Deconstructing Diversity Discourses in the Field of Educational Management and Leadership

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Jill Blackmore

ABSTRACT

Discourses of diversity have supplanted those of equal opportunity or social justice in many Western democratic societies. While the notion of diversity is seemingly empowering through its recognition of cultural, religious, racial and gender difference within nation states, the emergence of this discourse during the 1990s has been in the context of neoliberal managerialist discourses that assume social action is fully explicable through theories of maximizing self interest. Thus notions of diversity, while originating in collective demands of social movements of feminism, anti racism and multiculturalism of the 1970s and 1980s, have in recent times privileged learning and leadership as an individual accomplishment and not a collective practice. Thus the dominant discourse of diversity is more in alignment with the deregulatory aspects of the increasingly managerial and market orientation of schooling, decentring earlier discourses of more transformatory notions premised upon reducing inequality and discrimination and developing 'inclusivity' in and through schooling. This paper provides a contextual and conceptual framework through which to explore the intersections and divergences of discourses of diversity in schools and their practical application.

KEYWORDS *diversity, equity policy, leadership, social justice*

Introduction

During the 1990s, a discourse of diversity has come to supplant discourses of equal opportunity in the public and private sectors of many Western democracies, as well as in all education (Bacchi, 2000). Recent educational reform discourses argue that schools, teachers and educational leaders should be responsive to cultural, racial, gender, sexual and religious diversity within their 'client', student and indeed, parent and community populations. Similarly, more culturally diverse societies could expect greater diversity in political, educational and business leadership. In Australian schools, for example, students may learn in classrooms in which English is the second language for

the majority, with up to 24 different languages spoken at home, as well as numerous Aboriginal dialectics. The *Adelaide Declaration on the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty First Century* (Australian Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 1999: 3) links socially just schooling to freedom from discrimination, but also raises the expectation that students 'understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society . . . the value of cultural and linguistic diversity, and possess the knowledge, skills and understanding to contribute to, and benefit from, such diversity in the Australian community and internationally'.

Despite this seemingly progressive stance, the discourse of diversity during the 1990s, I suggest, has been mobilised and operationalized in educational policy and practice within market and managerialist frames that tend to limit the possibilities of delivering its promise of more inclusive and equitable schooling. As one principal of a small working class high cultural mix secondary school stated with the move to self managing schools in Victoria during the 1990s:

> The main change has been the focus, switching away from a view of students based on an assumption that they can all learn and that they are all entitled to access to life's goodies (which includes access to tertiary institutions), and that it took longer and more resources, to a view that young people must fit into economical imperatives, be 'polished up' in a particular way. If the teachers don't succeed in that, then the fault lies in the teachers . . . So it is the switch from a system that gave space to an optimistic view about young people and their entitlement to learn and their entitlement to us trying as many ways for them to learn to achieve, and an instrumentalist view of them and of the institutions that are to serve them and of teachers.

For this principal, diversity was about addressing highly specific cultural, linguistic, economic and social needs; building individual and collective cultural and social capital. But the move to managerialism and more market oriented schooling put her school under threat. Student diversity was indeed the major reason for this school's 'failure' as indicated by reducing enrolments. Upwardly mobile parents chose nearby schools where there were people 'more like us', seeking cultural and class homogeneity (Blackmore and Sachs, in press). Diversity was risky particularly when associated with socio-economic disadvantage. Likewise, systemic dispositions favouring standardised student outcomes as evidence of success (measuring up against like schools), failed to recognize the diversity of her school's student population and how this school 'added value' in immeasurable ways in terms of student wellbeing and imparting a sense of belonging, important preconditions to learning, by promoting community rather than individual competitiveness. Likewise, many aspirant women leaders still consider that representations of leadership, both visual and textual, are homogenized, monocultural, and often masculinist, thus discouraging female, minority and indigenous applicants (Blackmore, 1999; Brooking,

2005). In a study of the declining interest generally in the principalship, local selection procedures were found to be more about 'homosocial reproduction'; appointing low risk applicants who did not challenge comfort zones or who were just like us in terms of 'best fit' (Blackmore et al., 2005).

This article explores the context, nature and implications for schools and school leadership of this discursive policy shift from equal opportunity to diversity that occurred in conjuncture with reforms promoting a new managerialism and market orientation in schools and school leadership at both state and federal levels in Australia. Drawing from an analysis that tracks the emergence of the discourse of diversity in the USA and UK as well as in the Australian context, I consider how particular discursive strands have been mobilized with significant effects for equity. In concluding, I suggest how a transformatory conceptual framework of diversity can provide practical strategies highly relevant to school leadership.

