Educational Leadership Relationally

A Theory and Methodology for Educational Leadership, Management and Administration

Scott Eacott

SensePublishers

Educational Leadership Relationally

Educational Leadership Relationally

A Theory and Methodology for Educational Leadership, Management and Administration

Scott Eacott
Australian Catholic University, North Sydney, Australia

SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM / BOSTON / TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-94-6209-909-8 (paperback)
ISBN 978-94-6209-910-4 (hardback)
ISBN 978-94-6209-911-1 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,
P.O. Box 21858, 3001 AW Rotterdam, The Netherlands
https://www.sensepublishers.com/

Printed on acid-free paper

For Amy, Daniel and Madelyn

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

This book originates in a discussion with a potential doctoral candidate. He had taken a class with me the previous year on the foundations of educational administration theory and we had remained in contacted ever since. On this particular day we were discussing French social theory, particularly the work of Pierre Bourdieu and to a lesser extent Michel Foucault, and the mobilisation of critical social theory in contemporary educational leadership, management and administration studies. After careful discussion, we had reached a point where we had highlighted the commonly used theoretical resources of Bourdieu and Foucault and the tell-tale signs of a Bourdieusian or Foucauldian study. It was at this point that the potential student turned to me and asked, this is all good and well, but what would a student of yours do?

So began an intellectual pursuit. What would a student of mine do? If I was to be more than a guy who used Bourdieu in educational leadership, management, and administration, what was I to offer a potential doctoral, masters or honours candidate? There are many others who very competently think with Bourdieu in educational leadership, management and administration – and I am thinking specifically of Helen Gunter and Pat Thomson, among others. It was during this time I was to make two key intellectual connections, one more fleeting and the other enduring. In the case of the former, while working at the University of Newcastle (Australia), I was fortunate to work in the Faculty of Education and Arts when Lisa Adkins was appointed as the BHP Billiton Chair of Sociology. Lisa came to Newcastle via Goldsmiths (University of London), Manchester, the Australian National University and Kent. While best known for her work on gender and labour, it is in her engagement with Bourdieu that was most insightful. Rather than mapping an intellectual terrain with Bourdieusian resources, Lisa was adamant that Bourdieu was writing in a different time and space and therefore the challenge of the contemporary scholar is to bring Bourdieu's social theory face-to-face with key problems of the twenty first century. In doing so, my engagement with Lisa inspired the mobilisation of theoretical resources to think anew the contemporary condition. There remain substantial traces of Bourdieusian thinking in my work. However, it is not a strict adherence, nor is it restricted to the popular resources of *fields*, *habitus*, and *capital*.

The second key connection was to Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski, two scholars I hold in the highest regard. This connection developed following my acceptance to give a public lecture at the University of New South Wales (where Colin is currently located). Colin and Gabriele are well known for their natural coherentism research programme in educational administration. Unlike many, dare I say most, people working in educational leadership, management and administration, Colin and Gabriele have systematically built a research programme over 25 years. Despite working in different institutions, Colin and Gabriele have consistently supported and encouraged me to push my thinking and develop a programme of research. This sounds straight forward. However, in a contemporary

academy that is obsessed with only publishing in the 'right' outlets and privileges (at many places anyway) the bringing in of money, the systematic development of a comprehensive and sophisticated research programme is about playing a long-term scholarly game more so than the short turnaround of institutional research assessment exercises. Arguably the greatest moment of scholarly pride I have experienced was during the annual Educational Leadership, Management and Administration (ELMA) theory workshop I host when Colin and Gabriele commented that my work was programmatic and they liked how I was willing to put my ideas out there rather than playing it safe behind the names of great thinkers. At least that is how I recall it. The combination of thinking a new and building a generative programme is what I have sought to do in this book.

Educational Leadership Relationally is an intellectual project which aims to explicitly articulate my distinctive brand of scholarship for educational leadership, management and administration. I am not claiming to have developed a completely new form of scholarship. The work I present in the following pages is very much rooted in Bourdieusian thinking, among others. What I have sought to do is bring a collection of intellectual resources face-to-face with the contemporary conditions of educational leadership, management and administration. These include new forms of administration and regulation, changing understandings of the local, and the challenges of researching objects to which we have substantial investment.

This comes at a time when educational leadership, management and administration as a disciplinary space is under renewed stress. This stress is theoretical, methodological and one of relevance. I have sought to bring matters of methodology, beyond the simplistic division along paradigmatic lines (quantitative/qualitative), to the fore to enable dialogue and debate. In my work I aim to develop, argue, and defend, a distinctive brand of scholarship for educational leadership, management and administration. This is not an ahistorical scholarship. Rather it is one with a significant intellectual heritage drawn from social theorists Pierre Bourdieu, Luc Boltanski, Gaston Bachelard, who themselves drew on many others. It also calls upon leadership studies by Mary Uhl-Bien and others working in the broader relational agenda, and understandably educational administration thinkers such as Colin Evers, Gabriele Lakomski, Helen Gunter, and Richard Bates among others.

What I offer is not a definitive theory of educational administration, or a finite set of theoretical resources, instead, I offer a research programme for scholarship in educational administration. It is less focused on delivering a theory and more focused on a way to study. Attention is therefore given to epistemology and ontology to generate a *relational* approach. In particular, I propose this work as a counter to the scholarly bias, or anti-intellectualism in educational administration that others such as Helen Gunter have written about. My work also goes beyond the simplistic binaries of the introductory research methods courses of contemporary university programmes. In short, I reject the entity based thinking that partitions theoretical and research practices into isolated stages and territories.

One of the hallmarks of generative research programmes are their ability to not only transcend the temporality and socio-spatial conditions of the intellectual

context and empirical terrain of its initial articulation and to produce new ways of thinking, but to think itself and even to out-think itself. This book is not free from contradictions, gaps, tensions, puzzlements, and unresolved questions, many of which I have tried to openly acknowledged, and perhaps at times accentuated, in the pages that follow. What will become clear is that I oppose the orthodoxy of educational leadership, management and administration as a scholarly discipline. I seek to challenge the rhetoric that dominates the space as a domain of intellectual inquiry and in particular what I see as the closing of boundaries between research traditions. As a result, this book is an invitation – an invitation to think with, beyond and where necessary against me in advancing a *relational* approach to educational leadership, management and administration scholarship. I will have achieved my purpose if this work serves a stimulus for others to mobilise in their own analysis. In this sense, I encourage others to use it, engage with it, change it, protest it, most of all, think with it.

Scott Eacott
Sydney, October 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As noted previously, this book is an output – but far from final word – of an intellectual journey to articulate an approach to scholarship for educational leadership management and administration. As a result, the ideas presented in this book have been tested out in various forums and appeared in parts in other publications.

The ideas proposed throughout the chapters have been presented at various conferences, including but not exclusively, the Australian Association for Research in Education and the Australian Council for Educational Leaders, and have been the basis of presentations I have given at the University of Newcastle, University of Queensland, Australian Catholic University and the University of New South Wales. A version of Chapter Two appears in a special issue of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, and a version of Chapter Seven appears in *Journal of Educational Administration and History*. Sections of Chapter Three appear in *International Journal of Educational Management*.

In addition to such formal outputs, I would like to acknowledge colleagues both near and far who have stimulated my thinking in relation to this work.

To my colleagues in the School of Education (North Sydney) at the Australian Catholic University, and in particular Tania Aspland, Charles Burford and Judith Norris, your contributions to my thinking through regular conversation and often debate, have helped push my thinking in new and exciting ways.

To my former colleagues at the University of Newcastle, notably Robert Parkes, Zsuzsanna Millei, Eva Bendix Petersen, and Tom Griffiths, whose collegial support and pursuit of scholarship in a contemporary academy that frequently discourages such activity is much appreciated and I would not be where I am today without you.

My network of colleagues further afield, in particular Colin Evers, Gabriele Lakomski, Richard Niesche and Jane Wilkinson, your contribution to my work, though implicit, is great. Colin and Gabriele, you are model scholars. Although we may hold different world views, the guidance and support I have received – and continue to – from you both are invaluable. The productive ways in which you demand me to push my thinking and asking questions of myself and others is outstanding. Jane and Richard, I consider you to be my partners in this intellectual endeavour. We have come into positions of prominence in the discipline nationally at a key junction. The collegial support you provide is much appreciated, as is your encouraging yet demanding attitude to pushing the boundaries of knowledge production.

Finally, I need to acknowledge my wife Amy and children – Daniel and Madelyn. Your understanding, particularly during what can be the challenging and stressful moments of writing a book is much appreciated. Your love and support are what makes the effort worthwhile.

CHAPTER ONE

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION RELATIONALLY

INTRODUCTION

Fenwick English (2006) argues that advancing scholarship in educational administration requires criticism of it, philosophically, empirically and logically, suggesting that we do not search for core pillars but the contested grounds on which educational leadership is defined moment-to-moment. As a domain of inquiry, educational administration has a rich history of epistemological and ontological debate. From the work of Andrew Halpin and Daniel Griffiths in the 1950-1960s in what is known as the *Theory Movement*, through to Thomas Barr Greenfield's critique of logical empiricism in the 1970s, the emergence of Richard Bates' Critical Theory of educational administration in the 1980s, and Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski's naturalistic coherentism in the 1990-2000s, debates about the ways of knowing, doing and being in the social world have been central to advancing scholarship. However, in the most recent decade, at least since the publication of Evers and Lakomski's work, questions of the epistemological and ontological preliminaries of research have become somewhat marginalised. This is not to suggest that such discussions are not taking place, but rather that they have been sporadic and piecemeal. This is further embodied in the context of various traditions of educational administration research (e.g. critical, humanistic, instrumental, scientific) rarely, if ever, engaging with one another.

Given the relative absence of epistemological and ontological debate in contemporary educational administration thought and analysis, Izhar Oplatka (2010) argues that it is timely to once again engage with such matters. This book explicitly establishes the importance of the interplay of theory and methodology in the scholarship of educational leadership, management and administration. Fusing multiple analytical frames, I outline and defend a particular 'scientific' view of scholarship before using that perspective to criticise existing administrative theories and develop a distinctive alternative, one that I label a *relational* programme in educational administration. This is not to be confused with just another adjectival approach to leadership, management and administration scholarship. The argument that I am building is for a *relational* approach to scholarship in educational administration and the rationale for this is grounded in a recasting of administrative labour in the contemporary social condition.

The intellectual heritage of my *relational* project is eclectic, drawing heavily on French social theory such as the work of sociologists Pierre Bourdieu (critical) and Luc Boltanski (pragmatic), management scholars such as Peter Dachler, Dian Marie Hoskings, and Mary Uhl-Bien, but also critical management studies, political science, policy analysis, organisation studies, and given my own disciplinary location, recognised educational administration thinkers such as

Richard Bates, Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski, Thomas Greenfield and contemporaries such as Helen Gunter, Pat Thomson, John Smyth and Fenwick English. Centrally, in bringing critical pluralism to scholarship I engage with what I see as the key theoretical problem of the legitimation of the social world and its empirical manifestation in the organisation of schooling. I mobilise the label 'scientific' in the Francophone (or even continental European) sense, that which adheres to rigorous inquiry through the explicit interrogating of a large scale theoretical problem embedded within an empirical problem, as opposed to the more conservative Anglophone tradition – primarily that of North America – which privileges the exhibitionism of method and analysis. In doing so, this book delivers an elaborated, and coherent, discussion from the fragmented discourses of contemporary educational leadership, management and administration thought and analysis to sketch an alternate research programme. Importantly, this book is not a critique of the field – something that is already too frequent enough. Rather, it is devoted to sketching an alternate research programme for advancing scholarship. Specifically, I aim to:

– To break new ground methodologically for the 'scientific' study of educational leadership, management and administration.

In working to this aim, this book is arguably the most ambitious book since Evers and Lakomski's three book series: *Knowing educational administration* (1991), *Exploring educational administration* (1996), and *Doing educational administration* (2000). Importantly, I interpret this aim widely and my discussion is based on the following guiding questions:

– What are the large scale theoretical, and empirical, problems on which educational administration is based?; and
– How can we study them?

These questions, I believe, are vital as the domain of educational administration faces increasing questions of its relevance and status within education, and as education itself faces increasing challenges from both within, and beyond. The arguments put forth in this book clearly stem from my intellectual pedigree in critical social theory – that which is frequently assigned the label of 'sociology' or 'organisation studies' more so than educational leadership, management and administration. However, in order to engage with the aim and guiding questions of the programme, I am not going to apply or map the intellectual terrain of educational administration using a critical social theory lens,[i] as this is not desirable or helpful for my purposes, as such an approach would leave the existing theorisation of educational administration intact. Rather, what I offer is a theoretical intervention that enables one to see educational administration in new ways. Such an approach settles many of the popular assumptions of contemporary educational leadership, management and administration thought and enables a new

understanding of the relationship between schooling, policy and broader socio-economic conditions.

OUTLINING THE ARGUMENT

The canonical literature of educational administration, as is so often the case, comes from a bygone era. Classic administration works, such as Frederick Winslow Talyor's (1911) *The principles of scientific management*, Chester Barnard's (1968) *Functions of the executive*, and Herbert Simon's (1976) *Administrative behavior*, were written at a time of industrial expansion and in the case of the latter two, shifting post-war socio-political conditions. Influential educational administration texts such as those written by Andrew Halpin (1966), Daniel Griffiths (1959a, 1959b, 1965, 1985, 1988), Thomas Greenfield (see Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993), Christopher Hodgkinson (1978, 1996), Richard Bates (1980a, 1980b, 1983), William Foster (1986), and Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski (1991, 1996, 2000), were also written in a different time and space. This is not to suggest that ontological and epistemological arguments are bracketed to a particular historical period, rather I argue that if we are to advance scholarship in educational leadership, management and administration we need to recognise that the research object has shifted over time and by virtue, our ways of knowing said object must change to.

The challenge for educational leadership, management and administration scholarship as engaged with in this book aligns with three markers: first, the changing image of what is essentially a modern institution, the school, in contemporary (post-modern?) times; second, the critique of 'science', or what will become clear, logical empiricism, from scholars, primarily from the critical school; and finally, the contemporary, although arguably enduring tensions of administration polarising individualism and collectivism and agency and structure. The *relational* research programme, as proposed in this book aims to reformulate the image of school administration by seeking to get beyond the tensions just mentioned. What in particular is the narrow attribution of 'science' with logical empiricism and *Theory Movement* inspired scholarship. Although notions of science in educational administration have been critiqued by: the humanists (e.g. Greenfield, Hodgkinson) for privileging the objective and failing to account for the subjective; the emancipatory critical theorists (e.g. Bates) for being an instrument of control; and the critical sociologist (e.g. Gunter) for its apolitical approach, this querying of science however is primarily on the basis of the limited mobilisation of science in educational administration and its relations with the social. The binaries of objectivity and subjectivity, as with individualism and collectivism, and agency and structure, are hardly productive theoretical spaces. Therefore, as with Evers and Lakomski's research programme, I accept the various criticism of empiricist epistemology raised by the scope of alternate perspectives, but argue that they do not seriously affect the value of science as a scholarly endeavour.

I seek to pursue, and even increase, anchorage in a rigorous empirical science, which seems to me to represent a fundamental contribution of the work developed

in the framework of this *relational* programme, by offering theoretically rich descriptions of the activities of actors in particular administrative situations. To this end, it seems unproductive to engage in a power explanation whose mechanical utilization risks crushing the narrative prior to any data being generated. To be brief, my move therefore consists in re-orienting from a critical sociological lens to the search for a description which attests to the unstable character of administration. This is not to suggest an abandonment of the project of the critical, however, through attention to close up descriptions of disruptions in production,[ii] one is better placed to craft accounts that can productively theorise educational administration in ways that can inform our understanding of how schools are constructed and exist in the social. The programme is inherently pragmatic, exploiting the resources supplied by current intellectual threads in history, philosophy, sociology, geography, literature, psychology, often taking different paths but focused on *in situ* activities in schools. Coming together in this way, by its very nature involves compromise, and the union is one that is eternally fragile. This approach to knowledge production mirrors the knowledge dynamic in which its object is embedded and embodies. In doing so, it moves beyond the mapping of directives and influences to an explicit interrogation of the messiness of the social. Such a move is incompatible with modernistic accounts which present educational leadership, management and administration as a coherent and focused body of work (field[iii]), marked with a past, present and future (English, 2002). Theoretically this enables us to break down the hierarchal world view that dominates much of the discourses of administration, management and leadership, that which reduces asymmetries in the social to single measures (e.g. class, gender) or binaries (dominate – dominated), to a *relational* way of thinking.

This move plays out in both the relations that the researcher has with the research object and also in the empirical. The intimate relationship between the researcher and the research object is magnified in educational leadership, management and administration (and arguably other domains within the professions) given that most, if not all, academics working in the area have previously held administrative positions in organisations and have a long association with such institutions, therefore heightening the embedded and embodied nature of their engagement. In the empirical, while the theme of colonisation has been replaced by globalisation in broader discourses, I argue that the image of the school, and by virtue, school administration, has for the most part not moved beyond the image of a colonised social group of educators working at some distance from the centre of education governance embedded within the state bureaucracies. This is despite policy moves focused on empowering schools and their communities.

Foregrounded in this argument is the role of ontology and epistemology. Core to my argument is that the centralist mindset of education research – even that which explicitly speaks back to it – limits our way of conceptualising the school and by virtue, theorising educational leadership, management and administration. I argue that there is a need to move beyond the linearity of rational action and consciousness. As is frequently witnessed when a centralist mindset is mobilised,

and especially so when an emancipatory account is put forth that in the process of building its argument further embeds the centralist agenda, it is difficult to move beyond a somewhat deterministic narrative being constructed. In the case of educational leadership, management and administration, this more often than not translates into seeing the school as the local face of a state agenda. The mobilisation of labels such as neo-liberalism, managerialism, and new public management, are too broad a brush stroke to sustain meaningful advances in knowledge anymore. Far too much is gathered in the sweep of the labels and the usage has diffused to such an extent that it is rarely productive in the space. The agenda of the *relational* research programme that I am advancing in this book has a chance to move beyond this limitation. I investigate how the production of knowledge about the legitimacy, effectiveness, efficiency, and morality of administration connects with the practices of administration. In doing so, questions are raised regarding the extent to which 'new' forms of administration – leadership, participatory, distributed, and so on – are generative or thwarting of new knowledge. Such a move is not surprising given that for the most part scholars, at least those who take such matters seriously, are looking for an alternate ontology as the Newtonian/Cartesian universe inhabited by self-interested, atomistic individuals – that which fits nicely with managerialist accounts of administration – does not logically fit prescriptions for collaborative practice nor the image of the school as a nebulas unit. A *relational* focus enables scholarship to move beyond internal tensions and external pressures by opening up the school and engaging with the dynamic relations that it both holds with other social institutions and those which constantly redefine its very existence. As a means of highlighting the key features of my argument, below I list five central features of the *relational* programme explored in this book:

- The centrality of 'administration' in the social world creates an ontological complicity in researchers that makes it difficult to epistemologically break from our spontaneous understanding of the social world;
- Rigorous 'scientific' scholarship would therefore call into question the very foundations on which the contemporarily popular discourses of 'leadership' 'management' and 'administration' in education are constructed;
- The contemporary social condition cannot be separated from the ongoing, and inexhaustible, recasting of administrative labour;
- Studying educational administration 'relationally' enables the overcoming of the contemporary, and arguably enduring, tensions of individualism and collectivism, and structure and agency; and
- In doing so, there is a productive – rather than merely critical – space to theorise educational administration.

In light of this, the primary point of departure I make with mainstream educational leadership, management and administration scholarship is my attention to matters of epistemology and ontology, or knowledge production. However, rather than locate this work in a philosophy of science space, I explicitly bring this into

discussion with contemporary discourses of educational leadership, management and administration. This move enables the argument to speak across intellectual (e.g. education, management, organisational studies) and socio-geographic boundaries through the provision of a theoretical argument that is not confined to any one empirical problem, space or time. Adopting this analytical strategy enables an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship while also fusing multiple lenses for the specific intent of opening new lines of inquiry and renewal in a field of knowledge production – educational leadership, management and administration – under question for its scholarly value within the academy.

TOWARDS A RELATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Despite relationship-orientated perspectives being around since the earliest forms of scholarship on leadership, management and administration, the term 'relational' leadership is surprisingly new (Uhl-Bien, 2006). James Hunt and George Dodge (2000) consider relational perspectives, and the approaches within them, to be at the forefront of emerging leadership scholarship. In the time since Hunt and Dodge's claim, relational approaches have solidified a place in the intellectual space of broader leadership scholarship (Dinh *et al.*, 2014). The significance of a relational approach is often argued for as a means of generating scholarship that has more relevance to the world of practice (Bradbury & Litchenstein, 2000). Key thinkers in this space include Peter Dachler and colleagues, Dian Marie Hoskings, and Mary Ulh-Bien.

There are two major schools in the broader relational scholarship: entity; and relational. Although both 'entity' and 'relational' approaches view leadership as a social process, what they mean by process, particularly with respect to their ontology and epistemology, is quite different (Uhl-Bien, 2006). An entity perspective is consistent with an epistemology of an objective truth and a Cartesian dogma of a clear separation between mind and nature (Bradbury & Litchenstein 2000). Relationship-based leadership from this perspective is focused on individuals and their perceptions, intentions, behaviours, personalities, expectations, and evaluations relative to their relationships with others. In contrast, a relational perspective views knowledge as socially constructed and socially distributed, not as mind stuff constructed or accumulated and stored by individuals. As Dachler and Hoskings (1995) argue, '[t]hat which is understood as real is differently constructed in different relational and historical/cultural settings' (p. 4). The distinction between the entity and relational schools of thought are important. Consistent with my argument through this entire book, the identification of work within a relational space does not suggest a homogenous approach.

Helen Gunter (2010) argues that there is an emerging, or arguably re-emerging, sociological stream of scholarship in educational leadership, management and administration. The *relational* research programme that I am building and defending in this book fits within this sociological tradition of educational leadership, management and administration scholarship. I am of course not the only individual playing in this space. David Giles and colleagues in the Flinders'

Leadership And Management in Education (FLAME) research group (Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia) are building an agenda around 'relational' leadership (see Giles, Bell, Halsey, & Palmer, 2012). The point of departure, or 'distinction' to think with Bourdieu, in my work is both empirical and theoretical. Whereas Giles and colleagues seek to operationalise a 'relational' approach, adding yet another adjectival leadership, and in doing so, aligning with an entity approach, I am not seeking to map an intellectual terrain using existing theories adopted from elsewhere yet alone operationalise them. Rather, my argument is built upon what I see as the demise of theoretical advancements in educational leadership, management and administration. As a domain of scholarly inquiry, there is a proliferation of adjectives that exist beyond the need for any concrete referent and a denouncement of the heroic individual through 'new' organisational forms, yet the celebration of the individual 'turnaround' leader at unprecedented levels. The volume of critique regarding the impact of the expansion of the manageralist project has never been greater yet the aspirational tone of narratives of individual and/or collective autonomy has never received wider popular appeal. The *relational* approach I am advancing seeks not to map the existing terrain but to recast it. My intellectual project – an ongoing and generative one – is to recast educational administrative labour and the relations between the researcher and the researched.

While this is undoubtedly a theoretical monograph, something that is unpopular in the literatures of educational leadership, management and administration, it is not a theory. The theoretical and methodological frame I build is largely based on the work of others. Importantly, I have sought to mobilise multiple analytical frames in my analysis of educational administration. For the most part, I have sought to explicitly name the frameworks from within which I construct various claims, but in some parts this is more subtle.

Although it is difficult to accurately pinpoint the genesis of an intellectual project, this book is grounded in a Bourdieusian inspired scholarship, particularly the methodological perspective first sketched out in a text written by Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Chamboredon and Jean-Claude Passeron (1991[1968]) entitled *The craft of sociology: epistemological preliminaries* (*le métier de sociologue*). However, my use of Bourdieusian theorising is neither with utmost loyalty or reverence. Bourdieu never explicitly wrote about educational administration, but most importantly, as James Ladwig (1996) argues, built within the very French, Durkheimian sociological tradition, Bourdieu's theoretical and methodological stance begins from the epistemological presumption that (in Poincare's words) 'facts do not speak'. The result being that for Bourdieu, 'scientific' knowledge does not come into being through deduction or induction rather through social construction. He believes that social science is not about reality, nor is it about how reality is experienced, instead social science must focus on how reality is constructed in a dialectic between objects and subjects. As I will touch on elsewhere throughout this book, Bourdieu's belief in science is not the science of mainstream Anglophone employment, that which is mostly tied to logical empiricism and displaying an 'exhibitionism of data and procedures' rather

he believes 'one would be better advised to display the conditions of construction and analysis of these data (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992], p. 65). Bourdieu's view of science, or more specifically scientific inquiry, sees it as an act of distinction from ordinary language and the under-problematised view of the social world *as it is*.

As I have argued previously, research in educational leadership, management and administration – or anywhere for that matter – is a political activity (Eacott, 2013). Therefore, what I have sought is to ground my work in a methodological tradition that explicitly pays attention to the relations between the researcher and the researched – the epistemological preliminaries of scholarship – as much as it does the relations between the empirical foci of research. It is the contention of this book that the *relational* approach I am building and defending offers important resources for engaging with both of these levels.

The type of analysis made possible by this *relational* approach offers a means of crafting theoretically charged descriptions illuminating the situated nature of administration and illuminating the embodied and embedded location of the educational leadership, management and administration scholar. Struggles for legitimacy are at the core of institutional labour, whether that is the principal working in a school or an academic in a university. These tensions are performative in that they only exist in practice and cannot be solely reduced to the structural arrangements of the empirical. The contested terrain that is the struggle for legitimacy is inexhaustible and as such, is a forever unfinished project. The binds that hold a group, organisation, institution and so on together are therefore problematic, active and by virtue of these qualities, fragile. However, as Les Back (2009) argues, what makes sociology interesting is engaging in the task of the interpretation of meaning that inevitably must be left open. He contends that the slippages, the insights, as well as the blindness, are what make it valuable and where the incomplete record is nonetheless compelling. These features though are not necessarily consistent across all research traditions.

Working from the above, this book contains a theoretical intervention demonstrating how a *relational* approach can be used to theorise educational leadership, management and administration. My appropriation of multiple analytical frames is guided by my singular (theoretical and empirical) task of trying to describe what I see happening in the scholarship of educational leadership, management and administration.

This multi-analytic approach recasts the image of the school, the administration of schooling, and its relationship with a range of other social institutions and bodies. The move I make is beyond that of merely mapping the various relations that schooling has to external bodies (not to mention the arrays of internal dynamics at play). Here I want to explicitly state two differences between my argument and that of mainstream educational leadership, management and administration discourses. First, for me, the contemporary focus of 'leadership' is an epistemic, and not empirical, research object; and second, the school, as a unit of analysis, is now located in a floating territory no longer defined by the downward linearity of state policy and/or ties to the 'local'. Following the former,

from this point on I am going to adopt the label 'educational administration'. I am well aware that this is unpopular and for many seen as an historical label (as is 'educational management'), but I do it for two reasons: i) I believe it to be too cumbersome to continually mobilise the rather lengthy 'educational leadership, management and administration' label, therefore having a very pragmatic goal of increasing readability; and ii) conceptually, as I build my argument I believe it will become clear that 'educational administration' enables a broader perspective for interrogating the theoretical problem and opening new directions for scholarship.

In presenting this work, I argue that the developments, dynamics, and ruptures inherent within the *relational* research programme have a significance that lies well beyond the boundaries of educational administration, beyond its immediate parents (education and public administration), and into the larger family of studies of society (sociology). This is partly because theory travels better across boundaries, especially geographic but also cultural boundaries, than empirical research (Miller, 2011). Importantly, this means that while the examples I use throughout the book are primarily Australian, this is much more than an Australian story.

MORE THAN AN AUSTRALIAN STORY

This book, and somewhat understandable given my own geographic location, is unashamedly Australian. As an intellectual home, Australia has a rich tradition of contributing to educational administration scholarship, particularly from a socially critical perspective (Bates, 2010; Gunter, 2010). More than just contributing, Australian scholars have a rich history in disruptive scholarship, that which challenges the hegemonic discourses, including that of fellow Australian scholars. At the same time that Brian Caldwell was selling the virtues of the self-managing school (see Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, 1992 1998), John Smyth and colleagues were critiquing the movement on the basis of its social impacts (see Smyth, 1989, 1993). Elsewhere, Smyth's Deakin colleague Richard Bates' (1980a, 1980b) Critical Theory offered a viable alternative to the logical empiricism of the US-centric *Theory Movement* and the Thomas Greenfield inspired humanist movement (see Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993), Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski's (1991, 1996, 2000) natural coherentism proposed a post-positivist perspective that challenged many of the criticisms of 'science' in educational administration, and at a more specific level, Peter Gronn (then of Monash, but now at Cambridge via Glasgow) engaged in a methodological debate with Ross Thomas (long time *Journal of Educational Administration* Editor) over the value of observational studies (Gronn, 1982, 1984, 1987; Thomas, 1986; Thomas, Willis, & Phillipps, 1981). This book speaks both to the intellectual history of Australian educational administration scholarship and the contemporary context.

There is little doubt that on a global scale managerialist discourses have become the orthodoxy of the contemporary condition. Therefore, despite being intellectually located within a rich Australasian tradition, the arguments put forth in this book speak to a global audience. The underpinning of academic scholarship is the process of grounding new theorisations and empirical examples in the existing

body of knowledge. Through my engagement with theoretical tradition and the lived experience in the empirical, this book seeks to not merely contribute to acts of recognition, such as recognising the various roles played by anointed leaders in educational institutions, rather by providing means of cognition. That is, ways of thinking about educational administration grounded in histories but not bounded by historical categories, images and metaphors. As I have argued though, the intellectual project from which this book speaks is dynamic. This book is neither the beginning nor end of a research programme. I argue that both as individual chapters and as a whole, this text offers theoretical interventions that enable one to see the leadership, management and administration of educational institutions in new ways. Ways which are not limited to any one specific socio-geographic location but rather theoretically charged. As noted previously, theory travels far better across boundaries, both geographical and cultural, than empirical research. Offering a research programme of questioning the status quo of knowledge production and practice, this book sketches areas of relevance and possible theoretical development that serve to extend current debates, in fruitful directions. In doing so, and to borrow from Peter Berger (1966), this book is an invitation to the reader, and therefore warrants a generative reading, but it will become clear that 'the reader will need to go beyond this collection if the invitation is to be taken seriously' (p. 7). Therefore, I encourage the reader to think with, beyond, and where necessary, against what I argue in the spirit of the intellectual enterprise.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book seeks to model the research programme in which it espouses. As a result, the book is more or less divisible into three parts – although such partitioning is problematic as it artificially partitions the social world in ways not experienced apart from in the book form itself. The first part establishes the importance of epistemological issues and stresses the need for an epistemological break with ordinary language. This discussion takes place across two pivotal chapters in the book, *Problematising the intellectual gaze* and *The (im)possibility of 'leadership'*. In the former, I argue that educational administration can credit its genesis, and level of esteem, to the administration of schooling becoming a public concern. That is, once society, or at least enough people, began to see administration as a key leverage point for improving outcomes (social and economic), there was demand for systematic inquiry. However, those who did the inquiring were frequently affiliated with school systems, administrators themselves, or as the current profile of the academy suggests, academics who themselves are former administrators. I contend that this does particular things to the intellectual gaze of the scholar through a form of ontological complicity. While epistemological debates once raged in educational administration, there is a somewhat uncritical engagement with the epistemological preliminaries in contemporary scholarship. As it stands, there is an awful lot of talking past one another with a number of completely contradictory viewpoints, arguments and interpretations whirling around the pages of publications, but more importantly, the

lack of any really meaningful dialogue between them. I am not trying to suggest a need to congeal around a core set of problems and/or theoretical resources as diversity – assuming robust and rigorous scholarship – is a healthy sign for a domain of inquiry. Rather as Robert Donmoyer (2001) argues, and Martin Thrupp and Richard Willmott's (2003) book *Education management in managerialist times* demonstrates, as a domain of inquiry, educational administration exists in a state of tacit agreement where those with whom we disagree, we treat with benign neglect. In picking up this debate, and arguing for what I see as one of the key issues at play, in *The (im)possibility of leadership,* I model the notion of the epistemological break through an interrogation of ordinary language and the construction of 'leadership' as the contemporarily popular buzzword.

Having undertaken the intellectual work to problematize the intellectual gaze of the educational administration scholar and destabilised the contemporarily popular notion of 'leadership', Chapter Four *Recasting administrative labour* explicitly reconstructs the research object of educational administration on the basis of the epistemological break undertaken in the previous chapter. Mobilising a *relational* approach to understanding the social world, this chapter revises the conceptualisation of the school, and by virtue its administration, by locating it within a floating territory that is no longer defined by the downward linearity of bureaucratic policy directives or explicit ties to the 'local'. Such locating work speaks to, but also challenges, notions of autonomy, policy, and community, among others. In doing so, schools and administrators are constituted as much more than the local face of a state agenda.

If this book is to have an audience beyond itself, then it is vital that I can demonstrate further how this approach to scholarship plays out. In what could be described as the second part of the book, I begin by engaging with an outlining of the empirical focus of the *relational* approach. Working with the notion of 'worth', taken loosely from Luc Boltanski and colleagues, this chapter blends the seemingly fragmented discourses of 'value' and 'values' to offer a renewed research object for educational administration. I further bring the *relational* research programme to life through the following two chapters. First, I engage with how the *relational* differs from two relatively recent Australian studies on school leadership. This nuancing is less about how one approach is better than the other, but instead about demonstrating how the *relational* facilitates the asking of new questions. This chapter is then followed by one where I begin to outline how the *relational* approach could be mobilised to think through the principalship in the context of autonomy. Importantly, as the *relational* is a generative research programme, what I offer is 'a' (not 'the') *relational* approach. It is not necessarily better than other approaches, although I am a little bias here, but offers a different way to think through the organising of education.

Before concluding the book I devote a single chapter – although later than one may expect – to develop an argument for the perspective put forth thus far in the context of contemporary thought and analysis in educational administration. This work will bring the discussion into direct conversation with, and in some cases opposition to, other perspectives. The location of such a chapter is important.

Rather than foregrounding this explicit chapter and then outlining the *relational* research programme, I feel it is important to do the work first and then outline how this engages with, and opens up, current perspectives to new ways of thinking. The previous chapters serve as supporting evidence for the claims in this chapter regarding the strength of the alternate programme being proposed.

To bring the discourses of the text into a coherent argument, the final chapter *Conclusion* revisits the arguments put forth and essentially captures the key points of the narrative constructed. Moving beyond simply bookending with the introduction, this chapter is an explicit invitation to others to join the *relational* research programme being proposed. It asks for a generative reading, other case studies in different locations (both in time and space) to advance our understanding, and importantly, for others to work with, beyond and where necessary against what I have proposed in the interests of the intellectual enterprise. This book is not the final word on the *relational* research programme, rather just an articulation.

NOTES

[i] It is important for me to acknowledge at this point that Helen Gunter (1999, 2000, 2002, 2004) has already eloquently used Bourdieu to do this work, using England as her geographic anchor.

[ii] The term 'disruptions in production' is mobilised as a deliberate means of moving beyond the reproductive nature of education as advocated by critical sociologists such as Bourdieu and numerous contemporary educational administration scholars.

[iii] Being of a Bourdieusian persuasion, I cannot mobilise the notion of 'field' to discuss educational administration as a domain of inquiry. This is a matter that I shall return to in later chapters in relation to the study of disruptions in production.

REFERENCES

Back, L. (2009). Portrayal and betrayal: Bourdieu, photography and sociological life. *The Sociological Review, 57*(3), 471-490.

Barnard, C. (1968). *Functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.

Bates, R. J. (1980a). Educational administration, the sociology of science, and the management of knowledge. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 16*(2), 1-20.

Bates, R. J. (1980b). New developments in the new sociology of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 1*(1), 67-79.

Bates, R. J. (1983). *Educational administration and the management of knowledge*. Melbourne: Deakin University Press.

