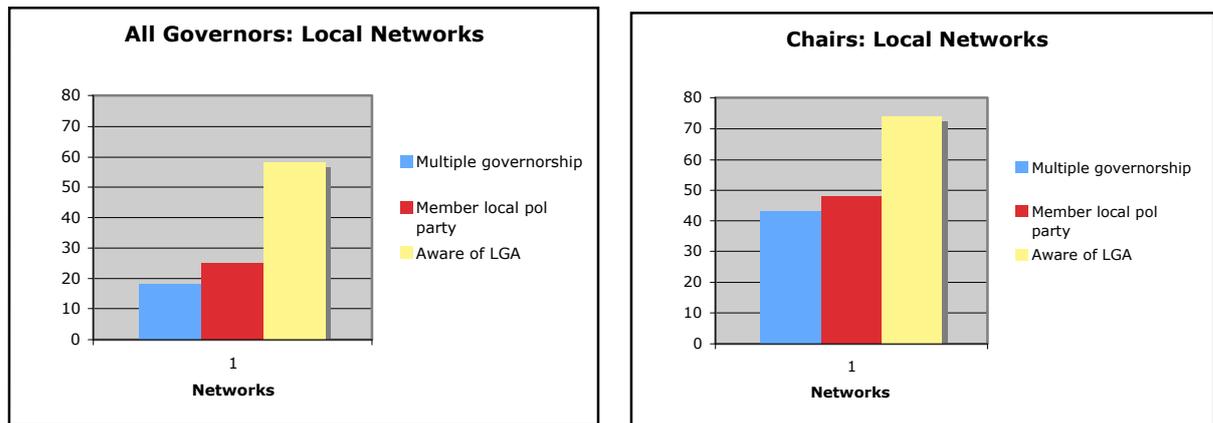


Fig 10: (Governors) $n=640$ (1 non-respondent) except for ‘awareness of LGA, $n=625$ (16 non-respondents).

Fig 11: (Chairs) $n=58$ except for ‘multiple governorship’, $n=57$ (1 non-respondent).

Other motivations for governorship included a desire to support their child within the school. More women were inclined to express this view, perhaps due to the higher incidence of female parent-governors. Men were more likely to indicate the desire ‘to give something back to their community’. This was perhaps reflective of the tendency for male governors to be LEA and co-opted nominees and to have significant links with the community, not least through local political activity. Perspectives on motivation also varied with generation: younger respondents were more committed to their child while an older generation of governors seemed more oriented to the community. Those in the secondary sector, and in urban areas, also emphasised the school in its community as a motive for volunteering.

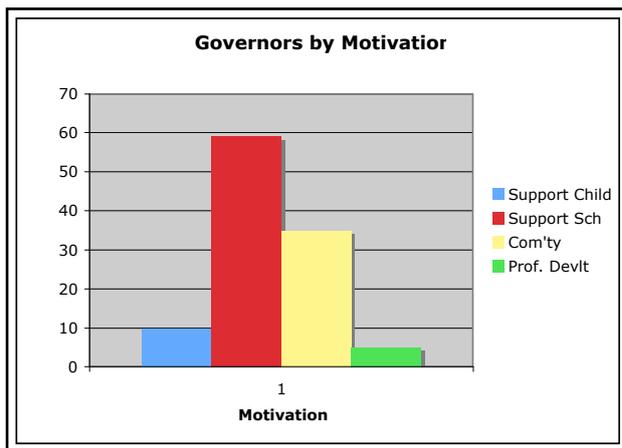


Fig 12: *n*: 628 (13 non-respondents)

The dominant ‘supportive’ motivation for school governance was reflected in the responses to the question about the function of governing bodies: the most significant response (27 percent) was ‘to offer support and advice to the school’. A similar percentage of governors indicated the function of governors was to ‘represent those in the community with an interest in the school’. A further 8 percent indicated the need to ensure community responsiveness. Similarly, when asked to whom governors felt accountable, one third indicated the parents of school pupils (fig.13). Such responses point towards governors’ acknowledgement of their function in the process of participatory democracy, although as has been discussed, the social profile of the governing body may work against this. This contradiction between the theoretical purpose and realities of school governance resonates with Bourdieu’s description of ‘bureaucratic habitus’. This describes the process whereby assimilation into a specific ‘way of being’ over time overrides initial motivations of committee members. Whilst governors may have set out to represent their ‘community’ and may continue to express this belief, as they remain in post these principles become abandoned as their habitus adjusts to that of the bureaucrat. This particular habitus obliges the individual to conform to particular ideologies and discourses of government, principles that may contradict those of participatory democracy.

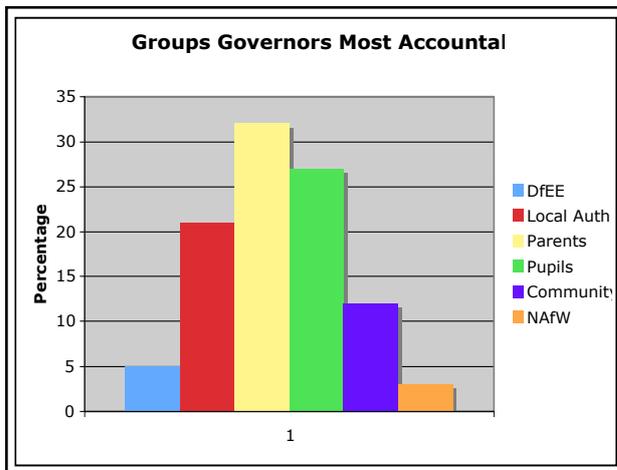


Fig 13: $n= 614$ (26 non-respondents)

The deference and unchallenging disposition of the bureaucratic habitus resonates with Foucault’s analysis of the schools and the institutions surrounding it. Positioned as ‘instruments of governance’, schools are amongst a number of institutions seeking to manipulate and direct behaviour. Governing bodies enable and support this process structured through discourses aligned with ‘improvement’ and surveillance through the regular testing and examination of pupils. This was reflected in the NAFW project’s particular interest in exploring governing body ‘effectiveness’. Governors could also themselves be identified as under the surveillance of their ruling LEAs. For example, in the case study work, agendas for meetings were largely drawn up by the local authority. In responses to the survey governors were divided on the issue of consultation and agendas: around 35 percent disagreed that they were consulted and a further 10 percent were unsure. Amongst chairs, somewhat less (28 percent) indicated they were not consulted, reflecting their relatively close proximity to the agenda-making process.

Workload and Training

Governors responding to the survey described themselves as being committed to the role. Perhaps predictably however, governing body chairs spent the most time on governor duties, and had the most regular contact with headteachers. Around 60 percent of all governors indicated they attended all meetings, a further 37 percent indicating attendance of most. Time spent on duties beyond meetings was also considerable: governors in borders and industrial valley areas spent the most time on this. On a termly basis, around 40 percent of respondents were spending between 11 and 20 hours on governor duties, with a further 21 percent between 21 and 50 hours. Around one third however were spending less than 10 hours per term on these duties, and very few (4 percent) were spending more than 50 hours a term on this. Chairs however were spending a considerable amount of time on governance: 20 percent dedicating more than 50 hours a term. Chairs were also regularly in touch with their headteachers, with 90 percent reporting they spoke to them once a week or more often; this compared to 70 percent of governors overall.

Fig 14 and 15

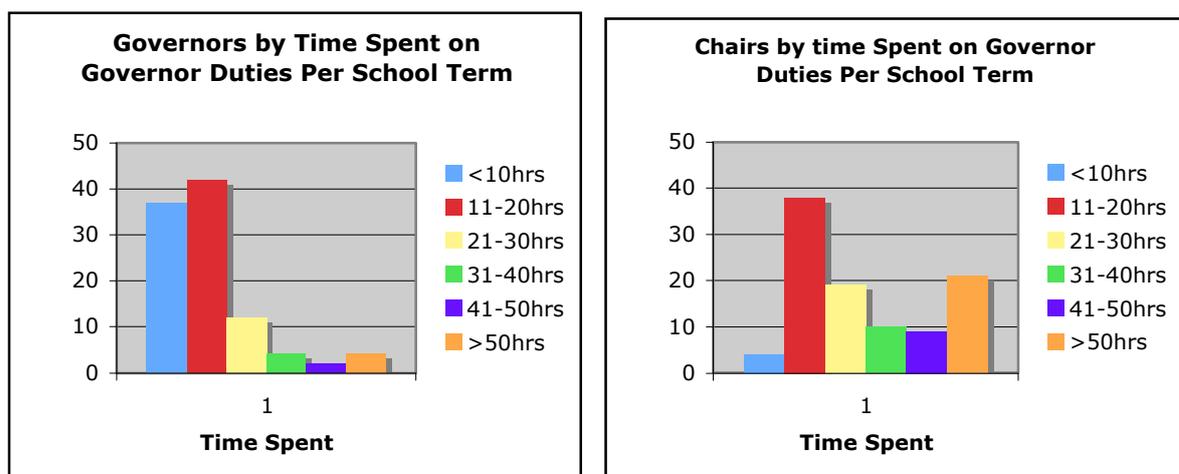


Fig 14: $n=614$ (27 non-responses)

Fig 15: $n=58$

Ninety per cent of governors found the volume, complexity and responsibilities of governorship reasonable. There were discrepancies surrounding the distribution of workload however: while nearly 90 percent said that this was shared, around 70 percent indicated the head and chair did most of the work. Amongst the sample of chairs there was a 50/50 split on this issue. These contrasting opinions give further credence to the two-tier nature of governance alluded to earlier, and the definition of ‘workload’ in this context. Whilst the majority of governors may have believed that work was shared within the governing body, their reference may have been to work distributed to governors in the second tier. This may have differed from the work preoccupying headteachers, the SMT and to a lesser extent, the chair of governors (the first tier). The question of workload may have found chairs torn between the realities of this tiered structure and the ‘official’ discourse of school governance (for example in the Guide to the Law for Governors). This discourse asserts that the collective power of the governing body should be prioritised over that of the individual governor.

Fig 16 and 17

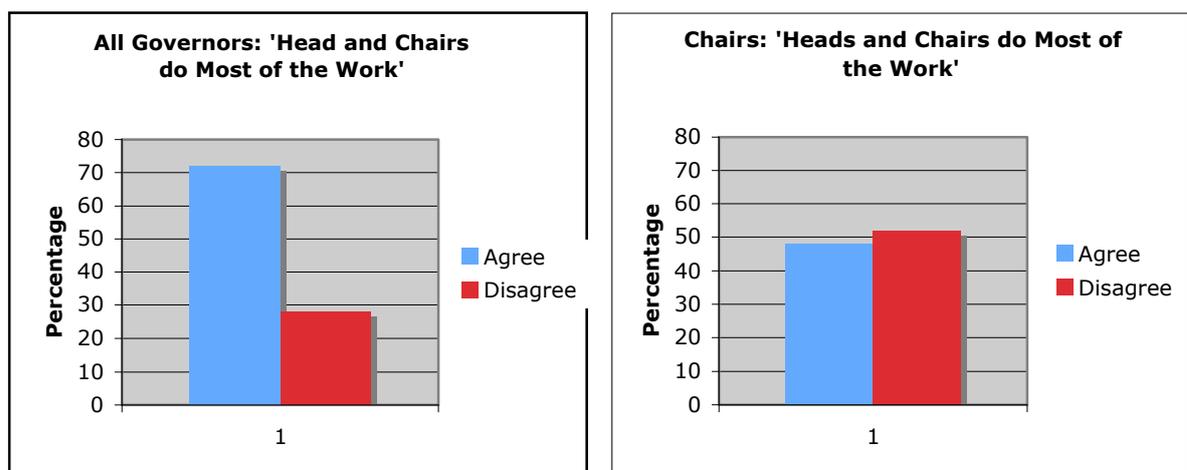


Fig 16 (Governors): *n*= 510 (131 non-responses)

Fig 17 (Chairs): *n*=56 (2 non-responses)

Overall governors believed they were effective: at 90 percent respectively, most governors thought they were improving the school and effectively exercising their responsibilities of scrutiny in monitoring performance. Similar percentages of governors believed their governing bodies to be forums for discussion and that they were encouraged to ask challenging questions of the school. Eighty to ninety percent of governors held these views. Similar percentages of respondents indicated that school policies were comprehensively discussed in the governing body and they were fully involved in discussing and deciding policies. Between 85 percent and 95 percent of respondents to the survey indicated they were ‘well informed to make good decisions’, were fully involved in discussing and deciding school policies, and were helping to decide the future of the school. It was interesting that at around 70 percent, positive responses to these questions was lower for governing body chairs. This could be because chairs had a greater insight into the pressures beyond the school affecting its future, pressures relating to funding and political activity beyond the governors’ control. Most governors and chairs (around 90 percent respectively) however believed that they managed their business effectively.

Governor training was regarded as important in developing skills to achieve such effectiveness: most governors (75 percent) believed induction training should be compulsory for governors. Responses to the survey also found that 60 per cent of governors had spent up to five hours on LEA-provided training in the past year. A further 20 percent had spent between six and 10 hours on this. These figures were broadly the same for chairs with the majority of governors indicating they valued the training provided by the LEA. Despite the considerable involvement of governors in training however, only half of those surveyed believed training was prioritised in their governing body. The varying levels of commitment to training in governing bodies resonates with levels of apathy and in extreme cases antipathy towards training amongst headteachers in

the case study schools. One headteacher had concerns that training actually had a negative effect on school governance, instilling governors with a false sense of expertise: ‘when they (governors) go to a training session and they come back and they think they know more than they understand.’

Conclusion

The survey data offers a sound statistical base for engaging with the key questions in this thesis. The predominance amongst governors of a particular ‘type’ especially amongst chairs is evidence that certain forms of cultural capital are valued in the school governing body. These characteristics relate to social class (high levels of education, occupational status and earnings), gender and age and pointed to a particular habitus. Amongst chairs in particular this was most likely to include a middle-class profile and political connectedness. As the case study data bears out, these were characteristics often valued by headteachers. The coding of particular types of knowledge was evident. Some of the data suggested that governors and headteachers were reluctant for governors to contribute to the ‘techniques’ of teaching and learning, such as classroom observation. These areas were deemed to be the realm of educational professionals. Heads did however welcome skills such as accountancy and lobbying.

Given the social profile of governors and the dissonance between this and the mixed characteristic of school catchments, it was revealing that most governors believed their governing bodies reflected the social and economic mix of the community. This resonates with Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic violence: governors seemed unwilling to consider the possibility of the structure of school government to be anything other than representative. It is however important to consider the interpretation of this particular question in the survey. Whilst not representing the social and economic mix of their communities, governors may have felt sufficiently able to

reflect this through their intimate knowledge of the community. This issue relates to the role of governors as agents of participatory democracy and the definition of this (see introduction).

Although there are a number of arguments to be explored pertaining to the nature and purposes of participatory democracy, the identity of governors as particularly privileged has implications for how governors approach their role. Those who have benefited from the education system are arguably more likely to support and uphold its structure. That is the position of the school as a site of cultural reproduction privileging certain social groups above others. Bourdieu's concept of a specific bureaucratic habitus is also useful here as it makes the link between longevity and practice. This is particularly applicable to chairs of governing bodies who are likely to have been long-serving governors and therefore more embroiled and accepting of the associated discourses.

Webb, Shirato and Danaher explain how this inevitable process of inculcation occurs:

representatives co-opted onto state committees risk becoming peers not only of their own community of interest, but of the bureaucratic structure...this is rather inevitable, because committee members are likely to have an influence in the committee only in so far as they perform like everyone else on the committee, take on the perspectives, discourses and ideologies of the government organisations to which they report (2002: 100-101).

The privileging of certain discourses above others in school governing bodies also resonates with Bernstein's model of classification and framing. This can be described as considerably strong according to survey responses. This was illustrated through evidence that knowledge and discourse were strictly bounded according to their definition as 'vertical' or professional and 'horizontal', or 'lay'. It was in the relationship between the headteacher and chair however that there was likely to have been a clearer understanding of these boundaries, particularly as chairs were in frequent contact with the head and spending considerable amounts of time on governor duties. This could explain for example the reticence of chairs (compared to other governors) to admit knowledge and experience of education and to agree with the suggestion that governors are able to 'decide the future of the school'. It was probable therefore that chairs were more likely to

be accepting of the vertical and horizontal boundaries. The 'leadership' positions in the governing body were however subject to ambiguities. Whilst it was accepted that chairs and heads did most of the work, it was also implied that workload was shared within the governing body.

This illustrates the characteristic two-tier nature of school governance. The differentiation existing between the leaders (the chair, the head and possibly the SMT) and the rest of the governing body. It exemplified a Foucauldian notion of power as dynamic, working to consistently destabilize governors. Despite the strength of compliance with the official discourse of school governance, there was evidence that discrepancies around the position of governors - their function and relationship to lay and professional discourse - could leave them vulnerable to manipulation. Foucault's (1996:260) description of the transformative nature of power is instructive here: 'power is nothing other than...the form, differing from time to time, of a series of clashes which constitute the social body, clashes of the political, economy type etc...power transforms itself without ceasing.' This analysis positions school governors in the broader context of the school acting as an instrument of governance, tied to an agenda of 'improvement' and surveillance through the testing and categorisation of pupils. The role of governors in these analyses is one of supportiveness and compliance. This is exemplified in the data by the common motivation and function of governorship aligned to championing the school. The role of school governor was therefore not one inclined to challenge the practice of the professional within the school, but conversely to ensure its perpetuation. These themes will be explored in greater detail in the next four chapters which describe and discuss the case studies. This begins with a focus upon the nine LEAs in the wider NAFW project. Following this the chapters will focus upon the case study LEAs: 'Reithshire'; 'Llanethshire' and 'Blenarth'.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BETWEEN CENTRE AND PERIPHERY

Introduction

This chapter draws upon research conducted in nine Welsh local authorities. It describes and analyses data gleaned from interviews with key officials in each local education authority. These included: interviews with the director of education, the lead officer for governor services, and the chair of the LGA. Questions were designed to gather information about: the operation of LEAs in Wales, governors and their communities, and the development of strategy and school improvement. For the purposes of this thesis, five crosscutting themes have been identified, these are: strategy and school improvement, lifelong-learning, social inclusion and democratic participation, training, and engagement in education. These areas are pertinent to the questions central to the thesis, providing a local political context to the practice of school governing. Specifically they allow an exploration of the following themes: the relative positions of discourses in education, the effects of coding of particular knowledge on the lay/professional relationship, the social dispositions of those involved in governance, and the effect of this on their practice. An overarching theme is that concerning the position of governors as agents of participatory democracy in the context of local politics and national systems.

Wales: Socio-Economic Profile

At the time of the research (2001-2003) the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that the Wales economy was performing less well when compared to the UK average. This was measured with reference to the Gross Value Added (GVA): this fell from 79.4 percent of the UK average in 1998-1999, to 78.8 percent in 2000-2001. GVA is the total of incomes earned from production of

goods and services, its measure positioning Wales as trailing most areas of the UK (BBC news online, 2003). Unemployment levels were also relatively poor at this time at 6 percent compared to 5 percent in the UK as a whole (Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey, 2001/2002, ONS). This varied across Wales with a broad north/south divide, albeit with pockets of particular disadvantage or relative wealth. There was a tendency for higher than average employment levels to occur in south Wales: the lowest employment rates were experienced in the north of the country. The LEAs selected for the thesis had varying socio-economic characteristics. This was broadly demonstrated through levels of economic activity, the measure of those working or seeking work. Although positioned in the south of the country, Reith (Border), had a high rate of economic activity. This was 80 percent and contrasted with 65 percent in Blenarth (industrial valley), another of the case study LEAs in south Wales. In the western county of Llanethshire this figure was 72 percent (Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey, 2001/2002, ONS).

The Welsh Dimension

During the interviews it became clear that LEAs were conscious of a specifically Welsh dimension to school governance. One rural director of education referred to a 'culture developed here in (the county)', referring to a partnership principle distinctive to Wales. As a small country it was felt that there were more opportunities in Wales to work collaboratively with colleagues. Reference is made for example, to the annual Governors' Conference where 'the 22 governor support officers at which the Welsh Assembly Government and Governors Wales are present.' One industrial valley LEA also noted definite differences for school governance in Wales, believing that

the understanding by governors that there is a different agenda emerging in Wales... is a new one, which is much more of a partnership approach and a much more supportive approach, a much more evidence-based approach, a value-added approach.

It was suggested that the sense of a distinctive education service in Wales had been enhanced following the inception of the NAFW. A sharp contrast was identified with the experience of education in England. An official in an industrial valley LEA described English education policy to be characterized by a 'deliberate policy of fragmentation' where governors have had to be on the defensive, 'with a shield and spear'. Such defensiveness, it was asserted, was unrecognisable amongst governors in Wales.

