LINK 3a: Literature Review: Jack Keating, Alan Reid, Neil Cranston and Bill Mulford

Public schooling and Public Purpose

Introduction

Public schooling and public education are not necessarily identical. As historically constructed public schooling has been depicted in the institutional form of state owned and managed schools, while public education has been a more elusive concept and can variously relate to the institutional form, or to less specific ideas of public purpose. Schooling as deeply social institution and is related to the social construct of communities and nations. So the historical processes of the formation of schooling might also be expected to reflect the history of communities and nations.

Schooling typically has formed into school systems, and the concept of public education has been strongly linked to these systems. Systems typically have the characteristics of univeralisation and standardisation of educational programs, and these features, together with that of free access are seen as the public forms of schooling. However, these forms beg the question of public purpose. Schooling can be free, universal and standardised, but these features do not express a public purpose. As noted elsewhere there are deliberate attempts to express public purposes of schooling today (e.g. the Adelaide Declaration: MCEETYA, 2007), but such forthright and authoritive pronouncements were not the basis for the formative processes of school systems.

Public education and public purposes are frequently cited as traditions of schooling, and in Australia as being those of 'free, compulsory and secular' schooling. Yet this definition is both inaccurate and inadequate. Furthermore in themselves they are relatively meaningless as they beg the questions of the purpose of education and its content. On the other hand the historical processes of the formation of school systems were driven by these questions.

The project will examine public purpose of schooling from a contemporary and empirical perspective. The major lens for this observation will be the schools and school systems, and these institutions have been historically formed. Therefore, it is appropriate to give some consideration to the questions of what is public education and how it was influenced by public purpose in the formative processes.

Origins of public education

A history of public education and its public purposes is constrained by the evolutionary nature of the concept of public. In one sense public is the opposite of private. However, this definition of public would include many forms of schooling such as those conducted by religious of faith groups, political groups, and other social groups. Schooling by its very nature is a group activity that must have some group purpose. This raises the question of when and how does group purpose become public purpose.

This has been reflected in the formative processes of schooling and public schooling. Typically schools were established by religious groups, through private endowements, through the patronage of social (class) groups, etc. Some public systems, such as that of the USA, evolved directly from highly localised group purposes (Herbst, 2006), and others such as that of Flanders have evolved in a manner where group purposes in the form of religious and family groups have remained compatible with wider secular and civic purposes. The evolution of what we have come to see as public schooling has been through two sets of processes. The first has been a gradual process of government contributions to schooling through both the subsidisation of religious and other schools and the establishment and management of schools by governments. The second has been the processes of systematisation whereby governments have imposed systemic features and standarisation, including the relatively unique innovation of compulsion, upon schooling.

The processes of systematisation began across European, North American and Australasian countries in the 1870s, and this coincided with the period of the formation of the liberal democratic states in these countries. Therefore, the idea of public education is strongly linked to the principles of liberal and secular democracies. These principles and their relationship to public school systems are not entirely consistent. For example, several of the European states such as Norway and Sweden maintained a state church throughout the 20th century, in the Netherlands and Belgium the majority of schools within the public system are religious schools, and in Ireland the established church (Catholic) effectively controlled the schools until quite recently. A particular historical feature of public schooling in Australia is its formation within a situation of denominational tension and rivalry.

Therefore it is difficult historically to clearly delineate public and private purposes in education. Broadly purposes might be classified as civic, social, and economic. Each of these has a public and private dimension. The civic purpose of active citizenship evolved in conjunction with the growth of liberal democracy. Yet the evolution of public schools and especially secondary schools was also through the efforts of social groups who were seeking rights of political participation (Simon, 1965). The social role of schooling is related to the idea of community building, but also has private purposes of network building (McCalman, 1993). The economic purpose of a literate and numerate labour force also has the private dimension of economic returns. Therefore, a brief examination of the formative processes of public schooling systems should assist to develop an understanding of historical drivers of public schooling and the formative aspects of public purposes.

Theories

Liberal and celebratory approach tended to dominate the earlier historical literature on the formation of schooling and tended to lack analyses of the realities of access and restriction in early education systems. The liberal concept of education as a static private good is challenged by Craig and Spear (1982a). They argue that a study of education systems requires the *"placing of education in the broadest social context"* and therefore *"define educational systems as those patterns and processes that allocate individuals within the social system and undertake to socialise them in their respective roles"* (67).

The Weberian account of historical sociology has provided the major body of theory on the formation and expansion of education systems. These accounts are based upon group conflict theory (Collins, 1971). This body of theory starts from the premise that *"education expands because of the decisions made by relevant actors"* (Craig and Spear, 1982b:135), and that the origins or the 'take-off' of education systems is to be located in the private supply of education provision. The Weberian model locates development in the actions and interactions of primary actors in society, and these actors can be examined through their identification as status groups. *"A comprehensive understanding of the emergence and operation of educational systems necessitates considering social action at both primary and corporate levels.."* (Craig and Spear, 1982a:79). Classes, while different from status groups, *"in the long run are the main source of status group formation"* (Hopper, 1981:20). The dynamic of the model is status group contestation or conflict. This dynamic, conditioned by prior social

and institutional structures, in turn provides the basis for the formation and growth of education systems (Archer 1981), and mobility within education systems.

The most complete version of the Weberian model is provided by Archer (1979, 1982) through a macro sociological approach to comparative studies of the history of the formation of education systems. Growth and change are brought about through the interaction of dominant and assertive status groups. The key assets of successful dominant groups are a monopoly of scarce resources, constraints upon other groups, and a complementary ideology that legitimises this domination. Assertive groups challenge the dominant groups by either substituting their own education provision for the dominant group monopoly or by restricting the control of the dominant group over education (Scotford-Archer & Vaughan, 1979). Restriction will involve the use of political power through the state. The extent to which an assertive group is able to use substitution will depend upon its economic power, and the extent to which it is able to use restriction will depend upon its political power.