Tracing the Discourses of Diversity

In most education policy, diversity is now construed to be a positive force in educational work. The Victorian Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE, 1998: 11–12) states: Human diversity is a 'source of societal resilience and educational vitality . . . a compelling educational priority, important to every campus, every learner and the wider society'; it is a 'dimension of educational mission, community, curricular quality and service to the larger society'. An organization 'managing diversity through best practice' was one 'characterised by the presence of representatives from a rich variety of different cultures, backgrounds and perspectives', with a 'genuine commitment towards representation', and an environment with a 'respect for differences while fostering a caring relationship, cross cultural understanding and common educational commitments' (1998: 13). 'Managing diversity' was about 'negotiating the multiple interfaces of local diversity, pluralistic citizenships and global connectedness' (1998: 14). Leaders were expected to balance the tension between a respect for difference while developing and nurturing shared organizational goals.

On the one hand, the notion of diversity as expressed above appears to be all encompassing of all forms of difference based on race, ethnicity, disability, linguistic difference, socio economic background, as well as gender. This move appears to enrich earlier legalistic and procedural equal opportunity policies based on anti-discrimination and affirmative action legislation initiated in many Western nation states during the 1980s, viewing difference not as a source of deficiency but of productive relationships. On the other hand, the discourse of diversity emerged in conjuncture with the radical restructuring of education characterized by a post-welfarist state moving away from full provision of education, health and welfare services other than for marginalized groups and individuals, and towards governing through regulation, with a consequent

individualisation of responsibility. These new public administrative reforms were underpinned by neo liberal market principles based on choice and competition; human capital notions of the self-maximizing autonomous individual. Given this conjuncture, it is important to query why, and with what effect, particular discourses of diversity interacted with/against neo liberal discourses.

Capitalizing on Diversity

Two discourses of diversity as articulated in Australia and most Anglophone nation states can be traced in terms of their origins within wider economic and social movements. One is the discourse of 'capitalising on diversity', the 'corporate discourse' originating in business largely mobilized in mission and strategic statements as exemplified in the OTFE policies (Cope and Kalantzis, 1997). This discourse focuses on improving service delivery by meeting the individual needs of clients, appropriating cultural and linguistic diversity to gain new markets as a response to the globalizing of the market place with new flows of transnational migration, the growth of multinational companies seeking new global markets, and a shift in USA, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand from manufacturing to service economies. Greater workplace and client diversity means an increased reliance on person-to-person contact for productivity. Service work requires good interpersonal relations and communication. Service is a 'game between persons', requiring flawless interaction, with the ability to 'understand the customer's perspective, anticipate and monitor the customer's needs and expectations, and respond sensitively and appropriately to fulfil these needs and expectations', that is customer and intercultural literacy (Jackson et al., 1992: 14).

Managing diversity policies have symbolic value in international markets, and practical value in capturing the creativity arising from diverse workforces; an economic rationalist position based on human capital theory with the aim to assimilate and promote consensus or cohesion through diversity. This assimilationist view of organizational culture is often celebrated with evocative metaphors of a melting pot or cultural mosaic associated with 'images of cultural hybridity, harmonious coexistence and colourful heterogeneity' and the 'richness' that diverse groups bring to organizations (Prasad and Mills, 1997: 4). Whereas anti-discrimination and affirmative action recognized structural and procedural disadvantage in work and organisations, managing diversity was about systematically recruiting and retaining employees from diverse backgrounds based on the view that 'traditional monocultural organisations cannot function effectively in the context of today's and tomorrow's workforce' (Prasad and Mills, 1997: 8). The focus is cultural in seeking to change the beliefs, ideologies and values of individuals to benefit the organization.