Bates, R. J. (2010). History of educational leadership and management. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGraw (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed., pp. 724-730). Oxford: Elsevier.

Berger, P. (1966). *Invitation to sociology: A humanistic perspective*. Harmondsworth: Pelican.

Bourdieu, P., Chamboredon, J.-C., & Passeron, J.-C. (1991[1968]). *The craft of sociology: epistemological preliminaries* (R. Nice, Trans.). New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter. [Originally published as *Le métier de sociologue: préalables épistémologiques* (Paris: Mouton).]

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992[1992]). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. [Originally published as *Résponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive* (Paris: Seuil).]

Bradbury, H., & Litchenstein, B. (2000). Relationality in organizational research: exploring the 'space between'. *Organization Science, 11*(5), 551-564.

Caldwell, B.J., & Spinks, J. (1988). *The self managing school*. Lewes, UK: Falmer Press.
Caldwell, B.J., & Spinks, J. (1992). *Leading the self-managing school*. London: Falmer Press.
Caldwell, B.J., & Spinks, J. (1998). *Beyond the self-managing school*. London: Falmer Press.
Crossley, N. (2003). From reproduction to transformation: social movement fields and the radical habitus. *Theory, Culture & Society, 20*(6), 43-68.
Dachler, H. P., & Hoskings, D. M. (1995). The primacy of relations in socially constructing organizational realities. In D. M. Hosking, H. P. Dachler, & K. J. Gergen (Eds.), *Management and organization: relational alternatives to individualism* (pp. 1-29). Aldershot: Avebury.
Dinh, J. E., Lord, R. G., Gardner, W. L., Meuser, J. D., Liden, R. C., & Hu, J. (2014). Leadership theory and research in the new millennium: current theoretical trends and changing perspectives. *The Leadership Quarterly, 25*(1), 36-62.
Donmoyer, R. (2001). Evers and Lakomski's search for leadership's holy grail (and the intriguing ideas they encountered along the way). *Journal of Educational Administration, 39*(6), 554-572.
Eacott, S. (2013). Research as a political activity: the fallacy of 'leadership' data speaking for themselves. In S. Eacott & R. Niesche (Eds.), *Empirical leadership research: Letting the data speak for themselves* (pp. 215-229). Niagara Falls, NY: The Untested Ideas Center.
English, F. W. (2002). The point of scientificity, the fall of the epistemological dominos, and the end of *the field* of educational administration. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 21*(2), 109-136.
English, F. W. (2006). The unintended consequences of a standardised knowledge base in advancing educational leadership preparation. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 42*(3), 461-472.
Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (1991). *Knowing educational administration: Contemporary methodological controversies in educational research*. London: Pergamon Press.
Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (1996). *Exploring educational administration*. Oxford: Elsevier.
Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (2000). *Doing educational administration*. Oxford: Elsevier.
Foster, W. (1986). *Paradigms and promises*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.
Giles, D., Bell, M., Halsey, J., & Palmer, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Co-constructing a relational approach to educational leadership and management*. South Melbourne: Cengage.
Greenfield, T., & Ribbins, P. (Eds.). (1993). *Greenfield on educational administration: Towards a humane science*. London: Routledge.
Griffiths, D. E. (1959a). *Administrative theory*. New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.
Griffiths, D. E. (1959b). *Research in educational administration: an appraisal and a plan*. New York: Teachers College.
Griffiths, D. E. (1965). Research and theory in educational administration. In W. W. Charters (Ed.), *Perspectives on educational administration and the behavioral sciences* (pp. 25-48). Eugene, Oregon: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration.
Griffiths, D. E. (1985). *Administrative theory in transition*. Melbourne: Deakin University.
Griffiths, D. E. (1988). Administrative theory. In N. J. Boyan (Ed.), *Handbook of research on educational administration* (pp. 27-51). New York: Longman.
Gronn, P. (1982). Neo-Taylorism in educational administration? *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18*(4), 17-35.
Gronn, P. (1984). On studying administrators at work. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 20*(1), 115-129.
Gronn, P. (1987). Obituary for structured observation. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 23*(2), 78-81.
Gunter, H. (1999). Researching and constructing histories of the field of education management. In T. Bush, L. Bell, R. Bolam, R. Glatter, & P. Ribbins (Eds.), *Educational management: Refining theory, policy and practice* (pp. 229-245). London: Paul Chapman.
Gunter, H. (2000). Thinking theory: The field of education management in England and Wales. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 21*(4), 623-635.
Gunter, H. (2002). Purposes and positions in the field of education management. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 30*(1), 7-26.

Gunter, H. (2004). Labels and labelling in the field of educational leadership. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 25*(1), 21-41.

Gunter, H. (2010). A sociological approach to educational leadership. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 31*(4), 519-527.

Halpin, A. (1966). *Theory and research in administration*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Hodgkinson, C. (1978). *Towards a philosophy of administration*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Hodgkinson, C. (1996). *Administrative philosophy: Values and motivation in administrative life*. New York, NY: Pergamon.

Hunt, J., & Dodge, G.E. (2000). Leadership déjà vu all over again. *The Leadership Quarterly Review of Leadership, 11*(4), 435-458.

Ladwig, J. G. (1996). *Academic distinctions: Theory and methodology in the sociology of school knowledge*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Miller, H.T. (2011). Is bureaucracy no longer the technically superior form of organization? *Administrative Theory and Praxis, 33*(3), 447-452.

Oplatka, I. (2010). *The legacy of educational administration: A historical analysis of an academic field*. Berlin: Peter Lang.

Simon, H. A. (1976). *Administrative behavior* (3rd ed.). New York: Free Press.

Smyth, J. (Ed.). (1989). *Critical perspectives on educational leadership*. London: Falmer Press.

Smyth, J. (Ed.). (1993). *A socially critical view of the self-managing school*. London: Falmer Press.

Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Thomas, A.R. (1986). Seeing isn't believing? Neither is hearing! In defense of observational studies. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 22*(1), 29-48.

Thomas, A.R., Willis, Q., & Phillipps, D. (1981). Observational studies of Australian school administrators: Methodological issues. *Australian Journal of Education, 25*(1), 55-72.

Thrupp, M., & Willmott, R. (2003). *Educational management in managerialist times: Beyond the textual apologist*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Uhl-Bien, M. (2006). Relational leadership theory: exploring the social processes of leadership and organizing. *The Leadership Quarterly, 17*(6), 654-676.

CHAPTER TWO

PROBLEMATISING THE INTELLECTUAL GAZE

INTRODUCTION

Administration has been a central element in the trajectory of human society. As Peter Gronn (2010) notes, above a certain numerical threshold, humans, much like many examples in the animal kingdom, tend to establish hierarchies and the self-organisation of numerous (collaborating) societal groups proves difficult. Although frequently thought of as little more than a technology of control, administration and its key activity of policy, are intimately connected to our understanding of the social world. What remains rarely, if ever, addressed, at least in educational administration discourses, is the extent to which being embedded, and embodying, this world view shapes the intellectual gaze, and by virtue, 'scientific' inquiry. In this chapter I mobilise Bourdieusian social theory to challenge the nature of scientific inquiry in educational administration. Although Bourdieu never wrote on educational administration per se, and earlier claims that his work is minimally used in educational administration despite his theoretical attention to the relationship between individual agency and structural determinism (Lingard & Christie, 2003), the increasing use of Bourdieusian social theory is part of the re-emergence of a sociological approach to educational administration (Gunter, 2010). However, while Bourdieu has been used to interrogate aspects of educational administration, such as school reform (Gunter, 2012), professional standards (English, 2012), leadership preparation and development (Eacott, 2011), strategy (Eacott, 2010), autonomy (Thomson, 2010), educational leadership at large (Thomson, 2015), or even the intellectual field of educational administration (Gunter, 2002), the focus of this chapter on epistemological preliminaries through a Bourdieusian lens is rarely, if ever mobilised, in educational administration.

Much of the Bourdieusian inspired work in educational administration gives primacy to his thinking concepts of *field*, *habitus*, and *capital*, and this is understandable given the centrality of these concepts to his theory of practice.[i] After all, establishing boundaries for the topic, exploring the dispositions of key players, and the value of items – both material and symbolic – within the game is important for building an argument. However, what this does though is to highlight the need to engage with the epistemological preliminaries of the work. For example, Bob Lingard and Shaun Rawolle (2010) argue that school leaders, interpreted as principals, sit at the intersection of multiple *fields* and that the work of leaders, or leadership practice, is the mediation and expression of cross-*field* effects. Embedded within this argument is that school leaders need to be multi-lingual to engage with the discourses of multiple fields. Pat Thomson's (2010) contribution on the other hand is that headteacher practice is caught between different social *fields*. In making this argument, Thomson articulates how the work

of headteachers is both within the individual school (as a sub-*field* of the larger field of schooling) and beyond, where headteacher practice is about advancing – through the acquisition of *capital* – both the school and the individual in the broader social space. Pivotal to Thomson's argument is the boundary work of headteachers and the constant negotiations in which school leaders' push for greater autonomy. Both contributions add to our knowledge of educational administration, however, in advancing theory of educational administration I see two major limitations: first, the centrality of the principal/headteacher[ii] (even if defined relationally); and second, the argument for a *field* of educational administration.

Neither Thomson or Lingard and Rawolle claim to be describing any role other than the principal, yet contemporary thought in educational administration is that leadership, management or administration is no longer – if it ever was – the property of a single individual or title within an organisation. This challenges, if not forces, us to problematise the very concept of administration and the identification of administrators, and by virtue, non-administrators. The long standing problematic matter of the separation – which was the original stimulus for the establishment of departments of educational administration and the domain as a topic of inquiry – needs to be acknowledged and engaged with. In making an argument for a *field* of educational administration, there is the constitution of what Ron Kerr and Sarah Robinson (2011) label an 'elite *field* of leaders',[iii] where a class *habitus* serves to stratify the social world through links to organisational, not necessarily social, positions. The primacy given to Bourdieu's thinking tools in such studies, as opposed to his epistemological arguments, leads to a situation where it is difficult to get beyond the reproductive nature of the administration of schooling. Therefore, much of the Bourdieusian work in educational administration does not move past the role of the state in maintaining existing asymmetrical power relations of the social world, something primarily achieved through schooling (see Bourdieu, 1996[1989]; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990[1970]).

There has been intense critique of the administration, or policy, of contemporary Western democratic-capitalist societies, particularly in sociology, management (at least in critical management studies), and education, among other domains of inquiry. This critique, especially in educational administration,[iv] has privileged the empirical problem over the large-scale theoretical problem – that is, the monopoly of legitimation of the social world – embedded in the research object. I do not mean this in the sense that invokes the (false) dichotomy of theory and practice, rather, as a means of highlighting the intimate relations of the theoretical problem and empirical object in the scientific enterprise. Through the explicit privileging of the empirical, robust discussion around the ways of perceiving the social world are censored, or even dismissed as unnecessary intellectualism. Following the work of Pierre Bourdieu, it is the contention of this chapter that an important element of scholarship is *to take as one's object the social work of construction of the pre-constructed object* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992], p. 229). I build my argument on two key points, first, the centrality of administration in our understanding of the social world, and second, the intellectual gaze of the

embedded actor, to argue for a re-thinking of scientific inquiry in educational administration. As with Bourdieu, I seek to cast doubt on orthodoxy, or, to make the familiar strange. This is a necessary, and important, task when working in the social world that the researcher is involved. Importantly, such a move requires explicit attention to the epistemological *break* of the embodied agent, and the *construction* of the research object, rather than just the *confirmation*, or disconfirmation, of the researcher's model of reality (see Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991[1968]). To engage with these issues, I do not offer a fully articulated theory, research programme or even 'how to' description, that is the intent of the book at large. Rather I sketch an argument centred on the need to interrogate the construction of the research object as a means to extend current debates on leadership, management and administration of educational institutions in new and more fruitful directions.

SOME PRELIMINARIES

My use of the label 'science' in both this chapter and throughout the entire book is deliberately provocative. It is through the mobilisation of this label that I seek to both engage with, and contribute to, the discourses of educational administration. As with Bourdieu, I have a belief in science. An alignment with the view of science, and more specifically scientific inquiry, as an act of *distinction* from ordinary language and the under-problematised view of the social world *as it is*. Therefore, for me, science is, and should be, the goal of all inquiry into the social world.

The labels of 'science' and 'scientific' have a long association with educational administration. The establishment of departments of educational administration in US universities aligns loosely with the publication of Frederick Winslow Taylor's (1911) *The principles of scientific management*, and these principles were strongly advocated for by leading figures at the time, including George Strayer at Teachers College Columba, Edward Elliot at Wisconsin, Franklin Bobbit at Chicago, and Ellwood Cubberly at Stanford.[v] Taylor, like other classic administration thinkers such as Lyndall Urwick and Henri Fayol, was a practitioner-researcher rather than scientist-scholar, mindful that binaries are rarely productive. However, the prominence of 'science' and the 'scientific' study of educational administration were at its peak during the so called *Theory Movement* of the 1950-1960s. Primarily through the work of Andrew Halpin and Daniel Griffiths, this US-centric school of thought, whose genesis is commonly attributed to the annual meeting of the National Conference for Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) in Denver Colorado during August 1954, but owes many of its underlying principles to Herbert Simon's (1945) *Administrative behavior*, marked the beginning of a systematic traditional (natural) science approach to educational administration. This new 'scientific' movement drew heavily on the (early) writing of Herbert Feigl – linked to the Vienna Circle – and sought to characterise educational administration inquiry through 'objectivity, reliability, operational definitions, coherent or systematic structure, and comprehensiveness' (Griffiths, 1959, p. 45).

Interestingly, the Theory Movement sought to break educational administration inquiry away from the *atheoretical* knowledge of the practitioner-researcher, yet did this not by embedding (social) theory per se, but rather rational technique of inquiry. In doing so, 'science' was constituted through the neutrality and apparent distance between observer and research object. Significantly, it also privileged methods over methodology.

Twenty years later, at the 1974 International Intervisitation Programme at Bristol, England, Thomas Barr Greenfield challenged the American pragmatic empiricism of the Theory Movement and the epistemological assumptions of an objective science of administration.[vi] Greenfield's core epistemological claim is that all our knowledge of reality, natural and social, contains an irreducible subjective component. That is, objectivity is a myth – in both the natural and social sciences. In arguing for a subjectivist/phenomenological approach to educational administration scholarship, he called for a 'humane science' (see Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). Through the rejection of objectivity and submitting his argument to the subjectivity of social phenomena, Greenfield does however leave himself in a situation where anything goes – a situation which is arguably equally problematic. He was not alone in the critique of logical empiricist inquiry, as Richard Bates' (1980, 1983) Critical Theory of educational administration also made the claim – so too have sociological approaches to educational administration (see Gunter, 2010). Significantly, these critiques led to many believing that the pursuit of a science of educational administration was neither worth pursuing, or even possible. In contrast, Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski (1991, 1996, 2000, 2012) have consistently argued that it is not science that is the problem, but rather the model of science. They contend that it is the narrow operationalisation of science as logical empiricism that is the problem, not the pursuit of scientific study.

What remains in educational administration, and education at large for that matter, is the canonical opposition between theory and practice, most profoundly inscribed in the division of labour between administrators/teachers, those physical located in schools and school systems, and academics/scientists, those who occupy the hallow halls of the university. It is this (false) dichotomy between theory and practice, and its impact on the intellectual gaze of the educational administration scholar that I seek to problematise. Particularly, my argument is that it is scientific inquiry that separates the practitioner/researcher from the scientist. That is, there is something about the way of thinking, without reducing this to an essentialist argument, which creates a distinction. It is not that the scientist and practitioner/researcher think about different things, in this case the administration of schooling, rather, my argument is that these groups – and the line of demarcation is not easily identified, or maintained – think *differently* about such matters.[vii] Importantly, scientific language, that employed by the scientist, is separate from ordinary language (and this also goes for the mobilisation of 'science' as a label) and therefore troubles common sense. As such, scientific inquiry is a powerful means of political intervention, and the genesis of creativity and innovation. Yet as Fenwick English (2006) reminds us, intellectual (scientific) work 'is never efficient, perhaps not even cost effective, but then, true discovery

and significant intellectual and practical breakthroughs rarely are' (p. 470). As a means of interrogating and problematising the intellectual gaze of the educational administration scholar, I build my argument around three key points: first, the embodied agent of the educational administration scholar; second, the scientific break from the pre-scientific world; and finally, the need for epistemological vigilance.

EMBODIED AGENTS

A central issue in the scholarship of educational administration is that administrators are, as are all social actors, *spontaneous sociologists* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992], p. 66). This is particularly so in the professions, such as education, but also law, business, architecture, engineering and medicine.[viii] In the case of educational administration, most, if not all, academics are former administrators at school and/or systemic levels. Further to that, many hold administrative positions in the academy, further blurring the boundary between the native (naive) perception of the spontaneous sociologist and the research objects constructed through the 'scientific' method of the scientist. Following Bourdieu, this does two (considerably overlapping) things, first, the *doxic* modality through which the social world is perceived is the result of the internalisation of the objective structures of the social world in the cognitive schemata through which they apprehend the social world. Alternatively, the social world exists in the body as much as the body exists in the social world. Second, there exists a belief, or *illusio*, in administration, and most importantly, the stakes of the task at hand. That is, administration functions only in so far as it produces a belief in the value of its product (e.g. policy, security, order), and means of production (e.g. governance). What I have brought to attention here is the importance of engaging with the epistemological (and ontological) preliminaries which shape, and in turn are shaped by, scholarship in educational administration.

In relation to my first point, the *doxic* modality, there is great difficulty in studying the social world in which one is involved. The tensions of this engagement are highlighted in Bourdieu's (1988[1984]) *Homo academicus*, among others. As noted above, resulting from the occupation of a particular position in the social (and physical) space, and the trajectory – both professional and personal – that got them there, educational administration academics are frequently, if not always, immersed in an *in situ* brand of scholarship. The individual's social history of education, and specifically of educational institutions, and the history of the singular relationship with these institutions, significantly, often in spite of ourselves, orients our thought.[ix] This blurs the boundaries of the empirical and the epistemic, as 'educational administration' as the research object is the institutionalisation of a point of view grounded in a pre-reflexive belief in the undisputed value of the object itself. This brings to the fore the need for an epistemological break – a point I shall return to later – in the scientific enterprise. As Bourdieu (2000[1997]) notes:

> … it is clear that, to secure some chance of really knowing what one is doing, one has to unfold what is inscribed in the various relations of implication in which the thinker and his thought are caught up, that is, the presuppositions he engages and the inclusions or exclusions he unwittingly performs. (p. 99)

It is the epistemic unconscious, that which is the history – however opaque – of the individual, and the intellectual *field*, that shapes the scientific enterprise. Administrative theory, most of the time, align with a Western pattern of thought that centres on administration (social order) and management (control) of populations and/or environments. This administration and management is exercised by more or less arbitrarily defined populations, produced through the successive partitioning of an initial category that is itself pre-constructed: 'first-year female small school principals', who administer or manage over more or less arbitrarily defined populations, produced through the successive partitioning of an initial category that is itself pre-constructed: 'disadvantaged students in regional areas'.

This brings me to the second, but deeply interwoven, point of 'investment in the object'. The original investment in, or belief in the value of, educational administration has no specific origin, because it always precedes itself. Therefore, even though the positive or negative relations that one may have with educational institutions, that which appear to create a distance between object and subject, the difficulties in recognising this ontological complicity limits the intellectual enterprise. As it is, the scientist frequently credits the research object with his/her vision of things as a result of the pre-reflexive conditioning. That is, the academic, s/he who is embedded and embodies educational administration rarely calls into question the value of educational administration. To challenge the value, or worth, of educational administration would be to not only question the very core of the domain, but to question the value of the self and one's role in the social fabric. The researcher, who is therefore implicated in the world, is unable to withdraw from the world in order to construct a re-creation of it through a manuscript or lecture. Furthermore, although somewhat deterministic, I would argue that education researchers for the most part, struggle to move beyond the innate desire to 'educate'. Therefore, much of the work in education seeks to 'teach', hence the implicit adoption of Taylor's (1911) 'one right method' – that which is contemporarily translated into 'best practice' – and the eternal quest for how best to prepare and develop school administrators for the purpose of bringing about change (generally towards some performative measure operating within the managerialist project).

The intellectual gaze of the researcher is significant here. What is arguably the *raison d'être* of the 'applied' domain, the advancement of practice, that which is perpetuated in part by the submission of many researchers and administrators to the managerialist discourses of the contemporary world and by the inertia of the academic/practical problematic handed down in the technicist classes of the contemporary school leadership preparation and development programme – whether they be based in universities or beyond – simply must be engaged with. I raise this point not as an iconoclastic attack, or privileged intellectualism, rather because I believe that, for the most part, educational administration researchers, for

all their research and voluminous literature, do not ask themselves these questions. By avoiding asking oneself about the stimulation and provocation of your questioning, the individual scientist, and the domain at large, is significantly limited as to what it can say about the social world. There is of course substantial risk, at least intellectually, and arguably career wise, in trying to know, and make known, what the world of educational administration knowledge may (or does) not want to know, especially about itself. In building my argument here, I contend that administration may derive its most substantive scientific work not from producing countless lists of best practice and essential traits or behaviours, but rather through a constant effort to undertake a sociological informed critique of its own reasoning.[x] That is, I am stressing a critical engagement with not only the limits of thought, but also on the conditions in which that thought is exercised. Understandably, an initial question may be to ask 'But what scientific profit can be discovered from such an exercise?' I argue that most, if not all, educational administration researchers enter the academy to effect change, to change the way of the world toward some inherently 'good' orientation. Critically engaging with thought enables the researcher to break with the intimate relation that one has with the social world – at least to a certain extent – and engage with that which is opaque to us due to familiarity.

As Bourdieu (1988[1984]) notes, there is a need to get 'increasingly closer to the originary of the ordinary' (pp. xi-xii). The educational administration researcher does not stand outside of the social world they analyse, nor do they look down on it from above. Rather, they themselves are agents in the social world, and the pre-constructed notions of educational administration, the management of systems, teachers, students, and buildings, derive their self-evidence and their legitimacy from the actions of subjects. Following Bourdieu, the social world that educational administration inquiry deals with is something that the subject themselves make, modify and transform through their activity. The individual, or research team, who studies schools has a 'use' for them, one that may have little in common with the parents who seek to find a 'good' school for their child, or the system or government looking to leverage performance. What I am doing here is not suggesting any one perspective is better than the other, although to say I am neutral here is also misplaced, but rather to stress that the internal politics of scholarship matters. For example, the Critical School, particularly that coming out of Deakin University (see Tinning & Sirna, 2011), has an explicit social justice agenda focusing on the adversarial role of education and the emancipatory power of learning/education. In what may appear similar to the novice researcher, or wider public, the School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI) movement has a belief in the transformational power of schooling – primarily through upward social mobility – that can be achieved through the perpetual improvement of student outcomes. However, unlike the Critical School, there is no questioning of the value of the measures (see Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). The School Based Management (SBM) movement, which is gaining renewed traction in Australian education policy, as with elsewhere, is built on a romantic belief in 'participation' at the local level and frequently exhibits a denial of power relations in the social,

yet invokes a level of common sense logic that is difficult, if not impossible, to refute. As Bourdieu notes, in the social sciences, even the least competent and intellectually equipped scholar (Bourdieu, following Alain, actually uses the label 'dumbest') can use common sense and find support, especially beyond the academy (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]). What this raises is the need to engage with the pre-scientific world and the construction of the research object.

THE PRE-SCIENTIFIC WORLD AND THE BREAK

Educational administration, like the sociologies of the professions (e.g. education), primarily owes its existence to the currency of public concern over particular social issues (e.g. schooling, education policy). Such inquiry however rarely achieves any scientific status while it remains in the realm of the pre-scientific, that of public concern or technocratic management. The researcher can, and I would argue that this is common in educational administration, avoid engaging with the epistemological break required for scientific study by remaining in the pre-scientific world of the wider public. This is most overt in the solicitation of researchers for the production of marketable products such as the 'leadership/management by ring binder' genre (see Halpin, 1990; Gunter, 1997), that which can prove to be very profitable, materially and symbolically, for those who opt to serve the dominant vision. However, educational administration cannot claim to be studied scientifically, – note that my argument is for the scientific study of, not a science of – without breaking from the orthodoxy of the pre-scientific world. This is not to discredit, or reject, the practical sense of the spontaneous sociologist, as it is this orthodoxy that is the beginning of the scientific enterprise, yet as Bourdieu argues, the choice of problem, the elaboration of concepts and analytical categories function as a ratification of the *doxa* unless the crucial operation of scientific construction breaks with the social world as it is (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992], p. 248). Therefore, what is required of the researcher, is submitting to scientific scrutiny everything that makes the *doxic* experience of the world possible. This includes not only the pre-scientific representation of the social but also the cognitive schemata that underlie the construction of the image.

If to the contrary, one is to accept at face value the *doxa* to construct the research object, you can find lists, directories, role statements, capability frameworks, among others, already constituted by 'professional' bodies. I am well aware of the critique, often quickly invoked, that educational administration, and the professions in general, differ from the natural sciences as it is required to be accessible in a way that is not expected of physics. Yet, I am reminded here of Gaston Bachelard's (1984[1934]) saying 'the simple is never anything more than the simplified', and Bourdieu's consistent refusal to make his work more accessible on the basis that what he was discussing is complex and to make it simple is inappropriate.[xi] The professionalisation of educational administration knowledge however mobilises, if not relies on, a kind of quasi-scientific rationalisation of orthodoxy – it is worth thinking through this in relation to the

Theory Movement. In this case, scientific work is little more than an instrument for legitimising power relations *as they are*. This is a particularly significant matter given the embedded and embodied nature of educational administration inquiry, and the notion that the scientist is at stake in his/her own object. Therefore, if the scientist seeks to construct techniques or instruments that make it possible to manipulate the social order or populations, then inquiry is in the service of 'administration' and scientists serve that master as social engineers. The question that this raises is whether educational administration can constitute itself through a refusal to submit to social demands for instruments of legitimation and manipulation? I also want to draw attention here to the use of 'administration'. I mobilise this term, following Bourdieu, to stress that in heavily administered societies, much like a gravitational field, even the person perceived to have absolute power – or decision making authority – is him/herself held within the constraints of administration. That is, nobody knows anymore who is the subject of the final decision, and the place of the decision is both everywhere and nowhere. This is counter to the illusion of 'the' decision maker and the countless case studies aimed at investigating how decisions came to be through merely the phenomenological manifestations of the exercise of power (see Bourdieu, 2005[2000]). However to simply denounce bureaucratic administration, or more specifically hierarchy, does not get us anywhere, rather, what we need to ask is how such a vision of the social world is possible.

What we experience in the empirical is an ensemble of administration. Often in the form of government departments, school systems, schools, faculties, and so on, within which individual actors, and categories of actors (e.g. bureaucrats, principals, teachers, students), struggle over a particular form of authority, that which is constituted through the power to rule or legitimise actions through legislations, regulations, policy and administrative measures.[xii] The history of such administration is characterised by a set of negotiations between rival claims of administrative control and individual agency. As such, the administration of schools, and school systems, depends on its bureaucratic past for legitimate authority while also constantly seeking to reform and renew itself. Alternatively, educational administration is a space where existing holders of the legitimacy of discourses come into direct contact with new contenders. The struggle for legitimacy, as with the researchers' struggle with the taken for granted of the immediate, is always in play. To avoid inquiry becoming little more than the advancement of the current state of affairs nothing can be defined or assumed *a priori*. That is, the popular practice, especially with graduate students, of operationally defining objects and subjects is not appropriate. In addition to being a direct rejection of logical empiricism, such a claim raises questions regarding the use of theory in educational administration, particularly if the researcher is to work with open concepts, and theory being a means of working through the empirical world. For one, as I demonstrate in the following chapter (see also Eacott, 2013a), the contemporarily popular label of 'leadership' relies on an *a priori* assumption of its existence yet a simultaneous *a posteriori* labelling of where it occurs. Specifically, while there seems to be little doubt about the 'realness' of leadership,

its identification is most frequently limited to the performative markers of the managerialist project of the state. The tautology of such research, where a site has been identified where leadership is enacted and then the findings are correlated against the very measures that we used to identify it in the first place seems somewhat lost, or at least not problematic, for mainstream scholarship in educational leadership, management and administration. I return to this matter again in Chapter Six while critiquing Stephen Dinham's AESOP work and the International Successful School Principals Project, in particular the Australian contributions from David Gurr and Lawrie Drysdale.

The use of 'theory' – although arguably a bastardised mobilisation of such label – in educational administration is frequently limited to the representation of experimental laws, or causal relations, and the 'research' is constituted as a distinct part of the process, with a somewhat naive demarcation of the empirical object, theoretical problematising, construction of the research object, and so on. Such research is of greater frequency in the project management style of contemporary academic life in the entrepreneurial university, as opposed to the longevity of the research programme – where one continually delves deeper into an area, not just picking up where one project or others have left off, but rather, better informed and with increasingly sophisticated ways of knowing and being in the world, scholarship is continually delving deeper into the research object, its construction and constant re-construction. In contrast, the project management approach, that which is most frequently limited to the inquiry of public concern, constitutes the researcher as a technician (e.g. a quantitative expert, or worst still, a software package expert, e.g. SPSS) who has the mobility to shift research objects according to the latest national priorities of large scale funding regimes, the whims of government or corporate juggernauts. This is an important aspect to engage with for any potential 'scientific' scholarship. With reduced research funding in many national contexts, many researchers or research teams are falling under the control (at least fiscal) of large firms seeking to secure a monopoly, or to use Michael Porter's (1985) term 'competitive advantage', through the commercialisation of profitable products. The relocation, or redistribution, of research funding to the commercial sector reflects administration – both at large, and specifically research – constituted in the model of the firm, embodying the market ideology or neo-Darwinism of the corporation. If we are to break from this solicitation, scientific inquiry requires, if not demands, freedom. Following Michel Foucault, I contend that this freedom is not synonymous with liberation and/or autonomy. The problem is not 'Let's liberate our researchers' but rather engaging with the practice of freedom by which one could define what is scientific inquiry and the researcher-researched relationship. To sustain such freedom, researchers need to combat and systematically resist the infiltration of ordinary language and spontaneous understanding of the social world. The common-sense or taken for granted of the social does however consistently re-appear (if it ever disappears) and there is a requirement of constant vigilance in scholarship. Such vigilance is particularly difficult in 6000 word journal articles, or 20 minute conference presentations, not to mention the temporal nature – or privileging of 'clock' time – in university and

academic ranking systems of publication output. What remains though is that the empirical is inexhaustible, something that objective science struggles to grasp and engage with, and theory is not something that the researcher applies to the empirical, rather it is a way of working through and with the empirical.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL VIGILANCE

Epistemological vigilance is particularly necessary in the social sciences, where the separation between the everyday language and opinion of the spontaneous sociologist and the scientific discourse of the researcher is more blurred than elsewhere (Bourdieu, Chamboredon & Passeron, 1991[1968]). It is familiarity with the social world, the ongoing struggle with the spontaneous understanding of the everyday that is the central epistemological obstacle for educational administration as it continuously produces conceptualisations (e.g. organisational structures, leadership) and at the same time, the conditions which serve to legitimise and sustain them. As a result, the inexhaustible intellectual project of getting beyond the everyday is never finally won. Herein lies a core difference between the 'natural' and 'social' sciences, although such a binary is not necessarily productive, the separation experienced between the laboratory and everyday life for the physicist is substantively more difficult – and dare I say impossible – for the social scientist. This is partially because the intellectual resources of disciplines, in this case educational administration, rarely provide the necessary tools to meaningfully break from the ordinary language of the everyday. In doing so, it is rare for disciplines, particularly those related to the professions (e.g. educational administration) to ask questions of their canonical thrusts (e.g. 'leadership').

All of the techniques and procedures of advanced research cannot completely overcome the embedded and embodied nature of the educational administration scholar. Due to the (social) relationship that the educational administration scholar has with the research object, scholarship is never a pursuit of pure truth (if such a thing is possible). Therefore, it is inappropriate to craft a scholarly narrative as though it exists separate to the socio-political, cultural and temporal conditions in which it is brought into being. Neglecting to subject ordinary language, the primary instrument in the ongoing (re)construction of objects in the social world, to a rigorous and robust epistemological/ontological critique runs the risk of mistaking objects pre-constructed in and by ordinary language for data (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991[1968]). The masking of the everyday origins of such data through the mobilisation of scientific language (e.g. the 'quality', 'improvement', 'effective' discourses) is infrequently called into question (except arguably in the critical stream of educational administration research) as the descriptions provided create a sense of comfort through the recognition of familiarity with lived experience. As Bourdieu *et al.* (1999[1993]) note:

> The positivists dream of an epistemological state of perfect innocence papers over the fact that the crucial difference is not between a science that effects construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of the work of construction, strives to discover and master as

> completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and equally inevitable effects those acts produce. (p. 608)

Gaston Bachelard (1984[1934]) denies science the certainties of a definitive heritage and reminds us that it (science) can only progress by perpetually calling into question the very principles of its own constructs. Similarly, as noted at the opening of this book, Fenwick English (2006) argues that advancing scholarship in educational administration requires criticism of it, philosophically, empirically and logically, suggesting that we do not search for core pillars but the contested grounds on which educational leadership is defined moment-to-moment. The arguments of Bachelard and English, among others, are significant. Historically, discourses of educational administration, primarily through the mobilisation of the 'applied' field label, have generated – and legitimised – the unproductive, and I would say false, binary of theory and practice. For the most part, this is justified through a desire to maintain a closeness, or relevance, to practice. Helen Gunter (2012) contends that such labels (e.g. theory and practice) have been used and abused to shape anti-intellectual cultures within the profession and 'educational leadership industry' in business and higher education. Notably, an integral feature of the managerialist project which dominates the contemporary research environment internationally is the discrediting of intellectual work (such as the critique and analysis of the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of research objects) as exotic, indulgent and not in the public interest (Gunter, 2013).

With the othering of intellectual work, often referred to as the professionalization of knowledge production, and the embedded and embodied nature of the educational administration scholar, I argue that there is a crisis in educational administration as a domain of knowledge production. For me, this crisis is not centred on divisions resulting from paradigmatic lens, or even intellectual traditions. Rather, this crisis is grounded in the relationship between the discipline as a domain of knowledge production and its interactions with the wider domain of education research and practice. In reflecting on her career working in educational administration, Eugenie Samier (2013) notes:

> In the field I eventually settled in, educational administration, significant changes were taking place, beginning in the later 1960s and the 1970s and accelerating throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with feminist critiques, the School of Critical Theory, the emergence of hermeneutics and phenomenology, the transformation of organisational behaviour into organisational studies as a broadly encompassing pursuit that included culture, micro-politics, aesthetic analysis, and psychoanalysis, all spilling into administrative theory as postmodern critiques appeared in English. And then … Not nothing, as this might have been a state preferable to the rise of neo-liberalism, the New Public Management, and the market model fostered and distributed internationally through globalisation. (pp. 234-235)

If we accept the social world at face value, the orthodoxy of ordinary language constructs the research object in such a way that you find lists, directories, role statements, capability frameworks, among others, already constituted by 'professional' bodies. This speaks explicitly to the argument of this chapter, the data generated (not collected) must not be seen as independent contributions to the

discourses of 'leadership' but rather as social constructions in the political game of knowledge creation (Eacott, 2013b). As Jill Blackmore (2004) states, to understand how educational administration is 'perceived, understood and enacted, one has to have a sense of the broader social, economic and political relations shaping educational work' (p. 267).