The difference between the English White Paper and The Learning Country document were also felt to indicate divergence between the two countries. The director of a rural LEA explained this was: 'largely to do with culture which reflects some structural things but reflects the direction in which the education service is going.' This sentiment is echoed by the deputy director of a borders LEA who claimed the inception of the NAFW had encouraged a distinctive role for local authorities in particular. These are described as 'clearly coming to the front of the agenda, as far as Jane Davidson's (Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning at the time) concerned'. There was a sense that the Welsh Assembly had increased LEA input into education policy. This increased the possibility of closer collaborative working between governing bodies, government and other institutions. Furthermore, those involved in Welsh-medium education felt that their cause was more secure and that the development of Welsh-medium education, even in largely 'anglicised' LEAs, could now more safely meet the growing demand. There were however some concerns that LEAs needed to be clear about their roles for this to work effectively.

The position of LEAs was also pertinent to the issue of small schools in Wales. In one rural LEA it was argued that this issue was intrinsically linked to the performance of governing bodies:

I think most of the issues that we're raising with you, and perhaps it's generally a problem in Wales ... is the small schools issue. The issue of the smallest units in Wales is much more of an issue for governance. If all the schools here were 200 or more I think governance would be of a much higher calibre, and there would be much better links between us and them and the whole thing.

This LEA official also expressed concerns that bias in the English media led to misunderstandings by governors and parents in Wales. This resulting in a failure to appreciate the distinctive experience of education in the country. The director of this LEA was keen to work closely with governing bodies with a view to guiding their practice. This 'supportive' approach was described in terms of 'sharing best practice'. The alternative to this was seen as detrimental: 'when you're encouraged to stand alone and plough your own furrow, you don't get the benefit from that.' This rhetoric or discourse also signified the need for taking control of the behaviour of school governors. Such analysis draws upon Foucault's theories of power, surveillance and governance and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Discourses of School Improvement

A key component of LEA education policy was the set of discourses or 'discursive structures' (Foucault) aligned to the project of school improvement, the raising of academic standards in schools. Under the pretext of ensuring governors were adhering to this agenda, LEAs asserted considerable powers over school governing bodies. Such powers were administered for example, through LEA clerking services and governor training programmes. These instruments allowed for the divisions between the vertical, specialised discourses of the education professional and the vertical, 'common-sense' discourses of the lay governor to be maintained. Although therefore, the official discourse of school governance asserted a strategic role for governors, the domination of the vertical, professional discourse operated to temper this. Furthermore, school governing bodies were functioning in an education system favouring particular socio-economic groups and those possessing particular forms of habitus. Whilst governors were inclined to be characterised

by these primarily due to their class position, there were limits to their abilities to interact with professional discourses. Chairs of governors were more likely to proffer the required cultural capital for this, thus easing their relationship with headteachers. This analysis draws upon Bourdieu's notion of an education system favouring the more privileged sectors of society. It positions the school improvement agenda – an ostensibly meritocratic approach- as upholding or sustaining an education system structured to favour and reproduce dominant class positions.

There was widespread agreement amongst all nine local authorities that governing bodies should be instrumental in promoting the standards agenda in the respective counties. This was however accompanied by considerable scepticism about governors' specific contribution to this. One urban authority referred to governor involvement in self-evaluation within schools as important to working towards improvement. The suggestion that governors, along with teaching professionals, should reflect on potential for improvement resonated with Foucault's notion of self-governance. This refers to the encouragement of individual monitoring of behaviour, and internalising forms of governance. There was however scepticism surrounding governor involvement in the evaluation of professionals in schools, and a lack of confidence in their ability to operate 'strategically'. As one director of education explains, this derived from the historical position of governors as relatively diffident figures. Strategy had not been a natural focus for school governors traditionally preoccupied with practical matters:

I think historically they've (governors) been very well aware of issues like financing and building...in my experience those were the thriving subcommittees, but I think in the standards issue they need to be helped to become more involved.

The chair of the LGA in one borders authority similarly recognised the tendency for governing bodies to focus on 'what in the end are not strategic issues'. Onerous bureaucracy was identified as hampering this by the chair of one borders governing body. He explained how the significant

volume of paperwork generated through broader policy changes in education impacted on governors' ability to carry out their prescribed role:

if you're involved in the setting of the strategic direction of the school which is the definition of what governors are, it's difficult to see how you would do that without understanding the context in which that strategy is set, so for as long as there is a huge amount of paperwork spewed out in education, governors have to at least get to grips with it, at a greater or lesser degree of superficiality.

Governor as Strategist

LEAs described how such difficulties could be alleviated by offering a number of services to governors. This varied amongst the differently populated authorities but included the provision of information, development support, clerking and training. LEAs claimed a high status for governor support; some had a dedicated and discreet unit managed by a senior officer and all LEAs had an officer dedicated to this. The ESP in one border authority referred to governor support services as a 'priority area'. Key aims in this respect were for: 'improving the advice, guidance and support to all school governors and governing bodies'. Emphasis was given to developing support and training for governing bodies through governor support services given the increasingly complex remit of school governors.

Other LEAs attempted to channel governors' strategic role by integrating support into the structure for school improvement and the standards agenda. This was positioned within a general responsibility held by an LEA officer. In one industrial valley LEA a development officer was appointed to help each school governing body achieve 'strategic direction', acting as a conduit between the school and the authority. In this capacity the appointed individual could 'support the governing body ... answer questions...connect the governing body with the correct area of service.' This process was however double-edged as the LEA officer provided a means of surveillance: the development officer was described by the director of education in this authority

as having an ‘influence in governing bodies’. Furthermore the director in this particular LEA describes himself as taking a ‘hands on’ role in cases of under-performing schools. In these circumstances he would meet with chairs and vice chairs (VCs) of governing bodies; the director was also personally involved in the recruitment of headteachers.

Lay / Professional Divide: Classification and Framing

The relationship between governors and the LEA in this instance reveals the inclusion and exclusion of particular discourses in school governance. Whilst governors were encouraged to operate strategically, there were limits to this. For example, in the case of schools ‘underperforming’, those at the highest level of the LEA would intervene. Furthermore, it was not deemed appropriate for governors to recruit headteachers and to make decisions over federation without the ‘expert’ advice of those within the LEA, specifically in this LEA, the director of education. Despite the encouragement of governors to contribute to strategic issues therefore, the bounded nature of knowledge inclined governors to focus on practical issues such as school buildings and finance. This left teaching and learning issues to the education professionals. This resonates with Bernstein’s analysis of language systems. The differentiation between the horizontal or ‘common-sense’ discourses lends itself to that characterised by that of governors. Vertical discourses of school improvement however, which were more inclined to be characteristically specialised and hierarchical, are most likely to be drawn upon by education professionals.

A pertinent example of this was the involvement of governors in decisions over the salary levels of teachers. This, combined with relationships within some smaller communities, led to some discomfort amongst the governors. As described by one rural director of education:

Last year was the whole issue of threshold and the assessment of heads, they read and understood it. They're very concerned about it, to be sitting back in judgment and making decisions about the head and his or her salary, particularly in these close-knit communities: they may live next door to one another as well.

This description resonates with Bernstein's analysis of the playing out of systems of language to classification and framing. In the relationship between school governors, schools and LEAs, these may be relatively strong. The classification of subjects, as this refers to appropriate areas for deliberation, may be bounded, and the framing of the pedagogical relationship between educational professionals and lay governors may also be strong. Therefore, although the thrust of LEA discourse is one of instilling a strategic approach amongst governors, there are structures of power relations intrinsic to the operation of LEAs inhibiting this. Relatively weaker forms of classification and framing are identifiable in the relationships between the headteacher and chairs of governors however. Chairs of governors were more likely to be attuned to the vertical discourses of the school, and more likely, in Bourdieu's words, to experience a shared habitus between themselves and the headteacher.

Surveillance: Agendas, Clerks and Training

There were instances of the differentiation between vertical (lay) and horizontal (professional) knowledge to varying degrees amongst the nine LEAs. In one borders LEA for example, information provided by the authority was 'filtered' prior to reaching governing bodies. This process was justified in terms of ensuring its 'appropriateness' for governors: 'LEAs have got a role to filter information, to make sure it's really accessible to governors'. Such practices, resonating with Bernstein's theories of horizontal and vertical discourse, also pertain to Foucault's theories on surveillance and the dynamics of power. The practice of agenda setting by LEAs was particularly pointed in this context, as was the potentially powerful position of the LEA-appointed clerk to the governors. One rural LEA was particularly keen to maintain a close relationship between themselves and the school governing bodies within its authority. As well as

providing layman's translations of documentation and flagging up key issues in NAFW documents, a pro-forma agenda for governing body meetings was routinely circulated. This was reported as particularly valuable to primary schools. The pro-forma broadly remained unchanged by governors, even when given the opportunity. The director of education in this LEA believed that the chance for governors to alter the agenda afforded them ultimate 'ownership' however: 'It's...the school's agenda, but we will give them a pro-forma ... There are a few occasions where they will add to it, and let us know that they want to put more on.'

The clerking service represented a further tool for LEA surveillance, although the extent that this was drawn upon varied according to authority. Indeed, uneven practices in clerking underlined the ambiguities around appropriate LEA involvement in school governance. In one urban LEA, the ESP described the clerking service as a 'vital link between the authority and schools and their governing bodies'. This was echoed in one rural LEA reporting 100 percent take-up for Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for clerking. This was regarded as a measure of the LEAs achievement. Experiences differed in other LEAs. In one authority, clerks provided by SLAs did not operate in all schools and in another the service had been discontinued. One LEA official referred to the misunderstandings of the remit of the clerk who was 'basically a minute-taker' resulting in governors' unrealistic expectations of the role. In case study interviews however it was found that governors were generally satisfied with the presence of an LEA representative at meetings, whether this was for clerking or advisory purposes.

There was also general compliance with the practice of LEA agenda setting, although some governing bodies held alternate LEA-led and school-led meetings to ensure LEA matters did not dominate. A view typical in schools is expressed here by the chair of an industrial valley school: the local authority advisor gives an 'LEA perspective and makes sure we're on the right

lines...gives us general advice'. In another rural school, where it was common practice for senior officials to attend governing body meetings, one headteacher describes this as 'brilliant', serving as a check on inappropriate behaviour:

They are handy because they reiterate the role all the time...in the last meeting one of the governors asked if his 'phone number could be distributed to the parents...very quickly the LEA rep said no that is not the role of the parent-governor, you aren't a channel for complaints, you are here for strategy and policy-making and to guide the school.

Others were more sceptical however. One borders headteacher noted as peculiar the practice of a senior member of the LEA clerking meetings: 'I used to think (that) was a strange position for her to have as deputy director of education, as part of the governing body'.

Whilst clerks provided a variable support to governing bodies, LEA training delivered provided a further layer of direction to the role of governor. As with clerking services, training practices differed according to authority. In one industrial valley LEA training was highly regarded by LEA officers, spoken of as being on a par to training delivered to senior managers in schools. Training here was regarded as key to the standards agenda, the discourse focusing upon the empowerment of governors, preparing them to carry out their roles independently: as the LEA official for this authority explains: 'they (governors) realise we were taking them seriously as well as equipping them for...the information they needed to make their own judgments'. Furthermore, the engagement of governors was deemed important to wider LEA planning and the broader social inclusion policy agenda: 'so they're not just local authority targets or plans: it's the wider strategic plan and the ownership is there through partnership'.

Although some LEAs believed they benefited tangibly from the investment in governor training, there were widespread concerns about poor attendance at such events. One rural authority

describes how, even when repeated, session attendance was poor: ‘We try and replicate training in three, four or five centres around the county, but the take-up is not huge by any means’. Attendance was also patchy at meetings arranged between the LEA, chairs of governors and headteachers. This was of particular concern as it was heads and chairs - as the case study analysis bears out - who were key figures for the cascading of information to the governing body as a whole. Governors themselves expressed some concerns about the quality of training on offer. One borders chair for example, described the poorly attended sessions he had attended as ‘inadequate’. His suggestion that training be more focused upon governors’ rights and responsibilities, along with initiatives such as performance management, underlines the wide-ranging remit of the role of governor and the ambiguities intrinsic to the position.

The following comments illustrate the specific anxiety that, despite access to training, governors were never able to be fully conversant with the professional discourses of education: ‘(the training programme) doesn’t help us to develop our skills and knowledge base quickly enough...there are certain things required of us that perhaps we don’t know enough about’. The development of skills was reported to be particularly challenging in small schools. This was described as particularly problematic in one rural authority where timescales were an issue: ‘you go back to the small school situation, with full-time teaching heads, they just don’t have the time to develop their governors’. One rural LEA planned to overcome this by delivering training to groups or ‘families’ of schools, a cost-cutting exercise as well as an attempt to formalise what is described by the LEA as a ‘cross-fertilisation’ of schools. This rural LEA was notable in the degree of control they asserted over their schools. As discussed in chapter eight, senior LEA officials, including the director of education, regularly attended governing body meetings. Furthermore, whilst acknowledging the various sources of information available to governors, this LEA sought to position itself as the most appropriate vehicle for information. As the director

explains: '(advice) doesn't have to come from an independent group 100 miles down the road'. The assertion of control by this LEA over its school governors is further evidence of the ambiguous position of school governors. There were tensions between the expressed need for governors to take a strategic view, with school improvement as the focus, and the barriers to carrying these out in practice.

Discourses of Life-Long Learning

To contextualise the preoccupation with the standards agenda of the nine LEAs in this analysis, it is necessary to explore the broader promotion of lifelong learning. This was a common theme in the interviews and policy documents, and was framed according to the rationale of providing for the economic and social regeneration of the community. In one industrial valley LEA for example, the broader purpose of lifelong learning was described as 'wider in scope than school improvement and the raising of levels of educational attainment'. In this context, improving schools was regarded as a first step in promoting a lifelong learning culture. It was necessary to take account of indicators of deprivation and the improvement of education and skills at all ages. The aim of this LEA's lifelong learning agenda was to 'improve the quality of life and the health and wellbeing of its diverse communities'. One urban LEA's 'strategy of involvement' was more concerned with positioning schools as a key instrument for lifelong learning, with a view to enhancing active citizenship through endeavours towards school improvement.

Drawing on Foucault, Fejes and Nichol (2008) describe how discourses around lifelong learning such as these are intrinsic to contemporary political technologies and strategies of power. From this perspective, the focus of LEAs on a lifelong learning culture is essentially an instrument of governance, working to instill a predisposition amongst individuals towards self-improvement and continuous economic activity. In this analysis the latter function would override personal and

democratic functions. This Foucauldian perspective is also taken by Sue Jackson (Birkbeck University website, 2007) who describes how the potential of lifelong learning can be distorted by its exclusionary effects. This theme resonated with Bernstein's analysis of language and Bourdieu's conceptualisation of schools as sites of social reproduction. Jackson specifically describes how lifelong learning works in favour of those with certain social class backgrounds, or accrued social capital:

Discourses of lifelong learning highlight ways in which learning helps interweave diverse sets of relationships and develop the capacity for reciprocal trust, cooperation and active citizenship: in other words, the development of social capital. However, social capital can be used to exclude as well as include.

Discourses of Community

Issues of social inclusion and local democracy were discussed by some LEAs in terms of the 'ownership' of communities by the 'people'. One industrial valley LEA director described this in the following terms: 'it (ownership of communities) means that people in communities have a say in the way in which that community develops, whether that is a school community or the general community'. This is echoed by an industrial valley (NPT) LEA whose ESP encourages governing body involvement in planning, 'so they're not just local authority targets, not just the local authority strategic plan; it's the wider strategic plan and the ownership is there through partnership'. A borders LEA drew on a similar discourse when explaining the importance of involving governors in decision-making. This LEA described the aim of this as 'building community confidence, and putting communities and local need at the heart of decision-making'. The director described the role of the LEA in this respect as one of 'facilitation, encouraging people to be fully involved by providing them with the training, the tools...all the perspectives to involve themselves.'

One rural LEA official described the local authority as ‘working in an active and proactive partnership from which all partners in the education community would benefit’; this is described as a ‘very good expression of local democracy in action’. References were made amongst the LEA officials to examples of opportunities for governors to contribute to such local democracy. For example in one rural LEA it was asserted that: ‘we will not produce any of our key plans without governing bodies having the opportunity to discuss them themselves, and without the governors being invited to a meeting’. In one industrial valley LEA, the ESP asserts governing bodies should have a ‘clear vision for their schools’. For this authority, targets and strategy needed to be understood and embraced by school governing bodies, ‘so they’re not just local authority targets, not just the local authority strategic plan; it’s the wider strategic plan and the ownership is there through partnership.’ In Llanethshire, a broad approach was taken to this whereby governor issues threaded through a number of areas in the ESP. This is described by one LEA official as defining ‘a clear set of objectives for all of us in the educational community’.

One particular practice justified as a means of fielding the views of governors was the attendance of senior LEA officers at all full governing body meetings. These officers were referred to as the ‘director of education’s representatives’; in fact the director himself also attended regularly. This was regarded as ‘something well worth investing in’, an affirmation of the partnership principle and the administration of practical help. LEA officers in this rural LEA also gave annual guidance to headteachers on what should be included in their headteacher’s reports. These were described as ‘focusing governors’ minds’ to ‘ensure that the quality of information comes through’. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the close contact between senior LEA officials and their schools was indicative of power asserted by local authorities more broadly. In this particular LEA, an operation of ‘governing of the governors’ resonates with Foucault’s analysis of surveillance in modern western society. Whilst the LEA justified their attendance at governors’

meetings as a means of offering a county and countrywide perspective, this practice also worked to monitor the behaviour of governors and to encourage them to internalise these processes. Such practices were also identifiable through the collation of information on specific activities of governors. This practice was facilitated through data gathered at quarterly meetings between the director of education and chairs of governors.

Gathering of data occurred via completion of questionnaires in one borders LEA. These were only distributed to chairs of governing bodies however, a measure of the conduit role of this layer of the governing body. LGAs were also a source of consultation; the same borders LEA drew upon their LGA to review a draft ESP before publication. Again, this form of consultation was likely to be limited to more senior members of the governing body, particularly chairs of governors who were most likely to be involved with LGAs (around a third of chairs in the survey, compared to a tenth of all governors). Overall, the structure of LGAs was valued within authorities. The director of education in one industrial valley LEA for example, underlined the need for a genuine ‘challenging’ democratic relationship between those involved in education, particularly the LGA. This was framed in terms of a wider social agenda:

the partnership between the governors, the schools and the LEAs is crucial, particularly in terms of tackling underachievement and deprivation...it’s not meant to be a cosy relationship because we expect to be challenged by the governing bodies, in particular by the governors’ association.

One rural LGA chair alluded to an open dialogue between himself and the director of education:

There is constant dialogue between the governor’s association and the local authority. There’s dialogue between chairman of governors and the director ... I’m pretty sure that if I picked up the ‘phone and wanted to speak to the director of education, if he wasn’t available then he’d phone me back ... The governor support unit are very accessible for all governors. So I think, yes: we have an excellent partnership in this area between governors and the local authority.

Furthermore, one urban LEA sought to consult with the LGA when drafting the ESP. In its induction portfolio for governors, a borders LGA states its main aims was:

to provide information to school governors on their work and encourage governors to bring matters of concern to the association; to act as positive mediators between bodies to encourage co-operation and the exchange of information, particularly the LEA, the Welsh Assembly Government and Governors Wales; to encourage provision of information, research and advice; to promote comprehensive, quality training.

An Unrealistic Proposition?

Although LEAs were keen to promote democratic and consultative strategies, particularly through the LGA, there were some concerns that these had not been fully realised. Referring to a social inclusion policy more broadly, one rural director of education acknowledged the ambitiousness of ‘rolling out’ this principle to all aspects of the authority, including education:

we are involved in it (social inclusion), but in reality to a fairly limited extent at the moment. We have cooperation between education and social services and various other departments that we deal with pupils in contexts of disadvantage. I think we’re really just touching the surface of that issue as an education service as it appertains to schools.

Such difficulties were reflected in failures to engage particular sections of parent communities in school governance. This reflected concerns that governing bodies were not representative of the social profiles of their catchment areas, an issue borne out in the case study schools. In one rural LEA for example, school governors were described by the head as representing the ‘aspirations rather than the overall composition of the catchment area’. This pattern was replicated on the PTA. The chair of governors in one industrial valley LEA articulated worries that lack of representation threatened democratic practice: ‘there are real dangers...seems to me self-perpetuating when you’ve got the same type of people with the same sort of outlook’. The tendency for those with certain socio-economic profiles to dominate school governance was an inevitability however, as schools operate to value certain cultural identities above others. This

appertains to Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital and the habitus identifiable, particularly amongst chairs of governors and headteachers. Furthermore, Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence is instructive as it illuminates the exclusionary practices within structures such as school governing bodies (see chapter two). These practices lead to particular forms of habitus (bureaucratic habitus) overwhelming initial motivations towards participatory democracy and service to community. Webb, Shirato and Danaher (2002: 98-101) refer to Bourdieu's analysis of this process, describing how the 'powerful field' of bureaucracy overrides initial, individual concerns of bureaucrats.

although bureaucracy takes the official position that it is committed to a universal, rather than a personal or political interest, and although, under the neo-liberal or corporatist government model, bureaucrats are not really independent from the elected government, many public servants will argue (though usually only in private) that they are concerned with their own careers and the status of their own ministries that with the public good.