Transformative Diversity

A second discourse, one premised on social justice, emerged out of 1970s global social movements (civil rights, second-wave feminism) and the multicultural movement in Australia of the 1980s. It is a discourse mobilized largely by the political and educational aspirations of racial, ethnic and linguistic social groups together with the resurgence of new knowledges. Local ethnic and indigenous communities have claimed access to more inclusive education. This transformative discourse symbolises the shift from a politics of redistribution with its focus on socio-economic disadvantage and class in the 1960s, to a politics of recognition of cultural and linguistic difference as a basis for the claims made upon the nation state by the 1980s (Fraser, 1997). Post colonial and feminist practitioners, teachers and scholars have argued that recognition of difference requires a fundamental transformation of organizations and the need to make leadership more 'inclusive' of women and minority groups (Fraser, 1997; Mirza, 2005). While significant differences exist among feminists/post-colonialists as to the strategies to achieve this end, most would agree leadership is a collective practice based on participation and a capacity to produce change within democratically organized and family friendly workplaces. The purpose for leaders from this standpoint is to achieve more equitable outcomes for all. This perspective overtly identifies racism, sexism and homophobia as embedded in organizational life and society, and promotes the redistribution of organizational power. It sees organizations as contested sites of political, cultural and social difference. Contrary to managing diversity discourse's assimilationist view of corporate culture, the transformative perspective argues against the assumption that effective organizations require consensus. Creativity based on dialogue over difference and not compliance within organisations will increase productivity (Cope and Kalantzis, 1997).

This transformative discourse of diversity goes beyond the symbolic and representational that in equal opportunity policies is often operationalized as promoting a 'token' woman or 'ethnic' into leadership, or having a gender/race balance on committees. This feminist/post-colonial discourse is also about fundamentally different assumptions about the role and practices of education and leadership, and the nature of society and organizations in multicultural democratic societies in a pluralist and democratic society (e.g. AhNee-Benham, 2003; Battiste, 2005; Ngurruwutthun and Stewart, 1996; Tuhiwa-Smith, 1993). Organizations should work on democratic principles based on recognition of, and respect for, and not assimilation of, difference. This position therefore sees the endurance of a predominantly homogenous white male leadership in politics, business, as well as in schools, as a democratic and not just an educational issue.

Diversity is therefore understood in multiple and competing ways, referring equally to improving service responsiveness but also democratic notions of citizenship and social cohesion. There is no predictability of outcomes with

either discourse. The transformatory notion of cultural recognition can produce conservative equity outcomes. An example of this is, that appeals to cultural tradition in what are now hybrid cultures are another way in which modes of masculine dominance can also be reasserted, for example the exclusion of women from leadership (Moreton-Robinson, 2000; Narayan, 1997). Each discourse assumes a different view as to the role of the state: the 'capitalising on diversity' preferring a free market less interventionist more voluntarist role with regard to equity; and the transformative discourse seeking ways in which the state can provide some balance between the politics of recognition of difference and that of redistribution of resources, the latter requiring intervention in markets. There is an inherent tension in both discourses, apparent in education policies and schools, as in most organizations, between valuing diversity (based on racial, linguistic and ethnic difference) and the desire for social cohesion; between diversity of ideas/values and consensus building.

Articulations of Diversity in Education

The concept of diversity is discursively articulated in education as managing-of-diversity, managing-for-diversity, diversity-in-management and diversifying-management. These discursive articulations need to be understood within the context of structural reform in education since the 1990s.

In education, the *managing of diversity* discourse became popular during a period of radical workplace restructuring in most Anglophone democracies marked by the introduction of the new public administration that infused private business principles into the public sector; reduced public expenditure in education, health and welfare; deregulated financial and labour markets; and devolved governance. Educational restructuring was informed by new managerialism and market notions of choice, competition and contractualism during the 1970s in the UK, the 1980s in New Zealand, and 1990s in Australia (Blackmore and Sachs, in press). Governments sought to steer self managing schools from a distance through funding based on enrolments; and a market focus that sought comparable national and international performances as measured by standardised educational outcomes. Furthermore, the discourse of diversity has also been mobilized within the policy context of the 'internationalization of education'. Western education is now seen as a commodity to be sold to non-domestic (non-Western) students and states. Internationalization is underpinned by a weaker post-colonial discourse regarding the mutual benefits of cultural exchange (Matthews, 2001). Diversity is therefore a new source of commodification of education, of education capitalism promoting the expansion of multiplicity of educational providers, particularly in the private sector with outsourcing, and competition within and between public and private sectors.