There is a substantial body of work stressing that as a discipline, educational administration is not held in high esteem within the academy at large or even education as a broader field of study. If educational administration research is to acquire any level of academic credibility within both the academy and wider community, then greater attention needs to be paid to the manner in which it undertakes its inquiry. An interrogation of the epistemological and ontological preliminaries of research, those underlying generative principles, is imperative for advancing a rigorous and robust research programme. Attention to the construction and ongoing re-construction of the research object in time and space would advance our understanding of the administration of organisations in new and fruitful directions. Understandably, to challenge 'leadership' – as the contemporary popular label within the discipline – is to attack one of, if not the, canon of the discipline. Unlike the critique of management and/or administration, not to mention the demonization of bureaucracy, 'leadership' is the current sacred label of the discipline. To question its scholarly legitimacy brings to the level of discourse the very generative foundations of scholarship and practice, and for most reading this book, our identity. This is why we see numerous critiques of the various adjectives (e.g. transformational, servant, strategic, distributed, motion) used in the rapidly expanding literatures of educational administration, yet minimal, if any critique of 'leadership' itself. It is as though the scholarly practice of reflexivity, or critically turning upon itself, has been neglected for the purpose of maintaining a particular relationship with practice. The argument that I am building in this chapter, and throughout the book, is that to engage, and arguably combat, questions of the quality of educational administration research as a scholarly endeavour, greater attention is needed to the ongoing construction of the research object and its relations with the researcher.

CONCLUSION

This chapter, and the thinking behind it, is not a case of theoreticism – or theory for theory's sake – but rather, if I return to my original provocation, to take as one's object the social work of construction of the pre-constructed object, then this chapter can be read as a Bourdieusian epistemological preliminary for the study of educational administration. That being said, it is more than merely a didactic exercise, this chapter is more than a mere appropriation of Bourdieu into a different intellectual space. This chapter, as with the book itself, seeks to explicitly reinvigorate epistemological and ontological debate in educational administration. The research approach that I am advancing is easily summarised. I am arguing for an approach to scientifically study educational administration, one that is able to incorporate the embedded and embodied nature of the 'education' researcher. To

do this, I am asking serious questions about the epistemological break in scholarship and the construction of the research object, more so than the confirmation or disconfirmation of the researcher's model of reality.

A social 'scientific' approach to educational administration, as advocated for in this chapter, must break free of the ambition of grounding in (rational) reason, the arbitrary division of the social world (e.g. administrators, non-administrators), instead, take for its object, rather than getting itself caught up in, the struggle for the monopoly of the legitimate representation of the social world. A chapter such as this is both difficult and risky. Difficult in the sense that, as Bourdieu (2004[2001]) notes, every word uttered about scientific practice can be turned back on the person who utters it. Risky, because as with any argument that directly engages with, or challenges, the status quo, there is the very real and likely outcome that it will be rejected by the existing guardians of the domain. This goes to the argument of the chapter, that is, administration is frequently the site where the custodians of the domain come into contact, and frequently confrontation, with new contenders. However, my goal is not to merely write a chapter (or book for that matter) on the scholarship of educational administration, but to make a much more fundamental point about scientific inquiry in educational administration, and beyond. Although I have stressed the importance of the *break* and the *construction* of the research object, I have deliberately not provided a set of prescriptive 'how to' conduct research forever more. Such a claim would actually be counter to the thesis of the chapter. Rather, I have sketched areas of relevance that if attended to, will advance our understanding of the administration of educational institutions in new and fruitful directions. The challenge laid out in this chapter however rests as much with the reader as it does me. If but one person in educational administration engages with the ideas presented here, then this chapter has been successful, albeit limited, in challenging the status quo.

NOTES

[i] Following Michael Grenfell (2010), from this point on I adopt the convention of putting Bourdieu's key concepts in italics. This is done as a mental reminder that each of these come with a complex and sophisticated theory of practice and should be simply taken and substantiated as analytic metaphors.

[ii] I have included both 'principal' and 'headteacher' here building out of the geographic location (Australia and England respectively) of the two works cited, however from this point on I will use the label 'principal'.

[iii] Although, as noted in the previous chapter, despite an initial Bourdieusian approach, Kerr and Robinson quickly revert to a common language mobilisation of field.

[iv] There is something of an inherent tension at work in this label. I am aware of the issue of the juxtaposition of the diverse disciplines of 'education' and 'public administration' to create a sub-unit defined as a specific domain of reality, that which primarily serves a pragmatic purpose. At the same time, there is the matter of conceiving of neighbouring sciences (e.g. administration, psychology, sociology, etc) as border conflicts, based on an acceptance of the pre-constructed division of (scientific) labour as an actual empirical reality. Furthermore, at its most limited reading, I am aware of colleagues who would question my labelling of 'educational *administration*', arguing that the area has evolved to 'management' and now 'leadership'.

[v] Interestingly, Cubberly had no background in the study of education. His own professional background was in geology and physical science, yet he taught a range of courses in the educational administration programme, including: school administration; school problems; school organisations; school statistics; secondary schools; history of education; and relations of ignorance and crime in education (Bates, 2010; Tynack & Hansot, 1982).

[vi] Some consider Greenfield's attack to have actually begun at the 1973 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in New Orleans (see Bates, 1980). This supports the argument that it is impossible to demarcate an exact point of origin for thought. As an idea, no matter how original, is little more than a reworking of previous thought in a unique time and space.

[vii] I do not however hold the assumption that all university based faculty are 'scholarly/scientific', or vice versa. And in many ways, this is the argument of the chapter.

[viii] My choice of 'professions' here is deliberate. While education is frequently, if not always, a low status faculty in the academy – lived out on a daily basis through numerous apparatus such as research funding regimes, journal rankings, promotion systems, research/post-doctoral fellowships – the same lowly status is rarely assigned to other 'professional' fields such as medicine and engineering.

[ix] My use of the collective noun (e.g. 'our') is for two reasons: first, I see myself as equally implicated in my argument; and second, it is consistent with the argument of the chapter that one cannot escape the social world from which they construct as their research object.

[x] Although this may be read as a derivative of Karl Weick's (1969, 1995) 'sense-making' in organisations, I stress that my focus is on the epistemological and ontological assumptions of scholarship more so than as a framework for engaging with the behaviour of organisations.

[xi] There is a tension here given that in Bourdieu's later works (see 1998[1996]; 1998[1998], 2003[2001]) we see an explicit shift towards engaging a wider audience. He begins publishing small paperbacks that are accessible to a more diverse readership in terms of price and writing style – most being collections of interviews, short speeches, and essays devoted mostly to critique of neo-liberalism/globalisation. This strategy brings a broad readership, one beyond the academy, and also sparks debate in the French media (see Swartz, 2003). Explicitly, Bourdieu sort to engage as a public intellectual by bringing the logic of intellectual life, that of argument and refutation, into public life – but only in areas where he felt competent, and preferably on the basis of scientific research (see also Lane, 2006).

[xii] Given this context, the under use of Max Weber's work, particularly that on bureaucracy, in educational administration is intriguing. When Weber is mobilised, it is rarely for anything other than naming the labeller of the bureaucracy, rather than the sophisticated writings he has on the rise of bureaucracy and its function in the administration of populations. There are of course exceptions, and I am thinking specifically of Eugenie Samier, but for the most part, Weber is much under-utilised in the discussion of educational administration.

REFERENCES

Bachelard, G. (1984[1934]). *The new scientific spirit* (P. A. Heelan, Trans). Boston: Beacon Press. [Originally published as *Le nouvel esprit scientifique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France).]

Bates, R. J. (1980). Educational administration, the sociology of science, and the management of knowledge. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *16*(2), 1-20.

Bates, R. J. (1983). *Educational administration and the management of knowledge*. Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.

Bates, R. J. (2010). History of educational leadership/management. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGraw (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed., pp. 724-730). Oxford: Elsvier.

Blackmore, J. (2004). Restructuring educational leadership in changing contexts: A local/global account of restructuring in Australia. *Journal of Educational Change, 5*(3), 267-288.

Bourdieu, P. (1988[1984]). *Homo academicus* (P. Collier, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Homo academicus* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit).]

Bourdieu, P. (1996[1989]). *The state nobility* (L.C. Clough, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. [Originally published as *La noblesse d'état: grandes écoles et esprit de corps* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit).]

Bourdieu, P. (1998[1996]). *On television* (P. Parkhurst Ferguson, Trans.). New York, NY: The New Press. [Originally published as *Sur la télévision* (Paris: Raisons d'Agir).]

Bourdieu, P. (1998[1998]). *Acts of resistance: Against the tyranny of the market* (R. Nice, Trans.). New York, NY: New Press. [Originally published as *Contre-feux* (Paris: Éditions Liber-Raisons d'Agir).]

Bourdieu, P. (2000[1997]). *Pascalian meditations* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Méditations pascaliennes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).]

Bourdieu, P. (2003[2001]). *Firing back: Against the tyranny of the market 2* (L. Wacquant, Trans.). London: Verso. [Originally published as *Contre-feux 2: pour un mouvement social européen* (Paris: Éditions Raisons d'Agir).]

Bourdieu, P. (2004[2001]). *Science of science and reflexivity* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity. [Originally published as *Science de la science et réflexivité* (Paris: Éditions Raisons d'Agir).]

Bourdieu, P. (2005[2000]). *The social structures of the economy* (C. Turner, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity. [Originally published as *Les structures socials de l'économie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).]

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J-C. (1990[1970]). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (R. Nice, Trans.). London: Sage. [Originally published as *La reproduction* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit).]

Bourdieu, P., Chamboredon, J-C., & Passeron, J-C. (1991[1968]). *The craft of sociology: epistemological preliminaries* (R. Nice, Trans.). Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter. [Originally published as *Le métier de sociologue : préalables épistémologiques* (Paris: Mouton).]

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992[1992]). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. [Originally published as *Résponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive* (Paris: Seuil).]

Bourdieu, P. *et al.* (1999[1993]). *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society* (P. Parkhurst Ferguson, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity. [Originally published as *La misere du monde* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).]

Eacott, S. (2010). Bourdieu's strategies and the challenge for educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *13*(3), 265-281.

Eacott, S. (2011). Preparing 'educational' leaders in managerialist times: An Australian story. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *43*(1), 43-59.

Eacott, S. (2013a). 'Leadership' and the social: Time, space and the epistemic. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *27*(1), 91-101.

Eacott, S. (2013b). Research as a political practice: The fallacy of data speaking for themselves. In S. Eacott & R. Niesche (Eds.), *Empirical leadership research: Letting the data speak for themselves* (pp. 215-229). Niagara Falls, NY: Untested Ideas Center.

English, F. W. (2006). The unintended consequences of a standardised knowledge base in advancing educational leadership preparation. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *42*(3), 461-472.

English, F. W. (2012). Bourdieu's *misrecognition*: Why educational leadership standards will not reform schools or leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 44*(2), 155-170.

Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (1991). *Knowing educational administration: Contemporary methodological controversies in educational administration research*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (1996). *Exploring educational administration*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (2000). *Doing educational administration*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (2012). Science, systems, and theoretical alternatives in educational administration: the road less travelled. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *50*(1), 57-75.

Greenfield, T. B., & Ribbins, P. (Eds.). (1993). *Greenfield on educational administration*. London: Routledge.

Grenfell, M. (2010). Being critical: The practical logic of Bourdieu's metanoia. *Critical Studies in Education, 51*(1), 85-99.

Griffiths, D. E. (1959). *Administrative theory*. New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Gronn, P. (2010). Leadership: Its genealogy, configuration and trajectory. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *42*(4), 405-435.

Gunter, H. (1997). *Rethinking education: The consequences of Jurassic management*. London: Cassell.

Gunter, H. (2002). Purposes and positions in the field of education management: Putting Bourdieu to work. *Educational Management & Administration*, *30*(1), 7-26.

Gunter, H. (2010). A sociological approach to educational leadership. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *31*(4), 519-527.

Gunter, H. (2012). *Leadership and the reform of education*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Gunter, H. (2013). Researching and conceptualising the field. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 45*(2), 201-212.

Halpin, D. (1990). Review symposium. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *11*(4), 473-476.

Kerr, R. & Robinson, S.K. (2011). Leadership as an elite field: Scottish banking leaders and he crisis of 2007-2009. *Leadership*, *7*(2), 151-173.

Lane, J. F. (2006). *Bourdieu's politics: Problems and possibilities*. London: Routledge.

Lingard, B., & Christie, P. (2003). Leading theory: Bourdieu and the field of educational leadership: an introduction and overview of this special issue. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *6*(4), 317-333.

Lingard, B., & Rawolle, S. (2010). Principal leadership and straddling fields: a Bourdieuian account. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Melbourne, Australia, 1 December.

Oplatka, I. (2010). *The legacy of educational administration: A historical analysis of an academic field*. Berlin: Peter Lang.

Porter, M. E. (1985). *Competitive advantage: Creating and sustaining superior performance*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Samier, E. (2013). Where have the disruptions gone? Educational administration's theoretical capacity for analysing or formenting disruption. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 16*(2), 234-244.

Simon, H. (1945). *Administrative behavior*. New York, NY: MacMillan.

Swartz, D. L. (2003). From critical sociology to public intellectual: Pierre Bourdieu and politics. *Theory and Society*, *32*(5-6), 791-823.

Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Thomson, P. (2010). Headteacher autonomy: A sketch of a Bourdieuan field analysis of position and practice. *Critical Studies in Education*, *51*(1), 5-20.

Thomson, P. (2015). *Bourdieu and educational leadership*. London: Routledge.

Thrupp, M., & Willmott, R. (2003). *Educational management in managerialist times: Beyond the textual apologists*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Tinning, R., & Sirna, K. (Eds.). (2011). *Education, social justice and the legacy of Deakin University: Reflections of the Deakin diaspora*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Tynack, D., & Hansot, E. (1982). *Managers of virtue: Public school leadership in America, 1820-1980*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Weick, K. E. (1969). *The social psychology of organizing*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CHAPTER THREE

THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF 'LEADERSHIP'

INTRODUCTION

The epistemological vigilance argued for in the previous chapter establishes a rationale to problematize, or at least engage with, the contemporarily popular labels of any given disciplinary space. In this chapter I take up this task by engaging with the current label of choice in educational administration, that being – 'leadership'. My choice to use quotation marks around the word 'leadership' is a deliberate technique to remind the reader that this label is not a given, yet alone universal. In a recent editorial of *European Studies in Educational Management*, Peter R Taylor and John Heywood (2013) observe that the label 'leadership' is infrequently used in Europe and when it is it requires extended articulation as to its meaning.[1] This raises an important point for the contemporary global academy of educational administration. That is, despite the apparent popularity in Anglophone literatures, 'leadership' may be more of a particular socio-geographic construct than a universal. Therefore, its spread in global educational administration discourses may be a part of a new form of imperialism achieved through language rather than physical occupation – an epistemic imperialism. My choice of 'Anglophone' as opposed to the 'global north' is purposeful. Consistent with my argument of socio-geographic particularity, I contend that it is potentially an Anglophone grounding rather than assuming a coherent set of discourses emanating from a single hemisphere. If nothing else, Taylor and Heywood's observation refutes claims to a universal global north on 'leadership' in education.

This brings me to ask questions of 'leadership'. In particular, I take cues from a recent editorial commissioned debate/discussion in *Journal of Management Studies* (Birkinshaw, Healey, Suddaby & Weber, 2014), where Klaus Weber argues:

> I believe that our efforts should continue to be aimed at theory development. Our understanding of organisations and management is far from complete or conclusive, and as students of social processes, we are working with a moving target. As academics with a commitment to methodological rigour, we are also not nimble enough to simply report on new phenomena, a task I believe we should leave to consultants, journalists, and think tanks. The unique role of academic scholarship in societal knowledge systems is to systematise, memorise, stabilise, and abstract. That means that it is quite natural and appropriate to not always have a conclusive view about a specific event or timely phenomenon. We should study fads and fashions, not chase them. (p. 51)

As with management studies in general (see Abrahamson, 1991, 1996; Abrahamson & Eisenman, 2008; Abrahamson & Fairchild, 1999; Carson, Lanier, Carson, & Guidry, 2000; Gibson & Tesone, 2001), educational administration has been prone to populous faddism (Peck & Reitzug, 2012). Even the evolving title

from administration through to management and now the contemporarily popular 'leadership' reflects the rapidity of changes in the fashions of rhetoric, but also the ease through which those in the academy shift to best meet perceived needs (both from within and beyond) to be fashionable. While we can argue about the unique context of each and every school, there is a certain level of predictability about schooling through both space and time, even if the individuals within a school change. Indeed the school is one of the canonical institutions of modernity. As such, it is frequently discussed in the context of large-scale bureaucratic systems and the downward linearity of policy directives from the state (see Gunter & Forrester, 2010). However, the contemporary capitalist condition, that of global financial uncertainty and the increasing influence of multi-national corporations, with consequential shifts in the politics of the nation-state, provides a timely opportunity to engage, if not interrogate, common-sense labels that have risen to ascendency (Eacott, 2013). In the specific intellectual space that is educational administration, this chapter is dedicated to interrogating 'leadership' in education with the goal of providing fruitful directions for advancing our understanding of how educational institutions operate in a particular time and space. While recognising that many others have directly engaged with the shifting labels and/or raised concern about the seemingly uncritical shift from administration to management and then leadership, the shift/s remain, so too does the proliferation of adjectival 'leadership' and the seemingly insurmountable theory and practice binary.

'Leadership' is arguably the most commonly used concept or label in contemporary research in, and the practice of, educational administration. However, in broader organisational research discourses, while central, the scholarly value of 'leadership' as a concept remains contested (O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, Lapiz, & Self, 2010), with Joel Podolny, Rakesh Khurana and Marya Hill-Popper (2004) citing that 'leadership' is actually marginalised by dominant organisational paradigms and perspectives. Although this critique is enduring (see Pfeffer, 1977; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003), it remains somewhat absent in educational administration. The exceptions that do appear, such as Gabriele Lakomski's (2005) *Management without leadership*, and papers by Peter Gronn (2003) and myself (2013), are situated on the periphery of the discipline and very much removed from the hegemonic mainstream. As it stands, if one is to critique the value of 'leadership' or show a preference for previous labels (e.g. educational administration), it has become common place to be accused of being outdated and having minimal, if any, value to contemporary thought and analysis. In most cases, publishers, or at least reviewers and editors, will often refuse to publish work until labels are updated to the contemporary title 'educational leadership'. That said, building from the argument established in the previous chapter around the need for an epistemological break with ordinary uses of words, in this chapter I problematise 'leadership' in the educational administrative context. This destabilising of the label is important due to the enduring ambiguity surrounding the very definition of 'leadership' (see Bedeian & Hunt, 2006) – not to mention its relationship to management – and that advocates of 'leadership' and its effect on

organisational performance frequently, if not always, constitute 'leadership' through titles/roles in organisational hierarchy.

Notably, over the past 50 years there has been a shift from 'leadership' as meaning making to the significance of 'leadership' for economic performance. This shift results in 'leadership' becoming an attribute of organisations demonstrating a 'high level' of performance. Embodying generative functionalist assumptions, such accounts are often limited to detailing personal/group traits, behaviours or actions correlated with higher levels of performance.[ii] In doing so, as with Chester Barnard (1968), there is a privileging of communication acts, with other activities being given the lesser label of 'management', part of what Peter Gronn (2003) labels the canonising of 'leadership' and demonising of management. Additionally, and most significant for education, and specifically educational administration, those who view organisations as heavily constrained, especially from external influences such as large educational bureaucracies, claim that 'leadership' is largely irrelevant and, at best, a social construction (Hannan & Freeman, 1989; Meindl, 1990). This brings Mats Alvesson and Stefan Sveningsson (2003) to assert that while most people seem to have little doubt that 'leadership' is a 'real' phenomenon – not only important but necessary for organisations – few acknowledge problems with confusing a socially constructed label with an assumed empirical reality. It is in this space that this chapter makes its contribution to the body of knowledge. That is, this chapter engages in a theoretical argument around the mobilisation of the label 'leadership' in educational administration discourses. It does not draw upon a specific case study, but given my physical and social location I use data drops from the Australian context – this is consistent with the argument of the chapter (and book) that context matters. The lack of a case study is not to say that there are not implications, for both researchers and practitioners,[iii] as a result of the argument. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Challenging the label of 'leadership' requires both scholars and practitioners alike to justify their own stance on the topic in the face of criticism. It is arguably the constant critique and justification of ideas, concepts, practices, and so on, that reflects a healthy intellectual community.[iv]

In this chapter I argue that 'leadership' in the context of education is a label of the managerialist project of the state and an historical analysis of the rise of managerialism in public administration and the emergence of 'leadership' as the label of choice (as opposed to the previous labels of administration and management) supports such a claim. As it is, in the discourses of educational administration there is a proliferation of types of 'leadership' through an assortment of adjectives, yet minimal critique or problematising of the label of 'leadership' itself.[v] It is here where I am drawn to Pierre Bourdieu's (1988[1984]) distinction between 'real' or empirical objects and those that become known through social analysis, the epistemic. In particular, I explore the relationship that educational administration discourses have with the social space. In doing so, I put forth a critique of 'leadership' as an educational administration concept to argue that 'leadership' is an epistemic label applied post-event through the *a priori*

assumption of its very existence. Most significant however, is that the hegemony of the discourses fails to recognise the epistemic labelling.

To make this argument I focus on academic discourses, or specifically, scholarship on educational administration. As a social scientist, and by virtue, as part of the social scientific community, this chapter (and the book for that matter) is intended to be disruptive, an act of political intervention into the hegemonic position held by mainstream educational administration scholarship and a challenge to the seemingly unlimited elasticity of 'leadership' as a label. Specifically, this chapter contains two key interventions: the first is the claim that 'leadership' is an epistemic, not empirical, concept; and the second related claim is that 'leadership' in education is constituted through a particular relationship with the social space. To lay out these two interventions it is necessary that I first turn to the issue of scholarly education discourses and in particular discourses in educational administration.

THE PROBLEMATIC

In the performative regimes that constitute the enterprise university, education research is arguably at its most critical junction since the establishment of university departments, faculties, and/or schools of education. For example, during the first iteration of the Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA) exercise in 2010, the Australian equivalent of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)/ Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK, education featured as one of the weakest areas accounting for five percent of the national research productivity and only receiving one percent of nationally competitive research income.[vi] In ERA2012, education research accounted for four and a half percent of national productivity and received two percent of national research income, once again ranking it as one of the lowest (out of 22) research fields. Of course, the weak quality profile of education in the academy is nothing new, and is experienced by education scholars on a daily basis through numerous apparatus including research funding regimes, journal rankings, promotion systems, research and post-doctoral fellowships, and so on. Herein lays a significant challenge for education researchers. On a global scale, policy makers have embraced the idea of experimental/interventional research design (e.g. randomised control trials) as the 'gold-standard' for educational inquiry (Donmoyer & Galloway, 2010). The preference for large scale experimental studies designed to reveal, once and for all, 'what works' in education is firmly embedded in assessment criteria for national competitive funding regimes. For those working in education, and the broader humanities and social sciences, this shift negates forms of research which are not easily recognisable in the logical-empiricism paradigm. That being said, for those working in educational administration, the privileging of logical-empiricism is consistent with the Theory Movement and continues in the 'scientific' stream (Gunter, 2001) of research.[vii]

What remains particularly challenging for educational administration scholarship is its relationship to theory, especially in the context of the desire to

maintain a closeness, or relevance, to practice. As Helen Gunter (2010) argues, theory only seems to matter if it can be directly translated into decisions to be made at 9:00am on Monday morning. The apparent relevance of social theorist/ philosophers such as Pierre Bourdieu, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Max Weber, among others, is seen as minimal at best, and in most cases, unnecessary. However, it is theory that stops us from forgetting that the world is not laid out in plain view and thinking that things speak for themselves – 'the data', 'practice', the pure voice of the previously marginalised (MacLure, 2010). This type of engagement, or lack thereof, with theory allows for the dominance of a particular form of description, a matter which I shall return to later. But for now, enough to say that, the explanatory power of the theoretically infused description of educational administration is far less seductive than the everyday language employed in descriptions of 'what works'. It is in the pursuit of, and engagement with, the 'what works' of education that we have the constitution of 'leadership' through the identification of high performing schools/institutions and then the attribution of what individuals playing key roles, frequently limited to titles and official positions rather than social positions, did to bring about that performance (there is however a general omission of lesser performing schools/institutions in such research, and therefore the explanatory power of the work to articulate what it is that differentiates between higher and lesser performing schools/institutions is significantly reduced – not to mention the apolitical view of 'high performing'). Here we have a major theoretical issue, that is, an *a posteriori* identification and labelling of 'leadership' while a simultaneous *a priori* assumption that 'leadership' exists. This establishes, and sustains, a particular relationship between the concept of 'leadership' and the empirical space in which practice takes place, one where the location of practice in both time and space is acknowledged, yet under-theorised. With the expansion of what Gunter (1997) originally labelled the 'educational management industry', which could now be more appropriately categorised as the 'educational leadership industry', and the proliferation of school leadership preparation and development programmes outside of the academy (see Eacott, 2011), there is now, more than ever, a need to engage with the knowledge claims of 'leadership' in educational administration discourses.

THE REALNESS OF 'LEADERSHIP'

In the broader academy, there is a level of scepticism as to the realness or robustness of 'leadership' as a concept. The underlying question, and one of significant importance for educational administration, is whether one is seeking to either *reveal* or *construct* 'leadership' through scholarship. To reveal implies that through scholarship, one can accurately portray an object of analysis as it exists in the empirical world. On the other hand, to construct centres on scholarship that through the methods of analysis brings an object into being. Pivotal to both positions is of course the use of language, or more specifically labels, for objects. For Bourdieu (1988[1984]), an empirical object is the 'real', that which is inexhaustible, and located in the complexity and messiness that is the social world.

In contrast, the epistemic object, that which comes into being through analysis, contains nothing that evades conceptualisation. My mobilising of Bourdieu in this space may seem odd, if not problematic. For some, it will be read as the binary that is realism and relativism, far less sophisticated than the musing of Weber or Deleuze on the use of concepts in the social sciences (see Gane, 2009), or the Foucauldian notion of discourse. However, Bourdieu's distinction is significant in the context of educational administration discourses, especially given the failure, for the most part, to recognise 'leadership' as an epistemic. As it is, the very establishment of educational administration as a domain of inquiry was built upon the distinction of administration from education, and therefore to challenge the very labels that constitute the domain (educational administration, management and 'leadership') is to destabilise the discipline itself. There are two issues which I am going to explore here: first, the cross-over of 'leadership' from everyday language into scholarly discourses; and second, the somewhat unique constitution of 'leadership' through the post event attribution yet simultaneous *a priori* assumption of its existence. It is through this combination that I argue educational administration discourses, for the most part, are unable to recognise its epistemic creation.

Bobby Calder (1977) argues, that 'leadership' is a term that originated in everyday discourses, and its common-sense meaning has been appropriated into scholarly discourses. However, in everyday language, the label 'leadership' merely *identifies*, giving little information about the object of which it speaks. As a label, it is capable of being arbitrarily applied to almost any object, saying that this object is different without specifying in what way/s it differs. In doing so, the label serves as an instrument of *recognition*, and not of *cognition* (Bourdieu, 1988[1984]). When mobilised as an act of recognition, the label 'leadership' singles out an individual, a team of people, or an institution, generally thought of as acting as a coherent whole, to say that they are different without saying in what ways they are different. The apparent comfort with assigning the label of 'leadership' in everyday language, that which provides little in relation to distinctions, leaves the concept, much like that of 'change', open to the critique of being vacuous, if not meaningless. In contrast, the constructed 'leadership', an act of cognition, defines 'leadership' by a finite set of criteria or properties which seek to create a distinction between those who possess the properties and those who do not. In short, 'leadership' is mobilised as a label of exclusion, not inclusion. The notion of 'leadership' as exclusive is problematic for those promoting the latest 'adjectival' 'leadership' (e.g. teacher, shared, distributed, and so on), where 'leadership' is apparently something that everyone possesses – effectively reducing 'leadership' to a meaningless label that offers nothing in relation to social distinctions – raising major questions of its scholarly value. A significant move here however is that the explicit criteria employed in the construction of 'leadership' constitutes a specific form of 'leadership' that exists in a social space given life through the very criteria that produce it. That is, 'leadership' is present in a context in which it was already decided that 'leadership' existed – a rather tautological situation. This plays out in very specific ways in the scholarship of educational administration.

In the Australian education policy context, whether it be national, federal, or state/territory,[viii] there is a clear message being presented: i) there is a desire to improve student outcomes in schooling – it is possible to argue that literacy and numeracy outcomes, those reported in national (e.g. National Assessment Program – Literacy And Numeracy, NAPLAN) and international (e.g. Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA; Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, TIMSS) testing regimes, have become a proxy for schooling; ii) teacher quality is a central focus on the basis of school effectiveness and school improvement literature citing the teacher as the most influential role in student outcomes; and iii) school 'leadership' (frequently defined as 'the principal', although the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, a national policy, makes mention of 'principals and other school leaders') is seen as a key driver of this desired perpetual improvement. In a letter to Tony Mackay, the incoming chair of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (to some extent, potentially the Australian equivalent of England's National College), then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Julia Gillard notes: improving teacher quality requires strong leadership from principals and that excellent school leadership is a key to improving outcomes for students. Likewise, as part of the Gillard Labor government's education reform agenda, she explicitly argues 'if each of those [Australia's 9529 schools] schools is to be a truly great school, it needs great leadership'. There is a clear assumption at play in this policy context, 'leadership' matters, and significantly, great schools – those with higher than average student outcomes, and especially those achieving higher than average value-added (growth) data – have great 'leaders'.[ix] Here we have the construction of a primary criterion, high student outcomes, a point of cognition, to which there is an assumed causal relationship. That is, an *a priori* assumption that by virtue of the institutional, or actually student, performance, 'leadership' as an entity, must have been enacted in that location. In doing so, researchers, policy makers and practitioners alike have constructed the epistemic label 'leadership' without acknowledging the post event identification of the construction. Through the application of this *a priori* assumption of the existence, or 'realness' of 'leadership', and the *a posteriori*, or post event identification of where 'leadership' has happened, scholarship pays far more attention to the description of who 'leaders' are, and what they do, than developing the kinds of description which can inform theoretical criteria from which its very existence can be engaged with. This leads to a neo-trait or neo-behaviour abstraction of 'leadership', one where the context, in both space and time, remains on the periphery. This distance is sustained as 'leadership' becomes an entity, one that can be mapped to context but remains separate from it. Key aspects of the cognitive process, that which conceals the abstraction of the empirical, are the relations with both time and space, primarily through temporality. To engage with these matters I turn to Bourdieu's discussion of time, including that mobilised and advanced by Lisa Adkins.

CHAPTER 3

'LEADERSHIP' AND ITS RELATION TO TIME AND SPACE

What we have come to know as the school and the administration of schooling is constituted through the operationalisation and privileging of clock time. The temporal rules of schooling construct the school day, terms, semesters, the school year, class schedules, and the notion of progression based on time. Just like the temporal rules of the economic field, the hegemonic position on time is its measurement in terms of an abstraction, separate to events, and reversible through units of the clock (see Adkins, 2009, 2011). As with 'leadership', time is constructed as an entity. Bourdieu (2000[1997]) argues, reinforced through ordinary language, time is constituted as a thing, something that an individual or institution has, gains or wastes. It is in this space that the administration of schooling, frequently reduced to the 'leadership' and management of change and enacted through the process of planning for the future and embodying the principles of perpetual improvement, comes to the fore. Significantly, activities such as strategic planning and reporting/funding cycles become not only synchronised with the game of schooling, but become the game of school administration. In this game, and I am referring to Bourdieu's notion of 'the game' as opposed to that of game theory or elsewhere, 'leadership', particularly that which is 'successful' or 'effective', is constituted through measures of student achievement, those reported through the operationalisation of time. Take for example the reporting of student outcomes in Australia, primarily through the *MySchool* website, but also available through the production of Annual School Reports – a rather corporate notion – produced for the system, distributed to all parents (e.g. shareholders), and publicly available via school websites (as a means of marketing/transparency). What we see here is the reporting of annual standardised testing (taking place for students in grades three, five, seven, and nine), essentially the schools bottom-line, and the value-added data, read 'growth' or 'profit', for those cohorts in-between tests. The centrality of this (economic) data for the policy, and arguably wider societal, constitution of what is school 'leadership' and the value judgement of 'success' or 'effectiveness' is significant, especially when viewed in the context of a federal policy agenda that replaced a $550 million over five years initiative to support and improve school leadership and teacher quality (consistent with *the Melbourne Declaration*) with two programmes, *rewards for great teachers* ($425 million) and *rewards for school improvement* ($248 million) for the next four years (see McMorrow, 2011). Ignoring for the moment the well-rehearsed argument regarding the apolitical and ahistorical nature of education policy moves, it seems important to focus on the version of time employed in such accounts, especially given the centrality of temporality to narratives of leadership.

Previously I have sought to explore the *strategies* of administrators and the methodological challenges that engaging with such poses for educational administration scholars (Eacott, 2010). In doing so, and following Bourdieu (1977[1972]), I argue that the limited engagement, or worst still, failure to acknowledge, the temporality of practice is to abolish the notion of strategy/ies.

Despite making this criticism, I am mindful that educational administration does engage, even if implicitly, with notions of temporality. It is the mobilisation of a particular type of temporality that is of interest. The construction – or more accurately, abstraction – of points of clock time used to delineate the temporal dimensions of 'leadership', or specific phases or stages, those in which the description or causal relationship of practice put forth has but to align itself with, is central to mainstream 'leadership' research. The underlying assumption is that 'leadership' is a means through which to bring about a better future, achieved through the manipulation, read control, of the forthcoming. Such a proposition is consistent with those who argue that educational administration is a technology of control (see Bates, 1980), and in this particular case, the desire to control the future. Therefore, educational administration, and specifically 'leadership', is about 'influence'[x] over the game and how practice plays out in time.

Eugenie Samier (2006) argues that educational administration exhibits the same 'persistent atemporality' (Adams, 1992) of its parent discipline, public administration, where attention is paid to the history of administrative theory rather than the actual history of administration. While she goes on to argue for greater mobilisation of history in scholarship, particularly in relation to point-in-time discussions of 'leadership' (the recognition of the here and now on a temporal continuum), my attention here is on the very notion of a delineation of past, present and future. Much of the work in educational administration is about the future, and the need to be 'future-focused'.[xi] As such, the future is conceived as at some distance from the present (e.g. the three-year plan for the school), and that our desired future can be achieved through prudent action in the here and now. Embedded within this thesis are the rationalisation of practice, with direct cause and effect, and the dislocation of practice from time. In contrast, for Bourdieu, the future is not a distant horizon separated from the present, rather, it is already present in the immediate present, a future that is already here. As Adkins (2009, 2011) argues, the present is already present because players are ordinarily immersed in the forthcoming, or more precisely, players practically and pre-reflexively anticipate the forthcoming as a routine part of action. As an example of this thinking, Bourdieu (see Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986) evokes the image of the good football player, stating:

> Nothing is simultaneously freer and more constrained than the action of the good player. He quite naturally materializes at just the place the ball is about to fall, as if the ball were in command of him – but by that very fact, he is in command of the ball. (p. 113)

What we have here, following Bourdieu, is practice that is not *in* time, but rather *makes* time. Significantly, as Adkins (2009) notes, time does not operate externally to events, but unfolds with events. This conceptualisation of time explicitly challenges the delineation of past/present/future, and the commodification of time. While sociologically the absence, or at least periphery, of such matters is limiting, the why is significant. I argue, and building from an extensive body of work, that the 'leadership' literature engages in a professionalisation of knowledge focusing

on being a problem solving toolkit for practitioners as opposed to theory infused accounts of practices in schools. Therefore, the operationalisation of temporality is consistent with the constitution of schooling – clock time, an external commodity that one has, or has not, in the pursuit of the purpose of schooling (usually limited to improvements in student outcomes). In short, an entity perspective is the orthodoxy of educational administration literatures. The literature, for the most part, conforms to what Bourdieu (2005[2000]) calls 'native theories' of strategic action (in this case, 'leadership'), expressly produced to assist administrators in their decisions, and explicitly taught in preparation and development programmes.[xii] This is not a surprising claim. Over 40 years ago George Baron (1969) noted:

> In the United States the study of educational administration, as Hoyle shows, grew out of the need for the diffusion of practical knowledge about the administration of school systems among the many thousands of superintendents and principals who, compared with their English counterparts, were thrown very much on their own resources. (pp. 10-11).