The use of restrictive action, however, will depend upon the extent to which education is integrated with the state. Starting from the premise that in the emergent phase of education systems there is very little state involvement, Archer uses this concept in a later work (1981) as a basis for a theory of the expansion of education systems. The emergent or take-off phase is characterised by corporate group investment in education, and the key to education expansion is corporate conflict amongst influence groups.

The second phase is characterised by the growth of education systems where *"conflict gives way to corporate negotiation as the main process of interaction and source of change"* (23). During this phase, the role of the state increases in proportion to the reduction in group conflict. This phase is also characterised by the growth in secondary education, as by this stage the growth in primary education is complete. This growth is characterised by two other features: employers begin to recruit from secondary schools; and the emergence of bifurcated secondary systems through *"the working class grabbing 'secondary' education* (through elongating their studies) *before it was given them, and corporate action confining it to inferior channels* (39) (like the English secondary modern schools, and technical schools in Victoria)".[1] This in turn creates pressure upon the bourgeoisie to push the system upwards towards higher education, and it means that there are increased consequences

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[1] In the case of the Victorian technical schools the corporate action, which certainly was at work, was complemented by the union movement's resistance to the attempts of the Director General of Education to establish common secondary schools in the 1930s (Bessant, 1973).

for those who 'drop out' of education. Another response of the middle class is to turn towards private education.

In the third phase, the education system takes on a life of its own and the consequences for non-completion rise, and longer education becomes a necessity.[2] One consequence of this is the credentials inflation that another Weberian sociologist, Randall Collins (1979), had pointed towards some years earlier.[3] The system itself becomes inflationary, and amongst its other features is "*no significant differentiation of programmes throughout most of secondary education*" (53).

As Archer has noted, the Weberian tradition with its concentration upon the primary actors or micro theory, has needed to confront the problem of dualism in constructing macro theories. As a consequence, and as Archer herself has demonstrated, the macro theory tends towards an over elaboration that limits its applicability. For example, the assertive bourgeoisie of France and England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries could be seen to have engaged in 'restriction' and 'substitution' respectively. But why was it that a Scottish bourgeoisie, smaller both numerically and proportionally, needed to and indeed was able to develop more democratic education traditions, and maintain amongst the highest levels of access to university in Europe (Anderson, 1983)? The conflict theory upon which the macro theory is based (Collins, 1971) does not appear to provide a sufficient explanation for the Scottish developments. Something else was at work. This is related to the concept of Scottish nationalism within the unified British state, which in turn fits with Simon's (1994) view that "*the forces primarily involved in restructuring and systematising* (education) *are political and social rather than economic*" (44).

The major alternative to the Weberian account has come from Marxist historians who have located the growth of education systems in the impact of the development of capitalism upon social structures and relations. This has been a strong theme in some American writings, notably Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Katz (1976). They point to the hegemonic function of schooling in societies where social relations had been severely disrupted and subsequently needed to be refashioned in order to be accommodated within the new social and economic order.

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[2] This element of Archer's construction appeared more credible in 1979 after a period of rapid expansion in education, than in the 1990s when education growth has stopped and provider control or capture has been reversed.

[3] Although Dore (1976) had examined this at an earlier date.

These theories have been criticised for their alleged tendency towards functionalism (Collins, 1971) and even economic determinism (Archer, 1981). This seems unjustified, however, in the case of those writers who have emphasised the concept of hegemony. Katz for example, is conscious of the fact that public education was not imposed upon the community and *"became compulsory only after attendance had become nearly universal"* (1976:400). He adds that "*it did not differ from the dominant ideology of democratic capitalism in nineteenth-century North America."* (401).

Another criticism is provided by Green (1990) who notes that some of these accounts, including that of Katz, have an unjustified urban bias. It Australian and Scotland, for example, secondary education grew at least as rapidly in rural areas as in the cities. A key criticism of both the Weberian and Marxist theories is their inability to account for differential development of education systems. Green (1990) has noted that neither group conflict, economic functionalism nor the changes in social relations can adequately account for the extraordinary lag in the development of education in England, the legacy of which continued into the late 20th century.

More recent Marxist theories that stress the hegemonic role of educational formation and development have turned towards the role of the state as helping to explain some of the variations. Davey (1989; Davey and Millar, 1990) has looked towards combining social theory, including class and gender, with state theory as a means of *"understanding the complexity of forces at work in the formation of schooling"* (9). Tyack and James (1986) have provided an analysis of the apparent aberration of public support for state-sponsored schooling in the formation of the American republic, in a society that has nurtured a profound distrust of government. King (1976) has concluded that despite the highly individualistic social order and the anti-statist traditions, the American public came to believe in the 'idea' of public education, and that this idea is located in the American state that needed to be built and sustained in the context of successive waves of immigration.

These accounts, however, have stopped short of proposing a theory of education formation and development. An exception has been Green's (1990) comparative study of the role of the state in the formation of education systems. He acknowledges the contribution of conflict theory and argues that *"it was the nature of the state and the relation of classes in civil society to the state"* (75) that also determined educational change. His analysis starts with the premise that education has been supply rather than demand-led. While acknowledging the contributions made by other theories he concludes that "*the major*

impetus for the creation of national education systems lay in the need to provide the state with trained administrators, engineers and military personnel; to spread dominant national cultures and inculcate popular ideologies of nationhood; and so to forge the political and cultural unity of burgeoning nation states and cement the ideological hegemony of their dominant classes....Three historical factors have been particularly associated with this accelerated process of state formation or 'nation-building.''(309) They are the existence of external military threats or territorial conflicts; revolution or a struggle for national independence; and national attempts to escape from economic underdevelopment (see also Feigembaum, 1995).

In Europe, North America and Australasia the churches played a significant role in the supply of education during the expansionary phase of the late 19th century. But the relationship between the churches and the state in each country and region was different. For example, in Australia the state was forced to intervene in elementary education because of the inefficiency, and what amounted to over supply of schooling from competing denominations (Austin, 1961). The established church in Scotland acted as a state substitute in developing a national system of schooling (Anderson, 1995). But it was supply driven and only incidentally related to 'national' purposes. The established church in England acted to limit the intervention of the state, but eventually the inefficiency of the supply of schooling required a greater state role (Cruikshank, 1963).