The discourse of diversity takes on a different trajectory in workforce planning. In Australia, the managing diversity discourse was promoted in the

Karpin Report on Management Education in Australia after 1995. Karpin (1995) predicted a world of global business that by 2010 would rely on 'productive diversity' with the 'leader-enabler' who was male or female, and most likely non-Anglo, possessing a range of ethnicities and citizenships. Leaders would require excellent communication skills and a capacity to delegate (1995: xi). Karpin's mobilisation of 'managing diversity' discourse shifted the policy frame of equity. Australia during the 1970s and 1980s stood out as an examplar of gender equity and multicultural reform with the incorporation of representatives of social movements through the institutionalization of the femocrats (feminist bureaucrats) within the federal and state bureaucracies during the 1970s, followed by multicultural and indigenous policy activists during the 1980s and 1990s (Yeatman, 1998). Mobilizing the discourse of equal opportunity, the femocrats implemented a legislative and policy framework of gender equity reform, creating a national gender equity infrastructure that was financed and supported by the state in areas of health, welfare and education, informed by bottom up activism by practitioners and 'policy activists' and monitored centrally by the Affirmative Action Agency (Yeatman, 1998). In so doing, the femocrats mobilized managerialist techniques of accountability, for example a gender audit requiring the review of all policies before cabinet to assess their effect on women, a strategy now used by global policy communities, such as UNESCO (Sawer, 1999). Equity principles (e.g. merit) were institutionalised in most education systems during the 1980s, embedded in selection of principals and teacher promotion procedures, particularly with the move to local selection of principals. Knowledge of equity policies, for example, was a criterion of promotion in Victorian schools.

However, educational restructuring after 1987 marginalized equity discourses (Blackmore and Sachs, in press). By the mid 1990s, the discourse of managing diversity was being mobilized as diversity is 'better for business' and 'in the national economic interest' (Sinclair, 1998: 4). The new corporate managerialism in most federal and state bureaucracies devolved equity responsibility down to local units and managers, incorporated equity units into human resource management, and provided less rigorous training and monitoring of local principal selection panels. In the highly devolved New Zealand system, lack of training in, or monitoring of, merit and equity for principal selection has facilitated the resurgence of sexist and racist discrimination (Brooking, 2005). Likewise, Deem et al. (1995: 105) indicate that Governing Boards in England composed of a third women and 10 per cent ethnic minority representatives who felt excluded from the 'allocative and authoritative' functions. Equity in a deregulated environment now relies for enforcement on the goodwill of individual executives to raise expectations through managerial fiat.

In Australia, the uneasy and temporary alliance between the second wave of the women's movement and federal 'corporate' Labor collapsed in 1996 with election of a neo-liberal Howard government. Howard promoted social conservativism (anti-feminism, multiculturalism and reconciliation) and market

radicalism, reducing funding in education, health and welfare, while ignoring the equity implications of deregulating markets; increasing accountability demands for compliance on outcomes and finance, but loosening compliance with regard to equity. Howard down graded, defunded and downsized the federal equity infrastructure and sidelined representative bodies. Thus managerial (efficiency) rather than transformatory (equity) discourses dominated nationally. By 2005, all state and federal government bureaucracies, including education, have workforce policies promoting managing diversity, although equal opportunity principles remain implicitly embedded in operational plans that build on past practice. Ten years on, there is a significant levelling out of the numbers of women and minority groups in executive positions in both public and private sectors, with women concentrated in middle management managing public systems and schools increasingly at risk (Blackmore and Sachs, in press).

In this policy context, schools have to, of necessity, be more client focused, as funding and flexibility in programme has become contingent in performance based regimes of governance on being able to attract and retain students within a policy context promoting parental choice and the naming and shaming of 'failing schools' unable to either attract students and/or improve performance (Gleeson and Husbands, 2001). But racial, cultural and linguistic diversity in and of itself was often, as cited earlier, a negative in attracting students. Indeed, school choice in the USA (Wells et al., 1997), the UK (Whitty et al., 1998; Woods et al., 1998), Australia (Teese and Polesel, 2003), and New Zealand (Wylie, 1999) tends to promote a trend for 'like' students to concentrate in particular schools, encourages the rise of specialist and selective schools, and by default promotes the demise of comprehensive schools, thus intensifying the concentration of advantage/disadvantage within particular localities and of particular equity groups (Campbell and Sherington, 2003; Vinson, 2002). Social exclusion, not inclusion, of marginalised groups has been one effect of these reforms in Australia as elsewhere (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Power et al., 2003; Teese and Polesel, 2003).

Diversity framed by the neo-liberal discourse of choice is thus reduced to meeting the preferences of individual choosers in terms of offering a diversity of schools and programmes, while ignoring how some have more choices, or how choice facilitates any disposition to be with those 'like themselves'. This *managing-of-diversity* perspective tends to disregard the inequitable structural and specific cultural conditions under which particular schools and their leaders operate that actually impede their capacity to deliver equity. The focus on student diversity within a school effectiveness/improvement frame is perceived to be a matter for individual preference, and individual treatment, not of group difference, in ways that view cultural backgrounds and the world views that students bring to school as problematic and not beneficial for learning. Such perspectives are premised less on principles of inclusive communities, citizenship and voice, or the cultural exchange arising from

two-way learning, and more equated to individual choice in market oriented systems where parents are active choosers to be attracted and retained but can choose to go elsewhere (Vincent, 2003). In this 'managing-of-diversity' perspective, diversity tends to be constructed as 'a managerial problem' and diversity as an individual attribute.