To consider how these practices operate within the bureaucratic networks surrounding schools, attention will now be turned to the nine case study school governing bodies, functioning in the three Welsh LEAs.

Case Study Schools

As has been described, LEAs were involved in the selection of the case study schools, nine of which were the focus: three from each of the three LEAs involved in the research for this thesis. The local authorities represented different geographical regions of Wales: rural (Llanethshire); industrial valley (Blenarth) and border (Reithshire). In the case study work, interviews with headteachers, chairs and other governors, along with observations of meetings, allowed for an exploration of how local political discourses were being played out at the level of the school. Questions pertinent to the thesis related to the value of different discourses in the relationship between the headteacher and the chair of governors and the effects of coding of knowledge and

discourse in this professional/lay interface. Other questions related to the social dispositions of governors, particularly of those holding positions of power within governing bodies: how did this affect their practice and what were the political implications and effects of this? Cutting across these questions were those pertaining to the position of governors as agents of participatory democracy in the context of local politics and national systems.

In the following three chapters the analysis of the three case study schools will be introduced. This will include an outline of the socio-economic characteristics specific to the local authority. Following this, the schools will be discussed in turn, beginning with a brief outline of the socio-economic profile of the catchment area and key characteristics of the school and the school governing body.

CHAPTER NINE

REITHSHIRE

Demographics

Reithshire was one of the smallest counties in south Wales and was characterised by its rural landscape. In 2001 there was a population of around 85,000, half of whom were living in the four largest towns with the remainder living in smaller towns, villages and farmhouses. There were a growing number of people aged over 65 and fewer of working age than the national average. Reithshire had the highest proportion of people in south Wales who were in work or actively looking for work. In 2001 the unemployment figure was 2.4 percent, comparing favourably to the Welsh average of 3.6 percent in 2000. Average incomes in Reithshire were however below that for Wales. Main employers in 2001 were in public administration and health, manufacturing, finance and business, transport, construction and agriculture. Much of the economic activity in the county was based on the service industry: in 2001 2,800 people in the county were working in the tourism industry for example. This was often part-time, seasonal work. The prominence of the service industry reflected the decline in the more traditional sectors of food, timber and farming.

There were few Welsh speakers in the county: 9 percent compared to 21 percent nationally in 2000. The county overall had high-attaining schools and colleges. Although Reithshire was in a relatively sound socio-economic position at this time with healthy employment levels, there were pockets of higher than average unemployment, as well as problems associated with low wages. The National Assembly Index of Social Deprivation identified six out of 43 wards in Reithshire exhibiting one or more of the eight contributing factors to the index. Some wards for example, were experiencing levels of unemployment as high as 6 percent. Furthermore, a report on poverty and social exclusion conducted by the local authority indicated that at £11,600, the average household incomes were well below the UK level of £15,000. One third of households in the

county had incomes of between £5,200 and £6,200 with disparities within the authority. At around 11 percent, pupils entitled to free school meals was half the national average for Wales. Like other regions in Wales however, transport to and from school could be an issue. This was compounded by the fact that 55 percent of the population of this authority were not car owners.

At the time of the research, Reithshire County Council was conducting a rationalisation programme, a Strategic Review of Schools. This focused upon falling populations of children and was placing under threat a number of schools, including two of the three case study schools. In Llewelyn Primary this was of particular concern as the school were struggled with funding as pupil numbers were on the decline. Pandy Primary was also under threat of closure and eventually did close shortly after the completion of the research.

Llewelyn Primary School

The School and School Governance

Llewelyn school was in a town 20 miles from the English border with a population of around 10,000 in 2001. In the same year, more than half (54.8 percent) of the working age population of the town was in the approximated social grades of ABC1. This indicates that they were employed in managerial, administrative or professional sectors. This compared to 47 percent in Wales as a whole and around 56 percent for Reithshire. The school was however in a town with a higher population falling into social grade E when compared to the county as a whole (around 17 percent compared to 14 percent in Reithshire). Grade E encompassed those on state benefits, the unemployed and those working in the 'lowest grade' employment. The catchment of Llewelyn junior school reflected this socio-economic profile. Taking children from seven to 11 years, the school was situated on a predominantly social housing estate on the outskirts of the town. At the time of the last Estyn report (1998) on the school, 42 percent of pupils were entitled to free

school meals (FSM) and more than one third were identified by the school as having special educational needs (SEN). These characteristics reflected the social profile of Reithshire and that of the catchment of the school.

The school was facing difficulties with falling pupil rolls. This threatened the future of the school. The LEA had identified Llewelyn, catering for 80 pupils, for possible closure under the 'rationalisation' programme in the county. The high number of pupils with SEN compounded the school's financial difficulties, these pupils requiring additional financial support. Governors had been instrumental in lobbying for more support for SEN and had set up a working group to consider 'ways of promoting the school' (head). Governors had themselves however, felt the impact of financial restrictions as governor meetings were cut to reduce LEA clerking fees. Financial difficulties had led to the possibility of debt at the end of the financial year, this strengthening the case for the school's closure. Adding to the weak position of the school was the identification of Llewelyn by LEA officers as a 'poor' academic performer, although the 16-strong governing body was described as 'good'.

The headteacher of 17 years had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of the governing body. He was frustrated by the lack of 'strategic overview' governors were prepared to take and were indeed capable of. This frustration was particularly focused on his relationship with the chair of governors. As will be discussed, the mismatch of purposes and expectations of these roles was indicative of competing discourses at the lay/professional interface. The limitations on governors' decision-making powers are also alluded to. This relating to the positioning of the governing body in the school, an institution located in a broader political structure subject to and the object of, instruments of governance.

The membership of the governing body at Llewelyn was described by the headteacher as ‘fairly stable’ with ‘one or two changes (of personnel) in a year’. Resigning governors frequently referred to the excessive time required for the role. This steady turnover necessitated regular recruitment, often a process of having to ‘slightly coerce people’ (head). The head was aware of the tendency for the governors to be dominated by those with particular social profiles Parent-governors represented a certain ‘type’ with the ‘more articulate and confident’ (head) individuals inclined to volunteer. The social mix of parent-governors was purportedly improving however with parents from varying backgrounds joining the governing body, as the head describes: ‘two of our new parent-governors are from very much a working-class background in rented accommodation’. Overall however, the balance of individuals on the governing body reflected the typical middle-class, middle-aged domination demonstrated in the survey. The chair of governors was no exception, his professional background in industry and accountancy afforded him the cultural capital required for the post. As will demonstrated however here were limitations to the application of these skills.

The Chair: Political Capital

The chair was an LEA-nominee, a town councillor of 25 years, including a stint as mayor of the town. Conversant with local political networks, the chair brought considerable political capital to the governing body, a habitus common to most of the chairs in the case study schools. In addition to local networking possibilities through his position as councillor, the chair’s work as a volunteer with local charities was an important part of his identity in the community. Both chair and head refer to the importance of local political connections for the lobbying powers this afforded school governors. Indeed, for the headteacher this was currently their most useful function. He refers in particular to LEA-nominated governors who ‘have been very much school

focused and what our needs are here...I find the local authority representatives are very useful at going back and seeing somebody at county hall and asking them, 'why hasn't this happened?'

Lay/Professional Discord

At a time when the school was under threat of closure, the head describes the chair in particular as well positioned to 'fight the corner of the school'. He has 'that little bit of leverage, pestering the authority if he feels there's something that we need and if people are not responding quickly'. Further to this, the head talks of the 'cushion' of the governing body, of particular use when difficult decisions are necessary. In the case of staff redundancies for example, decisions were effectively dispersed. As the head explains, the governing body 'eased the burden on me because it's not a personal decision, I'm not the one making the decision...in a way that is helpful, that's perhaps when governors can be most supportive'.

Although agreeing that a supportive role was important- the chair drawing on his local political networks for this purpose- there were considerable disparities between the head and chair on their perceptions of the proper function of the governing body. As accountancy professional, the chair designated finances as his predominant focus, with this and lobbying dominating governor activity. In this way, the chair differentiated between the segregated lay and professional interests in the school. For him the task of the governors was to focus on practical tasks such as the school budget, with governors operating according to their perceived competences:

I feel the governors should become more involved not in the actual running of the school... more involved in the finance, general condition of the school...it's keeping the school going more from a financial point of view...not to get too involved with the actual teaching.

Here the chair identifies with the bounded nature of the professional domain of teaching and learning. This was compounded by the limited time governors spent within the school beyond

governors' meetings: 'we don't get too involved in normal day to day work and they (governors) have very little time to see the school actually working...that's the only problem there' (chair).

The relationship between the chair and headteacher in this school was complex. The head was frustrated by the governors', and specifically the chair's, lack of engagement in the school, or in the appropriate issues of the school. As the head explains: 'sometimes you feel he's (the chair) taking his energy in the wrong direction and not prioritising the correct issues'. The chair's nervousness about engagement in areas presumed beyond his expertise can be aligned with Bernstein's description of the vertical, specialist discourses of the education profession. The chair was uncomfortable with classroom observation and links with specific curriculum areas. Such were regarded by him to be inappropriate activities for school governors. This clashed with the head's view of the role of governors. Whilst the chair's cultural and political capital was valued, his fixation on the budget was regarded as a distraction from broader, longer-term strategic issues. In this particular 'episteme' of education this refers broadly to notions of school improvement in academic terms. The head believed that to be strategic, governors needed to deepen their understanding of the school. This he believed, was achievable through direct contact with staff and pupils, this also serving to develop lay and professional relationships within the school.

Bureaucratic Overload

The unwillingness of the chair to engage in areas deemed to be bounded by their professional identity is further frustrated by what he describes as the 'wedges of paperwork' governors are expected to navigate. These were distributed from local and national government. This bureaucratic overload served to engender a sense of role confusion amongst governors, as the chair explains: 'I'd be surprised if any governor had really gone through it (paperwork)...I'm not

sure what the legal responsibilities are of a governor' (chair). The head is also mindful of the onerous amounts of literature governors are presented with, indicative of the complexities of decision-making involved in the role:

the amount of material they're supposed to absorb is more than most people realise when they take on the job...a lot of governors taking on the role perhaps don't realise the level of responsibility and...level of decisions they are forced to contend with.

These comments by the headteacher are indicative of his frustration over governors' unwillingness to engage with their responsibilities. The head does concede however that decision-making is limited by decisions taken beyond the school, at LEA level for example. The procedure for formulating school finances for example involved the budget figures being sent from the LEA. Following this the head would 'play with these figures'. The governors would then be presented with 'perhaps two options' (head) relating to minor savings such as those gleaned from altering the organisation of fuel supply in the school for example.

Lay Deference: Professional Head

It is useful to draw upon Bernstein's classification and framing to deconstruct the dynamics of the lay/professional relationship in this school governing body. At Llewelyn, the chair of governors identified with systems of strong classification and framing. For him there were strict limitations on accessible knowledge. The chair felt it inappropriate to be involved in the specialized, horizontal discourses of the education profession. He expresses deference to the professional lead of the headteacher, positioning governors as taking a minor role, mildly questioning and then accepting the head's decision. The chair was aware that this supportive role might not have dovetailed the official scrutinizing function of the governing body:

the LEA say the governors run the school, I personally don't believe that, I believe the governors come along and help within the school...they come along and query what is going on if necessary and say why we can't do it this way? And then the head will explain (chair).

The chair does however differentiate between what he believes to be his close relationship with the headteacher and that between himself, the head and the rest of the governing body. For example he describes how the head and he sometimes make decisions in isolation. For example when dealing with questions from the LEA: 'the best thing is if the headteacher and the chairman get together and formulate the reply and we (the governing body) accept that, which we do'. A smooth relationship between the chair and the headteacher is described as vital, that agreement is crucial. An absence of this leading to an unworkable governing body: 'if you don't get on together...I'd have no point in being the chairman. I'd say sorry but if we don't agree.'

The head's account of his relationship with the chair differs significantly from that given by the chair. The ultimate deference to his professional lead is frustrating for the head whose conceptualization of the lay/professional dynamic is based upon a weaker model of classification of knowledge. His avocation of increased governor involvement in the school has not resulted in improved governor activity. The headteacher bemoans this, suggesting that classroom observations in particular would develop strategic thinking:

it gives governors a chance to see the way children are learning, the philosophy of the way we teach things and it's very helpful for teachers to be able to talk through what they're doing, to get that close contact with the governors.

The headteacher wants to encourage governors to understand the school 'beyond league tables', these being 'too simplistic'. These comments point to his belief that governors are insufficiently engaged in discourses of teaching and learning; they are incapable of fulfilling what he believes to be the proper strategic role of the governing body. These inadequacies were particularly manifest in the head's problematic relationship with the chair. The chair's lack of awareness of

this and his deference to his professional lead however, illustrated the strength of the structures of classification and framing.

Governors at the Periphery

In this case study therefore the lay/professional relationship was predicated on the governors unwillingness to engage with the day-to-day life of the school. They felt restricted by the perception of the strictly bounded knowledge and discourses of the education profession. This was despite the predominantly middle-class profile of the governors and the considerable political and cultural capital of the chair. The decision-making powers of governors were in any case restricted. For example budget decisions involved the ‘tinkering at the edges’ rather than the imposition of significant change. Furthermore, although the headteacher believed governors would benefit from a deeper understanding of methods of teaching and learning, since the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 (imposing national decisions about subjects taught), there was limited scope for influence on this at the local school level. This dissonance between expectations of governors and their ability to influence decision-making reflected a Foucauldian view of the school as an instrument of governance. Whilst ostensibly functioning as structures of participatory democracy, governing bodies’ function are also part of a project of ‘governance’ in Foucauldian terms. In this construction, governors operate to ensure schools are adhering to the school improvement agenda, directing behaviour to this end. Symptomatic of this would be the focus upon league tables, disapproved by the headteacher in this case. Governing bodies are also subject to forms of governance and surveillance themselves, for example by LEAs who work to ensure they are operating according to this agenda.

Skipworth Primary School

The School and School Governance

Skipworth was a primary school teaching 370 four to seven year olds. It was purpose-built, opening in 1989. It was situated in a market town in south Wales, close to the English border. The social and economic characteristics of the town's population of around 14,000 indicated a relatively prosperous town. In 2001, 52.4 percent of the working population was in the approximated social grades ABC1 with more than half working in managerial, administrative or professional employment. This figure was compared to 47 percent for Wales, although compared less favourably to 56.3 percent for Reithshire as a whole. Levels of employment in the town were however higher than in the county as a whole

Skipworth school was characterized by its predominantly middle-class parent community and continual academic success. Parental expectations of the school were high, as were those of the LEA who categorized the school as having 'good' academic performance and governance. There were 17 school governors with 'fairly high' (head) turnouts for parent-governor elections. There was a relatively low turnover of members with governors remaining in post for at least 'their four year stint' (head). Some governors had been in post since the opening of the school. Representatives from the school's staff on the governing body were those working closely with the headteacher; these included the deputy headteacher and the head's 'number three'. The chair of governors was also close to the headteacher, socializing beyond the school, this relationship benefiting from shared habitus. There were however limits to this. These were evidenced through ambiguities expressed by the chair concerning appropriate lay/professional boundaries. This can be analysed according to Foucault's analysis of the school as an instrument of governance and resonates with the experience of governance at Llewelyn Primary.

Cultural and Political Capital

The headteacher and chair of the governing body were both middle-class, male and middle-aged, this social profile inclining them to share outlooks, life-experiences and attitudes. A shared habitus denoted more than class position however. It related to the ability to engage in the discourse of school governance, to understand the rituals of its bureaucratic structures and to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate discourses. As a governor of eight years, the chair was well established in the governing body, although he had been a chair for just two years. Originally elected as a parent-governor, the chair had been an LEA-nominee for the past four years by virtue of his position as a county councillor of 23 years. The social profile of the chair afforded him significant cultural capital. His middle-class, professional background denoted the status and skills for his role, particularly his accountancy skills that he was able to apply to school budget matters. Furthermore, his councillor role afforded him significant political capital, links that could potentially help the school. This experience also afforded access to the language of local political structures, transferable skills for his role as chair in the bureaucratic structure of the governing body. Other governors at the school also had local political links, able to draw upon this experience. The (party) political constitution of the governing body could however be the source of tension, as the head describes:

my chair is a county councillor and he's gained that from another governor who was a county councillor with a different party up until the last election, so you can see the political divide between...I think it (political dimension to discussion) comes up in matters related to LEA finance, resources for the school.

Shared Habitus

The common habitus of the headteacher and chair operated to limit the possibilities of conflict in the governing body, particularly as the headteacher and chair socialized beyond the school. The nature of this relationship meant that discussion and decision-making was likely to take place at

two levels: at a formal level, in governing body meetings and other meetings between the headteacher and the chair within school, and at more informal levels at the golf club for example. The discourse between the head and chair resonated with Bernstein's restricted code: conversations were unlikely to include detailed explanations of particular viewpoints as these were taken-for-granted. The two were likely to share world-views. Furthermore, the need for explanation and elaboration of discourses around education – vertical, specialized discourses – would be limited, particularly as the chair was a long-standing governor. The head describes how his relationship with the chair had been disapproved of by some describing them as 'too close professionally'. The head defends the relationship however, describing it as key to a culture of openness in the school, the acceptance of personal fallibility:

I think if you've got a quality relationship the head can stop pretending he's got all the answers, stop pretending he's infallible, stop pretending he doesn't make mistakes....and open up, and say "I haven't got the answer to this, have you?"

Lay/Professional Boundaries

Although the relationship between the head and chair appeared to operate well, the chair alludes to tensions between the headteacher, his educational professional colleagues, and the chair and other governors as lay members of the governing body. The ill-defined boundary between the purposes and specific practices at the lay/professional interface ultimately resulted in the domination of professional discourse of the school. The nature of the professional domination is discernible in the head's description of accountability in the school. Although drawing upon the commonly cited 'critical friend' definition of the governing body (see NAFW Circular 34/2000), the head describes how ultimately responsibilities lay with himself as lead professional: 'I'm responsible for everything I suppose: academic standards; health and safety issues; finance. You name it and I'm responsible for it'. We can conclude from this that the 'oneness of purpose' the

head regularly refers to in an attempt to draw the governors into a common aim, is ultimately an education professional purpose. At an individual level, the headteacher has considerable status through his recent acquisition of an OBE for ‘services to education’.

This represents an enhancement of professional and cultural capital at the school, augmenting his authority in the school governing body, potentially contributing to a lay/professional relationship marked by tension. The chair illustrates this through his reference to the discomfort that governors would experience if it were suggested that they observe teaching in action in the classroom. Although this activity was an option for governors, there appeared to be no expectation that governors would want to be involved in this. The chair justifies this in terms of the inappropriateness of a ‘non-professional’ observing a class as there would be little governors could ‘take further’. The implication here was of a sharp differentiation between the professional activities of teaching and learning, an occupation characterized as strictly bounded, and the lay concerns of governors as non-professionals.

Managing Boundaries

This resonates with Bernstein’s analysis of classification and framing, in this case these would be perceived as strong. The chair’s description of the differentiation between lay and professional concerns in the head/chair relationship also allude to relatively strong classification and framing, despite their similar habitus. Although the chair is conversant with educational discourses and embodies the cultural capital befitting the role, as the lead professional in a school where discourses of the education profession dominate, the headteacher has ultimate power. The chair describes how with this in mind, the management of the professional/lay boundary is ever-present: ‘yes, there are times when you have to think to yourself, ‘am I treading on the Head’s toes and the professional’s toes?’ The prospect of challenging the dynamics of the

lay/professional relationship is particularly weakened given the academic success of the school. The chair explains how the school's consistently good results had led to general complacency amongst the governors. An example of this could be seen in the chair's reservations about the reviewing of the SDP, the key document for school planning. The chair felt this was not adequately analysed in the governing body: 'sadly the discussion isn't as rigorous as it ought to be'. The chair believed furthermore that tasks such as these were in any case frustrated by an over-bureaucratic system:

if you're involved in the setting of the strategic direction of the school which is the definition of what governors do, it's difficult to see how you would do that without understanding the context in which that strategy is set, so for long as there is a huge amount of paperwork spewed out in education, governors have to at least get to grips with it, at a greater or lesser degree of superficiality.

Instruments of Governance

This exposes the limitations of the power of governing bodies and resonates with Foucault's analysis of schools as instruments of governance. This analysis, briefly drawn upon in the discussion of Llewelyn school governing body, seeks to reveal the underlying function of the school governing body. The chair's description of the 'superficiality' of the work of governors exposing the official and unofficial discourse of school governance. As was shown in interviews with LEA officials, structures of school governance were being founded upon principles of participatory democracy and social inclusion. The social profile of governors and the bureaucratic nature of the practices of school governance hamper the realization of these. Although Skipworth is located in a relatively prosperous area (Estyn describe around 70 percent of the school as being 'relatively prosperous'), the governing body was not reflective of the entire catchment. The official discourse of 'inclusion' was overshadowed by the reality of middle-class domination.