There also are regional variations to be taken into account. For example from the mid 19th century, Victoria had a larger and more assertive middle class, both economically and politically, than the rest of Australia, and the outcomes in terms of private provision are the result of this assertiveness.[4]

In the case of Scotland, nationalism does not coincide with the nation state, and has various relations with the state, social institutions and even institutions beyond the nation state, such as Europe. There has been a similar detachment of nationalism in Australia from the nation state. In one sense, in pre-World War One Australia, nationalism was strongly related to another nation state, that of Britain. The attachment to the British

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[4] Rosecrance (1964) has argued that the character of the white population in Australia began to change from the middle of the 19th century. He has identified three waves of immigrants: the convicts, up until the 1840s, who were mostly criminals; middle class migrants in the 1820s and 1830s, who were by and large refugees from British industrialism; and those who came with the gold rushes, who were a more ambitious type. These waves had a differential impact upon Victoria and NSW, with the first two located largely in NSW and the third and more likely group to produce a middle class, located mainly in Victoria.

Empire was a strong element in education in Australia, as it was in Scotland, and for similar reasons.[5]

Trow's (1993) observation that *"secondary schools in the United States have been extensions of primary education upwards..*(in)*.. contrast, in the UK, as in most other European countries, upper secondary education* (both public and private) *has been an extension of the universities downwards"* (290). But part of Scotland's claimed democratic educational tradition was the virtual extension of secondary education into university education (Anderson, 1995). The established class structures of European countries had ladders built upon private rather than public elementary and preparatory schools. This was not possible in the newer societies of Australia and North America, however, and patterns of public primary and elementary education were established in the latter part of the 18th century. In Australia's case, this was due largely to the inadequacies of the diverse patterns of church, private venture and dame schools (Austin, 1961; Hooper, 1996).

Theories about the formation of school systems are relatively diverse and complex, none the least because of the different patterns of formation across nations in the critical period of the late 19th century. Broadly, however, two sets of factors stand out. One is that of the behaviours of different social and to some extent economic groups and the processes of assertiveness and resistance. The other is the role of the state, which was emerging in its new form of liberal democracy. In Australia both sets of factors are observable.

Public Education in Australia

State formation

We have argued that the idea of public education is closely associated with the entity of the state. At one level this is because public schooling has the characteristic of systematisation with its features of public funding and public regulation. It can include public ownership and management, but these elements are not universal in any of the public school systems across Europe, North America and Australasia, with the exception of the USA and Australia. On another and arguably more important level public education is related to the polity of its community. This is not to suggest that the purpose of a public school system is to underpin the political system of its society or nation. However, it does have a role in supporting and strengthening the culture in the

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[5] e.g. see Tate, 1908.

form of the main values, beliefs and sets of knowledge upon which the polity depends. In these societies they are the values, beliefs and sets of knowledge that support the principles and behaviours of a liberal democracy.

In this sense, therefore, the formation of public education systems is closely associated with the formation of the liberal democratic states. The formative processes in Australia was through the colonial and later state governments, and it is more than a coincidence that public schooling was part of this formative history.

If we look across the western democracies public school systems have different characteristics, as well as some common characteristics. In fact the Australian versions have some particular and in fact unique characteristics, and our notion of what constitutes a public education system and how it serves public purpose needs to accommodate these characteristics. Therefore we need to arrive at some understanding of what these characteristics are and how they were formed.

Staying with the theme of state and polity formation there has been a concentration in Australian history of the movement from a landed economic and political establishment to the development and political ascendancy of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie and the formation, challenge and subsequent accommodation within the polity of the Australian labour movement. Symptomatic of these developments was the earliest establishment in Australia of the democratic political instruments of universal suffrage within the British model of responsible government, and the world's first national labour government in 1905.

The microcosm of the rapid formation of an independent liberal capitalist economy and state, however, needs to be qualified. Fitzpatrick (1969) has argued that in the two decades after 1890 the Australian economy, during the crucial period of secondary education formation, was subservient to British capitalism as a reliable supplier of cheap raw materials. McQueen (1975) has located a middle class with a cultural dependence upon Britain as the dominant force in colonial history. And while the liberal democratic institutions in Australia were to develop in advance of those in Britain, constitutional and legal links with Britain were to remain.

Thus, for a society and a nation state that has built up its own myths of radicalism and egalitarianism, Australia's approach to nationalism has remained problematic throughout its history. As a white society formed in the wake of the French revolution and European nationalism, and in the context of the industrial revolution and British

imperialism, Australian nationalism has remained a dependent concept. The radical myth has not been compatible with the demands of imperial loyalty, which respectively were weakened and strengthened by the severe depression of the 1890s and the Great War. Radical nationalism in Australia has not been nourished through any independence movements (Alomes, 1988), or deep cultural traditions, and in its populist forms has been relegated to myths of the bush and sport. But it did gain early expression in both political and industrial forms, especially in NSW, and this period coincided with that of the formation of public education.

Within this context, the institutional and bureaucratic forms of private capital and the state, both of which were attached to another nation state, tended to militate against the formation of both radical nationalism and indigenous culture, apart from the facades of cultural myth, including political radicalism. Thus the application of a liberal culture within an education system will be dependent, and it can be expected that any growth of education will tend towards utilitarian ends. Murray Smith (1967) has lamented the limitations in the *"doctrines of national efficiency and national destiny"* which had *"by the onset of the First World War, turned Australian education ...into narrow paths"* (822).