The second perspective is that of *managing-for-diversity*. That is, diversity is a desirable component of the educational experience to be promoted by leaders, that is 'productive diversity'. This position requires a level of recognition of, and respect for, diversity that gets beyond the individual and recognizes cultural difference and group identity. It was most evident in the push for linguistic, cultural and gender inclusiveness in curriculum and pedagogy during the 1980s, such as bilingualism in schools in USA, New Zealand and Canada and multiculturalism in Australia. But too often, these policies reduced in their articulation to multicultural food and music festivals, 'dress up in another culture' days in schools, and 'learning to get along together' as a form of 'practical tolerance' (Hage, 1994). More recently it aligns with the recent educational focus on individualized learning arising from new learning theories informed by concepts such as multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), multiple intelligences, learning styles, the inclusive curriculum, and more recently 'cultural awareness' to be developed as one aspect of 'productive pedagogies' (Lingard et al., 2003; MCEETYA, 1999). Curriculum and pedagogy is seen to be about the formation of new identities. But again, these progressive notions when framed by instrumentalist discourses of generic and transferable competence and skills, common outcomes and standardized tests lose the positive valuing of cultural difference.

Neither the managing-of-diversity and managing-for-diversity discourses as currently articulated in policy and practice require school systems or schools to either reflect upon their own lack of linguistic, cultural or ethnic diversity in leadership, although they are expected to see recognition of diversity and inclusion as important curriculum and pedagogical principles. Indeed, the Australian multicultural movement of the 1980s, informed by some cultural traditions that exclude women from leadership, focused on developing inclusivity in curriculum and pedagogy, but had little to say about the cultural homogeneity of the feminized teaching population and the male dominated school leadership. Even in 2005, few discursive links are made between the normative image of 'whiteness' and 'Angloness' associated with educational leadership and a school's capacity to manage diverse student populations. Instead, there is a moral panic around the lack of male role models for young masculinities in crisis, with national moves in Australia towards positive discrimination for 'men only' teaching scholarships (Mills et al., 2004).

Then there is the *diversity-in-leadership approach*. This is where the 'women and leadership' literature, for example, can be located. The claim is for a more equitable (but not necessarily equal) representation of particular outsider groups. Drawing from a cultural feminist position, this notion of

representational diversity argues that there needs to be representation and recognition of women's ways of leading and doing things differently. This is worrisome, first, because of its essentialist connotations about women as a homogenous group that ignore first order differences among women based on race, class, ethnicity and how this is embodied through images of leadership; but also second order differences in terms of the significant contestation over values, ideologies and educational positions among women; that is 'intellectual diversity' (Phillips, 1996). Second, this view also ignores how systemic and school discourses, cultures and structures shape the possibilities of those in school leadership to practice inclusive and democratic leadership. Furthermore, the cultural feminist discourse has been too easily subsumed by managerialism. Women (as a group) are seen to bring particular attributes to leadership that are positioned as complementary to male attributes in leadership, without changing the masculinist frame of educational leadership and management (Blackmore, 1999). There is little consideration of systemic disadvantage or advantage, the social relations of power/gender, or the privileging of particular value systems.

Most of the above discourses mobilised around diversity assume some essentialist and static notion of culture, of women 'as a class' or of an ethnic group. The solution is to seek inclusion, usually from an assimilationist perspective, premised upon 'mosaic multiculturalism'; that is a mosaic of different 'cultures' aggregates into a harmonious unity (Benhabib, 2002). There is no recognition of power and status differentials between and within cultural groupings, but based on a narrow notion of representation within liberal theory, a 'politics of presence' that assumes representation alone will lead to voice and reform (Phillips, 1996). Others argue that the notion of productive diversity (Cope and Kalantzis, 1996) also takes into account intellectual diversity in arguing that creativity (and productivity) arise from a representation of ideas arising from wider representation of different cultural groups. But just as the procedurally focused equal opportunity discourse based on merit was readily incorporated into the line management of corporate governance in the 1980s, so too the diversity-in-leadership approach has been readily appropriated as symbolic value is gained through the token presence of women and minority groups as signifiers of a caring and inclusive organization.