Furthermore, the ‘wedges of paperwork’ emanating from local and central government impede governors’ ability to carry out their assigned role. Taking a Foucauldian analysis, the dissonance between the official purpose and actual practices of school governance is symptomatic of the positioning of the school as an instrument of governance. Whilst central and local government identify school governing bodies as an expression of local democratic decision-making, they actually serve to justify decisions already made. The uncertain nature of the function of governors contributes to this manipulation. This can apply to heads dispersing difficult decisions (see Llewelyn and Llaneth School) or LEAs seeking to maintain a balance between: the need to scrutinise professionals (teachers) and the need to be seen to consult on decision-making and to be promoting democratic participation.

Pandy Primary School

The School and School Governance

Pandy Primary was a small rural village school, two miles from the largest town. It was judged by the LEA to be ‘poor’ academically. The school had an Anglican foundation, its funding sourced from the Anglican church as well as the LEA. Pupils attended the school from the village and surrounding rural areas; at the time of the 2001 Estyn inspection more than two-thirds were from outside the catchment area. Children were from mixed socio-economical backgrounds: 15 percent were entitled to FSM, below the Welsh average of around 20 percent and 27 percent required SEN support. No pupil was a first-language Welsh speaker or came from an ethnic minority. There were 30 pupils altogether, recent waning of pupil numbers leaving the school vulnerable to closure following the County Council’s Strategic Review of Educational Need in 2001. The school was eventually closed at the end of the school year 2003. Prior to this however, those in leadership positions at the school, including the governors, were managing this prospect, ultimately campaigning to prevent this.

Two-Tier Governance

The chair of governors was at the forefront of this campaign. He brought considerable cultural capital to the role, this facilitating a close working relationship with the headteacher, who was a temporary secondment at the school. Governance at the school was concentrated within this relationship, positioned as it was, in a structure characterized by two tiers of governance. The headteacher, chair and occasionally VC, formed the first tier, carrying out the main tasks and making key decisions. Other governors formed the second tier. Those within the second tier served a minimal purpose, at the most having an overview of decisions. The 2001 Estyn Report was critical of the disjointed nature of the governing body describing it as having a ‘relatively underdeveloped involvement in analysing and planning for school improvement...the relatively new governing body do not operate entirely as a team’. The chair acknowledged difficulties with the 11 newly appointed governors. He had been initially keen to revive the governing body, developing governors beyond a ‘rubber-stamping’ function. This was no longer a priority given the circumstances of the school. The chair was in any case sceptical about the ability of governors to perform their ascribed strategic function. This was attributed to their confused identity, made more ambiguous by the inception of the NAFW.

Cultural and Political Capital

The chair had been a governor at the school for two years, a chair for most of that time. As a community councillor he brought political capital - knowledge of local political structures. His background in industry also carried considerable cultural capital and was particularly valued by the headteacher who described the chair as a ‘very astute businessman’. Specifically, the head was keen to draw upon the head’s financial skills, particularly as the school was under threat of closure and there was a need to demonstrate economic efficiency. On joining the governing body the chair had positioned himself in a pioneering role. He referred to his intention of ‘turning the

governing body around' steering them away from a 'rubber-stamping' function towards a more committed, strategic approach:

when I was first joined as a governor I did feel that the then incumbents who were running the governing body, who were chairing the governing body, we'd have little problems ...and I guess I'd spoken with others who'd been members of the governing bodies who'd said "yeah, it's a rubber-stamping process", and I thought no, that's not my idea of the way it's going to be.

Although keen to develop the governing body, the chair had been diverted recently by the campaign to defend the existence of the school, in light of the county's proposed re-organisation.

As a community councillor the chair was familiar with the broader context of the crisis facing the school. His position as a retired, older governor afforded him considerable capital relating to accumulated professional experience. Financial skills were particularly valued by the headteacher, these and other assets overriding the chair's lack of direct experience of the education profession. The position of the headteacher at the school buttressed the relative power of the chair. As a seconded, temporary teacher at a school in crisis she was open to all available resources to manage this situation. Under pressure from parents to defend the school's existence, the head was driven to demonstrate financial viability and academic record. Within this particular set of circumstances she was willing to take a flexible stance on her professional identity. The head was therefore happy to draw upon the advice of her chair on all aspects of her role as headteacher, including matters of teaching and learning.

Weak Classification and Framing

The personal characteristics of the chair therefore, or his habitus, afforded him considerable cultural capital in the governing body. As a middle-class, retired businessman he was afforded considerable authority within the school; he was able to engage with the appropriate discourse

given the crisis the school was facing. In Bernstein's terms, the relationship between the headteacher and the chair was based upon weak classification and framing, there were not overly strict boundaries between what was defined as professional and lay knowledge. An example of this was the headteacher's reliance on the chair for problem solving in all areas of school life: '(he is) very, very supportive...I'm sure if there's a solution, he's the man'. The head's description of the development of the SDP also underlined the close relationship with the chair. This dynamic accounted for much of the business of the governing body, along with the occasional contribution of the VC. In this composition of school governance, other members functioned in a secondary position:

I had to prioritise from that Action Plan which (targets) I felt were achievable for me, at that first meeting I had with (chair) I said, "can I share with you what the staff are saying?"", well should really involve the governors...we didn't have that opportunity...all the governors were given a SDP (School Development Plan) and a copy of our Training Plan...and I tried to explain why we chose those issues.

Ambiguity and Bureaucracy

This two-tier structure of governance was a response to a particular set of circumstances at the school. Added to this was the ambiguous function of the governors described by the chair. He believed this would deepen with the emergence of the NAFW:

I think one has to look at the interplay of where the LEA is, where things lie with the Welsh Assembly, whether other or central government initiatives are coming from and how that fits together...there are one or two concerns across all these interfaces.

The 'bucket loads' (chair) of paperwork are indicative of the complex position of school governors. These are described by the chair as being superficially attended to by the governing body. The chair makes allusions to a need to instill 'real world' business discourses within education institutions to combat this:

147 change initiatives have come through in the previous 12 months...if this was the real world of commerce and industry somebody would have beaten somebody up on that... you've got to let that (change) settle...I think there should be some filtering mechanisms...we read them, we look at them, we discuss them, whether in fact we do it justice...it's time management.

The suggestion that governors should demonstrate particular 'business' skills before joining the governing body is also indicative of the perceived need to instill these discourses into school governance. As the head explains:

if they wished to be part of the finance committee surely they'd need some sort of business skills, something like that, proof that they have some sort of knowledge and expertise they can bring, rather than saying "we need a governor...oh I fancy being a governor of the school" (head).

This assertion articulates a clash between governors as volunteers, valued as community members and governors enhanced by their professional status. This is a theme developed in the analysis of other case studies.

CHAPTER TEN
LLANETHSHIRE

Demographics

Llanethshire authority is the fifth largest county in Wales. It is situated in the West of the county and is largely rural: around one fifth of the county is made up of coastal National Park. The population of Llanethshire was estimated at around 113,000 in 2001. The county had a comparatively high number of residents living in remote locations: more than one quarter lived more than 5km from an urban centre. Although the county had an agricultural base, much of Llanethshire's economic activity derived from the service sector. Main employers were in public administration, health and education. Tourism accounted for a significant amount of employment in businesses such as hotel, restaurants and retail. There was a tendency however for the development of many smaller rather than larger businesses in Llanethshire. As a result businesses tended to be restricted by small, local markets.

Unemployment was above the Welsh average in this county: in 2000 it was 6.8 percent compared to 3.6 percent for Wales. Earnings were also lower than average for Wales reflecting the poorly paid nature of the agricultural and tourism sectors dominating the region. As a geographically large county, Llanethshire varied in its social and economic profile. Although in relative terms it could not be described as a deprived area of Wales, it did have significant pockets of deprivation and social exclusion. Some parts of the region had above average levels of unemployment, disability and illness. Such problems had been accelerated by the failure of the once thriving oil and fishing industries in definite decline by the 1980s. According to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, Llanethshire had six wards within the top quartile of the most deprived areas in Wales. This was compounded by the remote nature of some communities suffering from poor

transport links and access to services. Overall crime rates in the area were however low. Education attainment equalled, if not surpassed the Welsh average, although there was a significant minority of adult residents who had poor educational qualifications. At 20 percent, the amount of pupils entitled to free school meals was just below the average for Wales. Transport to and from school could be an issue in a dispersed county like Llanethshire and had cost implications for the authority.

Betws Primary

The School and School Governance

Betws Primary was a school with around 120 pupils in a rural village of in the north of the county. The village had a population of around 600 people. In the Estyn report (2001) the catchment of the school was described as ‘neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged’, 9 percent of pupils had FSM and 38 percent had SEN. The school was designated a Category A school linguistically: this denoted primaries where learning was exclusively through the medium of Welsh up to seven years, and partly through the medium of Welsh from seven to 11 years. The Estyn report (2001) reported that about half of all pupils were from homes where Welsh was the main language. The chair described the school as the focal point for this tight-knit community. This is demonstrated through the activities of the Community Liaison subcommittee of the governing body. This group of governors organised events, with a view to harbouring positive relationships between the school and local people. The church was also a focus of social life with most governors attending a church or chapel in the area. The school was categorised by the LEA as being an ‘average’ academic performer and as having a ‘good’ governing body. The body was comprised of 12 governors with ‘very stable’ membership.

Competing Discourses

The most distinctive theme in this case study was that of competing discourses in the lay/professional relationship. Foucault's description of discourses is entwined with his notion of power/knowledge. Discourses are according to Foucault in a constant state of struggle with resistance and domination in a constant state of flux:

The strictly relational character of power relationships (is such that) their existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network.
(Foucault, 1979, 95)

In this case study a struggle was ensuing between the headteacher's insistence of the dominance of professional discourse, and the chair's call for increased governor input in the school, specifically through classroom observation. The impetus for this was the recent Estyn inspection and the perceived need to make preparations for the next. The impetus for this had been boosted by an LEA-led governor training session on the inspection process. This had been attended by the chair. Issues arising from these events were the cause of considerable tension between the head and the chair. A less prominent yet compelling theme nevertheless, was that of the incongruence between discourses promoting Welsh-medium education and heritage, and those identifying the school as functioning for academic success. These competing discourses had arisen in a context where increasingly Welsh-medium education was aligned with positive academic outcomes. At this school however, the Welsh language was perceived by some as having the potential for hampering academic outcomes.

Community Identity

For the headteacher, it was important that governor representation reflected the characteristics of the locality. In this quote he explains that in order to have an understanding of these, governors needed to be locals:

There is a difference between this part and the south of the county. The governors in this part of the county need to reflect the traditional demographic area they represent. When governors bring their children into school they know exactly what type of community it reflects.

The chair of governors conformed to these expectations. A governor for three years, a parent-governor for two of these and now an LEA nominee, the chair was born in the area. He was a community councillor and was involved in other voluntary and community activities in the village. The head and chair shared similar backgrounds in this respect. They were both brought up locally, both Welsh-speakers and were therefore likely to share an understanding of the context of running a school in this rural, somewhat isolated corner of west Wales. These aspects of identity denoted similarities in habitus allowing the relationship to operate. There was a shared understanding of the particular needs of the pupils and the backgrounds of their parents. This was particularly important in a school so embedded within the community. Intrinsic to this was the Category A status of the school and the preservation of Welsh heritage with 50 percent of children having Welsh as their first language.

Bounded Lay/Professional Identities

For the headteacher therefore, ‘localness’ was an important element of governance, for him this was their principal function, to reflect the community. This dominant discourse, perhaps served to distract from the encouragement of a mixed social profile on the governing body, as well as that of governor involvement in ‘professional’ issues. The head was keen to differentiate between the lay position of governors and the identity of himself and his staff as professionals. As lead

education professional he created strict boundaries between himself and the governors, the professional status of the headteacher dominating the discourse of the governing body. This was reflected in governing body meetings that were largely controlled by the head. Although the chair describes the governors as ‘quite happy to speak up’, contributions by lay members were made within the context of this professionally led committee.

Expectations of challenges to this domination were likely to be tempered, as the chair explains: ‘The head has an influence, he is the one that knows what is needed. And as a body we make an informed decision. The decision-making is as democratic as it could possibly be’. The overriding influence of the head in the governing body was equally applied in interactions with the chair of governors. There appeared to be no differentiation between these two relationships. This could in part be explained by the relatively recent appointment of the chair. More likely however was that this was a reflection of a dominating head determined to lead decision-making, effectively blocking challenges to his professional authority.

Although keen to assert his leadership in the governing body, the headteacher did value aspects of his relationship with the governors and the chair. These relationships were however characterised by definite boundaries. For example, the head acknowledges the lobbying activities of the governors, especially those of the chair drawn upon for the political capital afforded by his position as community councillor. Specifically, the head refers to the difference that ‘proactive governors within the LEA can make, they fight their corner for you...I know for a fact that if it weren’t for the governing body we wouldn’t have a school extension’. The head also refers to the governors’ role in promoting the school in the community, drawing on their local identities and networking abilities. The head also values the personal support of the chair, although the stress is

upon compliancy rather than challenge: ‘I need to feel that he is there and taking an interest. He knows what’s going on...anything untoward’.

One key function of the governors, from the head’s perspective, was as an instrument for dispersing difficult decisions: ‘the body provides the head with a very big cushion’ (head). This function was common in a number of the case studies. It resonated with Foucault’s analysis of the fluidity of power and the uncertain position of governors, resulting in their vulnerability to manipulation. The head’s description of the accountability function in the governing body was a potent illustration of this: ‘I would imagine that the governors I have here would see themselves accountable for the running of the school and if anything went wrong they would uphold anything I asked them to uphold’.

It was clear in this case study that the head had definite reservations about governor powers: ‘I am rather suspicious of how much power they have, what is expected of them’. A pertinent example of this was seen in governing body discussion following the recent Estyn inspection and the subsequent LEA-led training session. Inspired by the training in particular, the chair was keen for governors to be involved in classroom observations. This was with a view to developing familiarization with the mechanics of teaching and learning and a perceived need to prepare for the next Estyn inspection. The chair’s articulation of this was however regarded by the head as a direct challenge to the boundaries between professional and non-professional positions in the school. This was framed by the headteacher in terms of the potential threat classroom observation would present to staff and governor relationships.

Breaching Lay/Professional Boundaries

The head's concerns were however more deeply rooted than this. His reference to the negative effects of governor training revealed much about the strict boundaries he believed appropriately existed between the governors, and the professional teaching staff. For the head, training only served to engender the misguided belief that governors could participate in strictly professional matters. For the head, governors would be ill-advised to attempt to cross professional boundaries, engaging in discourses they could never truly understand: 'the running of the school is the most important thing, the teacher is very important. Many of the non-professionals don't realise that, they think what's down on paper, targets etc, are the most important thing'.

As far as the headteacher was concerned therefore, the LEA's 'training paraphernalia' acted as an unwelcome distraction to the agenda to be followed, preferably exclusively, by the professionals in the school: 'when they (governors) go to a training session and they come back and they think they know more than they understand. In school the education of the children has to come first.' This deep distrust of his governors was rooted in the headteacher's fierce protectiveness of professional status. His opposition to governor involvement in classroom observation was testament to this. This was despite the potential for training to deepen governor understanding of the complexities of target-setting for example. The chair is conscious of the need to carefully negotiate professional/lay boundaries, differentiating between governors' understanding of teaching and learning as lay individuals and the concerns that governors would seek to judge professional activity. He is however convinced that direct experience in the classroom was a key activity for governors:

By the next inspection we need to know, as a governing body, how lessons are taught and in doing that we will have to come in and sit in on the lessons, this shouldn't be a threat to anyone but I don't think the staff will be too happy with that. I get the feeling that they possibly think that you are there to judge them. We just need to go into the lessons to get the knowledge of how the lessons are taught.

The dissonance between the headteacher and the chair was characterised by strong classification and framing. In other words, the knowledge and discourse governors could access was strictly bounded and framed by the power relationship between the headteacher as professional and the lay governors on the fringes of professional activity.

Furthermore, Bernstein's conceptualization of language codes offer insights into the language adopted by the head when communicating with governors and his professional colleagues respectively. In interactions with the governors, the head would at times be drawing on language resonating with Bernstein's elaborated code. For example, as governors were required to be involved with target-setting, the head would have been obliged to contextualise this process. This was a matter of discomfort for a head taking the view that lay individuals had no business engaging in this essentially professional discourse. Attempts to encourage engagement with this through training were an anathema to the chair; the governors were always left wanting: 'even if they have been on courses they tend to ask questions. It's still very difficult for them to understand how things really work'. The head was more comfortable with interactions with his professional colleagues. In this context communication could broadly operate using language resonating with Bernstein's restricted codes. Unspoken assumptions due to shared professional identity or habitus, rendered explanation and elaboration unnecessary.

School Improvement v Welsh Identity

The dynamics of professional and lay identities in the governing body were further complicated by the Category A status of the school. This posed a challenge to the professionally oriented agenda of improving academic standards. For the chair, teaching through the medium of Welsh was a natural in a school where much of the local population was Welsh-speakers: half of the pupils at the school were from Welsh-speaking homes. The chair's comments on this issue

illustrate the competing discourses at the school: although there was a desire to preserve the Welsh language, there were pressures on the teaching profession to produce improving academic results. This was an expectation of the parents also. These issues were pertinent in the light of cultural capital aligned with Welsh-medium education (see chapter 12) and the preoccupation with school improvement, as underlined in interviews with LEA officers (see chapter seven). As has been discussed earlier in this thesis, this agenda appertains to Foucault's positioning of the school as a tool of governance and surveillance, governors instrumental in this process. The attempt to instill the school improvement motivation into the practice of school governance led to difficulties such as those experienced at Betws. In this respect comments from the chair illustrate the ambiguous relationship between Welsh-medium education and the quality of education at the school. These were likely to be compounded by the relatively high percentage of pupils with SEN at the school: this figure was 38 percent (Estyn) compared to 20 percent for Wales:

you are having to deal with two languages to start with. It is difficult because for some children English is their second language. There must be a difference and I would assume there is more pressure on a teacher, teaching in a bi-lingual school. It's a rural community and Welsh is predominant at the moment. English parents are happy for children to be brought up in a Welsh school. As long as the standard of teaching in the school is high I think that outweighs any other problems.

Llaneth Comprehensive School

The School and School Governance

Llaneth comprehensive school taught around 1500 children aged from 11 to 18 years. It was located between two towns on the south Llanethshire peninsula, a semi-rural area. In 2001, Llaneth's population was around 7,000 and was, according to the headteacher, characterized by 'a number of social problems' relative to those in the county and within Wales: 'the catchment area of the school has a gross domestic product per capita of about two-thirds of Wales, and Llaneth itself has got something like six out of 10 of the most deprived electoral divisions in

Llanethshire'. People of working age were comparatively less likely to be working in managerial, professional and intermediate professionals: this figure was around 22 percent in the Llaneth wards compared to around 26 percent in the county and around 30 percent in Wales. At Llaneth school itself, 28 percent of pupils had FSM and 21 percent had been identified as having SEN. According to a recent Estyn report (2002), the area was predominantly English speaking. The governing body was made up by 20 representatives. The teacher-governors held senior positions, one being the assistant headteacher at the school and other head of Maths. There was, according to the headteacher, steady interest in parent-governorship, for the most recent vacancy there had been eight nominations for two positions.

The experience of governorship at Llaneth as a secondary school can be contrasted to that in other case studies. Whilst the schools so far have been primaries varying in size, often in small communities, Llaneth was a large secondary located between two busy towns. The school was described by the headteacher as being 'intimately linked with the community' by virtue of its intake of pupils from most of the surrounding area. Its geographical positioning however made it physically dislocated from any given locale. This complicated the relationship between the governing body and the school's pupil and parent population, a population likely to be dispersed amongst different localities, characterized by heterogeneity. Pupils started at the school with differing experiences of schooling for example, having attended various primary schools, some located in much smaller rural settings. This large and differentiated school population had struggled academically but had been described as 'improving' in a recent Estyn report. The mixed intake of pupils obliged school governors to nurture a positive relationship with the community, easing the transition between primary and secondary: 'the perception of the school really matters. I was one of the parents that sent children from a small village school and

wondered if I should send them to Llaneth School, it's not until you come here that you realise that it is a really nice school' (chair).

Middle-Class Capture

The positioning of the governing body at the interface between the school and the community was a key function of the governors; this was particularly the case for the chair of governors. Crosscutting this theme was the tension between the function of the lay governors and those of the educational professionals. As a characteristic pertinent to all case study schools, middle-class professionals constituted the governing body at Llaneth. This saw them representing what the head describes as 'the aspirations rather than the overall composition of the catchment area'. This pattern was replicated in the PTA. The background of the chair of the governors conformed to this pattern, enacting the middle-class habitus of civic duty as county councillor. Many governors at the school were involved in voluntary work in the community. The head describes them as 'the type of people very much involved in the local community, whether in charitable things or institutions'. The chair was an active volunteer in the local tenant's association, family centre and hospital. The status of governors as volunteers was intrinsic for the head, the introduction of paying governors risking individuals entering governing for 'all together different reasons'.