Another interpretation of this situation is that during the period of state formation in Australia, from the 1850s to the 1900s, civil society was weak, and as a consequence it had a weak relationship with the political state. Although influenced by the philosophies of British liberalism, especially through the new bourgeoisie class, the political state in the form of the state legislatures was more susceptible to class interests, including those of the labour movement. A feature of class relations during the formative stage of public education in Australia, therefore, was that they were played out through the mechanisms of the state, and more so than any other society at that time (Hartz, 1964).[6] Elements of the civil society including elementary, secondary and technical education, and indeed the economic base as in the case of arbitration, were more subject to negotiations through the political state than in other societies at the time.

Church and state – the failure of the settlements

In Australia, or more specifically in the penal colonies of New South Wales and Tasmania (Van Diemman's Land) the state established an early monopoly and spawned

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[6] This does not mean that the state entered education on a major scale. Rather, its distance from the civil society forced it to both neutralise elements of the civil society, as in the secular provisions of the 1870 education acts, and to negotiate with the labour movement in education, as it did in industry with arbitration and tariffs.

its first ruling class in the form of the military officer class. This group was to provide the initial landed elite, which for a while held pretensions to the establishment of a colonial titled aristocracy, and it rapidly assumed political dominance. The state's early dominance was complete, and the first schools to be established were state schools, although there was no early public venture into grammar schools (Clark 1962:258).[7]

Even as late as 1840, 17,763 or 40 percent of the white population of 40,000 were convicts (Clark 1973:199). Thus the majority of the population was directly linked to the colonial state up to the eve of self-government and the rapid population increases of the gold rushes and the nascent Australian capitalism of the 1850s.[8] Under the auspice of the state, a Protestant ascendancy was rapidly established in the late 18th century. But by the second half of the next century this *"was crumbling to ruins, and the dream of the brotherhood of man was taking possession of men's minds"* (Clark 1962:380).

The 40-year boom in eastern Australia had a profound and long-term effect upon Australian society. Apart from multiplying its population and creating a highly urbanised society with a very large percentage of the population concentrated in the state capital cities, it established an industrial base and high per capita income, and accelerated the processes of social change. The processes of class formation were compressed in Australia, in which the political institutions had progressed from colonial oligarchies in the early 19th century to universal suffrage by the end of the century, and the world's first labour government in 1899 in Queensland.

The urban working class did not begin to form until the 1860s, but by the end of the century, together with the rural working class, it had established its own industrial and political movement, and its own national government in 1905. Class formation during the second half of the 19th century was also influenced by the rural working class. The strength of the pastoral economy in Australia and the large squatter runs required a waged and itinerant working class. Ward (1958) has argued that it was the rural working class that developed Australian radical nationalism in the 1880s. The attitude of this class of 'men' was formed through their frontier life, their status as wage earners to the squatter class, and their origins as convicts.

Thus in Australia with this possibly unique experience of a rural working class radicalism there was an early expression of class based economic interests through the state which

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[7] The British aristocracy had virtually no connection with Australia. British settlers were almost entirely of the middle and lower classes.

[8] Rosecrance (1994) has argued that this also produced a more dependent culture.

merged with the colonial tradition of state centralism. This compared with the English liberal tradition of voluntarism, and the American tradition of localism. It also compares with the Scottish education tradition with its routes in the Scottish Enlightenment, Calvinist meritocracy and localism. Thus in the Australian colonies the idea of state action gained an early presence.

The failure of a municipal system in schooling that had been adopted from England led to the establishment of boards of education: the Denominational and National Schools Boards. Ely (1975) has argued that participants in the activities of the National Board favoured greater centralisation of its activities. This offered the colonial administrators a solution to the growing pressure for funds. This value for money was in contrast to the more dispersive pressure from the Denominational Board. Thus the National Board and its developing state school system gained an early advantage over its denominational rivals. By 1880, the movement towards centralisation had resulted in the creation of a minister for education and an education department (Ely, 1973) that replaced the State Board.

The tendency towards centralisation of administration in education has been a feature of all Australian states, as noted by the American Freeman Butts (1955) during his visit.[9] *"New South Wales thus presents the extreme example of that centralisation which is characteristic of Australia as a whole"* (Davis, 1960:59).[10]

There is an argument to be made that the interpretation and perceptions of 'public education' in Australia have come largely from NSW. The state, apart from being the biggest, has the most robust government school system with its meritocratic traditions and its links with politics and power. Who's Who entries for NSW are dominated by the alumni of the elite government secondary schools, Labor has dominated the treasury benches for most of the past century partially through its strong provincial constituency, and there have been strong links with the NSW Teachers Federation and NSW governments. At the other end of the spectrum is the state of Victoria, where Labor until the 1980s had very brief visits to the treasury benches. It has most strongly represented the British liberal and voluntarist traditions, and its combination of urban bourgeoise and rural squattocracy has nurtured a type of gentility where education has strong social status rather than economic purposes.

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[9] Connell (1963) has pointed out that most overseas visitors who have written about Australian education have been struck by its rigidity, authoritarianism and centralisation.
[10] This is centralisation at the state level, and is in contrast to the resistence of state officials and governments to any centralisation at a national level.

The NSW *"central agencies have traditionally been the most powerful"* (Halligan & Power, 1992), and unlike Victoria with its Council for Public Education (Dunbar, 1976), its independent statutory authorities, and even the short-lived State Board of Education (1985-92), the educational administration has been able to consistently resist such dispersion of power and responsibility. This position has been comfortable within the NSW polity. In NSW in 1874, a Council for Public Education for making Primary Education National, Secular, Compulsory and Free was established. The Council which had a considerable influence in the passing of the 1880 *Education Act* that made education national, compulsory and secular, *"according to Parkes's statement"* (Crane, 1964:199), was conceived by a number of members of Parliament who had supported the withdrawal of state support for church controlled schools.[11]

Religion has loomed large in much of the history of the formation of education in Australia (for example, Austin, 1961). During the formative stage of state education, the denominational interests that the colonial states had managed to balance through the various devices of the Irish National System, the allocation of resources equally between the *three grand divisions of Christianity* (Pike, 1957) and the Denominational and National schools boards became increasingly incompatible with the corresponding political balances required by the responsible government of the colonial legislatures.[12]

In Victoria the churches were forthright in their views that the state should not establish an education system of its own (Dear, 1965). But, by the mid-19th century, the time had well passed when the Anglican Church could lay any reasonable claim to be the established church, and the new state legislature was forced to deal with the sometimes contradictory demands and various alliances of the churches in their resistance.