More recently, there has been tentative take up within mainstream policy of this diversity-in-leadership stance. Now the presence of women and minority groups within school leadership is perceived to be a solution to an emerging crisis of disengagement with leadership (Gronn and Rawlings-Sinnaei, 2003). Numerous government and media reports in the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand cite principals under stress. Applications for leadership positions are in decline, particularly in the more culturally diverse and often socio-economically disadvantaged schools (Blackmore et al., in press). Women and minority social groups are increasingly viewed as a new source of leadership talent, best suited to work with those with whom they have linguistic, cultural

and communitarian ties. But there exist countless stories of 'leadership rooted in respect for traditional cultural ways of knowing and commitment to social justice' undertaken by women leaders who are 'othered' by the dominance of whiteness and masculinism (AhNee-Benham, 2003: 35). For those women, indigenous, and minority group leaders who take up the risky job of educational leadership under the gaze of others through the ambiguous lens of gender, race, class, being perceived to be the 'representative' of a particular minority is dangerous, as they are seen to be too close to their communities through affiliation. They are also likely, within more performative self-managing systems, where the onus is on individual principals, to be more vulnerable, and thus to bear the brunt of any failure to make a difference according to predetermined externally imposed outcomes despite the challenging circumstances. Heroic leaders quickly become celebrities within school systems, but equally quickly are forgotten and rejected by systems that make such positioning unsustainable. Presence and voice is not enough unless there is also the possibility of a more inclusive process of democratic deliberation that enables agency and a capacity to influence decisions (Blackmore and Sachs, in press; Deem, 1996; Mitchell, 2001; Sinclair, 2000a, 2000b).

Mosaic multiculturalism when linked to equity groups as operationalized through policy produces the paradox of categories (Hart et al., 2004). Categories such as race, class, gender, ethnicity when associated with 'disadvantaged', 'underachieving' and 'at risk' assume particular authority through policy and in practice. Categories often become unified and homogenized, essentializing difference in politically and socially damaging ways as it freezes categories in ways that encourage social fragmentation rather than recognising the fluidity and multiple overlapping of categories. For example, the discourse of 'recuperative masculinity' about boys' underachievement in schools results from a narrow focus on all boys as a homogenous group on the one hand, and academic performance outcomes in alignment with the performative and competitive culture of 21st-century schooling on the other (Lingard 2003; Mills et al., 2004). While boys are over represented in literacy remediation, this discourse ignores not only how masculinity continues to dominate spaces and places in schools, and how particular masculinities (homosexual) are marginalised by dominant masculinities (heterosexual), but also how particular femininities (working class, non-English speaking background, rural and Aboriginal) are not achieving as well as white middle-class masculinities. That is, there is no recognition of how power and privilege works in and through the social relations of gender intersecting with race, class and linguistic difference. Treating boys as a homogenous group not only ignores how masculinity brings with it certain privileges, but how socio-economic disadvantage coincident with location and 'race' have significant impact on particular girls and boys (Lamb et al., 2004). While working-class, ethnic and indigenous masculinities *and* femininities are under threat, white and some ethnic middle-class masculinities *and* femininities are doing quite well (Lingard, 2003). Culture, race, class

and gender are not static or 'naturalized' categories but social constructs (Benhabib, 2002). The policy issue and any practical strategies in schools therefore should ask the more nuanced question: which girls and which boys benefit or are at risk?

Finally, what's missing in policy and mainstream educational administration literature is a transformative discourse to *diversify management and leadership*. This position would put dominant management and leadership paradigms under the critical gaze of the 'the other'. It would mean considering how organisations may better address issues of student and workforce diversity within a broader conceptual framework of how schools as organizations relate to culturally diverse societies. It may require school redesign and multiple modes of leadership that are thick, socially contextualized and constantly under revision and negotiation. From this perspective, mobilizing the notion of diversity provides 'an opportunity not only to theorise about privilege, but also to take stock of the condition of our much vaunted reflexivity as well' (Cavanagh, 1997: 47). How does privilege work in and through schools and school systems around the inextricable intersections between race, gender, class, ethnicity in ways that focus on the relations of power, hybridity and fluidity of multiple identities that arise from cross membership in different groups (Benhabib 2002)? The issue, therefore, is not just a representational one but about deliberative democratic practices that enable agency. How is representation and voice negotiated through structures and processes of deliberation for a particular marginalised group? It also means considering leadership and management in terms of who manages and leads beyond proportional representation of different minority groups, but asks questions about what values and power is invested in particular positions. It would require the processes of decision making as well as the structures and cultures of administration to be informed by public processes based on the notion of participation as educative, and management as being about providing the conditions conducive to student, parent and teacher agency, creating conditions and processes that impart a sense of empowerment to act and capacity to influence decisions (Forester, 1999). It would enhance earlier approaches by underpinning them with a clear sense of respect for difference beyond a practice tolerance, a reflexive engagement with how oneself as a leader is privileged and positioned by race, class and gender, and the ways in which school organization facilitates cultural exchange and two-way learning.