Negotiating Lay and Professional Interests

The chair positioned herself as an active agent of participatory democracy, and also of philanthropy. She describes her role as 'the mouthpiece of the people', maximising individual potential and helping people to 'get the best out of their lives'. Although accepting that the governing body was unlikely to reflect the socio-economic mix of the community, the chair asserts that knowledge of the school and catchment area could overcome this. This, she asserted enabled governors such as herself, to represent others. Drawing upon her experience as a county

councillor she was ‘very aware of protocol and discipline’ (head). The cultural capital associated with her links with local political networks was an asset to her position for this reason. There were however tensions between her identification with the needs of the community – lay interests – and those pertaining to the professional interests of the school. A pertinent example of this was the head’s reference to parental approaches made to the chair requesting she perform an advocacy role. The head had criticized the chair for attempting to deal with this independently and for not approaching him directly. This incident illustrated the divergent identities of the chair and the complex negotiation of lay and professional interests, the power of these fluctuating according to circumstances. As a governor, the chair was positioned as representing the needs of the community, according to discourses of participatory democracy. However, as a lead member of the governing body of the school, there was a dissonance between this and the professionally led institution surrounding the governing body.

Therefore, although the head was acting out the governors’ function as conduit between the school and the community, the negotiation of this lay/professional relationship was crucial. It was important that the demands of those on the fringes of the school - governors, parents and other community members - did not threaten the position of those working within this institution, the education professionals. The competing nature of discourses resonates with Foucault’s notion of power/knowledge. As discussed in chapter two, for Foucault these words are so intrinsically linked that they should not be separated. Within this school, the power of knowledge aligned with the education profession has mastery over the lay knowledge of the governor and the parent. These power relationships are however dynamic, manipulated according to purpose. For example, the head described how the assignment of collective power to the governing body was a valuable tool for dispersing difficult decisions:

if I've got something unpleasant I need to get through, like staffing, redundancies, I can quite honestly say, "the governing body says there must be some redundancies", which is a lot easier than saying, "I haven't got enough money to pay for the staff so I'm making some of redundant"...to an extent you use the governing body as a large blunt instrument...and everybody in the governing body can express their regrets, say, "I didn't agree with it personally".

A Pedagogical Relationship

Although the governors were subject to manipulation by the headteacher, he was equally aware of their potential power. This was particularly true of the chair whose position was underlined by the head as pivotal rendering it vital to appoint wisely, as he explains the chair could 'wield enormous amounts of power...that's one of the dangers of governing bodies, if you get the wrong person there's no means of appeal'. The pedagogic nature of interaction between the head and chair at Llaneth was defined by the ongoing induction into the role. This reflected the head's concerns about the potential power of the chair, a motivating factor for the maintenance of this instructional, mentoring relationship. The head had heavily supported his chair during the three years she had been in post. Although 'she's had a lot to do with the school in a short time' she was described by the head as still 'finding her feet'. The chair acknowledged her reliance on the head for guidance and the importance of this relationship: 'if you haven't got that relationship I don't know how you can do it'. The pedagogic nature of the lay/professional dynamic points to strong classification and framing in the school governing body with governors following the head's 'strong professional lead' (head). Although committee structures were in place to facilitate discussion in the governing body, it was clear that the key decision-maker was the headteacher, along with the SMT, the chair taking third position.

The process of setting targets exemplified the hierarchical structure of decision-making in the governing body. Discussions around this would initially take place in the governing body development committee, following the preparation of a 'detailed statistical report' (head) by the SMT. Targets were then discussed by the governors, the emphasis however being upon decisions

already taken: ‘all the governors are aware of what goes into it...everyone appreciates the fact that it’s being done and understands it’s necessary’. The head’s scepticism regarding governors’ powers was particularly notable in relation to the assessment of teachers’ performance. These skills, along with other professional judgments should, the head believed, be strictly bounded. They should be protected from the adjudication of those with limited access to specialised discourses of education. As the head explains: ‘I don’t know whether we should really have non-educationalists in charge of setting the curriculum. I’m not sure to what extent in reality governing bodies are able to undertake performance management activities’. The head also bemoaned the casting vote governors had on recruitment decisions. His surprise that his professional advice wasn’t taken on one particular occasion was testament to his expectation of this as the ‘natural order of things’, as he describes:

governors don’t always make the right decision and they don’t always understand all the requirements, all the implications of what they do. They made a very surprising choice. I’d given them criteria and I thought it was very obvious who to go for and they chose somebody different altogether. But I couldn’t argue with that and I supported them.

Limited Strategists

The head contextualises the shortfall in governors’ ability to perform ascribed functions to the unrealistic expectations of local and national government. He describes the Welsh Assembly and UK government’s definition of school governance as strategic as ‘idealistic’. This positioning he claims, fails to acknowledge the limited scope of decision-making open to school governors. In reality this is limited by decisions taking place in structures beyond the school governing body and indeed beyond the LEA:

The governors don’t have enough detailed involvement to decide intricate details of strategy and the overall strategy for schools is to a large extent set by government, there isn’t much local flexibility...so I think before governing body can really do strategic things, what strategy do they have command over?

The head describes how the prescribed strategic role of governors is overridden by more practical functions; governors are compliant with this:

One of the governors said, “the governors encourage the headteacher to stand back and look a bit further into the distance” and if that’s what governing bodies are happy to do, I think they should be beneficial. They don’t though, they tend to get into details of drains and classrooms and things...I want to stand back and get back to education. The Premises committee understands heating; they want to get involved in that aspect of things. So to an extent governors need re-educating if this is to be their role.

The dissonance between the official positioning of governors as strategists and their actual function alludes to the phenomenon of competing discourses as described earlier in this section.

Ysgol y Mor Secondary School

The School and School Governance

Ysgol y Mor was a secondary school teaching 11 to 19 year olds in a village positioned in part of the county’s national coastal park, on the south coast of the county. The town was next to another small village making for a joint population of around 5500 in 2001. Langston, where Ysgol y Mor was located, had around 3,000 inhabitants in 2001. At this time, around 40 percent of the population were Welsh-speakers compared to 21 percent nationally. The town had a higher than average population of people aged 65 and over, with 28 percent in this age bracket compared to 19 percent in the county. This perhaps in some part, accounted for the relatively high number of Welsh speakers. At the school, Welsh was the first language for around a quarter of all pupils. The socio-economic profile in the area was typical for the county, although there were fewer people than average at the higher end of the socio-economic scale: around 22 percent were working in managerial, professional and intermediate jobs, this was compared to around 25 percent in the county as a whole. Pupils at the school were described in the 2002 Estyn report as having a mixed socio-economic profile: at 21 percent FSM entitlement was about the average for Wales. Around 5 percent of pupils had SEN. The LEA’s assessment of the school concluded that

its academic results were ‘average/improving’ and that governance at the school was of an ‘average’ standard.

Welsh Identity

The themes pertinent in this case study relate to the school’s identity in the community. Ysgol y Mor was located in a tight-knit town but catered for a dispersed catchment in an area characterized by its Welsh-speaking population. The school was a secondary teaching around 700 pupils, although numbers had been subject to flux. This was due to a decreasing population of school-age children divided between this school and the Welsh-medium school close-by. The popularity of the latter reflected the number of Welsh-speakers in the area. The prominence of Welsh-Medium education was a trend identifiable nationally (see chapter 12). This leads to questions around what is at stake in terms of the promotion of this method of education. This could be considered in terms of claiming ‘rootedness’ in local identity, perhaps at the expense of other markers such as class identity, political connectedness and knowledge of education. The recent decision to change the school’s name to Ysgol y Mor, the Welsh translation of the original English version, represented a bid to further engender the Welshness of this particular school. This engendered the assertion that local identity carried significant capital, as the head noted: ‘I don’t like x (the English translation of the name) it doesn’t fit the community, it’s quite a Welsh-speaking area’. Ysgol y Mor had also recently become a bilingual school: geography, history, music and RE were taught through the medium of Welsh at KS3 and geography and RE at KS4. Attempts to reclaim a Welsh identity were also seen as a way of bolstering pupil numbers.

Conduit Between School and Community

As a newcomer, the headteacher was heavily reliant upon the chair of governors to mentor her, familiarising her with the school and the community. The head's relationship with the chair was pivotal in this respect, his prominence in the town as a long-standing governor and community councillor affording him significant cultural capital. The head's reliance on this guidance had led to the assignation of considerable power to the position of chair, although there was recognition of consistent boundaries between the lay and professional positions of the two. Furthermore, the pedagogic nature of the relationship was likely to be transitory as the head became more established in her role and more appropriately positioned to assert her professional power. Upon joining the school 18 months earlier, the headteacher had been obliged to negotiate a deteriorating relationship between the school and the immediate locale. The crux of the matter was concerns that the school was not sufficiently reflecting the town's 'Welshness'. The head describes the 'very strained relationship' at this time: 'it was pretty poisonous...the community felt excluded and disenfranchised'. The introduction of a bilingual policy was an attempt to tackle such issues, although this had evidently caused some controversy:

Last year there was a perception that the Welsh language had been totally ignored here and it needed promoting a lot more...the bilingual policy has to be dealt with very carefully because I don't want to alienate people or make people threatened by it. So far we have been very supported.

These difficulties were indicative of the school's status, the Welsh language issue positioning it as embodying the cultural characteristics of the community, the focal point for the town. The headteacher recognized this: 'we reflect the community; we have their children here. We are the school side of the community, they (community members) will approach the school more because it's part of the community'.

The head had drawn upon the governing body as a vital tool for nurturing the community/school relationship. Their position afforded them significant status in the surrounding area, this reflecting back on the status of the school: ‘who the governors are affects the status of the school, if you have good governors and they are respected in their areas then that respect is passed onto the school’. In the context of governors operating as a conduit between the school and the community, lay identity was defined by a number of characteristics carrying capital in the school. Specifically, these related to governor knowledge of the local area, the characteristics of the inhabitants, and their needs and opinions. The head describes how the governors reflected the various geographic and social characteristics of the community: ‘We have a farmer, a mill owner, people from the ferries, parents, retired...It’s got Welsh speakers, non-Welsh speakers...it reflects the community so you have an instant picture of what people want and what people need’. The conduit function of the governing body was exemplified by one parent-governor who

lives in the town and she does tell us what people are saying about the school. It’s given us an insight into what parents are saying and thinking, therefore I have been able to address and solve problems before they start because actually they were misperceptions.

The headteacher’s interactions with the chair also facilitated this ‘early warning system’ (chair). It was this relationship in fact, that epitomised the significance of the lay contribution to the negotiation and management of school and community relationships. The chair had been involved in governing in Langston for 40 years. Life-long links with the town through school governorship, the community council and other voluntary work, afforded him a good deal of cultural capital. The headteacher’s description of the chair is testament to the present value invested in this relationship: ‘He is very astute, very able, keeps me up to date on everything and he is very confidential...(he is) amazingly respected as well, he is a symbol of all that is good in life’. The chair’s habitus was founded upon discourses of loyalty to community and school, these

defined his identity. When describing his position he refers to civic duty, service to the community and tradition:

It's in the blood, the work that I was doing as a blacksmith made me involved in the community. My great grandfather was on the first committee of the first school about three miles from here, in 1870. My grandfather was on the first parish council. And I think it right that I be involved with children and schools. I felt I could give something to them. To help the community that I live in.

Negotiating the Lay/Professional Relationship

The chair's volunteer status is important to him. He rejects the notion that governors should be financially rewarded, despite the increasing workload:

I know it takes a lot of time but I feel I am helping the community. I feel one should give something back to the community...I don't think they (governors) should be paid individuals. I want to see improvement of this community and this school. I wouldn't like to charge for my work, you would lose the spirit of the volunteering.

The chair's knowledge of the Welsh language further strengthens the cultural capital he brings to the governing body, especially as the school attempts to revitalise this. Although motivated by civic duty however, the chair is keenly aware of inherent tensions in the lay/professional dynamic. He describes the pitfalls of negotiating loyalties to the professional agenda of the school and those to fellow community members:

we (governors) we have to work with her (head) as a team. There is sometimes a barrier between the teachers and the parents; they don't feel like they can talk to them...we have to work together. You must not discuss one to one issues with parents, you must listen to them and then go to see the head. Governors must not start discussing problems with parents.

The dynamics of competing discourses evident here resonates with Foucault's notion of power/knowledge (as discussed with reference to 'Llaneth school') The following comments by the chair are indicative of this dynamic, underlining the boundaries between the supportive

function of lay governors and that of educational professionals as experts in teaching and learning:

I can't go in and tell teachers how to teach. But I am there to support them. If there is any help I can give and the governors can give it, we will support anyway...we aren't professional people, we have to rely on the experts here at the school.

The supportive function of governors is further evidenced through discussion on target setting in the governing body. These are led by the headteacher with governors contributing later in the process, reviewing decisions already made. This practice points to consistently strong classification and framing of knowledge despite the relative power of lay discourses at this time. As the head builds relationships within the school and the wider community, the balance of power is liable to shift in favour of professional interests. This is a demonstration of how, following Foucault, the flow of power is vulnerable to change with lay and professional discourses acquiring more or less significance in response to particular circumstances.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

BLENARTH

Demographics

Blenarth County Borough was the seventh largest authority in Wales. The population in 2001 was 134468, the authority covering a large and diverse area with three main towns in the borough differing in size, economic climate and linguistic character. The economy was rooted in the manufacturing industry: one third of the population was employed in this sector - twice the UK average. There had also developed a number of small to medium enterprises, complementing and in some cases replacing, traditional heavy industrial sectors of petro-chemicals and steel. Coal was still important in Blenarth where two opencast mines, and one privatised mine, provided local employment. Initiatives had been under way to attract employment, including the development of an 'urban village'. The service sector accounted for 50-60 percent of employment, a low figure for Wales. The financial sector was particularly poorly represented as an employer. Unemployment was higher than the average for Wales in Blenarth in 2001.

Blenarth was in the upper quartile of most indicators of deprivation at this time, with many of its wards featuring in the Welsh Assembly's 100 most deprived communities. Examples of these indicators were: low birth weight: the weight of babies per 1,000 births was the fifth highest in Wales, the sixth highest number of children in Wales on the Child Protection Register, per 1,000 children aged up to 18 years, an economically inactive population with 52.8 percent of those 16 years or over and 37.6 percent of those between 16 and 59 to 64 not in employment. The number of council tax relief claimants was also relatively high as 117.08 per 1,000 population. One quarter of the school population were receiving school meals. Levels of academic achievement were around the average for Wales with 7 percent of the population of the county being Welsh-

speakers. Gradual population decline had implications for the area, particularly in terms of attracting investment.

Blodeuyn Primary School

The School and School Governance

Blodeuyn Primary school was located on the outskirts of a large urban town. With a population of around 13,000 in 2001. According to the 2001 Estyn report, children attending the school reflected the mixed socioeconomic profile of the area, with the majority of pupils described as neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged. Thirty-seven percent of pupils were entitled to FSM, this compared to 20 percent nationally, according to the 2001 census. There were no first language Welsh speakers in the school. At the time of the research, the school was teaching 192 pupils aged between four and 11 years and was reported by Estyn to have 'good' academic results in 2001. The LEA did not indicate the nature of governance/performance in this school. However this research concluded that it could be described as average/improving in terms of governance. A key theme in this case study was the two-tier nature of governance. The first tier of governance was constituted by the headteacher, chair and SMT as differentiated from the supportive governance of the rest of the school governing body and PTA, the second tier.

There were 12 members of the governing body. These were in the main 'professional people' (head). There had recently been difficulties recruiting parent-governors, the chair acknowledging the misfit between the timetabling of meetings and family and work commitments of parents. She refers to the 'pay-off' in this respect, between the lack of representation of the governing body and the demonstration of interest in the school:

we try to attract mums and dads and in this society, there are so many other commitments...I mean one parent possibly has to remain at home because this is a primary school so they can't leave the children, so it is difficult and you do need to

attract people who are interested in the school and at this moment of time we have a high quality of parents' (chair).

The dissonance between some of the parent community and the structure of the governing body is also referred to by the head: 'some parents want to get involved, others don't want to become a governor, they don't really know what's involved and you try and tell them and they think we're some sort of weird society!'. In this context the chair advocates the involvement of parents in the Teacher's Association (PTA). This is deemed a more appropriate outlet for parental involvement and for the garnering of opinion:

they're (PTA) quite a relaxed way to get involved with, they're not sitting down at a desk, they can talk to us and we can join in the fun, the children are there, the parents are there, if there are any concerns, that's a very good place for it to come out...

This structuring of relationships between the community and the school is one of mutual support. This resonates with the second tier of governors in this school as will be discussed later in this section.

Two-Tier Governance

The chair had been governor in the school for three years before taking on the role, a position she has had for the past three years. The chair approached the role as an extension of her professional identity as a trade union official. Her identity was one of campaigner, a position bolstered by her position as local councillor. This demonstrated a habitus drawing upon civic duty, a sense of responsibility to the 'people', as her motivations for joining the governing body illustrate:

I've had a background of being a trade union officer so I've always been involved with people and I think that's the most important thing the people and that's why I became a school governor, I went for the appointment. I showed interest in local schools, joining in activities, i.e., parent meetings, activities be it social, and I think it is very important to have attachments to the school in the area.

As a middle-class professional the chair brings significant cultural capital to the governing body. This is afforded by her occupational status, but also by her councillor role, this providing her with networking opportunities. The chair's links to the local authority for example, allowed her to access knowledge relating to sources of funding: 'I do have means to say to them (the governing body), "look I think you ought to go down this road or try this", so that would be my expertise or contribution to say, "look I think there's money available, apply"'.

The relationships within the school indicated a two-tier system of governance with the headteacher, SMT and chair (with contributions from the VC) forming the first tier. This tier made the key decisions relating to the management and governance of the school, the remainder of the governing body overseeing and monitoring these and forming the second tier. The chair alludes to her close relationship with the head, positioning this as detached from her relationship with the rest of the governing body. To this end reference is made to pre-meetings between herself, the headteacher along with other members of the SMT. Such meetings are regarded by the chair as essential for ensuring congruence between her views and that of the rest of the SMT:

if the head feels we (chair and SMT) should know something prior to a meeting, she will contact myself to see if I can come up for half an hour - an hour so that we are briefed and I think that's important if I'm going to out a point at a meeting I need to be sure that we put the correct point.

The chair was keen to point out nevertheless that this practice did not inhibit contributions from the second tier of governors: 'if there is a recommendation (on a staff appointment) I will have already spoken to the head and deputy myself but that doesn't mean it squashes debate, we do have people capable of putting their point of view'.

The head similarly refers to agenda meetings between herself, the SMT and the chair and/or the VC:

Yes we meet regularly, in-between the meetings, as and when. We always have an agenda meeting two weeks before the main meeting and the vice is invited there – it's always the chair and the vice, they work closely together, if one isn't here the other will be, so we have a very good working relationship.

Shared Discourse

This 'good working relationship' was facilitated by familiarity of the way 'things work' in the school and where the school sits in relation to its political environment. Put another way, both headteacher and chair were conversant with similar discourses, the specific experience of the chair relating to the political environment of resource allocation. Inherent to this was a shared habitus, that of middle-class professional. Although this may also have been true of other governors with similar class backgrounds, it was the chair in particular who embodied this class identity and access to other forms of capital. In this case, political capital was drawn upon through the chair's professional identity, strengthened by her links with the local authority.

The headteacher differentiates between the 'working' relationship with the chair of governors and the supportive relationship she draws from the rest of the governing body. The two-tier structure positions the headteacher, SMT and chair involved in the bulk of the decision-making and discussions of the governing body: these formed the first tier. The second tier was constituted by other governors, charged with the subsidiary function of checking and supporting decisions made in the first tier. Within this structure, professional and non-professional boundaries are identified. These resonate with Bernstein's conceptualization of strong structures of classification and framing. Suffice to say that regardless of position in the governing body and identity as professionals themselves (albeit in other occupations), it is deemed inappropriate for governors to make judgments on the delivery of teaching and learning. As the head implies, governors themselves are aware of this distinction, their discomfort demonstrating the tension inherent in the expectations and realities of their position:

they may be professional within their own field of work, coming into a school they believe that we're the professionals in school and they're there to work with us and help us...because at the end of the day it's the staff who deliver the curriculum in the school, that's what we're about, teaching and learning and this is where the governors often find it very hard to shall we say...they find it difficult to make contributions because as they say it isn't their job, they're not teachers.

According to the head's analysis, governors appropriately take a supportive, protective role in their relationship to the school. This fills a vacuum created by the distancing of the local authority:

that's the important thing that they aren't seen to be there in an inspectorial manner at all they're there just to support the school and try and improve school life in general...the LEA has become a little bit more removed from the school over the years through lots of changes, government changes and all the initiatives...but with the governors I just feel...we share things what's going on in the school, it's nice to know that they're there.