In meeting this stimulus, the gap between the native and research representations is less marked and this speaks to the argument in the previous chapter regarding the need for epistemological vigilance. For many, the highly practical and immediately relevant addresses *the* problem of the insurmountable theory-practice binary, however, there is an inbuilt, although frequently unrecognised, tension regarding a professional group who make consistent claims to the uniqueness of each and every school, yet seek refuge in scholarship that abstracts both time and space – removing context.

In a study investigating university based educational administration programmes in Australia, Richard Bates and I (2008) argue that the most common literature used for readings in courses is that associated with 'change'. Given the professionalisation of knowledge and the problem solving focus of educational administration, this is not surprising. However, Gronn (2008) is most scathing of this trend, labelling 'change' a vacuous concept devoid of any particular concrete referent or context and simply something 'out there'. The major shift taking place here, or at least reflected in this space, is that the epistemic label of 'leadership', that which is constructed through policy, scholarship and practice has shaped the ontology of leadership, further embedding itself and obscuring the abstraction.

In this space, leadership is reduced to change.[xiii] Brian Caldwell (2007) in his introduction to a special issue of the *Australian Journal of Education* on 'educational leadership and school renewal' explicitly states that leadership equals change and that no change implies that either leadership was not needed, or failed. Such a position is highly problematic, primarily on the basis that it overlooks the larger, and long-term, inequities of society and the (re)productive forces in that power struggle, but also for how it legitimises a form of scholarship that can exclude context. For example, Stephen Dinham (2005), produces a composite set of principal leadership attributes and practices contributing to outstanding educational outcomes but warns that 'there is a danger with such attributes or factors in that context is not sufficiently recognised' (p. 354). Likewise, David

Gurr, Lawrie Drysdale and colleagues' 'Australian' model of successful school leadership[xiv] has the objectives of: describing, explaining and categorising various kinds of leadership intervention and outlining their relationship and impact on student outcomes; providing a conceptual map of the interventions used by the school's leadership; and providing a framework for other practitioners to use as a guide to future action, including principal preparation (see Gurr, Drysdale, & Goode, 2010). However, the authors themselves note regarding the model that '[I]t does not explain why these interventions work in some circumstances and not in others' (p. 124). As such, leadership remains a vacuous concept connected to attributes, factors, behaviours, interventions, all of which lack a solid grounding in a specific context. It is however the context that gives behaviours or interventions meaning and significance. Similarly, the values, philosophies or other aspects of the individual articulated in neo-trait perspective lists only exist through practice. Any separation between the individual actor and their attributes is premature. Or more forcibly, they cannot be separated from the self. The lack of attention to the situatedness and specificity of contexts leads to a privileging of the directly observable features of practice rather than the underlying generative principles. The loss of context creates the illusion of 'leadership' as a universal construct.

THE POSSIBILITY OF 'LEADERSHIP'

A consistent message in scholarship across the social sciences and humanities is that theories – which include constructs, labels and so on – cannot merely be transferred to and adopted in different contexts. As Maria Nicodailou (2008) notes, we have all come to appreciate that school leadership is 'tightly coupled with cultural and national (often ethnic) values and contexts, there cannot be a recipe that fits all' (p. 215). Given the apparent failure on the part of educational administration discourses to confront the specificity of 'leadership', it is perhaps of little surprise that the theoretical resources of the discipline have not been put to use to engage with the questioning of its scholarly value. This is even less surprising if we consider that as a domain of practice and knowledge production, 'leadership' is constituted as a source of new methods of institutional performance and social transformation. However, 'leadership' discourses are not composed only of practical tips and/or recipes for improving the productivity of institutions as one improves the performance of machines. They simultaneously have a high moral tone, if only because they are frequently normative literatures stating what should be the case, not what is the case. This is a matter that I will return to Chapter Five.

A question, following Bourdieu (2004[2001]), is *how can 'leadership' scholarship not help resolve a problem that it has itself brought into being?* For the most part, since its inception, educational administration has positioned itself as a solution for schooling. As the language has shifted from administration to management and now 'leadership', few questions have been raised concerning the very criteria from which administration differs from management and then to 'leadership'. This is why at a certain point of the analysis, the lines of demarcation blur. This is why my interest in epistemology and ontology. In the contemporary

world where new forms of knowledge sharing are reducing boundaries yet also reinforcing ties to the local, the limitations of a discourse that is devoid of time and space has arguably reached its limit.

For me, as with many educational administration scholars, the initial point of interest centres on the theoretical problem of legitimation of the social world/ social order. With a focus on administration, and to a lesser extent, hierarchy and structure in the social world, educational administration is interested in organisations, but arguably more so, organising. Therefore a few things standout for me, if 'leadership' is an epistemic as I have just argued, rather than arguing for going back to management or administration as a label let's consider what is the actual empirical focus of our inquiry. This brings me back to the notion of relations. Not relationships which can be mapped and represented in neat two dimensional diagrams, but relations – those active and fragile social arrangements between two or more institutions/individuals. If our theoretical problem is the legitimation of the social world, and the specific empirical problem is the organising of education, then it makes sense to engage with relations. Grounding the scholarly narrative in time and space will bring to the level of discourse the subtle ways in which constructs such as 'leadership' are legitimised. In doing so, rather than basing 'leadership' on an abstraction of the social world there is a strong need to focus on the context, or the situated nature of relations, and a need to describe what is taking place, this is especially so during a period when public and education policy is recasting administrative labour.

NOTES

[i] I do however note Maria Nicodailou's (2008) paper and a 2009 Special Issue of *European Educational Research Journal* edited by Simon Clarke and Helen Wildy (who incidentally reside in Australia) on 'the Europeanisation of Educational Leadership'.

[ii] While it often goes unrecognised, these accounts frequently attempt to mobilise causal arguments from correlational data. This misinterpretation of data is commonly witnessed in public discourses on education reform (e.g. school autonomy and student outcomes).

[iii] This binary is far from productive, however, in the interests of locating the argument and its merits, I see the need to engage with this commonly mobilised distinction.

[iv] For work on the notions of 'justification' and 'critique' see the work of the French pragmatists Luc Boltanski and colleagues (see Boltanski, 2011[2009]; Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005[1999]; Boltanski & Thévenot, 2000, 2006[1991]).

[v] I am aware of the critical stream of research that engages, almost exclusively in such matters, but for the most part, this problematising is absent. This absence is also why at a certain point in the analysis we see the fusion of multiple 'adjectival' labels (e.g. distributed, shared, participatory, or even leadership, management and administration) as though they are one and the same.

[vi] It would of course be possible to argue that producing five percent of the output on only one percent of the funding is a strong outcome. Such an argument however has yet to gain any traction in the ongoing research funding and quality debates.

[vii] Helen Gunter's mobilisation of 'scientific' in this cited paper is consistent with the Anglophone, and particularly North American, equating of 'science' and 'scientific' with logical empiricism. Much like the demonising of bureaucracy, management, and so on, the critical stream and particularly graduate students, are often quick to dismiss or disregard 'science' primarily on the basis of an assumed equivalence with logical empiricism. The issues raised by Gunter, and others, are actually

to do with epistemological differences on the nature of knowledge, therefore, matters of theoretical lens and technique rather than science.

[viii] For the non-Australian reader, Australia has an idiosyncratic federal system of governance. While education remains a constitutional responsibility of the states/territories, the vertical fiscal imbalance of Australian federalism (Lingard 2000; Lingard, Porter, Bartlett & Knight 1995) enables the federal government to significantly influence education policy through the threat of withdrawing or redistributing funds. Federal intervention into education has increased substantially since the 1970s, notably with the Gough Whitlam Labor administration (1972-1975) as part of an equity agenda. However, Neil Cranston and colleagues (2010) note a distinct shift in foci of federal intervention from the public agenda (e.g. democratic equality) of Whitlam's equity interventions through to more recent moves (by both Labor and Liberal-National coalition governments) aimed at private purposes (e.g. social mobility and social efficiency).

[ix] Throughout this policy rhetoric there is frequent reference, at least implicitly, to Jim Collins' 2001 book *Good to great: why some companies make the leap … and others don't'.*

[x] I am aware of the rapidity to read 'power' as a negative term in educational administration discourses and have therefore opted to mobilise the less provocative label of 'influence' here.

[xi] I am thinking here specifically of the edu-prenuers who are often used as keynote speakers at professional conferences, such as Michael Fullan (North America), Brent Davies (UK) and Brian Caldwell (Australia).

[xii] Bourdieu (2005[2000]) uses the example of 'management theory'. Literature produced by business schools for business schools, and likened that to the writing of European jurists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who in the guise of describing the state, contributed to building it.

[xiii] The problematic here is magnified. If we are to buy into the notion that change is everywhere and nothing is static, then 'change' itself is a somewhat meaningless label. Therefore 'leadership' is a label of questionable foundations defined by a label that is devoid of any concrete referent or context. This raises more questions regarding the constitution of leadership as a label.

[xiv] An interesting tension here is that despite only having case studies from two of the eight states/territories, the researchers still name the model 'An *Australian* model of successful school leadership' – the representation of the entire nation is questionable and says something about the centrality, or lack thereof, of context (see also Drysdale & Gurr, 2011).

REFERENCES

Abrahamson, E. (1991). Managerial fads and fashions: The diffusion and rejection of innovations. *The Academy of Management Review, 16*(3), 586-612.

Abrahamson, E. (1996). Management fashion. *The Academy of Management Review, 21*(1), 254-285.

Abrahamson, E., & Eisenman, M. (2008). Employee-management techniques: Transient fads or trending fashions. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 53*(4), 719-744.

Abrahamson, E., & Fairchild, G. (1999). Management fashion: Life cycles, triggers, and collective learning processes. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 44*(4), 708-740.

Adams, G. (1992). Enthralled with modernity: The historical context of knowledge and theory development in public administration. *Public Administration Review*, *52*(4), 363-373.

Adkins, L. (2009). Sociological futures: From clock time to event time. *Sociological Research Online*, *14*(4), http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/14/18.html.

Adkins, L. (2011). Practice as temporalisation: Bourdieu and economic crisis. In S. Susen & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *The legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical essays* (pp. 347-365). London: Anthem Press.

Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2003). The great disappearing act: Difficulties in doing 'leadership'. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *14*(3), 359-381.

Barnard, C. (1968). *Functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Baron, G. (1969). The study of educational administration in England. In G. Baron and W. Taylor (Eds), *Educational administration and the social sciences* (pp. 3-17). London: Athlone Press.

Bates, R. J. (1980). Educational administration, the sociology of science, and the management of knowledge. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *16*(2), 1-20.

Bates, R. J., & Eacott, S. (2008). Teaching educational leadership and administration in Australia. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *40*(2), 149-160.

Bedeian, A., & Hunt, J. G. (2006). Academic amnesia and vestigial assumptions of our forefathers. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *17*(2), 190-205.

Birkinshaw, J., Healey, M.P., Suddaby, R., & Weber, K. (2014). Debating the future of management research. *Journal of Management Studies, 51*(1), 38-55.

Boltanski, L. (2011[2009]). *On critique: A sociology of emancipation* (G. Elliott, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity. [Originally published as *de la critique* (Paris: Editions Galliard)].

Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (2005[1999]). *The new spirit of capitalism* (G. Elliott, Trans.). London: Verso [Originally published as *Le nouvel espirt du capitalisme* (Paris: Galliard)].

Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (2000). The reality of moral expectations: A sociology of situated judgement. *Philosophical Explorations, 3*(3), 208-231.

Boltanski, L., & Thévenot, L. (2006[1991]). *On justification: Economies of worth* (C. Porter, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press [Originally published as *De la justification. Les economies de la grandeur* (Paris: Gallimard)].

Bourdieu, P. (1977[1972]). *Outline of a theory of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Originally published as *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle* (Switzerland: Libraire Droz S.A.).]

Bourdieu, P. (1988[1984]). *Homo academicus* (P. Collier, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Homo academicus* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit).]

Bourdieu, P. (2000[1997]). *Pascalian meditations* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Méditations pascaliennes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).]

Bourdieu, P. (2004[2001]). *Science of science and reflexivity* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity. [Originally published as *Science de la science et réflexivité* (Paris: Éditions Raisons d'Agir).]

Bourdieu, P. (2005[2000]). *The social structures of the economy* (C. Turner, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity. [Originally published as *Les structures socials de l'économie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).]

Calder, B. J. (1977). An attribution theory of leadership. In B. M. Staw & G. R. Salancik (Eds.), *New directions in organizational behaviour* (pp. 179-204). Chicago, IL: St. Clair.

Caldwell, B. J. (2007). Educational leadership and school renewal: Introduction by the guest editor. *Australian Journal of Education*, *51*(3), 225-227.

Carson, P. P., Lanier, P. A., Carson, K. D., & Guidry, B. N. (2000). Clearing a path through the management fashion jungle: Some preliminary trailblazing. *The Academy of Management Journal, 43*(6), 1143-1158.

Cranston, N. C., Kimber, M., Mulford, B., Reid, A., & Keating, J. (2010). Politics and school education in Australia: A case of shifting purposes. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *48*(2), 182-195.

Dinham, S. (2005). Principal leadership for outstanding educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *43*(4), 338-356.

Donmoyer, R., & Galloway, F. (2010). Reconsidering the utility of case study designs for researching school reform in a neo-scientific era: Insights from a multiyear, mixed-methods study. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(1), 3-30.

Drysdale, L., & Gurr, D. (2011). The theory and practice of successful school leadership in Australia. *School Leadership & Management*, *31*(4), 355-368.

Eacott, S. (2010). Bourdieu's strategies and the challenge for educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *13*(3), 265-281.

Eacott, S. (2011). Preparing 'educational' leaders in managerialist times: An Australian story. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *43*(1), 43-59.

Eacott, S. (2013). 'Leadership' and the social: Time, space and the epistemic. *International Journal of Educational Management, 27*(1), 91-101.

Gane, N. (2009). Concepts and the 'new' empiricism. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *12*(1), 83-97.

Gibson, J.W., & Tesone, D.V. (2001). Management fads: emergence, evolution, and implications for managers. *Academy of Management, 15*(4), 122-133.

Gronn, P. (2003). Leadership: Who needs it? *School Leadership & Management*, *23*(3), 267-290.

Gronn, P. (2008). The state of Denmark. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *40*(2), 173-185.

Gunter, H. (1997). *Rethinking education: The consequences of Jurassic management*. London: Cassell.

Gunter, H. (2001). Critical approaches to leadership in education. *Journal of Educational Enquiry*, *2*(2), 94-108.

Gunter, H. (2010). A sociological approach to educational leadership. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *31*(4), 519-527.

Gunter, H., & Forrester, G. (2010). New Labour and the logic of practice in educational reform. *Critical Studies in Education, 51*(1), 55-69.

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Goode, H. (2010). Successful school leadership in Australia: A research agenda. *International Journal of Learning*, *17*(4), 113-129.

Hannan, M. T., & Freeman, J. (1989). *Organizational ecology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lakomski, G. (2005). *Managing without leadership: Towards a theory of organizational functioning*. London: Elsevier.

Lamaison, P. & Bourdieu, P. (1986). From rules to strategies: An interview with Pierre Bourdieu. *Cultural Anthropology*, *1*(1), 110-120. Also appears in: Bourdieu, P. (1990). *In other words: Essays towards a reflexive sociology* (M. Adamson, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Lingard, B. (2000). Federalism in schooling since the Karmel report (1973), School in Australia: From modernist hope to postmodernist performativity. *Australian Educational Researcher*, *27*(2), 25-61.

Lingard, B., Porter, P., Bartlett, L., & Knight, J. (1995). Federal/state mediations in the Australian national education agenda: From the AEC to MCEETYA 1987-1993. *Australian Journal of Education*, *39*(1), 41-66.

MacLure, M. (2010). The offence of theory. *Journal of Education Policy*, *25*(2), 277-286.

McMorrow, J. (2011). *Waiting for Gonski: What the 2011 Commonwealth budget means for schools*. Sydney: The University of Sydney.

Meindl, J. R. (1990). On leadership: an alternative to the conventional wisdom. *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, *12*, 159-203.

Nicolaidou, M. (2008). Attempting a Europeanization of educational leadership: Philosophical and ideological dimensions. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 11*(2), 211-223.

O'Reilly, C. A., Caldwell, D. F., Chatman, J. A., Lapiz, M., & Self, W. (2010). How leadership matters: The effects of leaders' alignment on strategy implementation. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *21*(1), 104-113.

Peck, C., & Reitzug, U.C. (2012). How existing business management concepts become school leadership fashions. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*(2), 347-381.

Pfeffer, J. (1977). The ambiguity of leadership. *The Academy of Management Review, 2*(1), 104-112.

Podolny, J. M., Khurana, R., & Hill-Popper, M. (2004). Revisiting the meaning of leadership. *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, *26*, 1-36.

Samier, E. (2006). Educational administration as a historical discipline: An apologia pro vita historia. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *38*(2), 125-139.

Taylor, P. & Heywood, J. (2012). Editorial. *European Studies in Educational Management, 2*(1), 1-4.

CHAPTER FOUR

RECASTING ADMINISTRATIVE LABOUR

INTRODUCTION

In Western democratic-capitalist societies public administration is undergoing considerable restructuring as principles of private enterprise are becoming the orthodoxy. At the same time, economic instability (or crisis) is gripping both national and global financial markets suggesting a flaw in the system or even that capitalism has reached its limits. In this space, David Hartley (2010) argues that crisis of capitalism are frequently met with shifts in the rhetoric of management and that the relationship between education and these shifts has been little explored (see also Carpentier, 2003). Following Hartley, and building on the arguments so far in this book, it is timely to engage with the question of '*What does it mean to be an educational administration scholar when the notion of 'administration' at the school level is under revision?*'. It is the contention of this chapter that through a theoretical interrogation of recent Australian education policy moves we can find important resources for educational administrative theory that can inform contemporary thought and analysis on educational administration.

Having problematized, if not destabilised, the notion of 'leadership' in the previous chapter, here I begin to build an argument for a relational ontological position in educational administration. As noted previously, relational approaches are not new to the broader leadership, management and administration literatures, or even the educational administration literatures. Although implicit in many early works in educational administration, two key texts include Wilbur Yauch's (1949) *Improving human relations in school administration* and Daniel Griffiths' (1956) *Human relations in school administration*. Kenneth Leithwood and Daniel Duke's chapter in the second edition of the *Handbook of research on educational administration* (Murphy & Seashore-Louis, 1999) devotes an entire section to articulating a relational approach. Roald Campbell and colleagues (1987) label Yauch's work as an important bridge between democratic administration and human relations. Don Willower and Patrick Forsyth (1999) note Griffiths' strong orientation to social science and research. These are important observations. They demonstrate that for an extended period of time, there have been deliberate attempts to bring multiple perspectives together to understand educational administration. But this is not exactly the argument that I am making. Leithwood and Duke's (1999) chapter highlights the point I am trying to make while also stressing the point of departure my position has from the mainstream. They argue 'the distinction between management and leadership contributes little or nothing to an understanding of leadership conceived as a set of relationship' (p. 67). This speaks to my critique of 'leadership' in the previous chapter. As someone with a relational ontological and epistemological position, 'leadership' as a construct

offers me little productive space to work. As a point of divergence though, Leithwood and Duke construct their argument around entities, notably, the leader, followers, the organisation, and the environment. In this chapter I am going to argue that a *relational* approach breaks down the epistemic boundaries of objects (e.g. leaders, schools, systems) and in doing so recasts educational administrative labour.

Importantly, Australia, both geographically and socially located at the periphery of the developed world, and therefore far enough removed from the centres of power in the global north (see Connell, 2007), is uniquely located as a post-colonial state to engage with notions of administration, social theory, the advancement of modern institutions and managerialist policy. This is not to suggest that the discussion does not have appeal for an international audience. Arguably, many of the matters engaged with are equally relevant across a variety of contexts, but this is not a decision for me rather the reader. What I seek to do is provide a well-constructed case from a particular time and space. In doing so, I ask for a generative reading as this chapter serves to sketch a programme for other empirical analyses in situations different from the one I have studied. My argument is built on two key points, first, the (re)configuration of the relationship between education and the state, and second, the recasting of the relationship between the school and community. These shifting social conditions have revised what it means to administer schools and recast educational administration in the image of the firm.

THE POLICY TOPOGRAPHY

As with most Anglophone nations, Australia is currently pursuing an array of highly centralised education reforms such as high-stakes testing regimes, a national curriculum, professional teaching standards and increasingly prescriptive accreditation requirements for teacher education institutions. At the same time, after different degrees of success at state/territory level, on a national level Australia is undertaking a large-scale implementation of an empowering local schools initiative. Hartley, building on the work of James O'Connor (1973), argues that there is a relationship between the rhetoric of management and the capitalist condition, most specifically during periods of economic expansion and contraction. In doing so he draws on Eric Abrahamson's (1997) classification of two major rhetorics of management: the rational rhetoric which focuses on standardisation, hierarchy, audit, performance management and efficiency; and the normative rhetoric which appeals to the social and emotional needs of employees, and in the context of schooling, I would add stakeholders (e.g. parents, community). In a similar argument within organisational sciences, Paul Alder and Charles Heckscher (2006) refer to 'control' and 'commitment' approaches. The questions asked by O'Connor, Abrahamson, Alder and Heckscher, and Hartley centre on why different rhetoric becomes orthodoxy in certain capitalist conditions. It is in this space that a theoretical discussion of recent Australian policy moves can be most fruitful for advancing administrative theory, especially given that unlike many nations in the

global north, Australia's economy has maintained growth during recent economic downturns.[i]

Policy such as the Federal Liberal-National Party coalition government's *Principal Autonomy*, part of the *Students First* agenda, is presented by government as simple formalisations, in legal language, of the social and economic principles to which the government claims to conform. Much like how *The Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA, 2008) is couched in both economic (excellence) and social (equity) language. In doing so, we see a coming together of the rational and normative rhetoric. The Federal Liberal-National government is mobilising the *Principal Autonomy* reform, immediately following the previous Australian Labor Party government's *Empowering Local Schools*, as a vehicle for improving student performance (measured by items such as standardised testing regimes, attendance data) by giving principals, parents and each school community – hence my extension of Abrahamson's category earlier – greater oversight in establishing and committing to local priorities. Such a move is consistent with contemporary discourses of administration regarding the breaking down of bureaucracy and the 'distribution' of authority.[ii] The reconfiguration of state/territory education systems, particularly public schools, to align with the autonomous schools reform, that which comes with substantial federal start-up funds, explicitly replaces large-scale systems with smaller individual, and often isolated, firms regulated by the state and, importantly, the market. The underlying generative principle at play in this policy context is one calling for a new organisational form for the school. This hybrid organisation alters the relationship between the state and school administration, but also, school administration and others within schools such as staff, students, parents and community. That is, it places the existing relationship under revision.

Building on a series of policy moves enabling greater school choice, and the growth of non-government schools under the John Howard led Liberal-National coalition administration (1996-2007),[iii] the role of the state, individual schools, and parents have been significantly recast in Australian education through the language of markets. With the addition of *Principal Autonomy*, the state has shifted its role from provider to regulator. That is, with greater responsibility at the school level, administrators can no longer blame the system when things go wrong. Similarly, parents, who theoretically have a choice of which school to send their child/ren, are then responsible for the results of their choices and have the opportunity, again at least theoretically, to exercise choice in finding the best fit for their needs/demands.[iv] I argue that this does specific things in relation to community building and raises questions as to whether the relationship between parents as consumers and schools as providers thwarts, if not prevents, the establishment of community, or at the very least communal ties. If parents (and arguably students) see education as a product, but one with considerable social (and economic) leverage attached to it, and schools as the providers of a service, then this transactional relationship is not necessarily built on loyalty and trust but rather satisfaction and relative worth (that is not criteria based judgement, but a comparative or relative judgement against what other providers can offer). There is

a clear move here to a relational focus, yet a tension between an entity perspective, which holds for a transactional way of thinking, or a relational ontology where the boundaries between the any potential entities are blurred.

It is useful to think here with the Italian political theorist Roberto Esposito (2010[1998], 2011[2002]) and his contribution on 'community/immunity [communitas/immunitas]'. Working from the Latin word *munus*,[v] he argues that community [communitas], and specifically communal ties, are a reciprocal, inexhaustible, circulating gift that does not belong to anyone in particular. The opposite of community is immunity [immunitas]. To be immune is to be free from communal duties. For Esposito, modern society places immunity at its core, and this brings Luigi Pellizzoni (2011) to argue that immunity is central to understanding the specific condition of modernity, and by virtue assessing the social implications of the modern on forms of administration. This is timely as the contemporary managerialist project replaces organisational forms based on community with individualistic or private models. This elevates the importance of the contract within the administration of immunity. Such a contract allows for the fulfilment of one's desires without engaging in personal, enduring relationships with others (Godbout, 1998). Immunity is very much an entity perspective. To pick up on Pellizzoni's argument, an entity perspective is central to understanding the hegemonic ontology of modernity. Educational administration, a disciplinary space concerned very much with one of the canonical modern institution, the school, is embedded and embodies an entity perspective. Esposito's community, while frequently thought of as concerning less developed social grouping – at least those pre-industrial – actually paves the way for more relational ways of seeing and knowing the social world. Breaking down entities into more fluid relations enables us to think anew of educational administration.

The community/immunity tension also plays out in a particular way for school staff. *Principal Autonomy,* as with *Empowering Local Schools* before it, enables principals, parents and school communities – note the absence of staff – to have greater authority over the management of the school staffing profile including determining the right mix of staff, recruitment and staff selection. The corporatist model of organisations characterised by life-time employment and security (Heckscher, 2001), that which epitomises large centralised public school systems – and strongly defended by teachers' unions – is breaking down and being replaced by calls for more fluid and dynamic organisations with scope for entrepreneurship, rapid response, choice and greater diversity. The marginalisation of employees, who at best are viewed as commodities, is at odds with contemporary discourses calling for greater levels of employee participation in organisational decision making. The demands for self-management and empowerment made by employees since the mid-1900s and for the most part incorporated into the post-Fordist work regime of the private and (later) public sector (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005[1999]), has been superseded by a return to a somewhat Tayloristic approach of managerial control in the pursuit of the goals of effectiveness and efficiency embedded in a neo-Darwinistic context of organisational survival based on adaption and evolution to uncertain socio-economic conditions.

The literature on empowering schools, at least the advocates,[vi] make few references to broader social and economic trends, apart from commentary regarding the proliferation of self-managing schools, school-based management, devolution, decentralisation and the like as a global policy trend. Nor does it engage with questions of power and its asymmetrical distribution in society. Much like the abstraction of 'leadership' highlighted in the previous chapter, there is a removal from context and the construction of entities. Additionally, there is rarely any recognition that causal arguments are being made on the basis of correlational data (such as that presented in OECD reports) by academics and/or policy makers. An interesting development in this space is Brian Caldwell and Jim Spink's (2013) latest book, *The self-transforming school*. Early in the text they identify the problematic nature of making too much (e.g. causation) from correlation data. However, they then proceed to build their argument on correlation data as though it provides evidence of a cause and effect between self-management and learning outcomes. What gets lost in these instrumentalist accounts that continue with minimal, if any, empirical grounding is broader social, economic and political relations that shape education work (Blackmore, 2004). This is why John Smyth's (1993) edited collection *A socially critical view of the self-managing school* is considered one of the classic texts of critical studies in educational administration.[vii] As with more recent work (see Smyth, 2008, 2011), Smyth explicitly locates educational administration within a broader, more socio-theoretical, policy context. This is an important intellectual move as I would argue, policy, that which is forever political, is both product and producer of administration. In other words, policy is relational rather than an entity. That is, policy is both cause and effect of administration, as it allows actors, in both the form of administrators and non-administrators (although such an arbitrary demarcation is not particularly productive), to limit the possibilities of 'legitimate' actions and because administration is updated by the actions through which it produces. It is therefore, of little surprise that over the past few decades, administration, primarily in the form of government, has sought to emulate the most successful players in the game of policy – the firm. *Principal Autonomy*, as the latest iteration of the policy trajectory, has explicitly reconfigured the school, a more significant shift for public than private schools, as individual stand-alone firms, possibly still connected through networks, but not in the collective form of traditional centralised systems.

POLICY AND ITS RELATIONS

While policy is frequently conceptualised from an entity perspective that enables one to map its ties and chains of interaction between individuals, organisations, and the state, I contend we need a more relational understanding of policy. That is, a theoretically grounded mobilisation of policy that pays attention to the abstract systems of difference and distance within the social space established through the asymmetrical distribution of resources within society.[viii] To do so, there is a need to conceive of policy as a human activity, or in other words, a social practice. Policies

are not meta-physical laws, rather man-made, not an attribute or property of administration, but an activity, one that is forever incomplete. Therefore, it is also imperative to keep in mind that the scholastic endeavour is never complete or settled once and for all. What can be done however is the construction of a theoretically grounded description of the specific conditions in which a policy is enacted at a particular time and space. This is not to suggest that such description should be ahistorical, as this would be as problematic as overlooking relations in any socio-theoretical sense.

There is a substantive matter here that I believe needs to be engaged with in educational administrative theory, that is, the relationship between policy and the state. This is a key move in going beyond an entity perspective and adopting a *relational* approach to educational administration scholarship. The underlying problematic is whether we need to de-centre the nation-state, or at the very least the government/governance of nation-states, in a globalised world. For many, the nation-state is an unquestioned background assumption in social analysis. This speaks to calls for an 'epistemological break' in scholarship (see Bourdieu, Chamboredon, & Passeron, 1991[1968]) and brings to the fore the difficulty of studying the social world in which one is embedded and embodies, as was discussed in Chapter Two. My question in this space is: *Are we too wedded to the idea of the state being at the top of the policy hierarchy to see any alternatives?* That is, in the composition of the scholarly narrative, particular that focused on the leadership, management and administration of institutions, is too much primacy given to 'the state'? I mean this in in the same way that Bourdieu (2005[2000]) contends that the European jurists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who, in the guise of describing the state, contributed to building it. Educational administration and policy research frequently further legitimise the state as the centre of power relations. Priority is given to the influence of the state, as an overarching entity, on other dimensions of the social fabric at the expense of seeing the dynamism and reciprocity of these relations. It is this dynamism and malleability that can enable educational administrative theory to break from being grounded in classic structuralism. I contend that too much is made of the downward linearity of state influence on education. This is arguably, although I make no claims to being an historian of education, as a result of the establishment of mass schooling by the state. That is, the very establishment of schooling for all citizens was a policy intervention of the state, one which has ever since positioned the state/government at the apex of the hierarchy.

The positioning of the state in the hierarchy of educational administration and policy has not been constant, and nor has it been unquestioned. Raymond Callahan's (1962) classic *Education and the cult of efficiency* outlines the infiltration of management discourses, specifically Taylorism, in education policy during the first half of the 1900s in the US. While for many, this highlights the early colonisation of management discourses in education (see also Bates, 2010), and with the subsequent rapid expansion of globalisation discourses, presented as an evitable evolution, what if this is not an overlay, or 'new' model of educational administration but a recasting of administrative labour in schooling, one built upon

the model of the firm. The crisis/es in education are not therefore of an economic or social nature as they are frequently portrayed, but rather the clash of logics of administration. That is, the collision of differing views of schooling. One that moves beyond value, that which is discussed in economic terms, and values, those with strong ideological undertones. Within such a contested socio-political space, the school as a firm seeks to speak back or intervene in the governance of the state (primarily through interplay with the mechanisms of regulations and rights, but also through advantage achieved through state interventions), its means of production (the political act of educating), and a colonised social group of educators. In navigating this terrain, and arguably a shifting from schools as communities to administration under conditions of immunity, scholars and policy makers alike have constituted new units of analysis, the leader, not leadership, the teacher, not teaching, and the school, not schooling, as their focal point. This is evidenced in policy and research focused on 'improving' the leader, teacher or school – such as *Principal Autonomy*. This serves to atomise the education profession by dismantling the school education system (see also Smyth, 2008), and refocusing attention on individuals or individual units (e.g. the school – as if it acts as a coherent whole). This speaks to Alain Touraine's (2000[1997]) question of 'how can we live together in a society that is increasingly divided up into networks that instrumentalize us, and into communities that imprison and prevent us from communicating with others?' (p. 14). It also raises the notion that educational administrators are participants in a particular social space, or territory, but not full members having been dispossessed by the very discourses, notably policy, in which they participate. If this is the case, and I argue it is, there is a need for rethinking both the administration of schooling, but also what it means to be an educational administrator. This speaks directly to questions being asked of the contemporarily popular label of 'leadership' discussed in the previous chapter.

I want to turn my attention here to the territory, or scale, of policy and particularly Bob Lingard's (2010) mobilisation of 'post-Westphalian' society, by which he means the way that political authority is no longer located within the borders of the nation-state, but rescaled, creating another layer beyond the nation that includes a range of international governmental and, arguably more significantly, non-governmental organisations. Whereas in the past (pre-globalised world) the state was once the culmination of a concentration of different resources, it is this concentration of resources on a global scale, that which defines the contemporary capitalist condition, which constitutes the firm, as opposed to the state, as the central unit in economic terms. The geographic territory that is the nation-state remains important, but operates in different ways and with different influences, reworking national sovereignty and the role of the nation-state in relation to globalisation of the economy and the enhanced policy relevance of a number of international organisations to national policy making and related globalised education policy discourses. Recent examples in Australia such as the 'mining tax', 'carbon tax', and 'super profits tax', changes in the manufacturing sector (e.g. moving jobs offshore), and the privatisation of public assets, have demonstrated the significant influence of the firm (non-government, frequently

large multi-national organisations), both collectively and individually, as a policy player, often assisted through the media. Importantly, the stakes of the game (e.g. employment/economic growth) are simultaneously also the weapons. There is a relationship at play here, one built on 'ontological complicity' between the managerialist discourses of the firm and policy, where all players have come to see themselves through the eyes of the firm. Significantly, while managerialist policy operates at the collective, it speaks to the individual, most specifically through atomising the collective and pitting individual institutions against one another over the stakes of the game.

THE RECASTING OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

As social institutions, schools are both embedded and embody the unique administrative and policy conditions in which they exist. The contemporary capitalist condition is one that has given rise to what Luigi Pellizzoni (2011) labels 'consumer sovereignty'. This is not surprising given the ubiquitous commercial settings that surround us daily, encouraging consumption – resulting from choice – as a primary source of well-being. Furthermore, the contemporary capitalist condition is one of constant revision, instant change and dynamic institutional identities, or as Zygmunt Bauman (2000, 2005) calls it, a 'liquid society'. Such conditions explicitly challenge conservative conceptualisation of schooling based on notions of state provision, strong community ties, and stability. The strength of the Australian economy, relative to many of the global powers in the north, has enabled a hybrid managerial rhetoric to come the fore in the administration of education, where notions of the rational interplay with the normative (Eacott & Norris, 2014). However, as Bauman argues, the solidity and continuity that is the trademark of modern identities has been replaced with the floating and drifting selves of contemporary societies. The loosening, but not severing, of ties between the state and the school, but most specifically moving beyond the linear downward relationship, combined with the reconfigured relations of the school and its community calls for a re-thinking of educational administration, one not framed in the discourses of hierarchy and downward linear influence. Schools have been empowered however the consumer sovereignty of the contemporary world means that this empowerment comes with the trade-off of schools bearing responsibility for making themselves relevant and valuable for society, and more specifically, the consumers of their product. Therefore, unlike its hierarchal past with the state adopting a 'panoptic surveillance' (see Foucault, 1977[1975]), the contemporary capitalist condition has the individual school, and arguably the individual educator, vying for attention in the fluidity and diversity of the marketplace. In doing so, the 'school community' – the mythical entity that combines both geographical affiliation, but also an emotional attachment to the local – becomes little more than a nostalgic imagery of a bygone era where schools, particularly the local public school, were a central feature of communal identity. With increased mobility and migration, not to mention the explosion of social media enabling virtual communities to establish and sustain, the contemporary citizen has far less ties to

the local than previous generations. This is not to suggest that schooling is ahistorical, rather that ties to the physical, or material, space are not necessarily the same as they once were. The school is arguably more than the bricks and mortar that constitute the physical building and is instead a set of relations between a dynamic group of individuals. These relations are always in motion.