Within the social and economic dynamics of a rapidly developing mercantile capitalism, the denominational demands and changing alliances in education had a destabilising affect upon the colonial legislature (Dear, 1965). This led some of its prominent members towards secularism as a solution (Dow, 1964). Victoria was to move more quickly than the other colonies towards secularism in the form of the 1872 *Education Act* which *"had secured for the parliament a bulwark against recurrent political strife over the education question"* (Grundy, 1981: 24). But at the same time, the *"government declared that the reformed system would primarily be concerned with the elementary learning needs of the labouring population, and*

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[11] Henry Parkes as a member of Parliament and Premier in NSW was closely associated with the development of state education. Together with Alfred Deakin from Victoria he was also the central figure in the federation of the Australian states in 1901.
[12] Anglian, Catholic and Nonconformist.

the middle classes ....should not turn to the bounty of free state schooling, but should continue to pay privately for their children's education. ...In Victoria a striking contrast developed, well into the twentieth century between the heavily bureaucratized public schooling for mass consumption, and a customary social deference to the respectable economic individualism of those parents who privately purchased different forms of education" (Grundy, 1981:150-151).

This period had brought together various mixtures of secular and religious alliances and demands to the new theatre of the state legislature. The emerging working class-radical liberal alliance that was characteristic of Victoria; a short and unexpected alliance between the Anglicans and Catholics (Dear, 1965); shifting alliances within the legislature (Grundy, 1973); popular demands for elementary education; and the denominational demands were all symptoms of a society in a state of rapid change. Within this turbulence the interests of the bourgeoisie were the driving forces. But the secularist solution was a political solution to a political problem. It was not in the interests of the commercial and industrial middle class in economic terms, as it meant the withdrawal of state support for denominational schools. But it was tolerable, and it provided the solution to problems it faced in its political aspirations. These problems included not only the need for some stability in government, but the support of the working class in the face of the opposition of the property-based upper house, the Legislative Council. The political settlement, was also a class settlement, and was as much about secondary education as about elementary education. The assumption of middle class private investment in elementary education extended to secondary education, a form of education not accepted within the polity as being appropriate for the working classes. Group conflict that appeared as conflict between denominations and between church and state which preceded the 1872 Act was to result in a class settlement.[13]

In NSW the secularist Act of 1880 had been preceded by the Public School Bill of 1866. It was this act that was to establish the right and responsibility of the state to provide elementary education, and the major argument advanced for the provisions of the bill in favouring state over denominational schools was efficiency in provision. Despite clerical opposition, the Bill gained overwhelming support in the legislature (Austin 1961:119-120). It was, therefore, the nature of the NSW state and its perceived need for an efficient elementary education system that was to make the first telling blow against

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[13] As Gregory (1973) has noted *"there was, even through the half century of tension..., always a good deal of common interest between Church and state in Victoria....Hardly less than any avowedly Christian state, the secular State of Victoria actively involved with legislation controlling the behaviour of its citizens in areas which may broadly be labelled moral, at least in the Judaeo-Christian tradition,.."* (196)

denominationalism. When the secular act of 1880 did come, it was the culmination of severe antagonism between the Catholic church and the government, and was largely a response to the church's claims for independence and its attacks upon secular liberalism within the state system. Like the 1972 Act in Victoria, it was a political settlement, but not a class-based settlement.

Clark and Gregory (1958) have interpreted the 1872 Act in Victoria as the uniting of *"the Calvinists and the low churchmen...to drive religion out of state-subsidized education"* (quoted in Austin 1961:167). As a political settlement, however, the 1872 Act in Victoria did represent something of a defeat for the Catholic church. As a consequence, in Archer's terms, Catholic education reverted to substitutive action in Victoria, but restrictive action in NSW. And once, again the major factor in this different approach appears to be the relationship of this community, or element of the civil society, with the state.

Jupp (1986) has argued that what differences there have been in the histories of the cities of Melbourne and Sydney can largely be explained by the fact that Labor has held government in NSW for most of the past century, while it has infrequently held office in Melbourne. This has been due in a large part to Labor's failure to gain any foothold in Victoria outside of Melbourne, something which it has achieved in NSW, where it has been advantaged by the existence of several large provincial cities. The bourgeois and liberal-Protestant (largely non-conformist) political ascendancy in Victoria has meant that social and economic success has been associated with the institutions of this class, which include private schools. In both states, Labor has been strongly influenced by Irish Catholics, and its ascendancy in NSW has meant less emphasis upon education as a means of social, economic and political advancement, a relatively stronger state school sector, and a closer relationship between the Catholic church and the state.[14]

Jupp's argument is not entirely satisfactory, as it does not account for the earlier relative strengths of the state in the two communities, before the formation of the labour movement and party. His description of the relationship of the Catholic Church and its community to the state, however, is important. The alienation of the Catholic Church from the state in Victoria led to a more volatile relationship with the Labor Party, and a stronger role for the laity (Henderson, 1986). Both of these ultimately contributed towards a split in the party (Murray, 1970), and towards the substitution in education

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[14] The historical relationship between the ALP in NSW and the Catholic Church has been cited on numerous occasions in the literature (e.g. Henderson 1986; Jupp, 1986; Murray, 1970; Hogan, 1980).

through the establishment of a grammar school designed to give meritocratic access for Catholic boys to the liberal professions (Greening, 1961).