Despite the differentiation between the supportive lay governors and the professional experts, both head and chair envisaged an increasing 'professionalisation' of governorship: this included the prospect of payment. The head predicts that 'possibly in 10 years time it will be a different picture, we could well have the semi-professional governor'. Reference is made here to recent discussions in the governing body about the over-bearing responsibilities of governance and the related time commitment. The following comments from the head imply that paying governors would engender a sense of 'responsibility' amongst prospective governors. They also reveal the ambiguous position of school governance:

many people felt this (governing) is intrusive of their lives because it is at this moment in time voluntary and I do believe in time...with the extra responsibility it could well be paid, I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing but I certainly think if you want people to take on the responsibility you can't expect them to give their time not only at the school because they're involved in other things.

Professionalisation v Participatory Democracy

Allusions to the professionalisation of governors and the two-tier structure of governance in this school, were inconsistent with notions of governors functioning as agents for participatory democracy. That is the notion of school governance as a vehicle for articulating voices of the community, of volunteerism and civic duty, motivations referred to by the chair. This contradiction resonates with Bourdieu's notion of bureaucratic habitus. Although her original motivation may have been the representation of the people, the chair's assimilation into the bureaucratic habitus has rendered this negligible. This has happened as the interests of the most powerful discourse in the school have overridden others. Bourdieu's conceptualization of symbolic violence is also relevant here. This refers to the misrecognition occurring when assimilated agents in the field regard alternative explanations for practices unthinkable. In the context of the school governing body, the domination of the discourse of the education profession is misrecognised as beneficial to all involved, as the school is assumed to function according to meritocratic principles. As a beneficiary of this structure, the chair is unable to recognize the school's actual position as a structure for cultural reproduction. Here Bourdieu (2000: 142-3) describes this phenomenon:

The agent engaged in practice knows the world...too well, without objectifying distance, takes it for-granted, precisely because he is caught up in it, bound up with it; he inhabits it like a garment...he feels at home in the world because the world is also in him, in the form of habitus.

Mynydd Primary School

The School and School Governance

Mynydd Primary was in a small village around six miles from the nearest town. The town had a population of around 7,000 at the 2001 census. The 2001 Estyn Report described the catchment of the school teaching 88 children aged four to 11 years as 'neither prosperous or economically disadvantaged': around 12 percent were entitled to FSM, this compared to 21 percent nationally.

Ten per cent of pupils had special educational needs. All but one of the 10 governors at the school lived in the village. This case study was characterized by a number of features: the value assigned to local knowledge, the active involvement of all governors in regular classroom observation, and despite this, the two-tier nature of the structure of governance and the domination of professional discourse.

The VC at this school was interviewed in place of the chair in this governing body as the chair was not available.

'Localness'

Both headteacher and VC refer to the localness of the governing body as a virtue. Past experience of governors joining with a political agenda had inclined governors to reject (party) political governors. As the head explains:

it's a small community and I think that they feel more committed to the school than if it was somebody who's coming from outside perhaps with their own different agenda to get on politically, using governorship as a stepping stone.

The head was unsurprisingly therefore, pleased that the chair of governors was not 'overtly political'. The VC echoes these sentiments. She expresses wariness of 'outsiders' joining the governing body, allowing party politics to override local concerns. These governors were often LEA-nominated county councillors:

there needs to be change in the makeup of governing bodies...we were carrying dead wood, they weren't interested they just wanted to say they were involved...Sometimes they would try and blow the trumpet for the Labour party...but we're not here just for that...we're only allowed to have so many members on the governing body and there are lots of people out there who probably would love to be more involved.

This sentiment contrasted sharply with other case studies where chairs were highly likely to be councillors. This denoted the cultural capital associated with political networks, not least in terms of the potential lobbying opportunities.

At this school, the positioning of governors at the interface between the community and the school was important, governors acting as ‘go-betweens’ for the head teacher. This was the case for parent-governors in particular who provided the head access to local opinion and potential problems:

Three of the governors are parent-governors, this is a useful conduit between the parents and the school, ensuring the head is aware of any potential problems. If you have a strong parent-governor you will find that other governors will approach that person...and yes she will bring back some information.

The Governor Observation Group

Although the intermediary position of the governors was important, the head had been keen to broaden the scope of governance. This missionary zeal had begun 10 years previously when the head had joined the school. At this time there had been insufficient focus on teaching and learning issues:

When I started the governing body was a body who didn't know...too much about education, they found it much easier to talk in governing bodies meetings about drainage and...maybe they were nervous about trying to delve into the nitty gritty of how a school works...I realised that there needed to be some dramatic changes to the governing body...I didn't feel they made enough of their role within the classroom.

This realization provided the impetus for the Governor Observation Group (GOG), this initiative allowing all governors to systematically observe classes. Time was then allotted to discuss these observations. The VC refers to the school's ‘flagship status’ following this development, the head alluding to the pioneering nature of the work: ‘the school is furthest down the road with this observation group than many schools’. Although the GOG indeed represented a challenge to

lay/professional boundaries at Mynydd, there were definite limits to this. These were exemplified by the relationship between the headteacher and the chair of governors, a headteacher at a local special school. This relationship appeared to operate at a separate level to that between the headteacher and the rest of the governing body. This resonates with the two-tier structure of governance identifiable in other case studies. More broadly there were limits on the input governors could have on professional matters, an example of this being the nationally prescribed curriculum drawn upon in schools. These will be explored in more detail later in this section. Suffice to say that the extent that lay and professional positions could be challenged was restricted by the inevitable domination of professional discourses.

Whilst in case studies such as Betws, opposition to governor involvement in classroom activities was stridently articulated, at Mynydd this activity was a guiding principle of the governing body. The head's description of teachers' reactions to governor observations contrasts to experiences in governing bodies in other schools. Following observations 'some of the staff ask them (governors) for feedback on what they've see which again I think is very positive and it helps the governor who goes in'. There was an attempt to extend the positive lay/professional relationship between governors and teachers to that between the school and the wider community. This explains the VC, represented a challenge the 'us' and 'them' situation in schools', engaging the community with the school regardless of skills:

I've been in schools where it's happened, where they're (parents, community members) still being left at the school gate. We're not going to recruit governors in an atmosphere like that where they think they have to be particularly good at something before they're invited in.

Scrutinizers and Promoters

The headteacher and VC's comments gave the impression of relatively weak classification and framing - to draw upon Bernstein's constructions - as it applied to the pedagogic relationship

between the headteacher and school governing body. The head was open to governors' access to professional knowledge through classroom observations as well as details pertaining to the curriculum for example. As a general principle the head asserted the importance of openness amongst all 'partners' of the school: 'the community within the school with teachers, myself, the governors and the children, I think they play an active part in that and you can't hide anything...I want to be very disciplined in that sense, to be clear'. In this respect the head positioned the governing body's function as two-dimensional: as well as engaging in the scrutiny of the school, governors operated as promoters of the school in the wider community, an understanding of the school enabling this:

if they're involved in the classroom situation out in the wider community they can promote the school in a variety of ways not simply to say, 'oh yes the yard has been resurfaced' because I know they can talk about the achievements of the school with regard to the curriculum.

The headteacher's rationale for developing governor knowledge was aligned to notions of accountability, as she explains:

We as a school are accountable to the governing body and the governing body are accountable with the school to the wider community, the LEA, to the parents, so there's a healthy accountability and I think that's how it has to be because... if something comes up outside the school, they can talk in a knowledgeable way about the reasons...why we've done it as this school or how things can be bettered, I think that's the good thing about it.

The head asserts furthermore that governors' comprehensive knowledge of the school would inevitably lead to 'contented' teaching staff. This in turn would contribute to the school's development: 'teachers like coming to this school and I think the governors like coming to this school. It's a nice atmosphere, they're happy here...and I think that cuts stress levels and absenteeism, which does help school improvement'.

Welsh Identity

The position of governors' as village inhabitants was seen as a key contributory factor to the school's development: the habitus of the local constituted the dominant profile at Mynydd with 'community spirit' deemed an essential asset. A component of this was the cultural capital associated with the Welshness of the school. Although English was the language spoken at home for most pupils, the school was keen to encourage and promote Welsh culture. In this respect the head refers to a Welsh-speaking teaching colleague who was as a councillor for political party Plaid Cymru, contributing to the organisation of the Eisteddfod. The political persuasion of this teacher was deemed acceptable despite the broader disapproval of political partisanship. This was evidence of the considerable cultural capital associated with this. The VC comments below exemplify the way the Welsh language had become an increasingly significant factor for parents when making choices about schools:

one of the supervisory assistants has sent children to the Welsh school (because) this school didn't cover the Welsh dimension as well as it should and she's told me her grandchild's coming...we've got third generation children coming to this school because of our Welshness.

In common with a number of case studies in the research, Welsh culture was clearly an important aspect of identity at this school. The profile of school governors and the extent to which their habitus reflected this— their knowledge of the Welsh language, their support of the promotion of Welsh culture for example - carried significant cultural capital in a number of schools, the advocacy of 'Welshness' constituting a significant discourse in some cases. At Mynydd school importance was assigned to localness at the level of the village itself: governors were strongly associated with the immediate area, most living in Mynydd. A notable exception to this however was the chair of governors. His professional background indicative of the structure of governance at the school.

Cultural Capital

Although the chair's own children were pupils at the school, he was now living away from the village and working full-time in another local authority. Unlike other governors therefore he was not a regular presence at the school. Despite this, the chair's position as a headteacher himself afforded him significant cultural capital. The differentiation between his relationship with the head and that between the head and other governors resonated with the characteristics of the two-tier structure of governance. Whilst the chair was not part of the GOG, his professional habitus afforded him access to particular knowledge and discourse of education. In interactions between the head and the chair therefore, language use was likely to resonate with Bernstein's conceptualization of restricted code. Elaboration and explanation was limited as much was understood. This compared to the coding of language in interaction between the head and the rest of the governing body. This was likely to conform to more elaborated codes as the head was obliged to elaborate upon concepts that were likely to be unfamiliar to non-professional, lay individuals.

The two-tier nature of governance at Mynydd Primary was testament to the power of professional discourse in the school. It was clear that the head and VC were genuinely motivated by a desire to challenge the boundaries between education professionals in the school and the parent community in particular. There were however limitations to this, necessitating the headteacher's differentiated relationship with the chair. The VC alludes to the bounded nature of lay and professional functions in the governing body in this respect. Preferring the term 'partnership' to that of 'critical friend' to characterize the relationship between the school and the governing body, the VC points to the inclination of the governing body to be supportive rather than critical. Her comments on the role of governors in recruitment in particular illustrate the dominance of professional discourses in schools, despite efforts to challenge this:

what right have I got and a bunch of lay people on the personnel panel with me, go to say that? I don't think that when it comes to choosing heads and deputy heads and staff really that we've got the knowledge and expertise to do it and I think it's wrong that they should have the authority to appoint staff in the school.

Furthermore, whilst the head stridently defends the need for governors to be conversant with curriculum issues for example, this was inevitably restricted by the stipulations of the National Curriculum.

Trefon Comprehensive School

The School and School Governance

Trefon comprehensive was on the outskirts of the same urban town as Mynydd Primary. The town's population was broadly mixed with significant pockets of deprivation. One quarter of pupils at the school were in receipt of FSM, this compared to a 20 percent average for Wales in 2001. The school had around 900 pupils aged between 11 and 16 years old, although falling rolls in recent years had led to teacher redundancies. Although most pupils were from English-speaking homes, 'Welshness' formed a significant aspect of the identity of the school. This was illustrated by the governing body's decision to make St David's Day an official school holiday, an apparently unusual action to have been taken:

we're the only school perhaps who have a day where children still celebrate St David, but they also get a holiday, they get a half day, so we've discussed it and we've agreed that the school should enjoy the traditional half day as well, without going against the legislation.

The LEA did not locate this school on our governance/performance grid, however from the 1999 Estyn report. It can be gleaned however that this school was below average in terms of academic performance.

The prominent theme emerging from the experience of the 21 governors at Trefon derived from the particularly close relationship between the headteacher and the chair of governors. Amongst the case studies in the research it was at this school that the congruence between the habitus of the headteacher and the chair was most striking. Besides this, the experience of governorship at the school gave prominence to the contradictory position of school governors: the competing discourses of volunteerism intrinsic to the lay identity of governors, and the potential for the professionalisation of the role. A crosscutting theme at this school, as in many of the case studies, was that of the domination of middle-class professionals on the governing body. The headteacher at Trefon refers to the dispersed nature of the catchment area and the difficulty connecting a particular community to the school, as he explains: ‘I don’t think the community will identify with the governing body, the governing body with the community’. The chair was mindful of the dangers of governing body domination by those from particular backgrounds, although he believed the nomination system could work to bring balance of sorts:

There are real dangers, seems to me self-perpetuating when you’ve got the same type of people with the same sort of outlook, I think that’s where the balance between LEA reps, co-opted people, parents is so important and it is an elected body after all and I think that’s important.

Although the skills of those with backgrounds in business industry were valued in particular on the governing body, the head describes how at times the application of business principles to school governance could result in an ‘uncomfortable clash’. For example, the attempt by a governor with a background in business to apply this to the SDP was not well received:

50 percent of it (contribution of co-opted governor) was totally inapplicable for school development because I don’t think you can readily translate some of the things that they do in business to a school development plan because we’re not a business and I hold firmly on to that.

Despite these reservations, both head and chair refer to the value of drawing on the ‘life skills’ of parents in particular to the governance of the school. This was believed to act as a challenge to education professionals who may be out-of-touch with the ‘real world’. As the chair explains:

Parent-governors bring a realism. When you’re in the academy you tend to forget sometimes that some of the theories are alright but in practice it’s another thing. Governors can bring all kinds of skills to the governors and all valid.

The Ideal Partnership

As a retired headteacher himself with 28 years experience of working in education, the chair can be described as being firmly entrenched in this ‘academy’. This is interesting given the chair’s warning against insularity. As was the case at Mynydd Primary, the relationship between the headteacher and chair at Trefon School benefited from the chair’s experience in education. The chair had accumulated considerable experience of working in schools, much of this time in leadership positions. This afforded him significant cultural capital on the governing body. He was able to engage in the appropriate discourse, drawing specifically on his experience in the management of schools. There were a number of layers to the chair’s cultural capital. Besides his professional position as retired head, he was also a local councillor and held the position of chair of the LGA. These positions afforded him significant networking and lobbying opportunities on behalf of the school. Furthermore through the engagement with local political networks including committee work, he was experienced in the ‘language’ of bureaucratic structures.

The head greatly valued the chair’s connections in education. This had eased the relationship, enhancing his position of chair and grounding his understanding of lay/professional boundaries:

I have a very good chair of governors, it’s because of his background in education, he understands education issues. I think I’ve got a chair of governors who understands his role and as a consequence because he has a good understanding of school issues.

The chair's professional experience, specifically that as a manager in education, forms the basis of the resonance between his habitus and that of the headteacher. The cultural capital the chair brought to this relationship and to the governing body is further bolstered by his links with local networks. By virtue of his position as chair of the 'very successful' (chair) LGA and as county councillor, the chair of governors has access to the knowledge and discourses defining the structure of school governance at the local level. The head values these links in terms of encouraging collaboration and avoiding isolation amongst the governors and the school: 'sometimes you think you're very isolated as a school or as a governing body and in fact in that respect you share problems, you can share training, you can share lots of things'. The chair's leading role in the LGA and his county councillor position also encouraged a familiarity with the structure and workings of a number of schools.

It is clear that the chair's characteristics - his habitus - very much resonates with that of the headteacher. Both were conversant with discourses of the education profession. As was the case in Mynydd Primary, communication between the head and chair was likely to follow a pattern of restricted code: there was no requirement for extensive elaboration of concepts and issues. Both head and chair are entrenched in the appropriate discourse. The shared habitus of the head and chair is illustrated by the head's description of the accountability process. This is facilitated by the cultural capital of the chair:

I can't really think of anything negative to say about the whole process and yeah I get a slap on the wrist from time to time and that's fine because I haven't done things that should be done and yeah I can do things half-cock that should have had approval from the governing body first and I'm reminded of that by the chair.

Aligned to the comfortable relationship between the head and chair was the recognition and acceptance of assigned roles: headteacher as manager of the school, and chair as advisor. The

chair's conceptualization of the governing body is two-fold: representation and scrutiny, and to oversee the management of the school:

It's to oversee what's happening in the school – the views of outsiders, from outside the school, to give the head ideas of what the public perception of the school is to manage – I'm here to oversee the management and make sure that the school is functioning properly, and abiding by the law and the legal requirements and get reports.

For the head, the key role for governors was to act as a 'safeguard' against a 'lunatic headteacher' and as a 'source of information'. This was distinguished from the head's management role:

They're there to govern...as the head teacher I understand I know my place, I manage the school on a day-to-day basis and there are a whole range of issues that they have to take into account because they govern and that's their function.

Overburdened Governance

Increased workloads in schools and governing bodies had the consequence of blurring the boundaries between the appropriate position of governors and of educational professionals:

I think the days of cucumber sandwiches at 4 o'clock and hail and well met and 'off you go, right we've done our duty this term once again' – are long gone, as a consequence they're sharply aware of their accountability and their responsibility (head).

There's so much more responsibility, particularly on chairmen. That's the difficult part, you're expected to read so much and to be on top of things so much. We've got an item on the agenda about criminal disclosure – it's something else again (chair).

There were concerns that too much was expected of governors in a climate of continuous change:

If I'm going to be honest, they're expecting a lot of people. The amount of legislation coming through is crazy and it has been over the last four-five years. And to expect lay people to be on top of that is asking an awful lot (chair).

It's a worrying feature I think they're having more and more responsibility placed on their shoulders...I do believe that more and more and more is being demanded of these volunteers' (head).

'Professionalisation' v Participatory Democracy

The head was adamant that governors should remain volunteers and that monetary gain would threaten the 'special relationship' governors have with the school. The chair was more open to the idea of a profession of governors, or at least a profession of chairs. He was wary however of the idea of governing bodies constituted by paid educationists. This he believed, could potentially lead to the loss of 'ownership' of the school, rendering governing bodies 'another bureaucratic part of the education machine.' These differing perspectives highlighted competing discourses surrounding school governance. The notion of the lay, volunteer governor, valued for their 'life skills', collided with that of the governor as paid professional. The prospect of a paid, professional role for chairs of governors may be an attractive proposition for those already possessing the appropriate cultural capital, such as the chair of this school. It was however at odds with the same chair's concerns around the 'self-perpetuation' of the same 'types' engaging in school governance – further weakening the possibility of governors acting as agents of participatory democracy.

Concluding Discussion

The case studies were revealing in terms of the dynamics of the lay/professional relationship in the governing body. For most chairs the embodiment of a particular habitus and the associated cultural capital allowed them considerable access to the discourse of the education profession. There were limitations to this however. These reflected the varying strength of classification and framing in the governing body and the dynamics of power at work in lay/professional interaction. More broadly, it was the position of the school in wider political structures that dictated this. This

resonated with Foucault's analysis of the school as an instrument of governance. Operating as part of a network of institutions such as hospitals and prisons, schools work to disperse power and direct behaviour. As was evident in the analysis of interviews with LEA officials, school improvement was the driving force in education policy and this directed the behaviour of schools and those within them. This was reflected in the case study schools where academic success of pupils was the ultimate aim. Educational professionals were the drivers of this agenda.

It was considered crucial in the schools that heads and chairs should have a positive relationship, ideally agreeing on their respective roles and responsibilities. Chairs at Llaneth Secondary and Llewelyn Primary both explained how 'getting on' with their heads was important to the sustainability of their positions. The chair of Llewelyn Primary asserts that there would be 'no point' in continuing if this was not the case. One condition of the success of this relationship was the acceptance of the domination of educational professional discourse. In the relationship between the head and chair it was the discourse of academic school improvement that was most valued. It was therefore the headteacher as lead professional who wielded the most power. Given this context it was unsurprising that overall the case study schools conformed to Levacic's 'supporters club' model of governance, with challenges to the head at a minimum. This persisted despite the understanding evident in interviews with LEA officials, and in the case study schools, that governors should play a part in the scrutiny of professional activity and the 'enormous powers' governors could potentially wield (headteacher, Llaneth).

The social profile of governor chairs and the characteristically shared habitus between headteacher and chair contributed to the limited challenge to the authority of the head. The socioeconomic profile of chairs of governors was reflected in that of governors more broadly. As the statistical data demonstrated, governors tended to be middle-class with chairs more likely

than other governors to be drawn from this social group. Many chairs and headteachers had a similar habitus: they were often male, white and middle-aged. Headteachers and chairs were aware of this inclination. The head of Llaneth school for example, describes his governors as representing the ‘aspirations’ rather than the actual demographical mix of the school population. In the absence of a representative governing body however, the value of having ‘interested’ governors was regarded as sufficient, even if this was referred to as regrettable. As well as the cultural capital derived from class position, chairs were also likely to be politically active with all but one of them holding positions as local councillors. This was valued by headteachers for lobbying potential. The headteacher at Betwys Primary for example, described how the chair’s links with the local authority had helped to drive the school building programme.