The central argument of this chapter is that the contemporary capitalist condition, shifting policy relations and reconfigurations of community warrants a new image of the school, and specifically, school administration. The school, both theoretically and empirically, owes a number of, if not all, its most distinctive properties to the set of relations it holds with other institutions and society at large. The physicality of buildings, fences and the like may serve as material barriers, but they are not necessarily the defining properties of 'the school'. The relations between actors and/or materials are not static, rather complex and ambiguous. Consequently, the strategies adopted by a school, or school system, cannot be attributed to a single actor. The pursuit of the 'final decision maker' – he or she (but usually a he) who has absolute decision making authority – overlooks that in a relational sense, even the individual at the top of a hierarchal structure is themselves caught within a web of relations that interplay and influence decisions. Importantly, just as the strategies adopted by the school are reflective of its position in the broader socio-economic space, so too are they reflective of the power positions constitutive of its internal governance. The interplay of the macro- and micro-level nature of administration, policy and temporality is needed to conceptualise administrative labour. That is, administration is both an organisational quality, and a socio-theoretical concept. Structural theories which stress reproduction, or social oppression, primarily by the state, do not enable productive spaces for the theorising of administration. Or as Søren Jagd (2011) argues, in order to give organisational action its proper meaning, it is important to see actors as being thrown into situations of radical uncertainty and ambiguity with which they try to cope.

What is privileged in the conceptualisation I am arguing for is the problematic and active nature of relations between school administration and wider society. Such relations are however fragile as the *rule*, that which is central to the hierarchal mode of administration, has been replaced by the *relations*. In moving beyond the rule there is a need to recognise that the demands that are placed on schools, those which are central to the contract, are themselves a social product, constituted through schemas of perception and appreciation from all of those who interact with them. What I argue is that the managerialist project has been met with its own counter revolution, an evolution of the firm to a point where managerialism is no longer ruler of the territory, rather just another player. The goal here being to move beyond the Marxist inspired social analysis that in the end reduce the social to relations of power, and likewise the privileging of self-interested action designed to advance social positioning, through to a conceptualisation of school administration that is built on locating the work in a socio-theoretical territory.

Empirically this raises some challenges. Projects become less about scale and more about depth.[ix] But this call is not new. An intriguing question at this

particular point in time in the Australian context is how Australian schools, and specifically educators, are embracing the revision of labour conditions. This is part of the problematic and active nature of the relations, as Smyth (2008) points out, the passivity of Australians and the high degree of compliance with indirect forms of authority. Having long been embedded and embodying their position within the hierarchy of education systems and the downward linearity of policy, a timely question is '*How is the evolution of the firm being engaged with by Australian educators?*'. For me, but hopefully others, this is an intriguing problematic. With the predicted mass exodus of the education workforce, most notably among school executives, the work of school administrators under revised conditions is both timely and topical – at least in the Australian context.

CONCLUSION

Public administration, to which I see educational administration closely related, like economics, is frequently constituted as a state science. It is embedded and embodies state thinking, constantly pre-occupied with the normative concerns of an applied science and dependent on responding politically to political demands without giving the impression of political involvement. However, the state is a social construction, so too are state institutions such as schools. The genesis and maintenance of the state is sustained through various systems and structures that it sustains in its name, such as schooling, welfare, health services and defence. The underlying generative principles of the original social construction exist in every social action. That being said, the contemporary capitalist condition has brought uncertainty and ambiguity to what is frequently conceived of as a relatively static state. In doing so, I argue that it is increasingly difficult to justify a position that we can understand the actions of schools, and their constituting actors, with the partitioning of the social world into entities and downward linearity from the state.

In this chapter I have sought to construct an argument for a new image of the school, one that illuminates blind spots in contemporary scholarship and calls for theoretically and empirically moving beyond the downward linearity of policy directives from an all-powerful state and the nostalgic image of the school community. In particular, I argue that under the contemporary capitalist condition there is a need to think of educational administration, policy, and the school in new ways. Challenging the ontological complicity of the spontaneous sociologist, I argue that the resources needed to create productive alternatives lies not in the work of great thinkers from another time and space, but instead in the intellectual enterprise of interrogating the here and now – although this is not an endorsement of ahistorical scholarship. This is particularly so because, as illustrated in the previous analysis (albeit brief and under-developed), the contemporary conditions of labour have brought about a new order of administration, and understanding the dynamics of its relations will explicitly contribute to our understanding of schooling, policy and administration. With a move towards a *relational* approach as opposed to an entity based perspective to educational administration scholarship, the very research object comes under revision. This moves attention away from

entities, such as the school, the state, or individual actors with these social constructions and instead to the dynamic work of organising schooling. This goes beyond individuals and entities and is a phenomena generated in the interactions among actors in time and space with particular reference to reciprocity. A *relational* approach explores the space between individuals and phenomena. But rather than seeing them as separate, the work of actors is conceived of as coevolving in time this needs to be accounted for in educational administration scholarship.

NOTES

[i] This economic stability has been primarily the result of the value of the mining sector. There is evidence to suggest that other parts of the economy have contracted, and continue to (e.g. recent job losses in the manufacturing sector and reduced retail spending), but for the most part, Australia has avoided the austerity measures required in many other nations – at least for now.

[ii] The problem with mobilising 'distribution' as it most frequently is in educational administration discourses is that it is still based on a hierarchal conceptualisation of the organisation rather than socio-theoretical account of how power operates within, and upon, social groups.

[iii] John Howard's Liberal-National coalition government removed the cap on new schools in 1997 leading to the proliferation of non-government schools and a mass exodus of students from public schools. There is conflicting data presently in relation to current trends on the movement of students across sectors. It is also to be noted that the 'choice' agenda currently has bipartisan support in the contemporary Australian political conditions.

[iv] A fundamental flaw in the argument for school choice is that the resources required to exercise 'choice are not evenly distributed across society, and therefore the individuals and groups who can exercise choice are those who already possessed the necessary resources for educational advantage. See also Diane Reay (2012).

[v] Refers to a special type of gift that requires reciprocation.

[vi] In the Australian context, I am thinking here of Brian Caldwell – arguably the world's leading advocate of self-managing schools and who with Jim Spinks wrote the canonical texts for the movement: *The self managing school* (1988); *Leading the self managing school* (1992); *Beyond the self managing school* (1998); and its latest contribution [*The self-transforming school*, 2013] – but also lesser known advocates such as David Gamage (2005, 2006).

[vii] For Gunter (2010), the other canonical text for critical studies in educational administration is Bill Foster's (1986) *Paradigms and promises*. As an Australian scholar, I would add Richard Bates' (1983) *Educational administration and the management of knowledge*, but I am well aware of the contestation over whether it was Bates or Foster who brought Critical Theory into the educational administration intellectual space.

[viii] This argument clearly stems from my background using Bourdieusian social theory, but I am not going to apply or map this intellectual terrain using a Bourdieusian lens as this is not desirable or helpful, as such an approach would leave the existing theorisation of educational administration labour intact. Rather, what I offer is a theoretical intervention that enables us to see the school in new ways. Such an approach unsettles many of the popular assumptions of educational administration and enables a new understanding of the relationship between schooling, policy and broader socio-economic conditions.

[ix] For a strict Bourdieusian example of this, see my contribution to the Special Issue 'Rethinking 'leadership' in education' I edited for *Journal of Educational Administration and History* (Volume 45 Issue 2).

REFERENCES

Abrahamson, E. (1997). The emergence and prevalence of employee management rhetorics: the effects of long waves, labor unions and turnover, 1875-1992. *Academy of Management Journal*, *40*(3), 491-533.

Adler, P. S., & Heckscher, C. (2006). Towards collaborative community. In C. Heckscher & P. S. Adler (Eds.), *The firm as a collaborative community: Reconstructing trust in the knowledge economy* (pp. 11-105). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bates, R. J. (1983). *Educational administration and the management of knowledge*. Melbourne: Deakin University Press.

Bates, R. J. (2010). History of educational leadership and management. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGraw (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed., pp. 724-730). Oxford: Elsevier.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Z. (2005). *Liquid life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Blackmore, J. (2004). Restructuring educational leadership in changing contexts: A local/global account of restructuring in Australia. *Journal of Educational Change*, *5*(3), 267-288.

Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (2005[1999]). *The new spirit of capitalism* (G. Elliott, Trans.). London: Verso. [Originally published as *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme* (Paris: Editions Gallimard).]

Bourdieu, P. (2005[2000]). *The social structures of the economy* (C. Turner, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity. [Originally published as *Les structures socials de l'économie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).]

Bourdieu, P., Chamboredon, J.-C., & Passeron, J.-C. (1991[1968]). *The craft of sociology: Epistemological preliminaries* (R. Nice, Trans.). New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter. [Originally published as *Le métier de sociologue : préalables épistémologiques* (Paris: Mouton).]

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. (1988). *The self managing school*. Lewes, UK: Falmer Press.

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. (1992). *Leading the self managing school*. London: Falmer Press.

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. (1998). *Beyond the self managing school*. London: Falmer Press.

Caldwell, B.J., & Spinks, J. (2013). *The self-transforming school*. London: Routledge.

Callahan, R. E. (1962). *Education and the cult of efficiency*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Campbell, R. F., Fleming, T., Newell, L. J., & Bennion, J. W. (1987). *A history of thought and practice in educational administration*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Carpentier, V. (2003). Public expenditure on education and economic growth in the UK, 1833-2000. *History of Education*, *32*(1), 1-15.

Connell, R. (2007). *Southern theory: The global dynamics of knowledge in social sciences*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Eacott, S. & Norris, J. (2014). Managerial rhetoric, accountability, and the school leadership in contemporary Australia. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 13*(2), 169-187.

Esposito, R. (2010[1998]). *Communitas: the origin and destiny of community* (T. Campbell, Trans.). Torino: Einaudi. [Originally published as *Communitas: origine e destino communita* (Giulio Einaudi Editore S.p.A.)].

Esposito, R. (2011[2002]). *Immunitas: The protection and negation of life* (T. Campbell, Trans.). Torino: Einaudi. [Originally published as *Immunitas: protezione e negazione della vita* (Giulio Einaudi Editore S.p.A.)].

Foster, W. (1986). *Paradigms and promises*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Foucault, M. (1977[1975]). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. M. Sheridan, Trans.). London: Penguin. [Originally published as *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard)].

Gamage, D. T. (2005). Decentralization and school-based management: A comparative study of self-governing school models. *Educational Practice and Theory*, *27*(2), 35-58.

Gamage, D. T. (2006). *Professional development for leaders and managers of self-governing schools*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.

Godbout, J. (1998). Homo donator versus homo economicus. *Revue du MAUSS*, *2*, 261-282.

Griffiths, D.E. (1959). *Human relations in school administration*. New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Gunter, H. (2010). A sociological approach to educational leadership. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *31*(4), 519-527.

Hartley, D. (2010). Rhetorics of regulation in education after the global economic crisis. *Journal of Education Policy*, *25*(6), 785-791.

Heckscher, C. (2001). Response to Adler, "market, hierarchy, and trust". *Organization Science*, *12*(2), 235-237.

Jagd, S. (2011). Pragmatic sociology and competing orders of worth in organizations. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *14*(3), 343-359.

Leithwood, K. & Duke, D. L. (1999). A century's quest to understand school leadership. In J. Murphy & K. Seashore Louis (Eds.), *Handbook of research on educational administration* (2nd ed., pp 45-72). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Lingard, B. (2010). Policy borrowing, policy learning: Testing times in Australian schooling. *Critical Studies in Education*, *51*(2), 129-147.

Murphy, J. & Seashore Louis, K. (Eds.). (1999). *Handbook of research on educational administration*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

O'Connor, J. (1973). *The fiscal crisis of the state*. London: St James Press.

OECD (2012). *Public and private schools: How management and funding relate to their socio-economic profile*. OECD Publishing http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264175006-en

Pellizzoni, L. (2011). In search of community: Political consumerism, governmentality and immunization. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *15*(2), 221-241.

Reay, D. (2012). *What would a socially just education system look like?* London: Centre for Labour and Social Studies.

Smyth, J. (2008). Australia's great disengagement with public education and social justice in educational leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *40*(3), 221-233.

Smyth, J. (2011). The disaster of the 'self-managing school' – Genesis, trajectory, undisclosed agenda, and effects. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *43*(2), 95-111.

Smyth, J. (Ed.). (1993). *A socially critical view of the self-managing school*. London: Falmer Press.

Touraine, A. (2000[1997]). *Can we live together: Equality and difference* (D. Macey, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Pourrons-nous vivre ensemble? Egaux et differents* (Libraric Artheme Fayard).

Willower, D. J., & Forsyth, P. B. (1999). A brief history of scholarship on education administration. In J. Murphy & K. Seahorse Louis (Eds.), *Handbook of research on educational administration* (2nd ed., pp. 1-24). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Yauch, W. A. (1949). *Improving human relations in school administration*. New York, NY: Harper.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDYING ADMINISTRATION RELATIONALLY

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters I have interrogated 'leadership' as a label in the scientific enterprise and argued for re-thinking the research object of educational administration as the organising of schooling in a particular space and time. In doing so, my argument makes redundant the current proliferation of adjectival leadership, emphasises the importance of context (but in a way that is beyond the superficiality of the cliché mobilisation of this claim in mainstream rhetoric), and re-centres discussions on what is administration and how best we can come to understand it. An implicit, but hopefully explicit, thesis running in my argument is that theory – particularly the epistemological and ontological preliminaries that one brings to scientific inquiry – is methodology and methodology is theory. The individual data generation techniques, or methods, that we mobilise are just that, techniques or methods to generate data from a specific lens. The most important aspect at play here is foregrounding the theoretical, or at least epistemological and ontological, position being taken into a particular scientific task (e.g. an article, book, conference presentation, lecture, project, dissertation and so on). I mean this in a way that is beyond the common identification of a quantitative, qualitative, or the contemporarily popular mixed methods approaches to research. Alignment with quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods, does tell the reader something about the way data is generated and analysed, but it does not necessarily guarantee coherence with a given epistemological position. This is why it is not uncommon to see theory overlayed upon generated data as opposed to being recognised as both a product and producer of data, or even a disconnect between claimed data generation procedures and the discussion built upon the data. Therefore, while the 'paradigm wars' were about more than technique, rather of a more epistemological and ontological nature (see Waite, 2002), the current mobilisation of 'paradigmatic lens' is not always the case.[i] The most common example being the claim of 'qualitative' research when data might be generated through interviews but then the analysis is limited to a frequency count, arguably quantitative, to develop a framework for how to do leadership, all the while assuming that researcher and participant have the same understanding of leadership.

If the *relational* research programme that I am building and advocating for in this book is to have a life beyond this text, then it is vital that I can demonstrate further how this form of scholarship plays out. Therefore, in this chapter (and arguably the remainder of the book) I map out *a*, but not *the*, means of mobilising a *relational* approach as a theory and methodology for engaging with empirical research. This is an important move as I have argued earlier that my goal is to anchor the *relational* research programme in a rigorous empirical science. In a

space and time where managerialist discourses have become the orthodoxy to which the scholarship and practice of leadership, management and administration have become anchored – in both everyday language and scholarship – the potential generated by any alternate (note the open nature of this claim) way of knowing, doing or being in educational administration is productive.

THE QUESTION OF MEASUREMENT

An enduring question in the leadership, management and administration of the public sector as a domain of practice and knowledge production, has been the question of measurement. In combination with the preparation and development of organisational elites/upper echelon, it is possible to argue that the big question of administration, and its product and producer – policy, as a scholarly space is concerned with improving institutional performance. This was central to the argument built in Chapter Three about the construction of 'leadership' as a concept. Deeply embedded within these questions is what is of value and/or valued. The tension operates as both a theoretical and empirical problem and understandably, there are significant matters of epistemology and ontology – those underlying generative principles of research – at play in any discussion. The division most frequently played out is based on the separation of 'value', that which is most often aligned with the discourses of economics, and 'values', that which is more often aligned with a moral 'good' played out in social relations. Such division is reflective of the deeply embodied epistemological tension – or residual paradigmatic wars – between objectivity and subjectivity. In this chapter I develop an argument for how a *relational* approach to scholarship in educational administration directly engages with, and overcomes, the unproductive binary of value/values. Drawing on a range of social theory but particularly the pragmatic sociology of Luc Boltanski and colleagues, I mobilise an analytic strategy that fuses the notion of 'value' and 'values' through a central focus on legitimation of the social world. This explicitly links the discussion to the construction of the school as an object of research as crafted in Chapter Four. Such a framing moves beyond the static and often essentialised/deterministic dimensions of values and/or the static commodification of value, by foregrounding the process of legitimation, and acknowledging the underlying generative morality of judgement. In doing so, it blurs the lines between the economic and the moral. Furthermore, I raise questions – following on from the previous chapter – as to what exactly is the research object that is the focus of educational administration as a domain of knowledge production. I argue that rather than individuals, relationships or any other object, the empirical project of educational administration is relations (not necessarily relationships) between two or more individuals. I contend that 'administration' is a dynamic – and inexhaustible – construct which is defined moment-to-moment and therefore the context of administration is brought into being through grounding the scholarly narrative in a particular time and space. This conceptualisation serves as a theoretical intervention for mainstream discourses of educational leadership, management and administration but more importantly,

serves as a means of opening possibilities for generating new knowledge and ways of being and understanding administration.

CRAFTING AN INTELLECTUAL BRIDGE

The starting point for this chapter is that the discourses of value and values in educational leadership, management and administration are located in different scholarly communities. Such partitioning in a scholarly community is nothing new or unique. Nor is it without critique (see Evers & Lakomski, 1991). Different intellectual traditions – the critical, humanists, scientific, instrumental (Gunter, 2001) – have their own discourse communities, complete with conferences, journals and international networks. This is arguably an evolutionary product of scholarly communities, but for the discipline (educational administration) at large, as both a domain of knowledge production and one of practice, it poses a significant inhibitor to substantive shifts in thinking. This is especially so when as noted previously, there is a well identified lack of meaningful engagement across research traditions (Blackmore, 2010), and a state of tacit agreement where those with whom we disagree, we treat with benign neglect (Donmoyer, 2001; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). Consistent with what Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski (1991) label the 'oppositional diversity thesis', where different epistemological paradigms partition educational administration research so that research traditions turn out to be radically distinct, presenting different ways of knowing or forms of knowledge. As Evers and Lakomski (1991) argue:

> This means that neither educational administration research nor any other form of inquiry can provide a rational method for judging between paradigms. As different ways of knowing, they are mutually incompatible, competitive ways of researching the same territory. (p. 214)

They go on to name two other views, the complementary diversity thesis and the unity thesis. In the former, the epistemologically distinct paradigms, while incommensurate, remain, but are complementary, equally appropriate, overlapping, and possibly even addressing the same empirical problems. The unity thesis (see Walker & Evers, 1988) denies the epistemological diversity of the other two. It argues against the notion of incommensurable approaches believing that the very idea of paradigms if mistaken. What it is greatest importance here is the potential coming together, or means of evaluating knowledge claims. For me, the contested terrain that is scholarship in educational administration is symbolic of the argument I am building in this chapter focusing on the notion of valuation and engaging with the work of legitimation and legitimising of particular claims.

Value, finding its intellectual heritage in economics, privileges the commodification and the measurement of the social world. What is of value is that which is rare and desirable, and the (perpetual) accumulation of material wealth is a central feature of the contemporary capitalist condition. Value discourses are frequently reflective of epistemological and ontological positions of objectivity (realism). The logic of justification in value discourses is found in empirical

concepts derived from direct observation. The intention of such an approach is being able to establish claims that can be extended, or scaled up, to explain phenomena. While there are numerous examples of phenomenological investigations of the 'turnaround' school leader, such inquiries still privilege the measurement of schools, and by virtue student/staff, performance through abstract measures which are at best proxies for the core business of education – learning.[ii] The identification of samples on the basis of student performance in large scale testing regimes, as though these legitimised numerical figures accurately reflect an empirical reality embodies many of the criticisms raised against objectivity as an ontological and epistemological stance in the social sciences. Furthermore, irrespective of the subsequent methods employed, the generative principles of the origin of inquiry demonstrate an apolitical account of knowledge production – where the legitimation of the measure/s remains uncritically mobilised. This is what makes Martin Thrupp and Richard Willmott's (2003) account of textual apologist so compelling.

Values on the other hand is a more subjective (relativist) construct that arguably gives too much weight to the dispositional properties of individuals and in doing so, frequently assumes a static or essentialised version of the social world embodied by the self. Values discourses are frequently, and arguably the only exception being purely descriptive accounts, situated in an overarching ideology of what is 'right' and judgements related with such a position. This is also one of the reasons that a focus on 'values' is often central in discourses based on religious or faith-based institutions. In addition, values ideologies often exhibit crisis construction, a phenomena more likely to be explored in the disciplines of sociology and political sciences. This is where an ideological/political position constructs a forthcoming crisis yet simultaneously offers a path to avoiding such crisis. In doing so, the original orientation legitimises itself through the justification of particular actions as a means of avoiding a crisis that itself created. This is a common critique raised against religions.

It is through the centrality of valuation in both the discourses of value and values that I see a potential intellectual bridge – the prospect of unity. The means through which a particular set of values is legitimised and becomes hegemonic, much like the legitimation of what is of value, provides the generative origins for a line of inquiry built around the work of legitimising. Specifically, for education administration as a domain of knowledge production, I argue that through grounding the scholarly narrative in time and space and a focus on the legitimation and justification of actions provides a productive space for understanding the organising of education as it is embedded and embodied in the social world. A key perspective in bringing this productive space into being is that of pluralism, and the *relational* research programme provides this plurality.

THEORETICAL RESOURCES

This book, and particularly this chapter, explicitly fuses multiple analytical frames under what I label a *relational* approach to scholarship in educational leadership, management and administration. The intellectual heritage of the *relational* approach I am developing and defending is eclectic, drawing heavily on French social theory such as the work of sociologists Pierre Bourdieu (critical) and Luc Boltanski (pragmatic), management scholars such as Peter Dachler, Dian Marie Hoskings, and Mary Uhl-Bien, but also critical management studies, political science, organisational studies, and given my own disciplinary location, recognised educational administration thinkers such as Richard Bates, Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski, Thomas Greenfield, and contemporaries such as Helen Gunter, Pat Thomson, John Smyth, and Fenwick English. Centrally, in bringing critical pluralism to scholarship I engage with what I see as the key theoretical problem of the legitimation of the social world and its empirical manifestation in the organising of education. Through this theoretical and empirical focus, the *relational* research programme investigates how the production of knowledge about the legitimacy, effectiveness, efficiency, and morality of administration connects with the practices of administration. In doing so, questions are raised regarding the extent to which 'new' forms of administration – leadership, participatory, distributed, authentic, and so on – are generative or thwarting of new knowledge. Such a move is not surprising given that for the most part scholars, at least those who take such matters seriously, are looking for an alternate ontology as the Newtonian/Cartesian universe inhabited by self-interested, atomistic individuals (entities) – that which fits nicely with managerialist accounts of administration – does not logically fit prescriptions for collaborative practice nor the image of educational institutions as a nebulas unit. A *relational* focus enables scholarship to move beyond internal tensions and external pressures by opening up institutions and engaging with the dynamic relations that they hold with other social institutions and those which constantly redefine their very existence. As a means of highlighting the key features of this approach, I again outline the five features of the *relational* research programme:

- The centrality of 'administration' in the social world creates an ontological complicity in researchers that makes it difficult to epistemologically break from our spontaneous understanding of the social world;
- Rigorous 'scientific' scholarship would therefore call into question the very foundations on which the contemporarily popular discourses of 'leadership' 'management' and 'administration' in education are constructed;
- The contemporary social condition cannot be separated from the ongoing, and inexhaustible, recasting of administrative labour;
- Studying educational administration 'relationally' enables the overcoming of the contemporary, and arguably enduring, tensions of individualism and collectivism, and structure and agency; and

– In doing so, there is a productive – rather than merely critical – space to theorise educational administration.

The primary point of departure I make with mainstream educational administration scholarship is my attention to matters of epistemology and ontology, or knowledge production. However, rather than locate this work in a more philosophy of science space, I explicitly bring this into discussion with contemporary discourses of educational administration. This move enables the argument to speak across intellectual (e.g. education, political science, philosophy, economics, management, organisational studies) and socio-geographic boundaries through the provision of a theoretical argument that is not confined to any one empirical problem or socio-geographic location. Adopting this analytical strategy enables an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship while also fusing multiple lenses for the specific intent of opening new lines of inquiry and renewal in a field of knowledge production – educational leadership, management and administration – under question for its scholarly value within the academy.

The type of analysis made possible by a *relational* approach offers a means of crafting theoretically charged descriptions illuminating the situated nature of administration. Struggles for legitimacy are at the very core of institutions (Barley, 2008). Social institutions, particularly modern institutions such as education, are the configuration of individual actors in a particular socio-geographic space. As such, groups are an epistemic construction as much, if not more so, than an empirical reality. While individual actors exist in the empirical, it is the epistemic classification of groups on the basis of a particular attribute (which could include physical locality) that gives rise to institutions. These are then extended through the production, and maintenance, of material markers. In addition, administrative analysis is frequently based on an underlying generative assumption that this collection of individuals operate as a coherent whole. However, I, as with many others, argue that such configurations of individuals in a particular time and space are dynamic contested terrains. The binding attributes of institutions, as social groupings, are performative in the sense that they only exist in practice and cannot be solely reduced to particular structural arrangements of the empirical. The binds that hold a group of individual actors together in the form of a social institution are therefore problematic, active, and by virtue, fragile.

The work of institutional actors is the ongoing construction of the social world through the embedding and embodying of it with meaning centred on what is legitimate. Therefore, change in institutions can only take place through shifts in the logics whereby legitimacy is assessed, or, in other words, the standards whereby alternatives are deemed to be appropriate. A *relational* approach provides an analytical lens for interrogating the moment-to-moment social relations that define the political activity of educating. Specifically, it opens up analysis that breaks down the unproductive binaries that have existed in the scholarship of educational administration centred on individualism/collectivism and structure/agency. Furthermore, it brings to the fore the role of description in the scholarly narrative. Following Michael Savage (2009), I mobilise ‘description’ not as the

enduring rhetorical criticism that constructs description as a lowly, if not the lowest, form of scholarly work, but rather the rich or 'thick' (to think with Clifford Geertz (1973), following Gilbert Ryle (1971)) description of the scholarly narrative.

Educational administration, or its contemporarily popular label 'educational leadership' as both a field of practice and knowledge production, is constituted as a source of new methods of organisational performance and social transformation. But educational administration is not composed only of practical tips and/or recipes for improving the productivity of institutions as one improves the performance of a machine. It simultaneously has a high moral tone, if only because it is frequently a normative literature stating what should be the case, not what is the case. As a result, there are questions to be asked of the legitimacy or realism of this literature, and how believable, or empirically defensible, it is when it comes to what 'really' takes place in institutions. This is especially so when cases presented (e.g. the 'turnaround' narrative) conform to the moral 'what should be done' and in doing so craft a discourse that confirms the original moral orientation. The grounds on which we make claims in scholarship are important and need to be discussed rather than remaining implicit, or even silenced, in our work.

THINKING THROUGH THE EMPIRICAL

From a *relational* perspective, education is an ongoing political project that is defined moment-to-moment through the constant negotiation and re-negotiation of social relations. As noted previously in this book, the legitimising function of institutional labour is problematic, active and fragile. Historically, within educational administration as a field of knowledge production, substantial, and dare I say, far too much, intellectual space in journals, books, theses, at conferences, seminars, and graduate school classrooms is taken up trying to construct distinctions between 'leadership', 'management' and 'administration' or even different forms of all three as a focus of study. From a *relational* approach, the construction of such entities is redundant, if not incoherent. For my purposes here, I argue for what is a narrowing of focus, yet simultaneously an opening up of possibilities. If the organising of education is a social activity, and I contend there is a sufficient body of work to support this claim, and we are to take the dynamic and highly situated nature of social relations serious, then a theoretical framework that enables the analysis of ordinary work – ranging from the mundane through to the highly public – requires attention. Such a theoretical lens needs to account for a plurality of legitimate ways of operating and avoid falling into a normative position of how things ought to be. With such a framing, the focus of educational administration as a scholarly space is therefore on the work that individuals and collectives undertake in reaching agreements on what is a legitimate course of action. In doing so, scholarship moves beyond the dispositional focus on the individual, the ideological stance of the normative and the material needs and constraints of systems analysis ever present in the economic discourses of efficiency and competition. I contend that the theoretical problem of educational

administration – the legitimation of the social world – plays out in the empirical focus of situated (in time and space) action. This move gives scholarship both an individual and collective focus. The weaving together of the macro- and micro-level analysis of practice (where there is no final decision maker as all actors play a part in a web of relations) illuminates the theoretical problem which permeates the discipline, the legitimation of the social world. This legitimation plays out in the empirical in many ways, but is ever present, and by virtue inexhaustible, in the work of institutional actors. Attention to this situated dynamic explicitly brings the individual actors and the context – as a socio-political space embedded within a particular time – into conversation. Notably, the empirical focus shifts from a focus on individuals (dispositional), behaviours (practices), or structural arrangements (material and symbolic) to the rather fragile agreements, both active and passive, [iii] which constitute the work of institutions.

It is the shifting of the research object that is the primary point of departure for the argument that I am building. In bringing a *relational* approach to educational administration scholarship, there are the intellectual resources to bridge 'value' and 'values' discourses. It is through the primacy of the situated nature of actions – that which goes beyond mere 'contextualisation' – in combination with the individual trajectory of actors that facilitates a theoretically charged narrative. It is this attention to relations that makes description – that much maligned label in the scholarly community – a worthwhile scholarly pursuit. As Michael Savage (2009) writes:

> … it is not about understanding why someone is doing something, rather to relate actions to other actions, rather than establish causal relations, this is about unfolding an elaborated description of the ongoing politic work of organisations. (p. 163)

It is the underlying generative principle in Savage's argument that is important. Rather than seeking causality, and generalizability, which includes the pursuit of interventions, this scholarship is about detailed and rich accounts of organisations and the actors, symbols and materials that constitute them. It is concerned with the grounding of actions in a particular time and space. If context really matters, this is *a* (not *the*) means to bring that into being. This focus on situating the work of institutional actors illuminates practice in ways that are lost in the large scale aggregation of data in the static cross-sectional project or the single site case study of leaders which dominate mainstream educational leadership, management and administration studies.

THEORISING ADMINISTRATION RELATIONALLY

In short, what I have argued for so far is a need for a more *relational* understanding of educational administration. Before moving on, two aspects of this argument require attention or articulation. First, critical social theory – to which such a *relational* would most frequently been seen in alignment with – is often thought of as a critique of institutions and this potentially creates a tension because as a

domain of knowledge production, leadership, management and administration arguably has the highest stakes in institutions/organisations. As it stands, the very foundations of administration as a disciplinary body of knowledge are institutions. In the discourses of administration, institutions are both necessary and obvious. This argument holds whether the narrative is of the heroic institutional leader or the uprising against oppressive social institutions. It is this grounding that gives rise to the (unproductive) dichotomies of structure/agency and individualism/collectivism in discourses. Much of the scholarship building upon critical social theory perspectives, including but not exclusively, Max Weber's conceptualisation of bureaucracy, Pierre Bourdieu's (re)production, Critical theory (notably Richard Bates and William Foster in educational administration[iv]) and post-modern/post-structuralist concepts of governmentality, performativity, and subjectivity, frequently mobilised them in such a way that it is difficult to get beyond the internal tensions and external pressures acting upon institutional actors. It is however possible to use critical social theory to get beyond critique, particularly if shifting focus from relationships to relations. This is the second point requiring some articulation. The privileging of relations over relationships is deliberate. This focus requires a move away from attempts to map concrete ties and chains of interactions between individuals/organisations that can be neatly portrayed in diagrams – an entity perspective. To centre relations is to acknowledge that social institutions owe as much of their very constitution to the (dynamic) relations they hold with other institutions as they do with anything else. Theoretically, this takes analysis beyond the reduction of relations to the enactment of power, as is often the case with Neo-Marxist accounts, and brings to the fore attention to temporality and socio-political space.

The result is a theoretically grounded mobilisation that pays attention to the abstract systems of difference and distance within the social space established through the asymmetrical distribution of resources within society. Bringing this into conversation with the argument of this book – and particularly this chapter – a central generative questions is '*Why is this action taking place in this particular time and space?*'. In doing so, the mobilisation of time, or more specifically a theory of temporality moves beyond 'clock time', that which artificially partitions the social world to construct timetables, calendars, schedules and targets and does little more than bring our understanding of the social world into alignment with a particular narrative of measurement. Temporality, while having a long history of scholastic thought, has been the focus of recent scholarly attention in sociology (Adkins, 2011; Snyder, 2013), human services (Colley *et al.*, 2012), education (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013), and educational administration (Eacott, 2013). Mobilising temporality, as opposed to just time, historicises action without a need to prescribe a past-present-future model of reality. Through a focus on the situated practice of institutional actors, scholarship moves beyond any possible comparison based on 'value' and/or judgement based on an adherence to a particular 'values' set. Rather, centring scholarly attention on relations set within a framework of temporality and socio-political space facilitates asking the question: '*Why now?*' That is, why are the current actions taking place now (and just as importantly, why

are other practices not)? The bigger question being, '*What is it about the unique socio-geographic conditions, including the configuration of key actors that is producing the contemporary condition?*' This shift requires an engagement with the political nature of the socio-geographic space and the events that have led to this particular point in time.

What I am doing here is proposing an intervention built around the theoretical problem of the legitimation of the social world and the empirical manifestation of that problem in the situated practice of organisational actors. The challenge that this lays out for discourses of 'value' and 'values' is the prospect of delaying judgement or even judgement free description. This is not to suggest that the scholar is neutral, as all observations are interpretivist, rather that the desire to jump from the *is* to *ought* should be delayed, if not avoided. This takes me back to Helen Gunter and Tanya Fitzgerald's (2008) introductory paper when taking over the editorship of *Journal of Educational Administration and History* where they argue:

> … we are interested in how in particular contexts decisions are made in particular ways. We see purposes as inevitably political, and hence we are interested in issues of social justice in regard to diversity and the postcolonial legacy. … we would agree that the demand for evidence is stifling understandings and explanations of practice, and at the same time the self-reverence of a person's story of their victory in turning around a failing school does little to explain who determines whether a school is failing and for what purposes. (p. 7)

The latter part of the quote is reminiscent of Jean-François Lyotard's (1984[1979]) questioning of 'who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided' (p. 9) and highlights two things: first, those who engage with organisations have a purpose/use for them; and second, there is a need to recognise that scholars are only one – and by no means are they the most privileged – group interested in educational administration research and analysis. With the somewhat universal pursuit of improved organisational performance, there is an underlying belief that administration research is fundamentally concerned with analysis, explanation and causality. This posturing constructs description as a lesser form of scholarship. However, it is in describing the social world that those from differing epistemological and ontological frames, for example 'value' and 'values', can come together to explore both their dissimilarities, but more importantly, their similarities. This is why an empirical focus on the legitimation and/or valuation of objects/actions offers substantive potential for advancing our understanding of institutions. I argue that in relating actions/actors to other actions/actors offers a viable means of advancing our understanding of institutions and the actors that constitute them. It overcomes the objectification and commodification critique of 'value' discourses by not imposing an *a priori* measurement narrative and comparative lens. Similarly, there is no overarching set of 'right' 'values' from which all actors/actions are judged. In the case of both 'value' and 'values', scholarship brings an evaluative lens through which the research object is assessed – or measured – and then judgement passed (e.g. effective/ineffective, right/wrong). To avoid such, what becomes of heightened importance in such

scholarship is meaningfully locating the descriptions – both the empirical object and the intellectual work itself – in a theory of temporality and socio-political space. In doing so, the scholarly narrative becomes more about the particular than the universal. This is less of a concern in education, where parochial cultural and policy conditions prevail (this is despite the effects of global policy borrowing – see Lingard (2010) – which exist at a more macro level). As the Savage quote earlier argues, such scholarship is about locating actions with other actions and the ongoing political work of institutions more so than causality. As a scholarly community, building a substantive corpus of situated practices would provide a foundation from which inter-tradition dialogue could take place where the focus is on the empirical object more so than paradigmatic lens. The debate and dialogue that would take place across tradition boundaries would not necessarily break them down – and in the contemporary academy, I am not convinced that such an outcome is possible even if desirable – but would advance collective understanding of what 'leadership', 'management' and 'administration' actually mean and provide a pedagogical opportunity for those entering, or outside, the disciplinary space to gain insights into such foundational research objects. In doing so, the *relational* approach works on, with, and through the empirical object and scholarship itself.