In NSW, *"the emphasis was getting on with the job"* (Henderson, 1986, 126), and the closer relationship of the church with the state increased the authority of the clerical hierarchy, and required less emphasis upon substitution, as the Catholic system was more closely integrated with the state and its meritocratic system. Conflict between the Catholic schools and the state did break out in NSW in the form of a mass enrolment of Catholic students in the government schools of Goulburn, a provincial town of NSW. Hogan (1986) has interpreted this as the result of the local and lay reaction to the ameliorist approach of the Church hierarchy towards the government. In Victoria, the Church remained more separated from politics, both from the Protestant rump of the non-Labor parties, and the Labor Party itself after the 'Split'. This required different tactics.

This failure to reach a settlement contrasts with experiences in the other western democracies. In countries such as Norway, Denmark, and Sweden the existence of state churches meant that there was no real tensions. There has been a considerable amount of rivalry between the established Catholic church and the state in the Latin countries, and the relationships have varied between the aggressive state assertions of revolutionary France to the concordat between the church and the state within Franco's Spain. In all cases, however, this has not prevented the principle of public funding and public purposes. In the USA the multi ethnic and multi denominational nature of the society made the idea of publicly subsidised church schools an impossibility very early in the history of the nation. This together with some early assertiveness of the civic role of schooling prevented such practices (Butts, 1989). While England did have an established church the particular characteristics of English liberalism and its voluntarist traditions and the nature of the dissenting churches (Hempton, 1979) reduced the emergence of sectarianism in the relationships between government and the church schools (Grace, 2001; Cruickshank, 1981). Thus the government was able to secure an agreement with the main church groups, including the Catholic Church, over funding and governance arrangements that allowed the extension of full funding to the church schools (Grace, 2001). Finally in Scotland, the Presbyterian parish or village schools which were established at an early stage effectively formed the public school system (Anderson, 1985). Apart from Australia, only New Zealand failed to reach a settlement between church and state over the issue of schooling by the post war period. A settlement was

reached in New Zealand in the 1970s when the Catholic Church agreed to accept full state funding on certain conditions (FitzGerald, 2003). Australia failed to reach a similar settlement at the same time, when the indigent Catholic education sector was faced with the twin pressure of a rapid decline in its teaching orders and increased pressure for greater quality was in dire need of public funding. One reason for this is likely to have been the highly centralist characteristics of public education in Australia, which both discouraged the Catholic Church from reaching a settlement of the New Zealand type, and the resistance within the state school sectors, especially in NSW and especially from the NSW Teachers Federation.

This history has consolidated certain features of Australian schooling. First it created a split between government or state schools and non-government schools, which were mostly church schools. Second it consolidated highly centralised government school systems run by state education departments located in the large capital cities. Third it created a high degree of tension between the churches and the state. In Australia the dominant position of the established church, the Anglican Church, was soon assailed and the subsequent relationships between church and state were influenced by rivalries between the churches, and by the particular relationship of the Catholic Church with the colonial and subsequent state governments. These two factors effectively prevented any settlements of the type that have been almost universal in all other western democracies. They were reinforced by the relationships between the Catholic Church and the labor movement. The church rivalries and the associated sectarianism made it difficult for state governments to make overtures to the church school systems. Conversely the highly centralised state systems caused the church schools to be wary and tended to build cultures of resistance within the state systems, especially amongst teachers, to the church schools. There is also the irony in Australia that possibly more than any other of the western democracies the earliest schools were established by the state, yet it now has possibly the weakest public systems. This suggests that the particular concept of public schooling that has been most frequently expressed in Australia is a heavily institutionalised form.

Secondary education and private interest

The other theatre for development of the Australian version of public education has been that of secondary education. Through the second half of the 19th century, until the

depression of the 1890s *"the most conspicuous characteristic of the colonial secondary schools....was their variety in ownership and control, size and quality"* (French, 1958:147). The colonial administrations had been forced to enter into elementary education and had developed binary approaches of state administered and denominational schools, each supported by state funds through separate National Education Boards and Denominational Schools Boards. But secondary education almost for the entire century remained a private affair, and while there was no shortage of supply of schools, the barrier of fees made *"colonial secondary education, typically, a privilege of the middle class"* (French, 1958:153). Private secondary education was supported directly through fees from a very affluent society and a rising urban bourgeoisie.

The period was one of middle class triumph, or what Manning Clark (1981) has called the *'age of the bourgeoisie'* (223-226). This class was bracketed by a pretentious but relatively insignificant 'bunyip' aristocracy, and a labour movement that accepted the tenets of the bourgeois state, *"accepted political responsibility, relinquished the attempt to clutch the sun out of the sky and accepted a place in the sun instead"* (Murray Smith, 1967:884).

Although the troika of free, compulsory and secular ideals that were embodied in the 1870s education acts was only partially completed, the acts did not necessarily assume or facilitate the entry of the state into secondary education. The state governments provided support for independent secondary schools, but the establishment of post-elementary schools required supplementary acts in Victoria in 1910. In NSW, however, *"public schools with grammar class tops grew in number after 1867, though one or two had existed long before"* (Barcan, 1965:182).

A subsequent phase is that of the massive expansion of state secondary education that occurred after the second world war. This was facilitated by a public that, through the experience of severe economic depression and world war, had come to regard education as an important social and economic investment. The arrival of large numbers of migrants from war ravaged Europe also added to the numbers of aspirants to a new and better life. Governments could meet these aspirations with treasuries buoyed by a post-war economic boom, relieved of wartime demands, but not burdened by the need for industrial reconstruction.

But the substantial orientation of secondary education in this period had already been established previously. The foundation of a powerful private secondary sector with strong links to higher education, together with a habitual reluctance on the part of mostly

conservative governments to enter into secondary education, was laid prior to the 1930s depression. McCalman (1993) has argued that the great ideological divides between the post-war middle and working classes of Australia were tempered through the common experience of war, and to a lesser extent of economic recession. Her fear that this divide is now increasing with the coming of another generation devoid of common experiences may be supported by the growth in strength of the private sector, especially in the secondary schools, over the past decade.