The chair at Blodeuyn Primary explains how her ‘insider knowledge’ as a councillor allowed her to alert the governing body to potential sources of funding. This chair was also able to draw upon her experience as a trade union officer when negotiating and campaigning on behalf of the school. Although such political networking was valued, party political allegiances could cause conflict in governing bodies and weren’t always welcome. At Mynydd Primary for example, where the localness of the governors was valued, both head and chair described the distraction governors with political interests could cause. Furthermore, at Skipworth the chair of governors was an LEA governor from a different party to his predecessor who remained on the governing body, a source of potential conflict. The fact that conflict at Skipworth had not escalated was due in part, to the close relationship between the headteacher and the chair, their shared habitus.

The extent that the habitus of heads and chairs dovetailed varied in the case study schools. A pertinent example of this close alignment was in Trefon Secondary where the habitus of the head and chair was notable at a number of levels. As a retired headteacher the chair was conversant

with discourses of the education profession. As an ex-teacher in a senior position, this chair was likely to be sympathetic to the established function of the school – to promote the improvement agenda – and less likely to challenge this. As a local councillor and chair of the LGA, this chair was also well networked with other governors and other local politicians. His familiarity with committees and the idiosyncrasies of bureaucratic structures enabled him to engage easily with the headteacher in the governing body. As both headteacher and chair of governors were entrenched in the discourse of the education profession, discussions were likely to adhere to Bernstein's restricted code. The more elaborated code would be reserved for the rest of the governors. The success of this relationship was also derived from clarity around expectations of roles and responsibilities. A similar model existed at Mynydd Primary where the chair of governors was headteacher at a school in a neighbouring county. The relationship between headteacher and chair at Skipworth was also characterized by shared habitus. This was however largely based on the friendship between the head and chair, rather than shared educational professional identity.

In schools such as Trefon the head/chair relationship was likely to be characterised by weak classification and framing. Both were conversant with the teaching profession. There may however, have been stronger classification between the head/chair and the rest of the governors. There were aspects of this two-tier model of school governance in a number of the case study schools. One example was Pandy Primary where, in a bid to save the school from closure, the chair had become a temporary member of the SMT. At Blodeuyn Primary, the chair was similarly involved in meetings with the SMT. Both headteacher and chair at this school allude to 'pre-meetings' undertaken by this group focusing upon management and governance. The rest of the governing body and the PTA would provide an overview and supportive function. A similar split existed at Mynydd Primary: the head and chair appeared to focus upon strategic issues, the rest of

the governors occupied with activities within the GOG.

Case study schools tended therefore to be characterised by a close alignment of habitus between the head and chair of governors. There were however definite boundaries between the discourse of the educational professional and that of the lay school governor. An example of this was in Skipworth where although close personally, the chair remained keenly aware of the domination of the professional discourse, This was articulated through his concerns not to ‘tread on the professionals’ toes’. Drawing upon Bernstein’s analysis, we can conclude that the classification and framing in school governing bodies tended to be strong. There were boundaries around what was considered the appropriate activity and discourse of educational professionals and that of school governors. Although this was reinforced by the headteacher in most schools – for example at Betws Primary where the head strongly objected to the possibility of governor involvement in classroom activity-it appeared to be challenged by the head in others. For example at Llewelyn Primary, a school in an area of relative deprivation, the head was frustrated by his governors. In particular it was the chair’s lack of interest in developing an understanding of the processes of teaching and learning that created tensions in the head/chair dynamic.

The difference in the perception of the function of governors was evident in a number of schools. One notable frustration was the perceived expectation that governors should be strategic. By this it was asserted that they should take a long-term view on the school’s future, motivated towards improving academic improvement. There was however widespread scepticism about how realistic this was, along with doubts about the powers of school governors in practice. One contributory factor was the amount of paperwork governors were expected to digest – policy documents from LEAs, the NAFW and from the UK government at Westminster. The headteacher of Llaneth school questioned the extent that governors could take on a strategic role

given that many decisions in education were made elsewhere: ‘what strategy do they have command over?’ Others alluded to the lack of leverage over decisions at school level and the complex political context schools were operating in. As the chair of Pandy Primary describes:

I think one has to look at the interplay of where the LEA is, where things lie with the Welsh Assembly, whether other or central government initiatives are coming from and how that fits together...there are one or two concerns across all these interfaces.

The lack of clarity about the exact role of governors left them open to manipulation by headteachers. For example, the heads of Llewelyn Primary and Llaneth Secondary described how the assignation of collective power to governors was a valuable tool for dispersing difficult decisions such as staff redundancies. The head of Llaneth described the governing body as ‘a large blunt instrument’ for this purpose. The head of Betws Primary referred to the governors as providing him with a ‘very big cushion’. This manoeuvring of responsibility resonates with Foucault’s analysis of the dynamism of power. This would position the lay/professional relationship as subject to flux and change. Foucault’s power/knowledge configuration is also useful to draw upon here. This helps to illuminate the relationship between the knowledge of education professionals and the power aligned to this. There were times however, when lay knowledge was designated with power. The dispersal of responsibility to governors was an example of this, although power in this case was indirect and manipulated for the head’s purposes.

A further example of the changing dynamics of power in the lay/professional relationship was the varying pedagogic nature of interactions between headteachers and chairs. The more common model in the case studies was that of the head leading the chair. At Llaneth school for example the chair of governors was still ‘finding her feet’ (head) relying heavily on the headteacher, even after three years in the post. There were occasions however when this situation was reversed: the

head relying on the perceived knowledge and expertise of chair. At Pandy Primary, a school under threat of closure, the headteacher was openly very reliant upon her chair to guide and support her through difficult times. The chair's role in this case was akin to a member of the SMT. This weaker structure of classification and framing was also notable at Ysgol y Mor. Here the headteacher was dependent upon the support of her locally networked chair to help forge relationships between the school and the community. Both these schools were experiencing crises to varying degrees. This had altered the lay/professional dynamic, although this was likely to be temporary with the educational professional discourse reinstated once the crisis had been dealt with.

As the head at Ysgol y Mor was experiencing, relationships between the school governing body and the community, (usually defined in terms of the catchment area encompassing the parents of pupils at the school (see introduction for a discussion on community)) were complex. It was often the case that headteachers found the governing body, and particularly their chairs, to be useful in acting as a conduit between the school and the community. This could however prove a challenging position for the chair of governors. This demonstrated a clash between the identification of governor as volunteer embedded in the community, and that of governor aligned with education professionals within the school. This resonates with Golby's positioning of governors as janus figures, (see chapter four) simultaneously looking to educational professionals for guidance, but also expected to be open to the views of the parent community. An example of this was experience of the chair at Llaneth school who was approached by a parent with a problem who, according to the head, should have approached him directly. At Ysgol y Mor the chair's relationship with the community was essential providing the head with an 'early warning system'. The chair was however wary of providing an advocacy role for parents.

Knowledge of the community was equated with power. There were times therefore when governors and particularly chairs, with their enhanced cultural capital, were afforded considerable influence. The increasing cultural capital aligned with the Welsh language and Welsh culture was affording some governors significant power in case study schools. This was useful to schools hoping to enhance their status and attract pupils. The chair at Mynydd Primary for example, describes how the school was witnessing increasing numbers of parents choosing the school for its Welsh identity. Similarly the chair at Ysgol y Mor was particularly valued for his sense of belonging to a Welsh community and his identification as such within the area. There were however difficulties in combining the discourse of ‘Welshness’ and the agenda of school improvement – the dominant discourse of the education profession. This dilemma was evidenced at Betws Primary school where there were concerns that the teaching of subjects in Welsh was threatening the academic success of pupils.

These examples illustrate the way that lay discourses, such those of Welsh identity and community membership, were tempered and manipulated. In schools, educational professionals were likely to have mastery over lay knowledge. Further examples of this were at Betws and Mynydd primaries. Whilst the head at Betws recognized the need for governors to understand the characteristics of this isolated, rural community, the bounded nature of lay and professional functions in the school overrode this. The head’s strident assertion of his identity as an educational professional led him to dismiss attempts to instigate governor involvement in classroom observations. He also dismissed the usefulness of governor training. At Mynydd Primary the involvement of the mostly local governors in regular classroom observation was set against the identity of the chair, a headteacher working in a neighbouring LEA.

The chairs of governors' relationship with the community was also complex. Some chairs of governors described a civic duty motivation. This was particularly likely to be aligned to their identification as local councillors. The chair at Ysgol y Mor most stridently expressed this. The chairs at Blodeuyn and Llaneth also described their motivation as serving the 'people'. As a trade unionist by profession this appeared to be a dominant motivator for the chair at Blodeuyn. There was therefore recognition, to varying degrees, of governors performing a role as agents of participatory democracy. This was despite their overrepresentation within a particular socioeconomic group. Whilst expressing the desire to represent the community however, chairs and headteachers were sometimes open to the suggestion that school governorship, or at least the role of the chair, should be professionalized. This referring to the potential remuneration of governors.

The headteacher at Pandy for example suggested that governors should demonstrate a particular skill before joining, community membership presumably not being reason enough. Furthermore both head and chair at Blodeuyn believed that the role would inevitably become professionalised. The chair of Trefon also expressed this view, at least for governor chairs. This contradicted the civic duty motivation strongly argued for by the chairs at both these schools. It equates to Bourdieu's concept of bureaucratic habitus, the development of this deeming the original motivations of those involved in structures such as committees irrelevant. The self-interested bureaucrat inevitably overrides the agent of democratic participation. Although supportive of the professionalisation of governors, the chair of Trefon was wary of the governing body becoming 'another bureaucratic part of the education machine'. This was a pertinent proposition as it resonated with a Foucauldian analysis of the positioning of school governing bodies as exactly that.

CHAPTER TWELVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The research for the thesis has drawn upon data from interviews with LEA officers, and interviews and observations of school governors in eight schools in each of the nine sampled local authorities in Wales, selected to reflect the geographical diversity of the country. This initial research was followed by more focused case study work in nine schools in three of these authorities, with particular emphasis on chairs of school governing bodies and headteachers. Interviews and observations within LEAs and schools were accompanied by the administration of a questionnaire distributed to all governors in the schools in the nine authorities. This included headteachers as members of governing bodies. The survey allowed for the collection of demographic information about the profile and opinions of governors. It was analysed through 'SPSS', a computer software package for statistical analysis. The interview and observation data was analysed by drawing upon some of the principles of discourse analysis and the theoretical insights of Foucault, Bourdieu and Bernstein. This theoretical framework was used to navigate and describe the patterns of the relationship between headteachers and chairs of governing bodies, and the practical and political operation of this.

Why School Governors?

By researching school governance, this thesis has focused on a subject that has received little attention, particularly within Wales. Furthermore, by focusing upon the relationship between the chair of governors and the headteacher in particular, a relationship found to be pivotal in school governing bodies, it has been possible to address a number of research questions. These questions are:

- what discourses are valued in school governing bodies and the head/chair relationship?

- what are the effects of the coding of knowledge and discourse in the professional / lay interface?
- how are the social dispositions of governors influential in how they see and conduct their role?
- and what are the political implications and effects of this?

Cutting across these questions has been an attempt to reflect upon the extent to which governors act as agents for participatory democracy. These areas of investigation have led to the emergence of two overriding themes: the school as an ‘instrument of governance’ and the impact of this upon governing bodies, and the domination of the discourse of the education professional within governing bodies and the institutions surrounding it.

Governance and Biopower

The framing of the school as an instrument of governance draws upon the theories of Foucault. His analysis of the growth of state-sponsored education and the accompanying development of school ‘governance’ is the outcome of the emergence of state institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and the realisation of schools as a key mediator of moral and economic behaviour. The education system grew up, in part, through religious institutions. As a result, they were governed according to the need to ensure education was led by particular moral codes. Schools were also however, a mechanism for the management of populations. Education was therefore an expression of the vast extension of biopower, this encompassing its role as a mechanism for moral management. From the early days, school governors or trustees had a financial interest in the schools under their guardianship. At a local level this meant ensuring that their money was spent as they saw fit. Following the 1870 Education Act, the beginnings of universal education, governors were overseeing the spending of public money. They were

therefore focused upon the broader economic needs of the country as a whole: the need for appropriately trained workers, retaining Britain's position in the world. For Foucault, the development of the school was part of the widespread project of the dispersal of 'governance'. Its emergence was amongst a more widespread growth of institutions shaping and affecting the behaviour of an increasingly categorised and regimented population. The proliferation of state institutions was accompanied by the proliferation of the 'expert': the doctor, the psychologist and the teacher, trained to focus upon individual behaviour and activity. The architecture of the school, the professional 'classroom teacher' with the 'headteacher' at the head of a hierarchical structure, formed the basis of an emerging education apparatus. Foucault's analysis of schools as instruments of governance, would include the institution of school governance. These would inevitably be constituted by individuals able to engage in, or be shaped by, the discourse: that relating to 'school improvement' and the continued academic progress of the individual.

Cultural Reproduction; Classification and Framing

Bourdieu's analysis of schools as sites of cultural reproduction positions education as favouring and reproducing particular social groups and classes. As Harker explains, this analysis of structures of education and class advantage is powerful, providing a '...unique methodological apparatus for a penetrating analysis of social inequalities and the part that schools play in their perpetuation' (1990: 105). Wolfreys also positions Bourdieu's analysis as instructive in 'exposing the social mechanisms that lie behind the pursuit of cultural or educational distinction' (2000: ISJ website). The cultural capital aligned with positions of privilege is identifiable in the school curriculum. It is also notable through behaviour within an institution: certain subjects and discourses carry more significant value than others. This relates to Bernstein's theories of pedagogy. This positions the relationship between teacher and pupil in terms of the classification and framing of subjects. Where regulation of classification and framing are strong, there are

definite restrictions to access to certain knowledge. Where it is weak however, restrictions are less strict and the possibility for the transformation of power strong. These theories are applicable to governing bodies embedded within the school. Here, certain forms of cultural capital such as social class and professional identity are valued. The strength of classification and framing in the pedagogic relationship between the headteacher and chair characterise this lay/professional dynamic.

Professional Dominance

The status of headteachers as education professionals, and their relationships with those charged with governing the school, has been subject to change. This change has been driven by the change and flux in political and social climates. With the rise of the teaching profession and the emergence of a specialist field and discourse of education in the eighteenth century, the guidance of lay governors became relatively marginalized. This was particularly the case as governors no longer had a financial stake in schools. The power of the professional – in Ranson’s terms the ‘age of the professional’ - continued with little interruption as the education system became national following World War II. It continued to develop until the 1960s and 1970s when economic and political changes stemmed its growth. At this time, public institutions and the professionals working for them came under increasing scrutiny. As the ‘value-for-money’ and integrity of professionals was brought into question, so the strength of the consumer was elevated. This had a direct impact on school governors in the 1980s. The 1986 and 1988 Education Acts afforded governors significant powers – in theory - as significant LEA powers were devolved to the school. Despite this, the research conducted for this thesis found, that to a significant degree, governing bodies (at least in Wales), had continued to be dominated by an educational professional discourse. The consequence of this was that governors tended to be constituted by a particular ‘type’ of individual. The typical governor was found to have middle-

class, professional backgrounds. This socioeconomic profile and their related cultural capital, inclined governors to be conversant with professional and ideally, educational professional discourses. Engagement with local politics was also regarded as an asset: all but one of the nine case study chairs were local councillors.

The domination of a particular type amongst governors, and amongst chairs in particular, is a necessary trait for the practice of school governance. It reflects the position of the school as an instrument of governance. Such individuals are less likely than others to challenge the agenda and are able to draw upon a restricted code. There would be a danger, for example, of individuals outside of this ‘type’, challenging current structures of education. Such individuals may have been failed by their schooling, or may feel disaffected by a system not necessarily serving them well. The effects of the predominance of a type or prevailing habitus therefore are the exclusion of those not possessing the required cultural capital. Such individuals are those not sufficiently engaged in these discourses due to social class position. Drawing on Bourdieu, this can be seen to reflect the education system more broadly: the predominance of certain discourses is systematically reproduced. In the current episteme, the overriding discourse in education institutions centres on meritocracy. LEAs and schools are obliged to pursue improvement evidenced through academic results. This meritocratic approach masks a system favouring the culturally advantaged and the reproduction of dominant class positions.

Cultural Capital, Habitus and Language Codes

The cultural capital demanded by the role of the chair is therefore indicative of an education system favouring particular powerful groups within society. It was clear from the research for this thesis that in governing bodies certain discourses were valued above others. Articulation of these was particularly in evidence in the headteacher/chair of governors’ relationship. These discourses

were those of and surrounding the education profession, for example the standards agenda as set out by OfStEd in England and Estyn in Wales from 1992, and the need for the school to be consistently improving. In interviews with LEA officials, the focus for the education service within the current episteme centred upon: raising standards, lifelong-learning, social inclusion, skills and training, and levels of engagement in education. It is worth noting however that with the establishment of the NAFW came attempts to temper the focus on results. This was witnessed through the rejection of league tables for schools for example, as will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter. Suffice to say that those most comfortable with the 'school improvement' agenda were middle-class chairs of governing bodies. Those embodying this profile were more likely to be conversant with and accepting of, an education system focused upon the improvement of academic standards, the official definition of success.

Those holding the position of the chair were more likely than other governors to embody the appropriate cultural capital; in the case study schools the resonance between the habitus of the headteacher and the chair of governors was marked. It was clear from the research that the closer the alignment of habitus, the smoother the relationship between themselves and the headteacher in the school. A pertinent example of this was in one industrial valley LEA where the chair of governors was well placed in his role due to his professional and political standing. As a recently retired headteacher, the chair was able to draw upon professional expertise in his relationship with the head. This allowed the head and chair to draw upon Bernstein's restricted code where much of the context of conversation was understood and taken-for-granted. This had the effect of a significantly concentrated governorship focused upon the head/chair relationship, this potentially excluding other governor members. As well as his ex-headteacher status, the chair at this school also benefited from his links to local political networks. As local councillor and chair of the LGA, the chair's conversancy with the structures of local political and governor networks

were useful skills for his role as chair and his relationship with the head. Overall therefore, the common habitus in the head/chair dynamic facilitated the relationship. This resulted in the compatibility between lay and professional roles, the differentiation between the roles deemed largely irrelevant. This chair complied with Bourdieu's description of social agents' ability to draw upon their 'feel for the game'. This refers to an ability to negotiate particular discourses, drawing upon assigned habitus and forms of capital.

Agents of Participatory Democracy?

The domination of certain types on governing bodies, particularly those holding the position of chair brings into question their position as structures of participatory democracy. Governing bodies are made up by representatives nominated or elected from different constituencies: parent-governors are elected by parents of pupils at the school, LEA governors are nominated by the local authority, and 'community' governors are chosen by the governors. Governors cannot however be described as agents for participatory democracy insofar as they consistently fail to reflect the communities their schools operate within. There was stoicism amongst governors who make reference to the unfortunate lack of governors from the working-class. At one rural secondary the headteacher alludes to the naivety of the suggestion:

It would be lovely if we could involve more people from other social strata, but in reality people don't get involved and that's reflected in the PTA meetings for example, the same sort of people that join the PTA. It would be a good idea to involve a lot more people. I don't think any school would be able to achieve that.

A recent study by Ranson and Crouch (2009) has highlighted how the possibility of representative school governance may be jeopardized further under new initiatives. The authors report how Academy and Trust schools³ in England pose a significant threat to the 'stakeholder

³ Academy schools in England, established by the UK government in 2000, are state-maintained independent schools set up with the help of outside sponsors. The legislation for Trust schools was established in 2006. These schools are government-funded but receive extra support from a charitable

model’, encompassing different constituencies (as described above). In Academy schools the ‘sponsor’ can appoint most of the trustees (governors), although this must be agreed by the DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families). In their research, Ranson and Crouch found that governorship in such schools put at risk lay contribution to school governance:

The analysis of school governance demonstrates a distinctive trajectory of change in the growth of partnership governance, the expansion of professional power at the expense of elected volunteers, and the corporatising of school ownership.
(Ranson and Crouch, 2009: 47)

Welsh schools were somewhat protected against this development however; this resulting from NAFW attempts to distinguish policy-making from that in England. The persistence of professional middle-class capture threatening governing bodies in England was however seen to be at work in the Welsh case study schools. This was at variance with the supposedly democratic values of the National Assembly.

This trend was exemplified by an acceptance of the lack of socio-economic mix amongst governors. The attraction of ‘interested’ governors was the best that could be hoped for. One LEA official explained that despite their attempts, it was difficult to ensure that those involved in decision-making at LEA and school level, were truly representative of communities: ‘I think we’re really just touching the surface of that issue as an education service as it appertains to schools’. A senior education officer expressed doubts that ‘democratic wellbeing’ in the community was effective in improving standards in any case. The lack of representation on governing bodies was concerning given the socio-economic profile of the three local authorities in the research. All three were experiencing difficulties economically and consequently socially. The borders and rural authorities were notable for higher than average unemployment levels.

trust such as a local business, community group or charity. The emphasis is on partnership with other local schools based upon locality or specialism.