AGAINST, OR BEYOND, TRADITIONS

In the previous sections I have outlined a case for why I prefer a *relational* approach to knowledge production in educational administration over other forms. What I am now going to do is to justify my position in relation to other key positions in the literatures of educational administration. I am also going to engage with what I see as the major criticism, or arguably more importantly, the points of distinction from these positions. Following Gunter (2001), I am going to show how my argument differs from the four main positions taken by those who research and write about 'leadership' in educational settings. This is not to say that these are the only research traditions in educational administration, but they are arguably the most dominant. It is important to note, as I have flagged numerous times already, that there is minimal dialogue across research traditions. It is also important to keep in mind Evers and Lakomski's (1991) work around the unity thesis – that which denies paradigms/traditions.

Gunter names the following four traditions in educational administration: critical; humanist; scientific; and instrumental. With the expansion of the managerialist project, especially throughout the Anglophone world, the instrumental and scientific are the preferred traditions of policy makers, systems and arguably practising educators. There are arguably more traditions, or even more nuanced classifications, but for the illustrative purposes of this chapter, this grouping will suffice. Structurally I am going to adopt the approach of outlining what Gunter (with some additional information from myself) means by each of the traditions, follow that with a brief outline of how the *relational* approach differs, and then articulate the key critiques which could come from the tradition and how I

engage, overcome, or dismiss those. Of particular interest is the foundation of knowledge claims.

The instrumental

The popularity of the instrumental for policy makers, systems and practitioners is not surprising. For the most part, the instrumental provides models of effective/ successful systems, cultures, and leadership designed to enable improved or scaled-up performance to be operationalised. It is this tradition of research that has led to the proliferation of adjectival 'leadership', various frameworks, professional development packages, and the rise of edu-preneurs.[v] The instrumental research tradition adheres to the problem solving approach to educational 'leadership', with an underlying generative principle that 'leadership' matters and is not only important but imperative for institutional success.

From an instrumentalist perspective, my approach is arguably viewed as needless intellectualism. As Gunter (2010) argues, for the instrumentalist, if it cannot be translated into practice, or making a decision, at 9:00am on a Monday morning, it is of little value. The instrumental position legitimises and proliferates the unproductive (and I might add, false) binary of theory and practice. But to draw on that much over-used, and arguably poorly cited, quote from Kurt Lewin, there is nothing as practical as a good theory and vice versa. That being said, the major flaw with the instrumental, to which the *relational* approach explicitly engages, is a focus on playing the game better built upon an uncritical acceptance of the social world as it is defined in hegemonic discourses. The instrumental does not move beyond the ordinary language of the everyday.

In privileging the delivery of products, packages, models, frameworks and the like, the instrumental tradition is prone to de-contextualised (in time and space) narratives. This is acknowledged by some working in the instrumentalist perspective such as Stephen Dinham (2007) and David Gurr, Lawrie Drysdale and Helen Goode (2010), but rarely, if ever, seen as a fatal flaw. It is lack of empirical grounding that allows for the blurring of what is meant by 'leadership' by those like Brian Caldwell (2007) who link it with 'change' – that which is another rather vacuous concept (Gronn, 2008). It also explains why many of the leading figures in this space such as Michael Fullan, Brian Caldwell and Brent Davies remain popular with practitioners and professional associations yet attract very little, if any, serious scholarly attention. The instrumentalist literature is accessible. It can be read as easily by the practitioner as it can by the graduate student or professor. As a tradition, the instrumental seeks an audience and applicability with practice – a direct and explicit use in the advancement of practice. Significantly, the instrumental begins with an acceptance of the world as it is, therefore having a belief in 'leadership', and then seeks to articulate ways of doing 'leadership' better. It remains in the pre-scientific space of the spontaneous sociologist and the (apolitical) direct observation of the social world. Its knowledge claims are based on, and defended by, empirical observation but under a normative position of how it ought to be. In contrast, the *relational* approach recognises 'leadership' as an

epistemic and as a result pays attention to the construction of the research object. In other words, rather than employing an *a priori* assumption of how things ought to be and then providing a path to this, the *relational* seeks to illuminate the various means through which the formula for success is constituted and sustained. That is, an acknowledgement that the underlying generative principles of the social world are not always directly observable and that the scholarly narrative is strengthened when problematized.

The scientific

As a research tradition, the scientific has a long history in the discipline strongly linked to key figures such as Andrew Halpin, Daniel Griffiths, Jack Culbertson and notably the *Theory Movement*. Contemporaries include Kenneth Leithwood, Philip Hallinger, Jaap Schereens, the journal *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, and not surprisingly given the US-centric nature of the tradition, *Educational Administration Quarterly*. The scientific tradition seeks to abstract and measure the impact of 'leadership' on organisational outcomes. This is particularly popular with policy makers and systemic authorities in an era of evidence-based practice, data-driven decision making, and the science-into-service agendas. It is the grounding in an externalist perspective, where the observations of an external reality, one that is not influenced by the researcher or the context in general, and where procedures can remove bias and error, that gives strength to claims. The popularity of Viviane Robinson's work (e.g. Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008) and John Hattie's (2009) is evidence of the preference for scientific work by the profession. Consistent with the instrumental, the broad agenda here is discovering 'what works'. The key distinction between the instrumental and the scientific is that the latter brings an apparent degree of rigor and robustness to the discussion of what works. This is based on the quantification of measures, that which aligns with classic natural sciences inquiry and an inherent belief that such inquiry is the legitimate way of doing research.

The hegemonic labelling of scientific, not just by Gunter, is however problematic. For the most part, it is grounded, if not synonymous with logical empiricism. This is to the exclusion of other forms of science such as the post-positivist perspective taken by Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski, or the Francophone version of science to which I align. This is not a critique of Gunter. Her work is useful here in thinking through the different traditions of educational administration scholarship. Importantly, it is also a marker of the way in which the label scientific is thought of and used in educational administration. Following the *Theory Movement*, the scientific tradition remains grounded in logical empiricism. The scholarly activity of description – that privileged within the *relational* approach – is a point of convergence between the natural and social sciences. Both claim it as their domain. Through careful attention to the epistemological break with ordinary language and the articulation of the relations between the researcher and the researched, there are some shared points between the *relational* and the scientific stream. However, my approach, deeply grounded in Bourdieusian

thinking, is more concerned with bringing a rigor and robustness to the construction of the research object as much as it is the generation of data. This breaks down any potential distance between the researcher and the researched by acknowledging the embedded and embodied nature of scholarship in educational administration.

The distinction between the scientific and the *relational* approach is the starting point. Within the scientific, as classified by Gunter (and others), there is a need to define 'leadership' in advance and then measure that construct. The empiricist nature of the work means that there is grounding of knowledge claims in observation of an external world. This particular form of science privileges method and procedure. Here is a significant flaw in contemporary thought and analysis in educational administration. The application of advanced mathematics, or statistical modelling, does not make something more scientific. While the appeals to rigor and robustness made possible courtesy of equations and other measures displayed in tables and diagrams, this is based on assumptions of a static and knowable (measurable) empirical world. What I am arguing here is that we need to decouple 'science' from method. They are not one and the same. Quantitative methods are not necessarily scientific and science is not necessarily quantitative. This is a residual hangover from the paradigm wars and the simplistic binary of quantitative and qualitative methods. Although different techniques may be stronger aligned with the knowledge claims of certain traditions, methods and traditions are not the same.

From a *relational* perspective, it is inappropriate to define once and for all, the research object prior to conducting any empirical work. That is, the *relational* is based on a belief in the ongoing and inexhaustible of the empirical and the epistemic nature of labels. The messiness of the social is very difficult to engage with in the conservative scientific tradition of scholarship in educational administration. As with the instrumental, the scientific is orientated towards improving practice. This is arguably the *raison d'être* of an applied discipline, but a key question is whether the only way of achieving this is through the provision of pathways. That is, is there merit in a form of scholarship which illuminates the ways in which the empirical is legitimised and sustained? I argue that the answer is an unreserved 'yes'. The only way to change the world is to create the conditions in which alternates can be conceived. Bringing to the level of discourse the ways in which the social world is organised creates these conditions without necessarily delivering a prescriptive 'how to' approach. The strength of such an approach is the power of description to make known the complexity of the social world. It is possible to engage in scientific inquiry with relying solely on the quantitative measurement of the empirical. This is made possible through the epistemological break with the language of the everyday and the mobilisation of appropriate data generation and analysis strategies.

The humanists

In response to the critique of the *Theory Movement* – notably from Thomas Greenfield – the humanistic tradition is very much concerned with the subjective and the phenomenological experience of administration. At its most simply, the paradigm wars were divided over two distinct approaches to knowledge production: the externalist and the interpretivist. The former has become synonymous with the scientific and the latter with a more humanist approach. As a tradition, the humanist is common, and accepted by policy makers and systemic authorities, as it provides case studies which add credibility (even if cherry picked as suggested by Gunter) to initiatives such as the professional standards for principals. Studies within the humanist perspective are concerned with the subjective understanding of actors. Multiple realities are possible and require multiple methods to understand them. Within the discipline at large, despite a critical mass of scholarship that falls into this category, it is frequently limited to parallel monologues – arguably as a result of its implicit relativism. Even a cursory glance at mainstream journals would find multiple articles – potentially in each issue – which fail to acknowledge similar works even in the same journal. A common critique is that the humanist perspective is too subjective, lacks any substantive sense of (comparable) measurement, and offers little to the advancement of knowledge in the discipline apart from the accumulation of examples/case studies.

Consistent with critiques often raised against anthropological accounts, and thinking here of Clifford Geertz' work – even if praised in some circles – on the Balinese cockfight, that by grounding in the particularities of the local, humanists arguably engage in a form of relativism under the guise of subjectivity. That is, in privileging the particular, the scholarly narrative is removed, or at least distanced, from the broader (globalised) discourses. Somewhat similar to how the scientific privileges the external the humanist is frequently limited to the internal world of subjects and the interpretation of that by the researcher. In the specific case of 'leadership', there is the mobilisation of a universal or foundational construct ('leadership') and a focus on the subjective experience of the particular. While the humanist provide attention to context that the instrumental and scientific do not, the potential separation of the individual phenomenological experience from the broader social conditions is problematic. The centring of the experience arguably creates a separation between the self and the experience – both constituted as entities.

An enduring problem and remarkably similar across the humanist, scientific and instrumental, is the initial belief in 'leadership' as a foundation concept and then studying its empirical manifestation. This is particularly so when a researcher mobilises a pre-existing normative orientation and seeks empirical validation for their position. For example, a researcher – arguably on the basis of lived experience – believes that the managerialist regime is at odds with the educative purposes of schooling and then seeks to investigate how that plays out. For the humanist, s/he who seeks to gather and theorise from the experiences and

biographies of 'leaders', this is less of a problem. Closer to the instrumental than the scientific, the humanist has traction with the profession through its empirical grounding in the day-to-day work of 'leaders'. This is also a point of departure with the critical which is frequently perceived to aspire to an ideal that is somewhat removed from the daily realities of education.

A humanist may argue against the *relational* on the basis that I seek to give too much weight to the construction of the research object as opposed to the research subject. But this does not necessarily make the humanist and *relational* incompatible. However, it does imply a separation of object and subject. There is an interdependence between the subject and context for the humanist, but they are entities. This is contrary to the argument that I am building where I explicitly call for the recognition and engagement with the embodied and embedded nature of the researcher and the researched. The constructed separation is a flawed position, much like the constructed division of the micro and the macro levels of society. Such divisions serve the classifiers purposes more so than reflect an empirical reality. Therefore, while the humanists privilege the subjective – pitted against the perceived objectivity of the scientific – I seek to breakdown this unproductive binary. This requires a recognition of the value-laden nature of observations yet also entertains the prospect of moving towards a rigorous and robust generation of data that can be recognised – even if not completely endorsed by – the objectivist.

The critical

The critical tradition according to Gunter draws on the social sciences to map and analyse the interplay of structure and agency. Unlike the instrumentalist and scientific traditions, the critical engages in a problem posing more so than problem solving approach. However, the critical is frequently accused of privileging a particular orientation. The perspective is somewhat captured by Richard Bates' (1983) argument that administration can be seen as a technology of control. Personally, I feel that a more appropriate notion would have been 'manipulation' rather than 'control'. While both words frequently attract negative attention, I believe 'manipulation' is a more empirically defensible position, and one which has examples of both success and failure across time and space. However, by its very orientation, the critical is critical of the status quo and in doing so, rarely gets beyond replacing an existing master narrative with another. For the most part, I do not believe that the critical has overcome this claim except to counter claim that others are complicit in the status quo and that the critical seeks an alternate.

As a tradition, the critical has a rich history in educational administration, particularly in Australian and New Zealand and usually linked to the Deakin school (both faculty such as Richard Bates, Jill Blackmore, John Smyth, and those who did their doctoral work there such as Pat Thomson). Although I would say that the *relational* approach I am arguing for has some connections to all four traditions (although possibly not the instrumental), its strongest connection is with the critical. Bourdieu is often classified as a critical sociologist (although not by him), so this connect should not be surprising. This criticality recognised in Bourdieu's

work is grounded in a challenging of, not rejecting, the status quo, employing rigorous and robustness methods of inquiry, and engaging in the logic of scholarly life – argument and refutation. By refusing to align with a particular *a priori* normative orientation, the *relational* could be accused of being complicit with the status quo. This is however balanced against the privileging of description, that which could be used as a foundation for *a* (not *the*) alternative. The critical, particularly those aligned with Marxist accounts, frequently have an overt politics built upon an ideal of how society ought to be. This is not to generalise to all of those adopting a critical perspective, however, critiquing society on the basis that it does not conform to a pre-existing normative orientation is similar to claims against the instrumental, scientific and humanists.

A major challenge for the critical is moving beyond old theories that have passed into common discourses, such as the continued use of Foucauldian notions of surveillance and governmentality, or Bourdieusian reproduction. That being said, the critical does make visible much of the underlying generative assumptions of social conditions and does not accept the social world as it is. Herein lies the greatest complexity for the critical. In drawing on the social sciences one is able to map the terrain using novel thinkers from elsewhere. This leaves the existing terrain unchanged, just described in novel terms. As a result, the critical is often constrained within the critique. Unlike the instrumental, the scientific and the persuasive humanists, the critical does not necessarily offer the profession something tangible.

The *relational* approach I am advancing is most strongly aligned with the critical primarily on the basis of its grounding in the social sciences. The point of departure is the role of critique. This may however have more to do with Gunter's classification – or my interpretation of her work – than it does the critical tradition. According to Gunter, the critical is concerned with revealing (which incidentally creates a division between the researcher and the researched) and emancipating leaders and followers from social injustice and the oppression of power structures. The difference is subtle, at best. The *relational* approach is concerned with the legitimation of the social – the various ways in which the contemporary social conditions have come to be, and importantly, are sustained. This is not couched in a negative perspective, rather one seeking description for the purpose of understanding, not judgement. The critical seeks to emancipate from regimes of oppression. In contrast, the *relational*, built upon description, pays attention to the construction and ongoing maintenance of the contemporary condition. Rather than explicitly seeking emancipation, the *relational* offers the means for alternatives to be promoted through its focus on the genesis of the contemporary. The critical and the *relational* are not so much different, but the distinctions matter.

CONCLUSION

Gaston Bachelard (1984[1934]) argues that a key distinction between the social and natural sciences is that in the social, research traditions are most important, where as in the natural, it is the pursuit of perfect theory. In this chapter, I have

taken Bachelard's argument serious, but also sought to directly engage with it. I recognise that for the most part, the discourses of 'value' and 'values' lie in different intellectual traditions yet I have sought to construct *a* (not *the*) means of bringing them together. In doing so, I have taken up the challenge of creating a theoretical and methodological opportunity to craft detailed descriptions of the work of institutional actors. Through the rigorous and robust descriptions of the here and now I believe there is convergence – not a merging – of the social and natural sciences. That is, as a scholarly community, the intellectual work of educational administration is about constructing better descriptions of what it actually means to lead, manage and/or administer.

My aim in this chapter has been to sketch the outlines of a research programme that blends the discourses of 'value' and 'values', organised on relational principles. The basic thesis I have presented is that one can organise a theorising of educational administration around *description* and shifting the research object to the situated practice of institutional actors grounded in a particular *temporal* and *socio-political space*. The infusing of descriptions of the contemporary social world with historical understanding and political analysis of social interactions is not new. Such an argument has a long intellectual history with conceptualisation of society, and by virtue social institutions, from Karl Marx and Max Weber being deeply interwoven with historical expositions. Institutions hold an integral position in our understanding of the historical and contemporary social world.

The *relational* approach I have stressed seeks to advance our understanding of social institutions through a focus on situated practice. The subtle shift in research object to the practices of legitimation brings the discourses of 'value' and 'values' into debate and dialogue through anchoring in a particular time and space. While it is temporality and socio-political space that receive higher levels of attention, it is the privileging of legitimation through administration that differentiates this research programme from mainstream discourses. Unlike the 'value' and 'values' literatures, under the *relational* research programme it is inconsistent to prescribe a version of a 'better', more 'effective' or 'right' institution as this would require alignment with a particular way of thinking to the exclusion, or at least de-legitimation, of other ways of being. Instead, the goal is the pursuit of increasingly detailed and sophisticated descriptions of how actions relate to one another.

This intellectual exercise may not appear directly relevant to 'stakeholders' – whoever this category of vested interest actually are – seeking to embed improvements or bring about change but it is important, and important questions are by their very nature, always relevant (the same cannot always be said for relevant questions, as their relevance does not equate with importance). In constructing detailed narratives of the *relational* features of educational administration, there is considerable scope for understanding social institutions in new ways. A desire to weave 'value' and 'values' is not surprising given that critiques – from both sides – frequently describe incoherence, or poor fit, between the discourses of 'value' and 'values'.

The usefulness and relevance of a *relational* approach may only be made explicit if we understand legitimising actions as concerning a reworking of

temporality and socio-political space. Through the provision of rich and provocative descriptions, not only in regard to legitimising actions, but also in regard to questions of what is legitimised, I seek to mobilise resources to understand these events in new terms and unsettle the normative assumptions of 'value' and 'values' literatures.

Pierre Bourdieu (2004[2001]) warns that there is great risk in critiquing scholarship, or the field of knowledge production, as every word uttered about scientific practice can be turned back on the person who utters it. As noted earlier in relation to 'values' discourses, this chapter may be read as the construction of a crisis in the discipline and that I then provide a path to avoiding such crisis. In doing so, I would be committing the same action that I raise in critique of 'values' discourses. Similarly, in building my argument, I have privileged my own position in understanding the social world and therefore merely replaced one normative narrative with another. While I can defend my position – hence the need for this book – these decisions can only be made by others. Have I achieved my aim of providing a bridge for the discourses of 'value' and 'values', I believe so. However, in doing so, I have adopted a pluralistic approach and deliberately avoided the provision of a prescriptive 'how to' do a *relational* approach. I see the intellectual work of bringing the discourses of 'value' and 'values' – as with the relations that constitute the work of institutions – as an ongoing project. What I have done however is to ask questions and provide a potential new line of inquiry.

NOTES

[i] For an interesting discussion of paradigms in educational administration see the final chapter of Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski's (1991) *Knowing educational administration* entitled *Research in educational administration: against paradigms*.

[ii] I make no claims here to privileging any particular form of learning that is the core business, rather, and on the back of a substantive body of work, merely arguing that education is about learning.

[iii] The inclusion of 'passive' here is important as an apparent non-decision, or the absence of critique, is evidence of complicity with what is underway. That is, it is impossible to simply be a passenger along for the ride in an organisation.

[iv] The attribution of who 'brought' Critical Theory into the educational administration body of knowledge is somewhat contested. This contestation though has more to do with membership of scholarly communities than it does anything else. For those located in Australia and much of the Commonwealth, Richard Bates is widely recognised as a leading thinker in the space – primarily on the basis of his work at Deakin following his move from Massey (New Zealand). For the US-based discourse communities of educational administration, William Forster is frequently attributed as a leading thinker. For those across communities, both were writing at around the same time and in the intent of the *relational* research programme, the question would be what is it about the socio-political space at that particular time that facilitated these two authors from different geographic locations to bring a 'new' set of intellectual resources to educational administration.

[v] The 'edu-preneur' is an individual or collective that mobilises educative credibility – through either being an ex-practitioner or having worked at a university – with business acumen to market products, including consultancies. This was very popular, and potentially lucrative, in the US following the launch of *No Child Left Behind*. It is increasing in Australia due to an increase in funds for professional development programmes and the need for educators to undertake a certain number

of hours of accredited professional learning to sustain their accreditation against professional standards.

REFERENCES

Adkins, L. (2011). Practice as temporalisation: Bourdieu and the economic crisis. In S. Susen & B. Turner (Eds.), *The legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical essays* (pp. 348-365). London: Anthem Press.

Bachelard, G. (1984[1934]). *The new scientific spirit* (P.A. Heelan, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press. [Originally published as *Le nouvel esprit scientifique* (Paris: Presses Universitaries de France).]

Barley, S. R. (2008). Coalface institutionalism. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, R. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 491-518). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bates, R. J. (1983). *Educational administration and the management of knowledge*. Geelong, Vic: Deakin University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2004[2001]). *Science of science and reflexivity* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Science de la science et réflexivité* (Paris: Éditions Rasions d'Agir)].

Caldwell, B.J. (2007). Educational leadership and school renewal: introduction by the guest editor. *Australian Journal of Education, 51*(3), 225-227.

Colley, H., Henriksson, L., Niemeyer, B., & Seddon, T. (2012). Competing time orders in human service work: towards a politics of time. *Time & Society, 21*(3), 371-394.

Dinham, S. (2007). The secondary head of department and the achievement of exceptional student outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration, 45*(1), 62-79.

Donmoyer, R. (2001). Evers and Lakomski's search for leadership's holy grail (and the intriguing ideas they encountered along the way). *Journal of Educational Administration, 39*(6), 554-572.

Duncheon, J. C., & Tierney, W. G. (2013). Changing conceptions of time: Implications for educational research and practice. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(2), 236-272.

Eacott, S. (2013). 'Leadership', and the social: time, space and the epistemic. *International Journal of Educational Management, 27*(1), 91-101.

Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (1991). *Knowing educational administration: contemporary methodological controversies in educational administration research*. New York, NY: Pergamon Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. London: Hutchinson.

Gronn, P. (2008). The state of Denmark. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 40*(2), 173-185.

Gunter, H. (2001). Critical approaches to leadership in education. *Journal of Educational Enquiry, 2*(2), 94-108.

Gunter, H. (2010). A sociological approach to educational leadership. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 31*(4), 519-527.

Gunter, H., & Fitzgerald, T. (2008). Educational administration and history part 1: Debating the agenda. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 40*(1), 5-21.

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L, & Goode, H. (2010). Successful school leadership in Australia: A research agenda. *International Journal of Learning, 17*(4), 113-129.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.

Lingard, B. (2010). Policy borrowing, policy learning: Testing times in Australian schooling. *Critical Studies in Education, 51*(2), 129-147.

Lyotard, J-F. (1984[1979]). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. [Originally published as *La condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit).]

Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(5), 635-674.

Ryle, G. (1971). *Collected papers*. London: Hutchinson.

Savage, M. (2009). Contemporary sociology and the challenge of descriptive assemblage. *European Journal of Social Theory, 12*(1), 155-174.

Snyder, B. H. (2013). From vigilance to busyness: A neo-Weberian approach to clock time. *Sociological Theory, 31*(3), 243-266.

Thrupp, M., & Willmott, R. (2003). *Education management in managerialist times*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.

Waite, D. (2002). "The paradigm wars" in educational administration: An attempt at transcendence. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 30*(1), 66-81.

Walker, J. C., & Evers, C. W. (1988). The epistemological unity of educational research. In J. P. Keeves (Ed.), *Educational research, methodology and measurement: An international handbook.* Oxford: Pergamon.

CHAPTER SIX

RETHINKING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Building from previous chapter, I am now going to outline how my *relational* research programme differs from the orthodoxy of educational administration scholarship. To do so, I am going to engage in an analysis/critique of how my articulated position is both similar, yet more importantly, different to the positions taken by Stephen Dinham and colleagues in the An Exceptional Schooling Outcomes Project (ÆSOP) work and David Gurr, Lawrie Drysdale and colleagues in the Australian contribution to the International Successful School Principals Project (ISSPP). The selection of these two projects/programmes is for two main reasons: first, as an Australian based scholar, and one who firmly believes in the need to contextualise work, the selection of two (relatively) recent Australian based studies is logical; and second, both of these projects can be identified by the two (at least current) markers of research esteem in the Australian, and arguably internationally, scholarly community – peer-reviewed publications and research funding from the largest and most competitive research grant scheme in the country (the Australian Research Council).

Given that neither Dinham nor Gurr *et al.* mobilise social theory specifically (but more on that later), any form of direct comparison is not possible – nor particularly useful. My goal however is not to merely bring one external narrative and overlay that upon another, rather, it is to actively engage with how the *relational* research programme that I am building enables the asking of new questions that can take scholarship in new and fruitful directions. This works on a few different levels. First, it opens up a potential dialogue between multiple pieces of Australian based scholarship in the area of educational leadership, management and administration. That being said, given the highly competitive nature of the academy, a contested space where distinctions are built upon originality and there is substantive overlooking of similar works on the same topic (Eacott, 2011a; Mulford, 2007), dialogue of this nature is uncommon in Australia.[i] Second, my argument – and not surprising given the text thus far – generates new questions regarding the narrative constructed as to what it means to 'lead'. Conceptually, this is a very significant matter, especially in a domain that has shifted its foci from administration to management and now leadership, combined with the popular faddism of adjectival descriptors. Third, and arguably of greatest pedagogical value, it enables further articulation of the approach described in the previous chapter and a more nuanced account of how it differs from the orthodoxy of the domain. To do so, I focus on the epistemological and ontological preliminaries of the research – at least those which can be detected from published work. As I have

stressed throughout this book, the way in which we engage with the concepts of research, which we construct, has a major bearing on our argument. Central to this move in the selected work is the construction of 'leadership' as the research object. While I have explicitly engaged with some of the problematic matters of this in Chapter Two, in this chapter I get the opportunity to work with some data.

The central argument of this chapter is that although Dinham and Gurr *et al.* both have school leadership as their research object, the minimal problematizing of the very concept limits what one can say about the matter at hand. That is, through the unquestioned adoption of leadership as an empirical reality in combination with an un-reflexive theoretical stance, means that the very object under investigation fails to move beyond the discourses of the everyday. This entrapment in the pre-scientific world results in serious questions being asked of the research concerning what it offers a theory of knowledge and the legitimacy of the school leadership research in the wider academy – even if the work is popular with policy makers and practitioners.

DINHAM'S AESOP

Dinham and colleagues' ÆSOP work investigates the processes leading to 'outstanding educational outcomes in Years 7-10 in New South Wales public schools'. It is a collaborative project bringing academics from the University of New England and the University of Western Sydney together with the Department of Education and Training (as it was then known). The scholarly outputs from this work appear, at least, in academic journals (Dinham, 2005, 2007a, 2007b), a seven book series edited by Ross Thomas (long-time editor of the *Journal of Educational Administration*) and published by Post Pressed (see Dinham, 2010; Graham, Paterson, & Stevens, 2010; Panizzon, Barnes, & Pegg, 2010; Paterson, Graham, & Stevens, 2010; Pegg, Lynch, & Panizzon, 2010; Sawyer, Baxter, & Brock, 2010; Sawyer, Brock, & Baxter, 2010), and are also loosely drawn upon in another book (Dinham, 2008). For the purpose of this analysis, my attention is on the three journal papers, and particularly the two appearing in *Journal of Educational Administration*.

The ÆSOP project foregrounds the notion of 'outstanding' educational outcomes. This 'outstanding' is clearly relational as it is derived from comparison with others. It is however an entity perspective as the 'outstanding' outcomes is constructed as an attribute of a particular organisation and the product of certain practices. For the purpose of their research, 'outstanding' educational achievement was defined using a rubric of the three interrelated domains or principles outlined in *The Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* (MCEETYA, 1999) that schools should: i) develop fully the talents of students; ii) attain high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a comprehensive and balanced curriculum; and iii) be socially just (Dinham, 2005, p. 339).

The instrumentation and measurement of the 'more social outcomes' of schooling is never made clear,[ii] at least across the three journal publications from

the work cited here. This is not to suggest anything inappropriate, just that it is impossible to provide further commentary on these instruments. That being said, two things stand out though. First, any decision regarding what is of value and privileged in the identified sites is already made in the sampling. Much like the critique of value and values earlier, the sample is confirmatory of an original normative orientation. The mobilisation, and measurement, of 'outstanding' educational outcomes and the subsequent construction of a narrative, or more specifically the legitimation of that narrative, remains within the discourses of ordinary language (the pre-scientific world). I say this because notions of 'outstanding' educational outcomes does little to problematize who it is that defines excellence, under what conditions and for what purposes. The abstraction of the measure and the use of an adjective to create a distinction – one based on comparison rather than criteria – is problematic. At least it is so if one is coming from the critical tradition. This is primarily on the basis that the mobilisation of 'outstanding' outcomes is seen as accepting a particular discourse – most frequently aligned with neoliberalism and/or managerialism – and then seeing who is playing that particular game the best. While I see some merit in this line of argument – the critique of managerialist/neoliberal discourses – and have myself done this in the past (see Eacott, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c), in this book I am providing a more productive way of researching school leadership. But I shall return to this shortly as I wish to engage more with Dinham's work first.

The mobilisation of the adjective 'outstanding' is a significant move in the ÆSOP work. The construction and/or legitimation of the narrative are limited to the ordinary language of the pre-scientific world rather than that of science and scholarship. This does particular work in relation to research design. Dinham (2005) outlines the following design:

> … a case study approach whereby quantitative (e.g. public examination performance, 'value-adding' measures) and qualitative data (e.g. nomination from parent groups, Principals, DET officers) were used to select a sample of sites where schools appeared to be achieving outstanding educational outcomes, either within faculty-based subject areas or with cross-school programs, over at least a four-year period. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative selection data occurred with sites selected to provide a sample of socio-economic types, rural-urban distribution, size of school and spread of subject areas and programs. Use of the 'Adelaide Goals' played an important role in the selection process, in that evidence of 'personal' and 'social' achievement was sought in addition to academic success. Eventually, 50 sites were selected for study at 38 secondary schools, with some schools being selected for potentially outstanding educational achievements in a combination of academic areas and/or cross-school programs. (p. 342)

In the context of the argument I am building, and the underlying generative principles of the *relational* approach, a central concern with this design and the subsequent analysis is the ontological complicity with the administrative entities of the social world and the limited, if any, epistemological break with the ordinary language of the everyday. Bringing public data (especially when not engaging with its discursive properties) into conversation with bureaucrats (systemic officials)

and stakeholders (parents) to identify sites creates an opportunity to deconstruct the very constitution of the research object. By not doing so, or at least not reporting doing so, the mobilisation of 'outstanding' as though it is some form of universal label is problematic. The identification of where 'outstanding' outcomes are taking place therefore does more work for the legitimation of the existing social order and the stratification of schooling (and by virtue, society) on the basis of hegemonic discourses of what it means to be an outstanding performer. The research narrative does not move beyond the pre-scientific world, despite any claims to adhering to sophisticated theoretical/methodological techniques. Rather, the ÆSOP work sits at the intersection of confirming a pre-existing normative orientation and the legitimation of the orthodoxy. From a *relational* perspective, what is of interest from the ÆSOP work is less the actual argument, but the research itself as an act. As a piece of research, the ÆSOP work serves to legitimise the existing ways of being. Of interests is the very reason that this type of work was undertaken, and at this particular time in this particular place. This goes back to Klaus Weber's point that as scholars we should 'study fads and fashions, not chase them' (Birkinshaw, Healey, Suddaby & Weber, 2014, p. 51). What this does is highlight the intellectual tradition in which Dinham's ÆSOP work fits. As research, it draws upon some (quasi-)scientific methods to abstract and measure leadership and outcomes to make an instrumental argument about how effective systems and cultures can be designed to enable improved site-based performance.

The attributed causation, giving the hint of scientificity, assigned to leadership in the ÆSOP work is also troublesome. For example, Dinham (2005) notes that while the vast majority of the 50 sites originally identified in the project were confirmed to be achieving 'outstanding' educational outcomes as defined in the project, some were not. In the latter, some 'aspects of leadership identified in the outstanding sites were lacking to some degree or absent' (p. 339). This raises some questions as to whether it is the 'outstanding' outcomes or the perceived leadership that is driving the research. If sites were identified because they exhibited 'outstanding' outcomes, why is the absence of leadership (whatever that is) resulting in the exclusion of sites? Does this not require asking questions of the original construction of 'leadership'? Instead, what we see is a position where leadership is evident where 'outstanding' outcomes are, and the absence of either is perceived as a demonstration of an absence of the other – a rather cyclic, or tautological, situation. As Dinham (2005) argues:

> Principals of the schools where 'outstanding' outcomes were being achieved were found to be relentless in their quest for enhanced student achievement. (p. 354)

To think this through, schools which exhibited 'outstanding' student achievement had a leader, or organisational head, that pursued student achievement. This is not overtly surprising. Much like how Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) argued that leadership focused on instruction was more effective at raising school performance (measured in student outcomes) than leadership focused on change (transformational). Constructing 'leadership' from this basis is somewhat compromised by the original sampling. What is actually being discussed is under

what conditions are 'outstanding' student outcomes achieved. The attribution of 'leadership' into the discussion is part of an ontological complicity with seeing the world through (administrative) structures and the hegemonic belief that 'leadership' matters. Dinham (2005) goes on to argue:

> Leadership, both positional (Principals, other school Executive, Head Teachers) and distributed (key classroom teachers and others), was found in this study to be a major factor in the outstanding outcomes achieved by students, teachers and schools. (p. 339)

There is a tension at play here, one that is implicitly present in mainstream literatures of educational administration, between classic bureaucratic based organisational studies, and the more contemporarily popular distributed (relational) ways of being. That said, much of the contemporary distributed work remains trapped in a bureaucratic (entity) ontology. For example, the notion of 'teacher leadership', while arguing that leadership is everywhere in an organisation – something that is equally problematic for the intellectual value of 'leadership' as a concept – remains embedded in the organisational hierarchy of roles. But that is an argument for another time and place. What stands out in the ÆSOP work is the focus on processes operating within schools, in general, but particularly in subject departments or other groupings of teachers, that appear influential in the achievement of 'outstanding' educational outcomes. The reported findings argue that 'leadership' matters, and by virtue, and consistent with Brian Caldwell (2007), if performance was not 'outstanding' enough, then 'leadership' was lacking or absent. These are all underlying generative assumptions within the work. As I have consistently argued in this book, the ontological and epistemological preliminaries are central to the construction of the research object, design, and discourses.