In the space of 50 years, the formation of a landed and politically dominant class was rapidly overtaken by an urban commercial and later industrial bourgeoisie, only to be faced by an aspirant working class in the 1880s. The influence in the colonial societies of the established church, the Church of England, was neutralised with the emergence of the bourgeoisie and the growth of denominations. The state generally attempted to play a neutral role in the educational assertion of the major denominations, initially through implementing the Irish National System, and subsequently through the establishment of the Denominational Schools Board alongside the National Education Board (Austin, 1961). As a consequence there was a different attitude of the colonial and subsequent state governments towards elementary and secondary education. The inadequacies of the church schools, and the difficulty of providing them with public funds forced the establishment of systems of state elementary schools. The idea that secondary education was largely a private and genteel affair had a strong base in those states dominated by conservative governments, notably Victoria and South Australia. In those states where Labor was more influential, notably NSW and Queensland, public secondary education gained a foothold.

But the dual system, in what must be regarded as Archer's first stage, was thus an outcome of both the assertiveness of the denominations and their group interests, and the needs of the colonial administration to attempt to establish some order in the nascent societies. In this sense, the moral interest of church and state merged.[15] But the practicalities of providing elementary education in a such a vast land made state support for a voluntarist education system (Allen, 1981) based on the denominations untenable. Thus the needs of the state were to have an early impact upon education in Australia. The characteristics of this emergent capitalist state with its increasingly secular identity in

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[15] The diverse array of schools makes it difficult to classify class and denominational interests, apart from the tendency for the colonial landed ruling class to be associated with the Anglican Church and the rural and emerging urban working class to have a high percentage of Catholics.

the face of denominational conflict, and its developing philosophy of 'new liberalism', in the 1870s, was to provide the foundations for education in Australia that would remain intact at the elementary level throughout most of the next century.

The economic and social conditions of late 19th century Australia were particularly conducive to the growth of liberalism. Christianity, according to Roe (1986), *"has always been on the defensive"* (2) in Australia. Landed wealth had a very short period of political ascendancy and a shorter period of economic ascendancy, and the rapid formation of the working classes and the labour movement meant that the Australian variant of 'new liberalism' can be interpreted as the *"conciliatory strategy of class rule",* and part of the vast apparatuses that *"our state has developed ...for negotiating and absorbing into itself class and intra-class tension"* (Rowse, 1978, p10-11).

Charlesworth (1967) has distinguished J.S. Mill's principle of the right of the state to ensure that its members have an adequate education and his rejection of the state as the major agency for education. He has argued that it was the 19th century liberals' failure to distinguish between these two principles that led to the acceptance of state education systems in Australia through the vehicle of secularism. His argument might be challenged, but it does serve to make the point that the 1870s education acts across Australia were not of the same quality. For example, in the case of Victoria, the 1872 Act used secularism as a solution to a political problem. Superimposed upon the administrative problem of isolation, it led to the establishment of the state system. This is wholly different to the more deliberate establishment of public schools in America, for example. In NSW the 1880 Act established secularism, and was not related to the role of the state in education. That had already been established through a previous act, a more deliberate act. So across Australia there was a degree of difference towards the establishment of state education, but commonality in the imposition of secularism, but as a political solution rather than a educational principle. In turn the motivations for the establishment of state elementary systems were located in the apparent failure of the churches to do this properly and the inability of the state to do this through the churches because of secularism (Austin, 1961).

Superimposed on top of this is the ambivalent attitude within the Australian polity towards the idea of public secondary education. On the whole the Labor Movement in Australia took a minimal interest in secondary education. In Victoria, for example, the *"trade unions were concerned with technical education. They had little, if anything, to say on other*

aspects of post-primary education or university, which for all practical purposes were not the concern of the working class." (Bessant, 1974:61). In South Australia shifting alliances within the legislature averted a sustained push for state secondary education (Grundy, 1983). There was a different attitude in NSW where the Labor Party was frequently in power. However, NSW Labor and Queensland Labor in government needed to appeal beyond the working class to the bourgeoisie through the establishment of a state funded meritocratic secondary education. On the whole the history of state secondary education in the Australian states has been one of conservative party resistance, and a degree of disinterest from the unions. Labor Governments have tended to take a meritocratic attitude and one based upon the limitations or rather than rejection of private schools. Thus public secondary education developed in areas where private provision failed to reach, notably in the regional centres.

Into the last decades of the 20th century, therefore, public education in Australia carried two legacies. First, with the exceptions of the USA and New Zealand, it failed to reach a settlement with the churches about the place of their schools in a public system based upon the principles of free access, public funding and a public curriculum. Second, it carried a strong cultural and to a lesser extent institutional legacy of secondary education as an essentially private concern. Furthermore, the two have interacted historically such that the mainly working class community with its strong Irish Catholic background invested strongly in its own secondary school system, rather than a less accessible government secondary system, as a basis of social progression. This was backed by a Church that saw its own secondary schools as a means of access to more powerful social positions, especially in the professions (Greening, 1961).

Public purpose

The expression of public purpose in schooling has been different both across and within nation states. Some of the earliest and most forthright expressions came from the newly formed United States of America in the late 18th and early 19th century. For example the Massachusetts (1780) and New Hampshire (1784) constitutions both referred to *"Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country,…"* (cited in Butts, 1989:71). One of the earliest advocates of education Robert Coram identified the social advantages education for all

by stating that education should not be *"confined to the children of wealthy citizens; it is a shame, a scandal to civilized society, that part only of the citizens should be sent to college and universities to learn to cheat the rest of their liberties."* (cited in Butts, 1989:79).

Of course the US pronouncements were talking place in a newly formed state that was to tolerate slavery for a further 90 years, and which did not formally adopt the full institutional forms of democracy for another 120 years. These same limitations were reflected in the emergence of public education in revolutionary France (Vaughan and Archer, 1971). They extended throughout the 19th century and carried with them a view of limited access to secondary education and a view that higher learning reflected a higher culture that had limited popular application (Palmer, 1982). By the end of the 19th century virtually all of the western democracies had accepted and implemented the principle of free and universal elementary education. This had essentially been a supply driven development, yet the innovation of compulsory schooling was essentially met with voluntary attendance across almost all countries.