The question is whether cultural recognition as an organizing principle of school provision is adequate to produce greater equity in educational outcomes and/or social cohesion. Schooling organised around first order differences of gender, race, class, language as the result of parent's choosing to have schools with 'those like us' could be seen to encourage social fragmentation and intolerance of 'the other'. Neo-liberal policies of parental choice tend to privilege individuals and promote social/economic exclusion, but can also mobilize particular ethnic/race/class groups' legitimate demands for education, many

having experienced exclusion from mainstream schooling (e.g. charter schools) (Wells et al., 1997). But cultural pluralism, together with social fragmentation and the individualization of risk and responsibility, converge when demands for cultural recognition are framed by discourses of marketization and managerialism. This juxtaposition privileges individual preferences with little regard to any social justice discourses calling upon historical legacies and responsibilities of government and organisations for marginalized groups. Fraser (1997) argues, that to obtain social justice and equity, policies must simultaneously address redistribution in order to redress disadvantage and discrimination, because only then can the interactions between gender, race, class, ethnicity be addressed (Gewirtz, 1998). Any improvement of student outcomes for Aboriginal children in Australia, for example, requires both cultural recognition but also strategic redistributive policies with regard to resources.

So if we are to manage *for* student diversity and take seriously the notion of participation (inclusivity) and agency (the capacity to act) of minority groups, then we have to distinguish between formal (representation) and substantive (capacity to influence) citizenship (Deem et al., 1995: 146). The latter would require a significant transformation of management and leadership practices based on clearly articulated principles of social justice underpinned by democratic theory. Central to how we would think about school organization and practices would be the principles identified above—redistribution based on theories of exploitation, fairness and capabilities; recognition based on theories of representation, interpretation and communication (Fraser, 1997); association based on theories of deliberative democracy (Forester, 1999; Young, 2000); and agency based on theories about the conditions that promote individuals capacity to act.

So What Does this Mean for Educational and Leadership Practices in schools?

If the concept of diversity is to be mobilized in ways that will produce greater equity, it needs to be located within broader notions of the role of schools in democratic pluralistic societies in terms of citizen formation, an analysis of how structural and cultural inequality occurs and how privilege works, and a theory of social justice that provides principles that will inform policy and practice locally as well as centrally. Diversity is both an empirical concept (a seemingly neutral documenting of difference), and also a normative concept ('not what the differences are, but rather what we make of those differences'), in terms of the categories we employ about students and colleagues (Riffel et al., 1996: 113).

We need to better understand how difference works through schooling by considering specific groups of students and examining the socio-economic, educational and cultural circumstances associated with their educational experience to better understand the factors behind their achievement or lack of it. We also need to consider how we as teachers and administrators respond

to categories, and how our own practices shape the educational experience. With regard to curriculum and pedagogy, a Queensland longitudinal study identified that while teachers are very good at creating caring environments, many lack a pedagogical repertoire of how to deal with student difference (Lingard et al., 2003). Developing this repertoire requires encouraging a culture of teacher inquiry and professional learning over time. This has implications for school leadership in practical terms. What strategies can a leader adopt and adapt in their particular context?

Working from the transformative position of diversifying management and leadership, and premised upon the four principles of recognition, redistribution, participation and agency, here are some possibilities. The principle of redistribution would require putting equity on the policy (and therefore resource) agenda. This could mean running an equity audit of school policies, practices and resources with regard to personnel and leadership; curriculum, assessment practices and pedagogies; as well as auditing the use of school space and time. Who benefits from the allocation of funds and resources; who misses out?

The principle of participation would require us to ask: how do curriculum offerings, disciplinary policies and enrolment strategies exclude some students (and groups) and privilege others? Is the curriculum inclusive (content, language, assessment) and intellectually challenging? Does the pedagogy capture student experiential learning? Teachers need to assume high aspirations and impart high expectations for all student groups. Asking students about how they view school particular policies, curriculum and assessment practices is informative as to how they position themselves as success/failures, as belonging to the school community or feeling excluded.