What Dinham does is construct 'leadership' as an entity. It becomes a thing that interacts with other entities. As he argues:

> … the attributes, actions or qualities outlined in this paper need to be considered as both product (output) and process (input) variables, in that they contribute to future change and improvement. (Dinham, 2005, p. 354)

Due its construction as a thing, consistent with an ontology of an knowable external reality, an epistemology of an objective truth and the Cartesian dogma of a clear separation between body and nature, the type of research Dinham and colleagues generate remains focused on individuals and their perceptions, intentions, behaviours, personalities, expectations and evaluations relative to their relationships with others. This is why they can list characteristics of leaders in schools producing 'outstanding' outcomes such as 'honesty, fairness, compassion, commitment, reliability, hard work, trustworthiness, and professionalism' (Dinham, 2005, p. 347). The focus on entities is not limited to the conceptualisation of individuals but also the boundaries of the school. When discussing the principals, Dinham (2005) notes:

> Principals of schools where outstanding sites were identified exhibited a keen awareness and understanding of the wider environment and a positive attitude towards engaging with it. (p. 343)
>
> Rather than being inward looking, they are aware of the wider environment, including other schools and systems, the community, society, business and government. (p. 344)

There is a clear entity perspective at play here with the arbitrary partitioning of the social world in a way that serves the partitioners purposes more so than reflects an empirical reality. It was this partitioning that was central to the argument developed in Chapter Three. A major limitation on the entity perspective being mobilised by Dinham for advancing scholarship is the focus on easily observable/identifiable actions linked directly to outcomes and ignoring the underlying generative principles of action, or to think with theological philosopher Martin Buber (1981[1923]), 'the space between'. This is a challenge that I have previously raised in relation to thinking through *strategies* in educational leadership scholarship (Eacott, 2010). The lack of attention to the discursive nature of the social world is embodied in:

> They have earned a certain amount of credibility with the system officials who tend to give special dispensation, support or approval to new approaches, even 'turning a blind eye' on occasions. … some leaders even appear to operate on the principle that 'it is easier to gain forgiveness than permission'. (pp. 345-346)

What remains un-explored here is the discursive nature of the social world. Why is it that these principals/leaders could act this way? Would the same dispensation been given to other principals/leaders? If all principals were given this treatment, then this behaviour actually tells us little. If to the contrary, this is reserved for but a special few, why was this so? How do leaders accumulate the necessary capital – in whatever form – to secure this type of treatment? These are significant questions. Heroic leadership discourses, which any 'outstanding'/turnaround leadership research adheres to, are frequently built upon obscure description of the conditions that enable such action to take place. This is why Malcom Gladwell's (2008) *Outliers* is so persuasive – he explicitly articulates how particular individuals came to be in the situation they are in now – even if not particularly scholarly. This also speaks to Eugenie Samier's (2006) argument that many administrative phenomena are actually historical (and I would add social – to mobilise both space and time) topics. In privileging 'outstanding' outcomes as an entity and mapping the relationship of that entity to others (e.g. socio-economic status of the students/school suburb) rather than empirically grounding the 'outstanding' outcomes in time and space, the constructed narrative is de-contextualised. Much like the critique of change as a vacuous concept, the aspirational tone of the instrumental does not necessarily engage in the messiness of the social world, limiting its contribution to both the advancement of scholarship and practice. Somewhat surprisingly, Dinham (2007) acknowledges the messiness:

> What has become clear is that leadership, including educational leadership, is a far more contentious, complex and dynamic phenomenon than previously thought. (p. 263)

There is a limited engagement with the body of literature that problematizes 'leadership' and stresses it complexity. In addition, there is a lack of reflexivity in the work to see how the ÆSOP work contributes to the simplification of 'leadership'.

In the two *Journal of Educational Administration* papers (2005, 2007a), there are claims of using 'grounded theory' techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998).[iii] This is somewhat deceptive for the untrained reader – this is especially so for the doctoral researcher. While the claim is only to have used the techniques of rather than grounded theory itself, the use of the label is problematic. A defining feature of grounded theory is the absence of pre-conceived theories. The foregrounding of 'outstanding' outcomes based on a definition already in existence, combined with the inherent belief that 'leadership' matters is at odds with the principles of grounded theory. The claim that 'the grounded theory techniques of axial and selective coding resulted in these concepts being grouped into seven categories – a core category and six contributing categories' (p. 343) is fine and a robust process for analysis in qualitative work, however for the purpose of constructing leadership as a theoretical object draws too heavily on *a priori* assumptions.

The approach adopted by Dinham and colleagues adheres to the orthodox position of educational leadership, management and administration researchers by building from the notion that 'leadership' is a real thing and that it is related in some way to organisational outcomes. In doing so, they are ontologically complicit with the everyday language of the social world. Irrespective of how sophisticated a research design or analytical frame employed, the limited, if any, attention to the construction of the research object limits what can be said about it. The approach aligns with an entity perspective where it is possible to identify, measure and link 'leadership' and 'outcomes'. The citing of examples where sites were identified for their outcomes and some aspects of 'leadership' were missing is further evidence of this. It also does very specific things in relation to how 'leadership' interacts with other entities. Through the construction of the social world as a series of entities which inter-relate, there is a separation or space between that remains under-explored. The separation means that while it is possible to map interactions, the ongoing reciprocal shaping of the social – that which is outlined in Chapter Four – is beyond the analysis. What does remain is an approach which advances the binaries of individual/collective and structure/agency. Conceiving of schools as made up of individuals, departments and then the school is symptomatic of the entity ontology. It is this positioning with enables the comparison of departments as it decontextualizes, in time and space, performance. Furthermore, the entity perspective extends the enduring structure and agency binary of leadership, management and administration research.

To be productive, a key question that remains is 'What would the *relational* approach do differently?' This is not to say that the approach of Dinham and colleagues in their ÆSOP work are opposed. We can think about the same thing, it

is however a different approach. Whereas Dinham wants to understand how to be more effective – or to produce 'outstanding' outcomes – the *relational* approach I am building is more interested in why under these conditions do we conceive of 'leadership' and 'performance' in these ways? What is it about this particular time and space that makes these conceptualisations possible and hegemonic? This is not beyond the data generated in the ÆSOP work. It does however require a broader analysis and asking different questions of the data. The initial identification process, assuming there is some prose around why sites were selected, could be used to build an argument about how 'outstanding' outcomes and 'leadership' are constructed. This would raise some questions for what is meant by these popular labels and also give a point of analysis/comparison with other studies. That is, serious work around the construction of the research object would enables bridges to be built with others studies and reduce the parallel monologues which dominate educational leadership, management and administration journals. This would not reduce alternate points of view, and that would be undesirable, but it would facilitate dialogue (and debate) about the research objects rather than different models, frameworks and the like constructed upon the apparently universal 'leadership'.

GURR, DRYSDALE AND COLLEAGUES' ISSPP

The work of David Gurr, Lawrie Drysdale and colleagues represents the Australian contribution to the *International Successful School Principalship Project*, arguably the longest running international scale project in the history of educational leadership, management and administration as a scholarly space (Leithwood, 2005). The project includes over 20 countries and 38 universities. The outputs from the project, so far, include four edited books (Leithwood & Day, 2007; Moos, Johansson, & Day, 2011; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2011; Day & Gurr, 2014), seven special issues of journals (e.g. *Journal of Educational Administration*; *International Journal of Educational Management*; and *International Studies in Educational Administration*), and more than 100 book chapters and individual papers. Gurr and Drysdale have contributed 14 book chapters and 13 journal articles so far.

Beginning in 2001, the project was conceived to address the need to better understand how principals contribute to school success. The origin and methodology of the ISSPP is found in an earlier study by one of the co-founders and current co-ordinator Christopher Day (see Day *et al.*, 2000). This work is based on: data from multiple perspectives; comparisons of effective leadership in diverse contexts; and the identification of personal qualities and professional competencies generic to effective school leaders. More than 100 case studies have been generated throughout the project. The focus of these case studies is on the leadership of principals, with selection criteria on the reputation of the schools, the acknowledged success of the principals by peers and evidence of improved student outcomes over time (Garza *et al.*, 2014). Unlike Dinham's ÆSOP work, the connection between the selection criteria and principals (a.k.a. leaders) is more

explicit. However, the connection between leadership and school performance remains assumed. The ISSPP has, according to its investigators, provided evidence of the now common view that successful school leadership comprises at least four core dimensions of: setting direction; developing people; developing the school; and managing the instructional programme (Leithwood & Day, 2007; Garza *et al.*, 2014). For the most part, the project has been conducted in two phases. Initially case studies, many of these case studies were then followed up five years later – sustainable. During 2013, it was decided that:

> … the ISSPP had assembled a powerful knowledge base about leadership success and that for the third phase the ISSPP would explore the leadership of schools were performance is lower than expected. Exploring underperforming/cruising schools was seen as a critical issue within each country and a missing part in understanding the puzzle of school leadership. (Drysdale & Gurr, 2014, p. 3)

This recognition, even if over 12 years into the project, is significant as it serves as the basis for creating distinctions.[iv] Without the presence of schools performing at different levels, it is impossible to construct rigorous and robust descriptions about what it is that distinguishes organisations that perform differently. To think with Bourdieu, you cannot establish 'distinctions'. This is something that the ÆSOP work never did. It also calls into question the strength of earlier claims about what successful school principals do. It is quite possible, and given its orthodoxy highly likely, that most principals most of the time do the things that instrumental accounts call for.

Two things stand out for me in the conceptualisation of the ISSPP work. First is the explicit attempt to create a distance, or at least a separation, from the School Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI) movement. Second is the pursuit of rigor through scientific inquiry. In relation to the former, I argue that the difference is more semantic than substantive. There is an attempt to move beyond the pure quantitative identification of 'effectiveness' frequently used in the SESI movement,[v] but the underlying generative principle remains the same. Both the SESI and the ISSPP work are about constructing models of effective systems and cultures to improve organisational performance. As Gurr and Drysdale (2008) note, models have been a central feature of mainstream management and leadership theory and research for over 50 years. They go on to argue, one danger in developing models is that they can be too simple and fail to address reality by ignoring important aspects of the context and key variables that impact on leadership effectiveness. If we return to Kenneth Leithwood and Christopher Day's (2007) introduction to the first ISSPP book, entitled *Starting with what we know*, there is a more comprehensive position taken – or at least acknowledged. There is recognition of reciprocity in social actions, an awareness of the role of perception in the attribution of leadership upon others, and acceptance that links between variables are not intended to suggest linear or one-way relations in the real world.[vi] There is however an unquestioned acceptance of 'leadership' and its value in organisational performance. This is not surprising. After all, if your argument is built upon leadership literatures – those written by leadership researchers and leaders for leaders and leadership researchers – then it is expected that leadership

not only exists but is important. Some of the subtle critiques of 'leadership' or problematizing the notion of the 'leader' or the construction of 'leadership' are either not recognised or remain under-developed. Rather we see Leithwood and Day (2007) argue:

> While the essence of leadership, as we have portrayed it here, is both subtle and complex, at least many of the things we set out to learn about leadership of successful principals in our study are quite straightforward to describe. (p. 4)

The simplification of 'leadership' takes us back to Gaston Bachelard's (1984[1934]) argument that the simple is never more than the simplified. The tension between the simple and complex is evidence in numerous places in the ISSPP publications. In addition to the previously mentioned danger highlighted by Gurr and Drysdale, Mulford (2007) argues that leadership is more complex than Leithwood and Riehl claim. He goes on to suggest that successful school principalship is an 'interactive, reciprocal and evolving process involving many players, which is influenced by and, in turn, influences, the context in which it occurs' (p. 36). However, this is balanced against a claim that successful principals also displayed a core set of basic leadership skills regardless of school context, or as Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2005) put it, 'a common and consistent set of personal traits and behaviours' (p. 548). It is the position of a core set of leadership skills, irrespective of context, in Leithwood and Day, Mulford, and the ISSPP more broadly, in combination with a desire to 'remain useful' (Gurr & Drysdale, 2008) in an applied sense, that legitimises the simplification in the ISSPP.

This explicit desire to be useful or accessible is balanced against an attempt to employ rigorous and robust methods. That is, the ISSPP seeks to remain in the ordinary language of the everyday – evidenced through simplicity and arguably common sense – yet establish itself as legitimate through scientific method. Much like the SESI movement, which is committed to exhibitionism of methods and increasingly sophisticated mathematical techniques, the ISSPP employs processes designed to give the legitimacy of traditional science. As Leithwood (2005) argues:

> … we wanted, for example, to approximate both the standards of internal validity commonly associated with intensive qualitative research and the standards of external validity typically reserved for large-scale quantitative research. (p. 619)

> … the number of cases being developed in some countries is beginning to approximate sample sizes not uncommon in quantitative research. So we are nibbling at the lower edges of external validity within countries. (p. 626)

There is no doubt that the scale of the ISSPP, and its longitudinal nature, make it unique in educational leadership, management and administration studies. The adoption of a similar set of procedures for data generation across multiple sites is impressive. The project coordinators have also systematically engaged with critiques of qualitative research (e.g. Bryman, 2004), and sought to go beyond the quantitative SESI literatures and 'reveal'[vii] how leadership may be hindered or helped by circumstances confronting the leader, as well as outlining in detail the or influences on the nature of leaders' work (Leithwood, 2005). There are a number

of ontological and epistemological markers in the discussion about the ISSPP. An entity perspective is mobilised in the work. A clear distinction is made between numerous variables, and the idea of demonstrating links between variables legitimises the entity approach. Attempts to establish validity – yet an absence of any engagement with the extensive body of work on cross-cultural validity – and 'reveal' how leadership is moderated by external and internal factors are signs of a belief in an external knowable reality that can be abstracted and measured. When combined with a belief in the universal 'leadership', despite the grounding in case studies, the constructed models of successful school principalship are de-contextualised. Without any concrete empirical grounding, no level of sophisticated or systematic data generation methods can construct anything but abstracts measures of epistemic constructs loosely connected to some generative normative orientation. This brings me to the Australian contributions to the ISSPP, notably that of David Gurr, Lawrie Drysdale and colleagues at the University of Melbourne,[viii] and earlier, Bill Mulford from the University of Tasmania.

The Australian contribution to the ISSPP began with case studies of five schools in Tasmania (Mulford and Johns, 2004) and nine schools in Victoria (Gurr *et al*., 2003). Unlike Dinham's ÆSOP which was focused on schools producing 'outstanding' educational outcomes, the ISSPP is explicitly focused on school principals. In particular, principals who are acknowledged by their peers as being successful and who have led schools that demonstrate success through improved student learning outcomes and positive school review reports. Both the ÆSOP and ISSPP could be broadly labelled 'positive organisational scholarship',[ix] the ISSPP aligns most closely with 'turnaround' narratives due to its privileging of 'improvement'. The use of peers in the identification is important, but as with Dinham does some work around keeping within the ordinary language of the pre-scientific world. The explicit linking of 'leadership' to change in student outcomes is also consistent with my earlier critique of 'leadership' as an epistemic based on an *a priori* assumption and post event identification.

For the most part, the cases constructed for the project by the Australian teams are examples of 'turnaround' leaders. This is why there is little, if any, problem with using the real names of the principals in the published work – usually frowned upon by human research ethics committees. Scattered through the extensive number of papers are hints of turnaround rhetoric. In the most recent paper, it explicitly argues that Jan Shrimpton had a reputation for improving schools in challenging contexts and was appointed in 1999 to address the very poor performance of the school (Garza *et al*., 2014). Further adding:

> Uniformly, Jan was credited as the main person behind this transformation. Jan was described as a person of integrity, high energy, sensitivity, enthusiasm and persistence. Her leadership style was consultative and conciliatory, and she was able to build positive relationships among staff, and with the parents. (Garza *et al*., 2014, p. 4)

The ISSPP has, despite contemporary orthodoxy in the space being about distributed and collaborative models, explicitly privileged the role of the principal. Of course the project claims to do exactly that, so this is not a direct critique,

however, in an era of rhetoric supporting more participatory forms of leadership, the ISSPP is evidence of inertia in research dating back to earlier trait and/or behavioural approaches to leadership studies. Like the ÆSOP work, and not surprising given the hegemonic ways of recognising successful schools, Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2005) note:

> … all principals were concerned to improve student learning outcomes in traditional areas such as literacy and numeracy. They did this by setting specific goals and continuously raising standards and expectations. For example, whilst school A is located in a low socio-economic area, the principal set an expectation that every child would achieve above the state average in literacy. (p. 547)

The common-sense recognition of 'success' in schooling is premised on the measures of the time and space. As it stands currently, at both national and international levels, student test results are the benchmark data used to make judgements on the success of schools and school systems. It is a contested space, yet the ordinary language of the everyday is strongly connected to public discourses of international testing regimes and national systems of measurement. Unlike the ÆSOP work which explicitly focused on 'outstanding' outcomes, the ISSPP had an opportunity to ask questions about what markers were used in the construction of 'successful' by participants. Irrespective of the focus on an organisational role and its effect on school performance, the initial phases of the project provided a unique window into the very ways in which stakeholders (for lack of a better word) construct 'success'. This would provide insights into what is seen as of worth among groups. It is this additional work that a *relational* approach would have brought to the ISSPP work. To do so however requires more substantive attention to, and grounding in, context. In a telling statement, Gurr, Drysdale and Goode (2010) note:

> … it does not explain why these interventions work in some circumstances and not in others. (p. 124)

A common critique against 'turnaround' narratives is the absence of empirical grounding and the importance of context in understanding 'leadership'. In other more methodological terms, the tension between the universal and the particular. It is the engagement with context, combined with the under-problematised acceptance of 'leadership', that is the greatest division between the *relational* approach and the ISSPP.

Earlier work stressed that successful school princpalship was embedded in context (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2005), Drysdale and Gurr (2011) argue,[x] while context did impact on what successful leaders did, across different country contexts successful principals were found to be adaptive, reflective, and able to learn from their practice and experience to ensure school success. This is reflective of a set of traits and behaviours conducive to the perpetual improvement logic of the contemporary managerialist project. Similar to Dinham's work, the ISSPP legitimises the underlying return on investment principle of the aspirational agency discourses where individual hard work and commitment can overcome structures. It does not overcome the tension between structure and agency rather just does not

engage. This is part of the separation of the research from the time and space in which practice takes place. As Day (2005) notes, successful principals demonstrated the ability to not be confined by the contexts in which they work.[xi] They 'do not comply, subvert, or overtly oppose. Rather they actively mediate and moderate within a set of core values and practices which transcend narrowly conceived improvement agendas' (p. 581). The latter part is interesting. It almost calls for what is the difference between the mobilisation of 'successful' and 'narrow improvement agendas'. What is the break between the two? Without attention to this, something that potentially goes part of the way to engaging with the epistemological break discussed in Chapter Two, it is not entirely clear how the ISSPP differs.

The importance of grounding the description is not lost in the ISSPP work. Rose Ylimaki and Stephen Jacobson (2011) argue that successful school leadership is context dependent in that global, national and local contexts need to be considered to fully understand the behaviour of principals. This is consistent with the argument I am building in this book and arguably the orthodoxy of the disciplinary space. However, it is the actual research design and its underlying generative principles that limit the work of time and space. As Gurr *et al*. (2006) argue, cross country analysis shows that principals are the key figure in a school's success. It was however the sampling strategy of the study that centred identification on principals that were leading successful schools. Therefore, this line of argument is not surprising. Like Dinham's ÆSOP work, the argument is tautological. Day (2005) argues that there are more similarities than differences in how the principals identified in the study lead. But then again, the ISSPP work sought to investigate commonalities. The methodological question this raises is the difference between confirming your original orientation (or simply seeking empirical validation for what you already believe) and actually developing a deeper understanding of the social world. This is an important observation. As noted by Leithwood and Day (2007), the findings of the ISSPP confirm the common set of leadership practices put forward by Kenneth Leithwood (one of the original co-ordinators of the ISSPP) and Carolyn Riehl (2005). To think this through for a moment, the ISSPP has, at a large scale, provided empirical validation for the work of one of the original coordinators. That original work was a synthesis of existing literatures. Therefore, the ISSPP has validated existing rhetoric in the discipline. It has provided a substantive knowledge base, but claims to have 'contributed significantly to our understanding of successful school leadership' (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011, p. 355) may be a stretch.

The minimal grounding in time and space is why Gurr, Drysdale and colleagues can articulate an 'Australian' model of successful school principalship even though their work comes from, at best, two states of a nation.[xii] This generalisation is not a problem because as they cite, context matters, but there are some universal practices which transcend contexts. As Drysdale and Gurr (2014) argue:

> [w]e support the proposition that school leadership broadly, and principal leadership in particular, can be identified, articulated and explained in terms of how it contributes to school success. We argue that whilst context does matter, successful school

> principals demonstrates a set of person qualities, skills and competences, and common practices that help them to adapt and succeed in any context. (p. 8)

AND SO

What would the *relational* approach bring to the ÆSOP and ISSPP work? To give this discussion some structure, I am going to use the key features of the *relational* programme to frame it. At the same time, I will also outline how the *relational* approach I am arguing for opens the prospect for potential dialogue across research traditions, leads to new questions being asked of 'leadership', while also providing further details of how to mobilise a *relational* approach.

Most substantively, both the ÆSOP and ISSPP are ontologically complicity with orthodoxy of the social world. There is an implicit acceptance of the structures – namely bureaucratic, but I will return to this point later – of the social world and the importance of designated roles within them. The intellectual gaze of the researcher is never mentioned yet alone problematized. In the case of the ÆSOP work, even the partial funding from the Department of Education and Training is not engaged with. I am not suggesting anything inappropriate here. Rather, I am highlighting the unquestioned acceptance of the social world as it is. The idea of embedded and embodied actors is not entertained. As I argued in Chapter Two, the researcher does not stand outside of the social world they analyse, nor do they look down on it from above. Instead, the researcher is an actor in the social world and the pre-constructed objects of education administration become self-evident and legitimate through the actions of subjects (including the researcher). The social world deals with things that they construct, modify and transform through their actions, including scholarship, and the actions of others. This is why I have stressed the importance of *relations*, not just the entity perspective of relationships. It is as much about the *relations* between the researcher and the researched as it is research objects. Neither ÆSOP nor ISSPP explicitly engages with the epistemological and/or ontological preliminaries of their work. Had they done so, it would have required some work around the role of structure in the social world. ÆSOP and the ISSPP are complicit with an entity based ontology that privileges structures. These structures functions because of the perceived value of their product – education – and the prospect of mapping relationships with other entities. Unlike the systems thinking, an entity perspective, evident in the ÆSOP and ISSPP a *relational* approach allows focus not just on the 'observed systems, but also the observing system, the context from which knowledge emerges' (Montuori & Purser, 1996, p. 185).

Engaging with the ontological complicity of the research would also require the ÆSOP and ISSPP researchers to do some work around their core substantive concepts of 'leadership', 'outstanding', and 'successful' among others. It is this lack of attention that breaks down potential dialogue across traditions. By failing to attend to the construction and legitimation of the research object, readers – potential critics – can quickly dismiss the work on the basis of a lack of alignment with their own normative orientation. Therefore, irrespective of the sophistication

of the research methods from that point, the potential value of the work is lost in the minimal explicit attention paid to the preliminaries of the work. I argue that the potential for inter-tradition dialogue, or at least scholarly respect, lies in the meaningful articulation of the preliminaries of the work. This is not to suggest that critical analysis of one another's work would not continue, it would – potentially even increase. The critique however would shift to the construction of the research object and ways of knowing. The logic of justification, how we defend our knowledge claims, becomes a focal point. It is this argument for research, refutation in the face of critique and ongoing defence of approaches that enables inter-tradition dialogue. Lack of attention to these matters has, for the most part, led to the benign neglect knowledge workers in educational administration demonstrate for one another.

In contrast, the *relational* approach explicitly articulates the underlying generative principles of the work and engages with the construction of the pre-constructed research object. In doing so, the *relational* approach brings a degree of rigour and robustness to the discussion of key concepts and their relations with time and space. Such an approach offers a potential avenue for inter-tradition dialogue as the focus is on the construction, or generative principles, more so than the actual findings and arguments. This gets beyond the benign neglect for different traditions on the basis that they do not conform to your underlying normative orientation. The ÆSOP and ISSPP would have generated substantial data around the original construction of 'successful' and 'outstanding' in their sampling approaches. Therefore, in revisiting that data, the research teams could do this work. However, this does require engaging with the orientation of the researcher in the process.

This brings me to the very design of the work. As social scientists, we need to submit to scientific scrutiny everything that makes the orthodox experience of the social world possible. By remaining in the pre-scientific space, that of ordinary language, it is possible to constructs lists of the traits and behaviours of successful principals and/or outstanding departments. But is this any more than a quasi-scientific rationalisation, and legitimation, of the social world as it is? Following on from the ontological complicity argument, a *relational* approach integrates the observer into the process of knowing. Furthermore, it is based on the premise that whatever is being studied must be thought of as a configuration of relations, not as independent entities. This is why notions of 'leadership', 'success', and 'outstanding' are problematized. More attention is to be paid to the front end of scholarly work in the approach I am advocating. This work may not always appear in texts, is particularly difficult in the 20 minute conference presentation, and a challenge in the 6000 journal article. It may also be subjected to arguments of being 'ivory tower' work or of little relevance for practice.[xiii] However, in failing to attend to the construction of the research object, or to problematize the legitimation of particular discourses, research is very limited in what it can actually say about anything. This goes well beyond the simplistic argument that complimentary methods can be used to overcome weakness in one another.

The *relational* approach I am advancing is also less concerned with simplistic methodological divisions – quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, or objective and subjective – and more concerned with coherent designs for the questions being asked. In the ÆSOP, and specifically the ISSPP, there are attempts to overcome the limitations of a particular approach by adopting complimentary approaches. The Australian ISSPP work sought to generate data through multiple perspectives to overcome limitations of standard approaches (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2006) and to contextualise data and increase trustworthiness (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011). While this is admirable, it is the epistemological and ontological preliminaries of scholarship which limits what can and cannot be said about the research object. The ÆSOP work suffers from a bias sample – as the absence of poor performing schools means there is little that can be said about distinctions – an under-problematised perspective on 'outstanding' performance and the role of 'leadership' in bringing that into being, not to mention the post event identification, meaning that at best it can offer an instrumental list of behaviours present in specific contexts. It does not even go far enough to offer insights into why certain leaders were given flexibility from systemic authorities. The ISSPP explicitly attempts to mobilise scientific rhetoric to add weight to its arguments. Two things matter here. First, no level of sophisticated design can overcome lack of attention to the construction of the research object. In other words, techniques cannot overcome weak methodology. So having highly developed, or not, sampling built upon different types of schools in different locations to compare on some universal construct is not enough. Poorly done design can actually remove any chance of describing that which was intended to be studied in the first place (Eacott, 2010). This attention is not about operationally defining the object, rather serious attention to the construction of the object in time and space. It is arguably through this path that any scientific legitimacy can be achieved in the broader academy – an enduring issue for educational administration scholarship. The second issue is that given the particularity of education, context matters. In an early paper, Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2006) argue:

> … the disregard for country context is worrying, as despite observations of the apparent homogenisation of world education, there remain important differences in how countries approach school education. (p. 372)

What makes this statement interesting is that as the ISSPP progressed, the concern with context decreased. It is further complicated by Gurr, Drysdale and Goode (2011) critiquing earlier research, noting:

> While this research explored school leadership broadly, it relied on overseas research and a somewhat unsophisticated view of school leadership. (p. 114)

Despite this, the ISSPP suffers from much the same matters that Gurr, Drysdale and colleagues critique. In seeking to construct a universal account of successful school principalship, they produce an unsophisticated view of school leadership. While the increasing complexity of the model as depicted in diagrams may give an impression of sophistication, the models remains a mapping exercise of entities

connected to school performance. There is also the matter of context, or arguably better termed, empirical grounding. This is not to say that the ISSPP work is not grounded in empirical data rather that the empirical work is abstracted from the time and space in which it takes place. Elsewhere, Gladys Asuga and I, drawing from the indigenous management scholarship movement, argue that comparative studies which take as their foci two (or more) completely different contexts and make arguments about similarities and differences are no longer sufficient – if they ever were (Eacott & Asuga, 2014). Our argument is that it is inappropriate to conceive of any individual educator, school, school system, and so on, operating in an apolitical or isolated social space. The challenge we laid out is the question: *why is this taking place in this space at this particular time?* As noted in numerous places throughout this book, context matters. This is a well-established and accepted position in the scholarship of educational leadership, management and administration. ÆSOP simply ignores context, instead focusing on the epistemic of 'outstanding' and an unproblematised notion of comparative school performance. ISSPP on the other hand, makes the claim that less successful principals are more likely to be impacted by context specific factors than successful principals. This claim ignores the entire, and rather large, body of work on the role of outside school factors in the outcomes of schooling. In both cases, 'success' or 'outstanding performance' are viewed as a victory over context. This aspirational tone, very common in educational administration literatures, is coherent with a technicist view where the social world is malleable through a series of logical incremental steps and that anything is possible if you work hard enough. In doing so, agency overcomes structure and this agency is mobilised at the individual level. Such a notion removes history. From the *relational* approach, practice – that which we seek to study – is historicising. It has a history and makes history. It is a temporal event. This is not to mobilise a static history, but one that is always in motion, a dynamic conceptualisation that influences but does not define practice in the here and now.

ÆSOP and the ISSPP do mobilise temporality. Dinham focuses on schools/departments with sustained outstanding outcomes. Gurr, Drysdale and colleagues pay attention to principals who have led sustained improvement in outcomes. They further embed a temporal dimension through the revisiting of case studies five years after initial contact to engage with the level of sustainability of changes. However, as pointed out earlier in this book, this mobilisation of temporality is limited to clock time. When combined with the reification of practice in their construction of the research narrative and the abstraction of outcomes as proxies for performance (test outcomes), the ISSPP work does not necessarily go beyond an uncritical adoption of reproduction discourses through its failure to identify under what conditions individual schools and principals work. Similarly, the example in ÆSOP of systemic authorities turning a blind eye to acting outside the norm, fails to articulate what forms of professional esteem is required to achieve this level of flexibility. By failing to acknowledge this, the explanatory power of the ÆSOP work is reduced, if not removed. Even the prospect of description is reduced as the portrayal ignores the complexity of the social world.

The role of description is rarely touched on in the literatures of educational administration. It is often demonised as the lowest form of scholarly activity and critiques frequently claim that as a disciplinary space, educational administration is made up of too many small scale descriptions of individual turnaround narratives. I argue that this critique and dismissal of description is premature. In seeking to go beyond description, even if implicitly, ÆSOP crafted case studies of outstanding departments, leaders, and schools. ISSPP sought scale, seeking to overcome the limited value of small case studies by having lots of them, and from different contexts. It is however, description that enables us to move beyond the discursive nature of the social world without claiming to be outside it. It means bringing to the level of discourse the problems and complexities of the social world. Where description falls down is the privileging of the empirical problem over the theoretical. Critical arguments against description are really critical of the privileging of the empirical problem. The inability to generalise from case studies is because the argument is limited to a specific empirical problem locating in a particular time and space. It is possible to make a larger (theoretical) argument from a single case and the case provides empirical evidence. This evidence is not conclusive, but if based on rigorous and robust scholarship can be convincing. A useful resource for this is Colin Evers and Echo H. Wu's (2006) *Generalising from single case studies: Epistemological reflections*. Consistent with the argument throughout the book so far, rigorous and robust scholarship is the single defining feature of what I am arguing for.

To make this a productive space, rigorous and robust case studies can be replicated elsewhere, to build a substantive basis for larger scale claims. This is to be admired in the ISSPP. Their model is very similar to that which I am arguing for here. It is also consistent with how legitimacy of knowledge claims is achieved in the natural sciences. The difference is that I contend that such a model is based on substantive attention to the preliminaries of the work and not some uncritical adoption of popular rhetoric. That said, as Evers and Wu (2006) argue, researchers bring an impressive amount of empirical knowledge that is contained within the theories that are used to make observations, to classify phenomena, and to understand and interpret cases. This challenges the notion of blind empiricism, but does not mean that researchers make these preliminaries explicit.

The point I am making here is that I seek not to critique ÆSOP and ISSPP for the sake of it. Rather, I seek an ongoing opening, a space where we can communicate and engage around the research object, how we know it, and what we can say about it. To do this requires a point of entry. For me, this point of entry is the construction of the research object, hence my attention and constant arguing for the epistemological break with ordinary language. A similar, yet different, argument runs in philosophy and the notion of a 'touchstone' (see Walker, 1985; Evers & Lakomski, 1991). Without this point of entry the spaces that exist between the parallel monologues of the domain persist and will arguably never close. Importantly, my argument is not for a single approach or position for the scholarship of educational administration. The loss of diversity would be detrimental to advancing knowledge. Instead, what I am arguing for, without

surrendering my own position, is a means for inter-tradition dialogue. Not speaking past one another, or ignoring each other. This is consistent with the *relational* approach I am advancing as for me it is not only inappropriate but impossible to see different research traditions as entities – separate from one another. Approaches to research can only be understood in relation to one another. All approaches are related in the dynamics of the social world and there are productive spaces yet to be engaged with at scale.

NOTES

[i] Due to the scale of the Australian academy – when compared with the US or even the UK – there is somewhat of an unwritten rule that scholars do not do work in the same space as colleagues. The closest exception is the overlap of the International Successful School Principalship Project and the International Principal Preparation Project. But for the most part, while there are examples of complimentary work, scholars tend to stay out of each other's way.

[ii] For a useful analysis of non-academic outcomes of schooling I suggest James Ladwig's (2010) paper 'Beyond academic outcomes', published in *Review of Research in Education*.

[iii] It should be noted that while Dinham cites the Strauss and Corbin texts, GT as an intellectual space has numerous streams, including, but not exclusively, the Barney Glaser followers, the Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin stream, and more recently, the Constructivist GT stream (particularly based around the work of Anthony Bryant; Kathy Charmaz; Jane Mills, Ann Bonner and Karen Francis; and Robert Thornberg.

[iv] As an aside, the notion of a 'knowledge base', mentioned in the quote, and its implication for knowledge production is problematized by Fenwick English (2006).

[v] As a case in point, see the flagship journal of the movement – *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* published by Springer.

[vi] It does always intrigue me the use of the term 'real world'. While I understand the usage is arguably to reflect a division between the laboratory of natural sciences, or the unhelpful binary of theory and practice, the notion of a 'real world' arguably suggests the presence of an 'unreal world'. Although this may seem like semantics, for those interested in ontology and epistemology, the raising of this question would potentially generate some interesting dialogue between peers.

[vii] This is the term of choice by Leithwood – not mine.

[viii] It is to be noted that Stephen Dinham is currently located at the University of Melbourne also. As a result, I do not imagine getting any invites or job offers there in the immediate future.

[ix] Positive organisation scholarship is an umbrella concept used to emphasise what leads to positive organisational deviance – performance against others. While it does not completely ignore dysfunction and (below) average performing organisations, POS is mostly interested in the motivations and effects associated with positive phenomena. This includes how positive deviance is facilitated, how they can be identified and how organisations can capitalise on them (see Spreitzer & Cameron, 2011).

[x] He actually uses 'found' which again is evident of an external knowable reality.

[xi] The idea of multiple 'contexts' is further evidence of an entity perspective, one where practice is seen differently by different groups (entities). In a post-structural sense, this would be arguably articulated through multiple subjectivities. Day is however not taking a post-structuralist approach, and instead is confirming the entity approach and the partitioning of the social world into entities which can be mapped against one another.

[xii] The model has had a few titles. Original labels include: Victoria model of successful school principalship (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2006); successful school leadership – an intervention based model (Gurr & Drysdale, 2007); Mulford-Johns model of successful school principalship (Mulford & Johns, 2004); Tasmanian model of successful school leadership (Gurr, Drysdale, &

Mulford, 2006). These were then combined to form an integrated Tasmanian and Victorian model (Gurr, Drysdale & Mulford, 2006) before 'an Australian model of educational leadership' (Gurr & Drysdale, 2008; Drysdale & Gurr, 2011).

[xiii] The term 'ivory tower' is most frequently mobilised against scholarship taking place in universities which appears to have little relevance or application in the 'real' world – that which is beyond the university. It is part of the rhetoric concerned with the theory and practice divide.

REFERENCES

Bachelard, G. (1984[1934]). *The new scientific spirit* (P.A. Heelan, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press. [Originally published as *Le nouvel esprit scientifique* (Paris: Presses Universitaries de France).]

Birkinshaw, J., Healey, M. P., Suddaby, R., & Weber, K. (2014). Debating the future of management research. *Journal of Management Studies, 51*(1), 38-55.

Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buber, M. (1981[1923]). *I and thou: The dialogic principle*. New York, NY: Dutton. [Originally published as *Ich und du: das dialogische prinzip* (Germany: Darmstadt).]