The cultural and civic foundations of public schooling remained into the 20th century but other expressions began to emerge. The social ferment created by the industrial revolution found its expression in more direct claims on schooling. In some cases this took class and political forms, such as the position of the Social Democrats in Germany who argued for curriculum reforms that reflected socialist principles (Olson, 1977). More broadly they took the form of claims of broader access to secondary education, and the secondary education for all movement in the pre secondary world war period in England being one obvious expression of this (Simon, 1974).

Therefore, the idea of public purpose has come to incorporate the principle of universal access, which into the latter part of the 20th century formed the principle of equality of opportunity within education systems. The meritocratic principle had existed in some school systems, such as those of Scotland and New South Wales, for some period. However, the idea that an education system would provide opportunity and equal opportunity for all was not accepted until the late 20th century. In Australia the Victorian Blackburn Report of 1985 (Blackburn, 1985) was the first major document to argue that all students should be able to complete secondary education.

This paper has argued that the idea of public purpose in Australian schooling has come to be associated with the institutional forms of state schooling, a form that is relatively unique amongst liberal democracies. Within this form it was able to sustain a

meritocratic construct of secondary schooling until challenged in the post World War II period. However, the fragility of the philosophical base of this form has been shown by the assault of managerial and liberal market philosophies in the last decade of the 20th century where private interest and advantage have underpinned public policy and have been the key drivers of the patterns of provision and outcomes (Lamb, 2007).

Therefore, the search for public purpose in schooling in Australia needs to be located at the elementary or primary level. On the whole in Australia the public purposes have been assumed and reflected in patterns of universal provision and a common curriculum that in all colonies and subsequent states were guaranteed by law. In this form public purpose was reflected in a combination of public or common rights of access to a school where tuition was free and where some common areas of learning were guaranteed. In Australia in the formative period of schooling, the late 19th century, this was relatively robust, and reflected the robust formation of democracy (Austin, 1961). Hence there was a natural compatibility between group or class purposes and aspirations and the needs of the newly formed democratic state(s) for social order and civic capacity.

There is an apparent paradox in the history of state schooling between highly centralised state school systems and the continued existence of a large private sector, especially in secondary schooling, which has been highly assertive in achieving a unique level of independence within a regime of public funding and a hegemonic influence over public perceptions of schooling.[16] This compares with the highly centralised French system where the private sector variously has taken a substitute role and only occasionally has attempted assertiveness, with limited success (McLean, 1985). Corresponding public purpose in the French system has been strongly asserted in cultural terms that reflect an idea of French culture and the French nation and its state. Such an assertion has been weak in Australian schooling.

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[16] Indicative of this is the following chart that records the views of parents from each sector on their views of the quality of their schools and other schools in their sectors, and community views of the quality of primary schools in each sector (source: Vic. Dept. of Premier and Cabinet, unpublished survey, 2003):
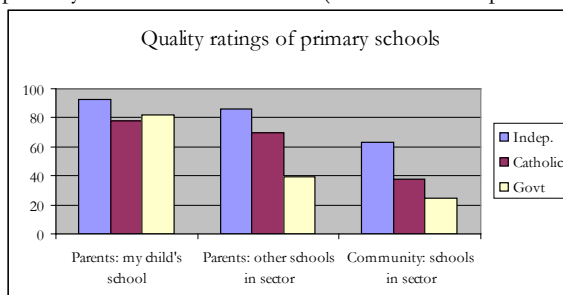
Consistent with Green's (1990) thesis, in Australia there has been a relative absence of the historical drivers for a strong public education culture. Centralism came about because of the historical legacies of state dependence in an unhospitable environment, the fact that the white communities were founded by the state, and the culture drawn from the convict period. It was reinforced because a significant assertive group, the working class and its labour movement wanted it. Centralism in Australia, unlike France, was not an expression of the state, which in most of the colonies retained a basically liberal tradition. The Australian states and the subsequent Commonwealth did not go through the boundary building that took place almost continuously across the European states (Flora, 1999). As societies that did not challenge for and with some reluctance acceptance from Britain the colonies and the Commonwealth did not need to go through the nation building that was needed in the USA, and which became imbued within the idea of public education.

In virtually all of the western democracies the idea of public education has formed through various forms of settlements between the state and civil society, in its various forms of religious denominations, family and community. These relationships have expressed the idea of public education and public purpose, because they have needed to for the settlements to be stable. Thus in the USA Butts (1989) has argued that there have been on going tensions between the common civic and democratic purposes of American schooling and the regular reassertion of pluralist purposes and interest. Labaree (1997) has argued that there have been three defining goals of American education: democratic equality, social efficiency and social mobility.

It is more difficult to do this in Australia. On the one hand the idea of public education is a firmer concept in Australia. Free, compulsory and secular have a trenchant tone. However, they are principles of institutional forms rather than educational purposes. There is little doubt that the ideas of educational rights have been strongly expressed in Australia. The right of students to have access to quality schooling, to not to have to pay for it, and to have the opportunity for social and economic progression are widely held and variously expressed in historical documentation. On the one hand they are public purposes in that they reflect democratic principles, but they have a private base.

Public schooling and public good.

These leads to the question of what is public, within public purpose. Public choice theory would locate public purpose with the individual (e.g. Friedman, 1962). The public

purpose of institutions should be to maximise the individual good, which in markets is expressed as satisfaction. In this sense the maximisation of public good is the maximum aggregate of private good or satisfaction. On the other hand Rawls (1971) has argued that the relationships between individuals and individual outcomes also are part of the public good.

The historical challenge for Australian public schooling is to express these relationships. They have been expressed as individual and to a lesser extent as group rights, but not as a public good. The lack of settlements between governments and civic society over the question of schooling has contributed to a failure to express public purposes beyond those of institutional forms and individual rights. This has allowed contemporary public perceptions of values and by implications the public good being located more readily in private than in public schooling.

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