Furthermore, the industrial valley LEA fell into the upper quartile of most of the indicators of deprivation. There were few governors in the case study schools who could be described as experiencing the economic and social problems associated with their catchment areas. It was therefore questionable as to whether they were capable of representing these issues and the effect of these upon education and schools.

Drawing upon Bourdieu and Foucault, the inability of governing bodies to represent their communities is symptomatic of a structure laying claim to the principles of participatory democracy. This distorts the role of the school where governing bodies operate as an instrument of governance itself and as the vehicle for cultural reproduction. This process, according to Bourdieu and St Martin, ‘dominates the mechanisms by which the educational system reproduces itself by recognising those who recognise it and by giving its blessing to those who dedicate themselves to it...’ (1974: 358). Bourdieu’s notion of the ‘bureaucratic habitus’ is relevant here; Webb, Shirato and Danaher describe how bureaucracies operate to reproduce themselves, operating according to their own agenda as others’:

bureaucracy is neither a tool for the dominant, nor just an intermediary between state and society; nor is it the guardian of the people’s rights. In fact, the bureaucracy is a powerful field in its own right: it does not just instrumentalise government policy, but also interprets and sometimes inspires it (2002: 98).

Habitus and Two-Tier Governance

Webb, Shirato and Danaher explain how this particular habitus can lead to the exclusion of particular interests, for example those from minority ethnic groups or women (2002:100-101). This analysis implies that whilst members of committees and boards such as school governing bodies may set out to represent their ‘community’, over time they abandon their allegiances. This occurs as their habitus alters to conform to that of the bureaucrat, with its particular ideologies and discourses of government. Even when members attempt to resist this, their capture by the

bureaucratic habitus is inevitable. Bourdieu's definition of the bureaucratic habitus is one that works to ensure the majority are inclined to be controlled by the few. Therefore, whilst committees and boards may claim to promote participatory democracy, appearing to allow public contribution to political decisions, this is illusory. In the case studies, there was evidence to varying degrees, of the chair being subsumed by the bureaucratic habitus. This was illustrated by the significant number of governing bodies characterised by a two-tier structure of governance. Other governing bodies were operating with varying aspects of a two-tier system, depending upon a number of factors: the cultural capital of the chair, the head and chair's respective length of service, and the issues currently preoccupying the school. Within this structure, the chair was drawn into the bureaucratic world of the headteacher. This was mediated through the wider agenda of local and national governments, the discourses of education surrounding this, and the ultimate dominance of educational professional discourses.

To elaborate, the headteacher, chair of governors, the VC and other members of the SMT constituted the first tier of governance. The remaining governors made up the second tier. In the first tier key decisions relating to strategy would be made. The involvement of the chair in these decisions varied. In some cases chairs would be included in meetings with the head/SMT prior to the full governing body meetings. In other cases, the chair would only contribute following initial discussions amongst the SMT, but before full governors' meetings. The second tier of governance would act as a vehicle for consultation. Their contribution would tend to involve minor alterations and suggestions to decisions often already made. Blodeuyn Primary school was a particularly pertinent example of the two-tier structure of governance. The chair of governors was involved in meeting with the SMT, including the headteacher, prior to meetings of the full governing body. This would occur when members of staff were due to be appointed. As the chair explains: 'if there is a recommendation [on a staff appointment] I will have already spoken to the

head and deputy myself'. Such pre-meetings ensured that the chair and head were seen to express a common view, to 'be sure that we put the correct point' (chair). Conversely, there were schools amongst the case studies, where headteachers did not include the chair in this first tier of governance. Within this structure, governance consisted of heads and their fellow professionals as the first 'tier'. The rest of the governors, including the chair, were in a definite secondary position, acting as supporters and lobbyists for the school.

This was the case at the isolated, rural primary school, Betwys. In this school the headteacher did not differentiate between his chair of governors and the rest of the governing body. The head's preference was to minimize the involvement of governors in teaching and learning issues, the professional sphere in his eyes. Although both the head and chair had lived in the area all their lives, any 'capital' brought to the governing body in this sense was overridden by the head's status as a professional. The head would not contemplate governor involvement in observing classes for example, even though the chair believed this would encourage deeper understanding of the needs of the school. The chair was valued for his campaigning for school funding, although this represented a 'safe' role for governors, avoiding unnecessary interference with 'professional' issues. This lobbying role was considered appropriate by this headteacher, and by others in the case study schools whose chairs were likely to be involved in local politics. Conversancy with LEA agendas was deemed a useful source of information. At Blodeuyn Primary, the chair felt able to alert the headteacher to news relating to the application for funding for example. Party political allegiances could also be the source for tension however, for example when LEA-nominated governors represented opposing parties. This was the case at a Skipworth Primary. Furthermore, at Mynydd – a small, isolated primary - political involvement was in effect prohibited as it was regarded as distracting attention from the business of the school.

Cultural Capital and ‘Welshness’

The connection to politics in the nine case study schools was also aligned with local knowledge in a broader sense. There was evidence in the case studies that as schools situated in Wales, they were increasingly affected by the emerging revival of the Welsh language and culture. As bilingualism had started to thrive, so the cultural capital associated with being a ‘local’ had gathered pace. At Trefon Secondary for example, there was pride in their official recognition of the national saint’s day:

we’re the only school perhaps who have a day where children still celebrate St David – but they also get a holiday, they get a half day, so we’ve discussed it and we’ve agreed that the school should enjoy the traditional half day as well, without going against the legislation’ (head).

Furthermore, attempts to shape the school in terms of Welsh identity were, at times, a strategy for increasing pupil intake. At the rural secondary school Ysgol y Mor for example, competition with the local Welsh-medium school had been a motivating factor in the recent school name change to the Welsh translation. Furthermore, for similar reasons, this school was looking to increase the subjects they offered through the medium of Welsh. Mynydd Primary, in the industrial valley LEA, took pride in the ‘Welshness’ of the school, the VC describing parents sending their children there for this reason:

one of the supervisory assistants has sent children to the Welsh school (because) this school didn’t cover the Welsh dimension as well as it should and she’s told me her grandchild’s coming...we’ve got third generation children coming to this school because of our Welshness.

The status assigned to Welsh-medium education was gathering momentum in Wales during the research for this thesis, and this continues. The introduction of the Curriculum Cymreig (Welsh curriculum) into Welsh schools in 1991 had signalled initial attempt to revitalise the Welsh

language and culture. The aim of the initiative was to ensure that ‘cultural citizenship’ was part of the curriculum. Specifically, this related to ‘language, religion and bloodline...more than where one resides’. The ‘rebirth’ of the Welsh language gained further momentum with the inception of the NAfW in 1999. The Assembly positively promoted the use of Welsh, as this extract from a 1999 NAfW paper presented to the ‘Post-16 Education and Training Committee’, and published online, illustrates:

The Welsh language has a special place in our history because it is one of the major factors which has made us what we are. It is not the only factor by any means, but few would deny that Welsh has played an important part in the formation of our national identity. As such, it is a part of the heritage of every citizen of Wales, whether they speak Welsh or not: it is something in which we can all take pride. (NAfW, 1999).

The 2001 census reported an increase in the number of Welsh speakers. The popularity of bilingualism was boosted by research such as that conducted by the National Literacy Trust. This demonstrated the link between early bilingualism and improved cognitive skills. One Wales-related website described a ‘very exciting time for the language’ (BBC Home, 2006). The same website describes the turnaround from the indifference and hostility shown towards the language in nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to its revival within the last 30 years. To date, all students to the age of 16 must study Welsh in English-medium schools as a second-language or in Welsh-medium schools where the majority of subjects are taught in Welsh.

The promotion of Welsh was given a boost by the 1993 Welsh Language Act. This obliged all statutory services in Wales to be offered in both Welsh and English. For the first time in history, both languages were given official standing. The revival of the Welsh language in schools received a more recent boost through the ‘One Wales’ programme. This was a collaboration between the Labour and Plaid Cymru Groups in the NAfW. It sought to establish by March 2009,

the provision of Welsh-medium education from nursery level onwards. Besides the issue of cultural preservation, the connection between the acquisition of the Welsh language and academic success has increasingly become characteristic of the debate. This particular discourse has arisen from the assumed status and power associated with bilingual education. It can be usefully analysed by drawing upon Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital acquired to varying degrees in the French educational system. The extent of the popularity of Welsh-medium education is exemplified by the recent phenomenon of English parents attempting to access this. Reports from 2004 suggest that those living near to the Welsh borders were applying to already over-subscribed Welsh-medium schools (Wales Online, 2004). This resonates with the perceived cultural capital attached to religious schools and the parental struggle to gain entry to these for their children (Guardian Online, 2006).

The impact of Welsh-medium education and the compulsory teaching of Welsh have not always been reported in a positive light however. Some have questioned the value of the promotion of a language with its limited practical use, for example. In one industrial valley secondary school in the broader NAFW project, both teachers and parents in this largely English-speaking area saw the teaching of Welsh as an unnecessary burden. In this school cultural capital was drawn from its Catholic status. This ethos dominated the agenda and discourse of the school and as a result, discussions in the governing body (the chair of which was the local Catholic priest). At the extremes of this debate are those who may regard Welsh as an inhibitor of education. A recent example of this relates to a recent news story. This focussed on a pupil and the opinion of an educational 'expert' that his Welsh-medium education had compounded his Special Educational Needs (Wales Online news, 2008). There was also evidence in case study schools, of the need to strike a balance between community and belonging, and the risk of excluding anyone considered an 'outsider'.

Local v Professional Capital

One example of this was at the Mynydd, a small primary in Blenarth. At this school, governors identified strongly with the school as the focus for this isolated village. Both the headteacher and chair were proud that most governors were resident in the village. They were also very wary of 'outsiders' such as the 'dead wood' of former LEA governors, and those living outside the area. The governors were very involved with the operation of the school through the GOG. This involved all governors observing lessons and discussing teaching and learning issues. There were limits and boundaries around this however. Despite the outward inclusion of governors, the governing body had features of the two-tier model as discussed in the case study analysis (chapters 8-11). Whilst the governors were valued for their 'localness', the chair of governors - a headteacher at a school in another LEA - was valued for his professional expertise. The chair was not a regular visitor to the school, but as a fellow professional, the head valued his contributions. These were particularly important in terms of matters relating to strategy and school improvement. The experience of governance in this school demonstrated the dominance of professional discourse, despite the appearance of local, lay participation and accountability. Although it was the case that to varying degrees headteachers and chairs shared a common habitus, it was rare that decisions of the headteacher as education professional embedded in the school, did not take priority over that of the chair of governors, a visitor to the school.

The traditional role for governors as focusing on 'financing and building' (LEA official) rather than teaching and learning, limited their powers. This tension in the lay/professional dynamic was evident in the tentativeness around issues relating to issues such as headteacher's performance and pay. Such matters were considered beyond the abilities of non-professionals. As the headteacher of Llaneth Secondary comments 'I'm not sure to what extent in reality governing bodies are able to undertake performance management activities'. Despite this scepticism, there

were many examples in the case studies of chairs being encouraged to call upon their professional backgrounds in business and accountancy for example. Such was regarded as helpful to the school in tangible, practical ways. In the terms of Bernstein, the focus upon the practical rather than the strategic indicated the differentiation between discourses. Whilst governors focussed upon the ‘horizontal’ or ‘common-sense’ discourses of finance, business and in some cases lobbying, the professionals’ preoccupation was the ‘vertical’ discourses of school improvement, regarded as specialised and hierarchical.

Ambiguity and Manipulation

There was some frustration on the part of LEA officers and chairs of governors themselves about this restricted role. One head believed his chair was not sufficiently engaged in strategic issues and was ‘taking his energy in the wrong direction and not prioritising the correct issues’. Conversely, one chair was prevented by his headteacher from involvement in classroom observations, deeming this inappropriate for a governor. Focusing upon strategy was also hampered by the quantity of paperwork distributed to governors from local and national governments. This led one chair of governors to bemoan the ‘superficiality’ of his role:

if you’re involved in the setting of the strategic direction of the school which is the definition of what governors are, it’s difficult to see how you would do that without understanding the context in which that strategy is set, so for long as there is a huge amount of paperwork spewed out in education, governors have to at least get to grips with it, at a greater or lesser degree of superficiality.

It was noted amongst LEA officers that training sessions for governors tended to be poorly attended. This was interesting given governor uncertainty about their role, perhaps suggesting compliance with its ambiguous nature. It may also be indicative of the failure of heads to increase their skills by taking part in training. The headteacher of Betws Primary in rural Llanethshire had concerns that training had an adverse effect upon school governors’ ability to focus on

‘professional’ priorities: ‘when they (governors) go to a training session and they come back and they think they know more than they understand. In school the education of the children has to come first.’

Some heads and chairs noted the lack of leeway available to governing bodies. Decision-making was restricted to a small number of options. The head of Llaneth Secondary explains: ‘what you’ve got in terms of flexibility is in fact very, very small and that’s what the people on the finance committee discuss’. Limited scope for decision-making was accompanied by a feeling amongst governors that the role of governing was ill-defined. This left governors open to manipulation by headteachers. In some schools headteachers referred to the governors as a useful device for dispersing difficult decisions: the head of a Blodeuyn Primary described the governors as providing the head with a ‘very big cushion’:

because if I’ve got something unpleasant I need to get through like staffing redundancy, I can quite honestly say “the governing body says there must be some redundancies”, which is a lot easier than saying, “I haven’t got enough money to pay for the staff, so I’m making some of you redundant” (headteacher of Llaneth Secondary, Llanethshire); ‘(referring to the governing body) eased the burden on me because it’s not a personal decision, I’m not the one making the decision...in a way that is helpful, that’s perhaps when governors can be most supportive’ (headteacher, Llewelyn Primary school, Reithshire).

Lack of clarity over role definition could lead to specific difficulties for chairs especially. This dual role meant having a ‘foot in both camps’: the chair was at once a lay member of the community and, a member of the professional structure of the school. An example of this was at Llaneth Secondary where the chair of governors had been criticised by the head for dealing with a problem brought to her by a parent. The head was wary of this, preferring such cases to be referred directly to him. Conversely, at Ysgol Y Mor, another rural secondary, the chair’s approachability in the community was positively encouraged. In this case study, the head was keen for the chair to provide an ‘early warning system’, alerting her to potential difficulties in the

community. Here the chair was valued as a locally known figure. His self-assigned ‘civic duty’ was regarded as key to his success, as was the local knowledge he was able to bring to the governors and the headteacher in particular. The ‘spirit of volunteering’ was common to governors who rarely if ever, made expenses claims. Although most governors believed that the role should remain unpaid, it was interesting that conversely some chairs and headteachers suggested that the role of chair should be ‘professionalised’. This would occur through payment and/or accreditation and was further evidence perhaps of the capture of chairs of governing bodies within the bureaucratic habitus.

School Governance and Surveillance

The position of chairs of governors as conduits between the school and the community was particularly pertinent in Wales. Much of the country is rural with close-knit communities whereby the school represents the ‘hub’ of the community, a focus of local social activity and pride. In some case studies, the school provided the largest source of employment. It was clear in the research that the traditionally close relationship between LEAs and schools in Wales enhanced the domination of the professional discourse. Interviews with LEA officials demonstrated this. In Llanethshire this was particularly notable and was demonstrable in the control the LEA asserted within schools and their governing bodies. This LEA regularly set school governing body agendas and sent senior officials to governing body meetings. Furthermore, information was regularly gathered on individual governors, this particularly resonating with Foucault’s description of surveillance by the state, and the incitement of self-surveillance. The measures taken by Llanethshire were described by this LEA as ‘something well worth investing in’. The attendance of senior officials at meetings was described as ‘focusing governors’ minds’, ensuring ‘that that the quality of information comes through’. This LEA appeared to be particularly vigilant of governors, but there were aspects of this behaviour across

all three authorities. Many LEAs sent an LEA clerk to provide a link between the school and the LEA for example. Furthermore, the conduit role of the chair also provided a means of surveillance between headteachers and their catchment areas.

Governance in Wales: Radical Change, Familiar Influences

This paternalistic relationship between LEAs and schools was intensified following formation of the NAFW in 1999. Criticism of the then Education minister Jane Davidson for her 'cosy' relationship with councils was testament to the traditionally powerful position of local authorities in Wales. As the general secretary of the Secondary Heads' Association pointed out in 2001 (Guardian Online, 2001), this compares to a relative independence of schools in England: 'There is still the old LEA paternalism. In England there is a recognition that schools improve schools.' Furthermore in England, direct grants for heads contrasted with the system in Wales where grants were being funnelled by the NAFW through the LEA. Just four out of the 22 Welsh councils in 1999-2000 allocated more than 80 percent of their total budget to schools. Jane Davidson justified her opposition to direct funding in 2001 by referring to the need for an equal starting point for schools. She argued that flat-rate funding 'preserves the difference...We want to get a level playing field; we want there to be a strategic approach which tackles the worst first, so that by the time we reach 2010 every school in Wales is fit for purpose' (Guardian Online, 2001). Initiatives such as these were evidence of Wales' attempt to develop an education system significantly different from the English system. The rejection of league tables and the abolition of testing in schools sent a defiant message to Westminster. Drawing on Paterson, Rees relates to the rejection of New Labour and the promotion of what he describes as 'new social democracy', the differences between the two relating to means of achieving goals rather than the goals themselves (2003: 165-186). Although distinctive however, the education system has according

to Rees, been developed by factions within Welsh civil society that have consistently been at the helm of policy-making in the country.

According to Rees, it is groups such as politicians, civil servants, trades unions and LEAs who have improved and intensified their influence, following the inception of the Assembly. Rees qualifies this by alluding to the influence of these groups on education policies in particular, such as comprehensive schooling and the curriculum. These views reflect the ‘assumptive worlds’ of this long-established ‘policy community’ (2007:7). Rees’ arguments throw significant doubt on the NAFW’s challenge to power relationships and the promotion of democracy in Wales. His insights suggest that there continues to be few opportunities for excluded groups to contribute significantly to policy-making decisions. This would include the contribution of excluded groups in school governance. Whilst LEA-nominated governors may afford some influence in local political networks, and LEAs seek to consult with governors, these processes are not designed to challenge the domination of middle-class professionals in school governance and education policy more broadly. Given the origins of the NAFW, the preservation of the power of professional groups in education was perhaps inevitable. Wyn Jones and Trysan (2001) describe how, despite the rhetoric, the development of the Assembly was motivated more by political self-interest and expediency than the need to create structures promoting participatory democracy.

Answering the Research Questions

To conclude I will consider the research questions posed by this thesis in turn. These relate to: the discourses that are valued in school governing bodies and the head /chair relationship, the effects of the coding of knowledge and discourse in the professional / lay interface, the social dispositions of governors and how this affects their roles and the political consequences of this, and the discourses which are valued in school governing bodies and head/chair relationship. The

crosscutting theme throughout the thesis has been the extent to which it is possible for governors to operate as agents of participatory democracy.

- Discourses of the education profession are most valued in governing bodies. These were found to mediate the relationship between the head and chair of governors. The most successful head and chair relationships were those where the chair was conversant with this discourse by virtue of his / her cultural capital. Such capital was constituted by the professional background of governors and / or their engagement with local political networks.
- This coding of knowledge and discourse, where the ‘voice’ of the professional knowledge was deemed more valuable than the ‘outsider’ perspective of the lay governor, had the effect of marginalizing alternative viewpoints. Governors were generally compliant with this, accepting the bounded nature of lay and professional knowledge. Furthermore, through assimilation into the bureaucratic habitus over time and the operation of symbolic violence this may have been deemed inevitable.
- The social dispositions of governors - most of whom were likely to be middle-class professionals, particularly chairs, whose cultural capital and habitus, disposed them to comply with professionally-led decision-making. Likely to have succeeded in schools themselves, they were inclined to be conversant with the meritocratic discourse and inclined not to challenge the functioning of the school and of their own positions.
- The social profile of governors was inevitable given the positioning of the school (within which they operate), its relationship to other political institutions, and at the heart of this, the purpose of the school. As institutions of cultural reproduction, the operation of schools favours those with access to a particular discourse, that associated with privileged social groups. Bernstein’s code theory also reinforces the differentiating affect of language use and success at school according to class. Furthermore the school,

characteristic of those in Wales perhaps, were strongly tied to LEAs. The local authorities' close surveillance of school governance limited the possibility of challenge.

- Drawing upon a Foucauldian analysis, school governing bodies can be seen to operate as part of a wider project of governance, working to instil a predisposition amongst individuals towards 'improvement'. These processes are at work in an institution where meritocracy is the dominant discourse. In this construction of education, professional discourse dominates the lay perspective. This is not consistent with the possibility of governors acting as agents of participatory democracy.

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