With participation is the associated principle of agency. What are the processes of decision-making that occur in the school? Who is represented on decision-making bodies? Do the processes of decision making facilitate both voice and agency (i.e. a capacity to influence?) through student councils, parental forums and school councils/governing bodies? Which parents have a voice and which do not? What do staff know about their communities, how do they engage with parents, what are the forums, processes and practices that shape staff–parent relations? How can more parents be encouraged to participate in a range of activities in the school, given their circumstances? What are the communication practices of the school (monolingual or multilingual)? Are there opportunities for two-way cultural exchange where parents are valued for their local and cultural knowledge, experiences and expertise? Student voice is an important dimension of understanding issues of student engagement, achievement and well-being. What are the dominant cultural/gender/racial images of leadership in the school for students and staff? How can informal leadership and teacher leadership be identified and recognized? Who are the student leaders?

Based on the notion of recognition and representational diversity an environmental scan may consider the types of networks within which the school, its

teachers and its students are located. Does the school student profile represent that of its geographical neighbourhood? If not, why not? Is this desirable in terms of how the school understands its educational community? How can there be stronger links made with various communities within the geographical neighbourhood as well as the student/parent community? How would such networks be utilized to encourage student community activities? What are the school and societal discourses that produce marginality and lead to hostility against particular social groups? Consider the ways in which individual and collective biographies are shaped in this school's cultural contexts. This requires reflecting upon the images and representations that are evident in any school—who gets recognised and rewarded for what activities, and in what context? Do student sporting, academic, community achievements all get the same space and time? Equally important in terms of student engagement are extracurricular activities, such as sport, drama, theatre, and clubs. These activities can be both links to the community, but also provide alternative spaces for student achievement and recognition outside the academic (Mansouri, in press).

Addressing diversity normatively would mean discussing what fairness and diversity means amongst staff and students, and consideration of how they are operationalized through policy and practice. Is it tokenistic, practical tolerance, or meaningful engagement? In discussing issues of diversity, it may mean staff through professional development being reflexive about their personal histories and professional biographies rather than focusing first on the disadvantage or difference of others. What does this then mean for their practice? It would mean recognizing that all students and their families have educational aspirations and life ambitions, and that desire, anxiety and alienation is not just invested in particular social groups (Mansouri, in press: 18; Mirza, 2005). The association between identity and school achievement is implicit and explicit. Mansouri (in press) in a study of Arabic Speaking Background (ASB) Australian secondary students concluded that:

> the educational and social experiences of ASB and non-ASB students . . . differ in the key areas relating to teacher-student relations, perceptions of interethnic relations at school, confidence in achieving a tertiary place, beliefs about whether racism affects learning and behaviour and family emphasis upon and attitudes towards education. ASB students were more likely to express distrust towards teachers, particularly based around a perceived lack of cultural understanding. They were less confident in their abilities to achieve education or training beyond secondary school, and were more likely to hold more limited educational ambitions than students from other backgrounds. While all students tended to think that their parents regarded education to be of importance, ASB students were less likely to discuss their education with their parents . . . Some ASB students, particularly young women, expressed a tension between their cultural roles and their educational ambitions. The research also shows that ASB young people, particularly boys, are concerned about the levels of racism and discrimination they face in a broader social context. This last point is especially important given the negative

impact social marginalisation and exclusion can have on one's sense of worth and belonging.

Educators need to understand difference and diversity within a single humanity in order to make education more equitable for all on a daily basis. This means getting beyond practical tolerance, and getting past the sameness/difference tension (we are all treated the same or reduce all difference to 'other' than the dominant). And as with all equity issues, this means it is about political will by government, reflexivity on the part of leaders, mobilising resources for equity, and strong equity policies locally and centrally. It also puts pressure on school leaders to put issues of diversity on the agenda, but as I have argued, framed by principles of social justice in order to work within/through/against education markets and managerial accountabilities (Blackmore, 2002). But 'what we make of it', I have indicated, is dependent upon which conceptual framework we draw from and in what context. A discourse of diversity within a liberal pluralist frame, for example, while based on notions of tolerance and fairness, gives priority to individual over group rights. A social democratic position would argue that diversity is also about recognition of both individual and collective rights within a wider notion of a good and democratic society.

Acknowledgement

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