Caldwell, B. J. (2007). Educational leadership and school renewal: Introduction by the guest editor. *Australian Journal of Education, 51*(3), 225-227.

Day, C. (2005) Introduction to ISSPP. *Journal of Educational Leadership, 43*(6), 533-538.

Day, C., & Gurr, D. (Eds.). (2014) *Leading schools successfully: Stories from the field*. London: Routledge.

Day, C., Harris, A., Hadfield, M., Tolley, H., & Beresfield, J. (2000). *Leading schools in time of change*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Dinham, S. (2005). Principal leadership for outstanding educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration, 43*(4), 338-356

Dinham, S. (2007a). The secondary head of department and the achievement of exceptional student outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration, 45*(1), 62-79.

Dinham, S. (2007b). How schools get moving and keep improving: Leadership for teacher learning, student success and school renewal. *Australian Journal of Education, 51*(3), 263-275.

Dinham, S. (2008). *How to get your school moving and improving*. Camberwell, Vic: Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Press.

Dinham, S. (2010). *Leadership for exceptional educational outcomes*. Brisbane: Post Pressed.

Drysdale, L., & Gurr, D. (2011). The theory and practice of successful school leadership in Australia. *School Leadership & Management, 31*(4), 355-368.

Drysdale, L., & Gurr, D. (2014). *Reflections on a decade of research of the international successful school principalship project*. Paper presented at the 2nd Educational Leadership, Management and Administration (ELMA) Theory Workshop, 3-4 July, North Sydney, Australia.

Eacott, S. (2010). Bourdieu's strategies and the challenge for educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 13*(3), 265-281.

Eacott, S. (2011a). *School leadership and strategy in managerialist times*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Eacott, S. (2011b). Preparing 'educational' leaders in managerialist times: An Australian story. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 43*(1), 43-59.

Eacott, S. (2011c). Liberating schools through devolution: the Trojan horse of the state. *Leading & Managing, 17*(1), 75-83.

Eacott, S., & Asuga, G. (2014). School leadership preparation and development in Africa: A critical insight. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, *42*(6), 919-934.

English, F. W. (2006). The unintended consequences of a standardised knowledge base in advancing educational leadership preparation. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 42*(3), 461-472.

Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (1991). *Knowing educational administration: Contemporary methodological controversies in educational administration research*. New York, NY: Pergamon Press.

Evers, C. W., & Wu, E. H. (2006). On generalising from single case studies: Epistemological reflections. *Journal of Philosophy of Education 40*(4), 511-526.

Garza, E., Drysdale, L., Gurr, D., Jacobson, S., & Merchant, B. (2014). Leadership for school success: Lessons from effective principals. *International Journal of Educational Management, 28*(7), 798-811.

Gladwell, M. (2008). *Outliers: The story of success*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Graham, L., Paterson, D., & Stevens, R. (2010). *Exceptional educational equity programs*. Brisbane: Post Pressed.

Gurr, D., & Drysdale, L. (2007). Models of successful school leadership: Victorian case studies. In K. Leithwood & C. Day (Eds.), *Successful school leadership in times of change* (pp. 39-58). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer-Kluwer.

Gurr, D., & Drysdale, L. (2008). Reflections on twelve years of studying the leadership of Victorian schools. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 36*(2), 22-37.

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Goode, H. (2010). Successful school leadership in Australia: A research agenda. *International Journal of Learning, 17*(4), 113-129.

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Mulford, B. (2005). Successful principal leadership: Australian case studies. *Journal of Educational Administration, 43*(6), 539-551.

Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Mulford, B. (2006). Models of successful school principal leadership. *School Leadership & Management, 26*(4), 371-395.

Gurr, D., Natalie, D. E., Ford, P., Drysdale, L., & Swann, R. (2003). Successful school leadership in Victoria: Three case studies. *Leading & Managing, 9*(1), 18-37.

Ladwig, J.G. (2010). Beyond academic outcomes. *Review of Research in Education, 34*(1), 113-141.

Leithwood, K. (2005). Understanding successful principal leadership: Progress on a broken front. *Journal of Educational Administration, 43*(6), 619-629.

Leithwood, K., & Day, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Successful school leadership in time of change*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer-Kluwer.

Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2005). What we know about successful school leadership. In W. Firestone & C. Riehl (Eds.), *A new agenda: Directions for research on educational leadership* (pp. 22-47). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Montuori, A., & Purser, R. (1996). Ecological futures: Systems theory, postmodernism, and participative learning in an age of uncertainty. In D. Boje, R. Gephart, & T. Thatchenkery (Eds.), *Postmodern management and organizational theory*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Moos, L., Johansson, O., & Day, C. (Eds.) (2011), *How school principals sustain success over time: International perspectives*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer-Kluwer.

Mulford, B. (2007) *Overview of research on Australian educational leadership 2001-2005*. Winmalee, NSW: Australian Council for Educational Leaders.

Mulford, B. (2007). Successful school principalship in Tasmania. In K. Leithwood & C. Day (Eds.), *Successful school leadership in times of change* (pp. 17-38). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer-Kluwer.

Mulford, B., & Johns, S. (2004). Successful school leadership. *Leading & Managing, 10*(1), 45-76.

Panizzon, D., Barnes, G., & Pegg, J. (2010). *Exceptional outcomes in science education*. Brisbane: Post Pressed.

Paterson, D., Graham, L., & Stevens, R. (2010). *Exceptional student welfare programs*. Brisbane: Post Pressed.

Pegg, J., Lynch, T., & Panizzon, D. (2010). *Exceptional outcomes in mathematics education*. Brisbane: Post Pressed.

Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(5), 635-674.

Samier, E. (2006). Educational administration as a historical discipline: An apologia pro vita historia. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 38*(2), 125-139.

Sawyer, W., Baxter, D., & Brock, P. (2010). *Exceptional outcomes in ESL/literacy education*. Brisbane: Post Pressed.

Sawyer, W., Brock, P., & Baxter, D. (2010). *Exceptional outcomes in English education*. Brisbane: Post Pressed.

Spreitzer, G. M., & Cameron, K. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Oxford handbook of positive organizational scholarship*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Walker, J. C. (1985). The philosopher's touchstone: Towards a pragmatic unity in educational studies. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 19*(2), 181-198.

Ylimaki, R., & Jacobson, S. (Eds.). (2011). *US and cross-national policies, practices and preparation: Implications for successful instructional leadership, organizational learning, and culturally responsive practices*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer-Kluwer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PRINCIPALSHIP, AUTONOMY AND AFTER

INTRODUCTION

On an international scale, irrespective of systemic variance, the office of the principal – the principalship – is a key component in our conceptualisation of the social order of schooling. Large-scale projects such as the ISSPP reinforce the centrality of the principalship. My claim here is not that the principalship is a universal and stable role, rather that the idea of an administrative position such as the principalship – or headteacher to think with the UK vernacular – is shared across many, at least English speaking, Western nations. To simply accept the principalship as a given would be to display the ontological complicity of which I am critical of in Chapter Two. After all, the notion of the principal is contested. Somewhat ironically, contemporary policy moves around school governance have raised the profile of the principalship despite the demonising of bureaucracy and the rhetoric of flatter organisations, networks, distributed leadership and participatory decision making within decentralised or devolved systems. This was pivotal to the discussion in Chapter Four on the recasting of administrative labour. Reinforced through our own lived experience of schooling and an ontological complicity with seeing organisations – if not the entire social world – through hierarchical structures, the theoretical and empirical schemata through which we come to know, do and be labour in education holds the principalship as the key administrative role (although it is now more common practice to go by 'leader' or even 'manager') in an educational institution. This recasting of administrative labour places not only the school but the somewhat timeless image of the principalship under revision.

Since at least the 1960s almost all education systems in Western democratic societies have implemented some degree of reform concerned with devolution, decentralisation and/or autonomy. This is part of what Bob Lingard (2010) describes, with origins found in comparative education, as 'policy borrowing' within a context of global education governance (Sellar & Lingard, 2013). The global spread of school-based management or its various facsimiles, and its manifestation as 'principal autonomy' (as is the current policy agenda in Australia), is consistent with what Sotira Grek (2009) labels the 'comparative turn' in education policy. This is where a proposed reform (e.g. principal autonomy) is a feature of a 'successful' education system elsewhere, yet absent in the country in question and its introduction is thought of – or argued for – as a means to bring about improved performance. For some, this is evidence of the global spread of the contemporary managerialist project (see Klikauer, 2013) and the adoption of a theory of the firm, including the pursuit of competitive advantage. Australia has

been one of the leading embracers of the managerialist – although frequently coming under the broader brushstroke of 'neoliberalism' – agenda. The adoption of practices from private enterprise into the public services, and in particular education, and the social Darwinism of the market have become key policy levers in the recasting of educational administrative labour.

In this chapter, I use the *relational* research programme that I am advancing in this book to ask: *What does the principalship look like after autonomy?* Despite the range of objections that could be raised regarding the thinking of contemporary educational administration with and through the principalship, it is the contention of this chapter that it is in the recasting of administrative labour that we find important resources for the task of theorising educational administration, even if at first sight, these resources appear to bear little connection to, or resonance with, contemporary discourses of 'leadership' in education. The usefulness and relevance of these resources may only be made explicit if we understand recent policy moves as concerning a recasting of administrative labour, an understanding that positions bureaucratic roles within institutions not only in regard to contemporary events, but also in regard to questions of the futures of schooling. This is more than an intellectual puzzlement. It is a serious question for educational administration as domain of knowledge production and of practice. Contemporary discourses in the discipline have exponentially grown the number of adjectival leaderships, challenged traditional/classic organisational structures and then offered autonomy as the solution. In contemporary Australia this autonomy is not constructed and argued for as 'school' autonomy, as is often the case with school-based management rhetoric, rather, the current Tony Abbott led Federal Liberal-National Party government is arguing for 'principal' autonomy. As a result, I argue that the current autonomy agenda is a significant point for the office of the principalship both theoretically and empirically.

RECASTING ADMINISTRATIVE LABOUR

Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005[1999]) argue that since the mid-1970s, capitalism abandoned the hierarchical Fordist work structure primarily on the basis of the attack on the alienation of everyday life by capitalism and bureaucracy. Temporally, this aligns with the proliferation of the 'leadership' industry in broader management and administrative discourses. As Barbara Kellerman (2013) argues, initially spawned and sustained in the United States in the 1970s, when corporate America was, for the first time since the Second World War, fearful of competition from abroad, notably Japan, 'leadership' became the dominant rhetoric in the pursuit of improved organisational performance. The genesis of leadership as a label, the existence of which implies a distinction from previous labels management and administration is rarely questioned in educational administration (see Chapter Three). However, there are significant limitations in constructing an understanding of administration in a linear or chronological manner.[i] History plays a small role in the Anglophone educational administration discourses (Samier, 2006). With philosophy, sociology and the humanities, it has been forced out of

preparation and development programmes during the standards era (English, 2006), and as with public administration, there is a general ahistorical approach to scholarship (Adams, 1992). A considerable limitation in our conceptualisation of administration, and administrative labour, is the constructed point of origin within the modern bureaucracy – that articulated by Max Weber (1978[1922]) – rather than recognising a lineage dating back to at least ancient times. Therefore, as Eugenie Samier (2006) argues:

> Many administrative phenomena are really historical topics rather than strictly managerial problems. First, those involving forces external to organisations that influence decisions and actions, which are regarded simplistically as 'environmental factors' in systems theory, would be more fruitfully pursued as the study of administration under different historical conditions, such as colonisation and decolonisation, social unrest, revolt, revolution and the introduction of new political and social values like equality and equity, all of which have had a significant influence on educational systems. (pp. 131-132)

Although for some, the administration of education is changing to reflect corporate ideals, or a model of the firm, there is a long history of broader managerial discourses in educational administration. It is significant to remember that the establishment of departments of educational administration in US universities, a key event in the creation of the discipline, aligns with the publication of Frederick Winslow Taylor's (1911) *The principles of scientific management*. Furthermore, it is well documented that many of the early high profile professors of educational administration, such as Ellwood Cubberly at Stanford, did not have a strong scholarly backgrounds in education (Bates, 2010; Tynack & Hansot, 1982). More so, Raymond Callahan's (1962) classic *Education and the cult of efficiency* explicitly outlines how managerial approaches were a generative feature of education policy and reforms during the first half of the 20th century in the US. This remains important because as Robert Kanigel (1997) argues, Taylorism is so embedded in our understanding of organisations and their management that we frequently fail to recognise it.

This is not to suggest that there is not an intensification of managerialism in contemporary times, rather it is to make the point that this is not a 'new' phenomenon. To ignore the history is to de-contextualise – in both time and space – the argument. In other words, conventional ways of thinking make it unlikely, if not impossible, to conceive of educational administration in any other way than the existing orthodoxy. This is not necessarily the radical paradigm shifts articulated by Thomas Kuhn (1962), or even the epistemological break argued for by Gaston Bachelard (1984[1934]) – later used by Louis Althusser (1969[1965]) and Pierre Bourdieu with Jean-Claude Chamboredon and Jean-Claude Passeron (1991[1968]) – rather, I am building an argument for a form of scholarship that pays attention to locating the scholarly narrative in time and space.

Structurally, education is one of the greatest achievements of administration. Systemic comprehensive education offered to a nation's citizens – and in particular, youth – is at a scale that very few national, and international, reforms can claim. What is at stake in the current drive for autonomy is the underlying

generative principle of education – universality. Autonomy discourses, those which are about creating localised distinctions, are part of a broader reform of public administration. Post-bureaucratic models of educational administration, particularly public education, shift the principalship from the local face of a state agenda to a role under revision. This 'revised' principalship is not the same unit of analysis that is the focus of critical literatures. Rather, it is a construction which enables the dismissal of critical analysis through the appearance of emancipatory potential and the prospect of moving beyond the structural constraints of the bureaucracy. This is an important move of the managerialist project, one that has the potential to shut down the alternative. But this alternative is one constructed within existing ways of thinking. Built upon entities, including the construction of the state, school, principal, community and so on, the dominant position has these as related, yet separate, entities. A *relational* approach explores the 'spaces between' people and phenomena in organising education. Martin Buber, a theological philosopher, contends that the self and the other are not separable (see Buber, 1981) but are rather co-evolving in ways that need to be accounted for in our ways of knowing and being in the world. The notion of space in between is also evident in physics. In the pursuit of identifying the basic building blocks of the natural world, quantum physicists found that atomic particles appear more as relations than as discrete objects (Capra, 1975; Wolf, 1980), and that space itself is not empty but filled with potential (Bohm, 1988). This is why I argue that whatever is being studied needs to be thought of as a configuration of relations and not individual entities.

In response to critiques of school performance and constraints on innovation, contemporary discourses in educational administration have sought to break down bureaucratic structures to argue that 'relief from stultifying mediocrity lies in deregulation and local control of schools (Timar & Kirp, 1988, p. 75). This is not part of a conceptual shift that goes beyond entity thinking. Rather, it is about a re-distribution of the entities within the system. The relationships between entities might change but the underlying entity based ontology remains. Long-time advocates of self-managing schools, Brian Caldwell and Jim Spinks (1988, 1992, 1998, 2013) argue that self-management provides the basis for a new professionalism and new forms of innovation that will provide a quality future focussed education for all. However, this stream of work is heavily criticised for over-playing the impact of reforms (Wolf, 2002) and overlooking many of the structural inequities of society that come to the fore through schooling (Thrupp, 2003) and exponentially grown through school choice and self-managing schools (Smyth, 1993, 2008, 2011). This critique can be summarised as highlighting the importance of the spaces between. Within the entity perspective it is common for the research object to be dislocated from its empirical grounding. This was demonstrated in the previous chapter in the analysis of the ÆSOP and ISSPP work. The research object is constructed and sustained as though it is beyond the context in which it takes place. Boundaries between the object and context remain. They can be mapped, and even claimed to have reciprocity, but they remain separate.

On the StudentsFirst website, the Australian Federal government articulates its position stating:

> Both internationally and in Australia, evidence emphasises the advantages of school autonomy as part of a comprehensive strategy for school improvement.
>
> In Australia, schools in all states and territories have been working towards more autonomous and independent models to improve education outcomes.
>
> The Australian Government also recognises that giving schools and school leaders greater autonomy can help improve student results.
>
> Great schools have leaders and teachers who have the independence to make decisions and develop the courses that best meets he needs of their students.

The recasting of administrative labour is very much a socio-historical event, one that requires substantive grounding in a particular time and space. In the example above, the notion of autonomy is given a history – and scale – through reference to 'evidence' from both Australia and internationally. This suggests that schooling is a universal and there is a utility to autonomy. As an independent variable, it can be inserted into a different location and because it is unaffected by context, produce comparable, even reliable, results. Autonomy is mobilised as though it has a stable meaning and serves to explain variance in performance. The trajectory of the context, based on its history and socio-political context is not of importance as the entity is independent. The context is mentioned in the example by virtue of all states and territories having undertaken some reform in the space previously, and the *Principal Autonomy* agenda is therefore a natural extension of that work. It overlooks long standing, and ongoing, debates about the 'success' of loosely coupled autonomy reforms in the country (see Smyth, 1993, 2011) and significantly, links to improving schooling. Drawing on confirmatory evidence, much like Helen Gunter's (2001) claim about policy makers cherry picking instrumental, humanist and scientific research, and ignoring alternate literatures, autonomy is predicted – on the basis of pre-existing knowledge – as an inherently good solution for performance issues. There is also the commodification of autonomy as government is 'giving' schools, and school leaders, greater autonomy. The commodification is consistent with critiques of autonomy discourses (Eacott, 2011). In the ordinary language of the everyday, and the instrumental, autonomy is constructed as the administrative key to unleashing the potential of the principalship to achieve the highest levels of school outcomes. However, I argue that the pursuit of autonomy is a fallacy. As Bourdieu (2005[2000]) argues, in heavily administered societies, much like a gravitational field, even the person perceived to have absolute power – or decision making authority – is him/herself held within the constraints of administration. That is, nobody knows anymore who is the subject of the final decision, and the place of the decision is both everywhere and nowhere. This is counter to the illusion of *the* decision maker and the notion of absolute autonomy. It also opens the prospect of a more *relational* way of understanding education administration – one that goes beyond the construction of separate entities.

Common-sense usage of 'autonomy' suggests a separation, even severance, of the principalship from a system or institutional context. This is an explicit demonstration of an entity perspective as the system and individual institution are constructed as separable entities. Despite this entity perspective, an inherent tension in autonomy arguments is the embedding of a requisite tie to the local. I argue that the principalship can only be understood through its relations with other actors and institutions, going as far to say that the principalship owes as much of its constitution to these relations as it does to anything else. These relations are only brought into existence in a particular time and space. This means that social activity is not viewed or mapped using measurable units of the clock but rather as actions taking place in relation to other actions. These relations are reflective of the various dynamics underway in the social space.

THE CENTRALITY OF TEMPORALITY

Kathryn Fahy, Mark Easterby-Smith and Jon Erland Lervik (2014) argue that the spatial and temporal dynamics of organisational life are much neglected. This is a key observation in the ongoing recasting of administrative labour. Schooling, as a canonical modern institution, has an underlying generative temporality. As I have argued previously (Eacott, 2013):

> What we have come to know as the school and the administration of schooling is constituted through the operationalization and privileging of clock time. The temporal rules of schooling construct the school day, terms, semesters, the school year, class schedules and the notion of progression based on time. (p. 96)

The hegemonic position on time and temporality in modern institutions is its measurement in terms of an abstraction, separate from events and reversible through units of the clock. As Bourdieu (2000[1997]) notes, reinforced through ordinary language, time is constituted as a thing, an entity, something that an individual or institution has, gains, or wastes. This relationship keeps temporality and practice separate where either one can be overlaid upon the other to measure or construct a narrative. There is a temporal turn in the contemporary social sciences, witnessed in sociology (Adkins, 2009, 2011), human services (Colley, Henriksson, Niemeyer, & Seddon, 2012), education (Duncheon & Tierney, 2013), and educational administration (Eacott, 2013a). Mobilising temporality, as opposed to just time, historicises action without the need to prescribe a past-present-future model of reality. This challenges mainstream developmental thinking by breaking down the underlying generative linear progress that explicitly links practice with time. Importantly, as Lisa Adkins (2011) argues, in breaking with a view that sees time as an object that operates externally to actors, it is possible to consider temporal points of view from the acting agents. This mobilisation of temporality enables an alternate construction of the principalship – one that addresses, or at least engages with, the concern with comparison based on proxies for institutional and leadership performance (e.g. student test results).

Contemporary orthodoxy in educational administration is built around central concepts of 'leadership' and 'change'. As I argued earlier in this book, what we have come to know as 'leadership' is very much shaped by our understanding of change and its measurement over time. This is however only one way to conceptualise temporality and although consistent with managerialist accounts of institution and performance, it has arguably reached its limits. A conceptualisation of time that exists separate to action is an organising framework arguably built for comparison. Clock time was central to Taylor's (1911) shop floor, primarily through his time and moment studies. He was particularly interested in measuring performance and comparing against both past performance and the performance of others, with an implicit belief in perpetual improvement. This mobilisation of time is central to international, and national, comparative testing regimes. That is, time and points of time, are an organising structure for educational labour, be that teaching, learning and/or administration.

The alternate, and one that I argue autonomy discourses call for, sees the principalship pay out in time rather than separate to it – a move from an entity perspective to a *relational*. As the contemporary capitalist condition shifts educational administration from an industrial to post-Fordist models of management, the boundaries between time and performance are increasingly blurred. The autonomous principalship is temporalized, or temporalizing. The autonomy agenda does not eliminate an external narrative of temporality, but casts radical doubt on it as the sole – or even most appropriate – means of understanding practice. This is however a major challenge for educational administration discourses which for the most part focus on manipulation, which is not necessarily a negative use of the word, of people, structures and symbols for the purpose of a desired future state. Contemporary 'leadership' discourses are heavily committed to this goal. However, a temporalizing principalship is not about building an alternate (better?) future rather building an alternate in the here and now. The conceptual category of the 'future' is somewhat redundant, or to think with Helga Nowotny (1994[1987]), at least loses some of its attractiveness with the emergence of an 'extended present' (p. 11).

If the future is present in the here and now, this casts into radical doubt the distance between the present and future. More so, it casts doubt over the credibility of comparison between schools and school systems. What becomes most important in this conceptualisation of temporality is trajectory – a historicising of action and locating that history within a narrative of performance. This trajectory is not isolated as it cannot be removed from the social space in which it takes place. However, I argue that a greater level of understanding can be derived from a rigorous and robust description of this temporal trajectory than can be from a broader brush stroke of sites using an external (and arguably normative) criterion. This is not to say that scholarship in educational administration ought to progress through a series of small scale case studies, as such parallel monologues do little to add to the body of knowledge. The over reliance on small scale case studies is an enduring critique of educational administration discourses. My concern is less with

case studies per se, and more with the failure to locate these case studies within the social space and temporality.

THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF 'THE LOCAL'

As social institutions, schools are both embedded and embody the unique spatial-temporal conditions in which they exist. The contemporary capitalist condition is one that has given rise to what Luigi Pellizzoni (2011) labels 'consumer sovereignty'. This is not surprising given the ubiquitous commercial settings that surround us daily, encouraging consumption – resulting from choice – as the primary source of well-being. Furthermore, the contemporary capitalist condition is one of constant revision, instant change and dynamic institutional identities, or as Zygmunt Bauman (2000, 2005) calls it, a 'liquid society'. Such conditions explicitly challenge conservative conceptualisations of schooling based on notions of state provision, strong community ties, and stability. The solidity and continuity that is a trademark of modern identities has been replaced with the floating and drifting selves of contemporary societies. Unlike its hierarchal past with the state adopting a 'panoptic surveillance' (see Foucault, 1977[1975]), the contemporary capitalist condition has the individual school, and arguably the individual educator vying for attention in the fluidity and diversity of the marketplace. In doing so, the 'school community' – the mythical entity that combines both geographic affiliation, but also an emotional attachment to 'the local' – becomes little more than a nostalgic imagery of a bygone era where schools, particularly the local public school, was a central feature of communal identity.

This poses a significant issue for mainstream discourses of the principalship and the autonomy agenda. Common-sense arguments for autonomy are built upon the assumption that schools will better serve students if they are autonomous, especially if held to account publicly – even if only through market forces. The central thrust of this assumption is that those closest to schools, including parents and teachers, know how to serve students best. Who exactly are these people is contested. In the case of parents, is it the parents of the students currently enrolled at the school, or is it the parents of yet-to-come students (and does it matter how soon that yet-to-come is)? If the latter, how does one even begin to identify this group? Similarly, the same questions could be raised about the teachers and those 'stakeholders' in the immediate geographic space. The assumption of physical proximity to the school as constituting those with the most knowledge about 'the local' is arguably cast into radical doubt when considered within the discourses of consumer choice, and the globalising nature of education policy.

Despite attention to the need for autonomy as a means of sustaining (or establishing) an attachment to 'the local', corresponding school choice discourses encourage consumerism in education and selection based on perceived fit rather than geographic attachment.[ii] This fit may be about ideology (e.g. faith-based), aspiration (e.g. social mobility through a 'high-achieving' school), or many other orientations, but rarely is the choice agenda ever about a sense of loyalty to 'the local'. Even market based rhetoric that focus on niche providers are often

dismissed on the basis that the niche approach is only enacted by those who cannot compete with comprehensive institutions on a larger scale. Autonomy discourses are therefore embedded within a broader set of discourses that place 'the local', that central feature of autonomy, under revision. Many of the assumptions regarding autonomy and 'the local' are counter to more sociological accounts of educational administration which argue for the impossibility of separating 'the local' from the global – even if they do not use that language (see Blackmore, 2004; Bates, 2006, 2008). Most striking about autonomy discourses is the perceived separation from a (nation-) state anchor while at the same time the facilitation of connections on a global scale all to be achieved through localisation.

However, rather than assuming where the boundaries of the local, global and anything in between are, or should be, these accounts of autonomy and the principalship alert us to how the boundaries and experiences of them are socially constructed. Normative assumptions – those which dominate much of the mainstream discourses of educational administration – assume static, in both time and space, boundaries. In addition, as Bourdieu warns, the artificial partitioning of the social world into such spaces serves the classifiers purposes more so than reflecting an empirical reality (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]). I am not suggesting that there is not an empirical local or any form of affiliation to the material and/or symbolic objects in the geographic space, rather arguing that establishing boundaries around what is, and more importantly, what is not, 'the local' are engaging in a complex and contested space. The notion of a static, in both time and space, local is counter to understandings of the social world that recognise fluidity and dynamic social relations. For the principalship, discourses of 'the local' both narrow – through the provision of some sense of geographic marker – yet also create a new sale – through the complexity of defining boundaries. Further complicating the matter is the nature of judgement on the principalship and its focal point, not necessarily its genesis.

THE IMPOSITION OF 'QUALITY'

An underlying tension in the autonomy debate is that of liberation. This liberating of individual schools, or units within a larger system, is proposed as a means of improving the 'quality' of performance and/or product. The great difficulty or tension that exists is that this measure or criteria for 'quality' of performance or product of schooling is already decided. In contemporary discourses, especially those outside the academy, it is, for the most part, performance in standardised testing regimes. This means that the 'quality' argument is more often than not backward mapped into policy and subsequent documents. In what is a Tayloristic turn, the imposition of 'quality' markers of school, and by virtue principal, autonomy discourses are more likely to lead to the pursuit of efficiency – especially if funding is reduced, even if only in relative terms. As such, 'quality' discourses are as much a constraint on autonomy as they are a facilitator. The presence of *a priori* criteria of success, those which align with a pre-existing normative orientation, does little to provide the conditions conducive to alternate

ways of doing, being and knowing. The backward mapping approach is consistent with a rational rhetoric of management (Abrahamson, 1997) for bringing about 'effective' performance through a series of logical and sequential steps or modifications of practice. However, as Pat Thomson (2010) points out, within such an approach, organisational actors become increasingly better at playing the game rather than challenging the rules of the game or its formula for success. These social conditions cannot be ignored. The managerial rhetoric around autonomy and freeing the principalship to innovate and localise education is negated if the markers of quality are set beyond 'the local'.

An alternate way of thinking this through is Michel Foucault's 'practice of freedom'. Following Foucault,[iii] I contend that freedom is not synonymous with liberation and/or autonomy. The problem is not 'Let's liberate our school leaders' but rather engaging with the practice of freedom by which one could define what is education and educating, and the pedagogical relationship. Previously I argued that it is possible to think anew what it means to be a 'quality' school and in particular how one school, but particularly the principal, rejected (although not completely) the use of external measures of quality as the sole criteria (Eacott, 2013b). The key point that I am making here is that what is most limiting about orthodox ways of thinking is that they are based in the orthodoxy of their time and space.

The construction of absolute binaries such as autonomous and bureaucratic (although these two are not directly opposite) educational administration are not necessarily helpful, yet alone empirically defensible – even if these are common in the ordinary language of the everyday. As argued earlier, it is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate an individual school. That is, the binary of individual or collective is not straight forward, as no school is completely constrained by social structures or entirely free to do as they wish. The social world is less clear. Boundaries or partitioning are less empirical than epistemic and relations are more reciprocal than linear. My argument is that policy, such as those around autonomy, is the product and producer of administration, and by virtue, the principalship. You cannot come to understand the principalship without attention to contemporary administrative practice. There is a reciprocal interplay as the principalship is shaped by, and shaping of, the contemporary conditions, in the time and space, in which it takes place. From a *relational* perspective, policy and administration can only be understood in relation to one another, not as separate entities.

Bourdieu (2004[2001]) stresses the need to not focus solely on the restraints on practice at the expense of the freedoms available to leaders. This is not to suggest we should engage in some naïve dialogue assuming absolute freedom to do what you want. Instead, the scholarly narrative needs to weave the two together. To privilege either one limits the scholarly narrative to replacing one master narrative with another. In de-centring both the constraints and freedoms it is possible to engage with the *relational* nature of the principalship in the contexts of autonomy. Most importantly, this opens avenues for thinking anew the principalship.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary thought and analysis in the scholarly discourses of educational administration stress the importance of the principalship, autonomy and 'the local', particularly in the pursuit of improving educational quality. This is not surprising given that in broader public discourses, leaders matter and market based reforms are useful levers for producing effective institutions. The challenge of scholarship is to get beyond the naïve understanding of the spontaneous sociologist and construct knowledge through rigorous and robust methodologies which facilitate new ways of knowing, being and doing educational administration. The office of the principalship is an almost universally recognisable post. However this is as much a weakness as it is a strength. It poses one of the greatest challenges of scholarship on the principalship. The spontaneous sociologist within us assumes validity of labels and objects and works from there. My approach, and what I have argued in this chapter, is that mainstream discourses of autonomy and the principalship actually fly in the face of contemporary thought and analysis in the discipline. Bringing together a diverse array of theoretical resources under the *relational* approach to construct an argument for a new image of the principalship, one that illuminates blind spots in contemporary scholarship and calls for theoretically and empirically moving beyond accepting at face value notions such as 'the local', 'quality', and 'autonomy'. What I have provided is a (not *the*) way of breaking with existing paradigms in educational administration and recasting our understanding of educational administrative labour.

In privileging the organising of education rather than the administrative structures of bureaucratic systems, the *relational* approach goes beyond the acceptance of the social world as it is. Hierarchies based on bureaucratic structures are replaced with an understanding built upon relations. Rather than the construction of epistemic entities for the purpose of analysis and explanation, the *relational* approach encourages, if not forces, the scholar to epistemologically break with the spontaneous understanding of the social world. This is not to say that this is an easy task, it requires substantive front loading, and more than can be done in a single chapter, but when combined with work from earlier chapters it begins to construct a picture about the degree of nuancing that can be achieved for the purpose of describing what is taking place.

Most importantly, the research object – in this case the principalship – can only be understood in relation to other objects. This is a challenge for the traditional entity based ontology of educational administration. Again, it forces an epistemological break with the spontaneous understanding of the social world. Furthermore, it empirically grounds the scholarly narrative. If the research object can only be understood in relation to other objects, then the description needs to be based in a particular time and space. The trajectory, both temporally and socio-spatially, of the particular is of heightened importance. This is not to say that the particular is a separate entity to the universal, as such a claim would be counter to what I am arguing for. Rather, context matters. But it matters in a very specific way. The general rhetoric that context matters fails to adequately outline what is

context, not to mention how and why it matters. From the *relational* approach I am arguing for it matters in two explicit ways: temporally and socio-spatially. Two questions raised are 'why now?' and 'why here?'. Of course, to prevent lapsing into an entity perspective, it would be better articulated as 'why here and why now?'. In the case of autonomy, why is it that policy rhetoric around autonomy is gaining traction now. What is it about the temporal conditions, the trajectory of autonomous discourses, in the particular socio-spatial conditions that have enabled autonomy to be seen as a potential solution to the problems of the time. Context becomes an inter-disciplinary and fluid notion. It is not simply describing schools using statistical data generated through audits and classification. Likewise it is not the classification of actors based on demographic markers. Instead, context brings into play many diverse disciplines (e.g. sociology, philosophy, history, economics, public administration) for the purpose of understanding. Does this mean that all of this needs to be covered in a single paper, chapter or conference presentation, absolutely not. Not only would that be cumbersome, but also not necessarily helpful. This is why the locating of scholarly work in a particular tradition is of importance. We cannot ask too much of individual scholarly outputs. However, ignoring this diversity is problematic. I believe that the *relational* approach provides a means of overcoming these matters.

Through the empirical grounding of the scholarly narrative in time and space, binaries such as individual and collective, and structure and agency, become blurred. They no longer serve any descriptive or analytical purpose as they are the result of privileging one narrative over another. The productive worth of binaries is increased if aligning with a pre-existing normative orientation, however, if one is seeking to describe what is taking place without casting judgement – in the evaluative sense – then binaries are of little use. What I am offering is an approach that goes beyond the critical and opens up productive description of what is taking place. I contend that such an approach is of significant intellectual worth in advancing understanding and thinking anew educational administration.

NOTES

[i] For an educational administration specific example here, see Fenwick English's (2002) work on the 'point of scientificity'.

[ii] An enduring critique of the school choice agenda is that choice is not a universal and that only those families who were already advantaged can exercise the choice. In a number of US based studies of schooling this is labelled as the ghetto-isation of schooling (see Anderson, 2009).

[iii] See Fornet-Betacourt, Becker, Gomez-Muller and Gauthier (1987).

REFERENCES

Abrahamson, E. (1997). The emergence and prevalence of employee management rhetorics: The effects of long waves, labor unions and turnover, 1875-1992. *Academy of Management Journal*, *40*(3), 491-533.

Adams, G. (1992). Enthralled with modernity: The historical context of knowledge and theory development in public administration. *Public Administration Review*, *52*(4), 363-373.

Adkins, L. (2009). Sociological futures: from clock time to event time. *Sociological Research Online, 14*(4), http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/14/18.html.

Adkins, L. (2011). Practice as temporalisation: Bourdieu and economic crisis. In S. Susen & B. S. Turner (Eds.), *The legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical essays* (pp. 347-365). London: Anthem Press.

Althusser, L. P. (1969[1965]). *For Marx* (B. Brewster, Trans.). London: Allen Lane – The Penguin Press. [Originally published *Pour Marx*, Paris: François Maspero.]

Anderson, G. L. (2009). *Advocacy leadership: Toward a post-reform agenda in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Bachelard, G. (1984[1934]). *The new scientific spirit* (P.A. Heelan, Trans). Boston: Beacon Press. [Originally published as *Le nouvel esprit scientifique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France).]

Bates, R. J. (2006). Culture and leadership in educational administration: A historical study of what was and what might have been. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *38*(2), 155-168.

Bates, R. J. (2008). States, markets and communities: is there room for educational leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, *40*(3), 195-208.

Bates, R. J. (2010). History of educational leadership and management. In P. Peterson, E. Baker, & B. McGraw (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of education* (3rd ed., pp. 724-730). Oxford: Elsevier.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2005). *Liquid life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Blackmore, J. (2004). Restrucuring educational leadership in changing contexts: A local/global account of restructuring in Australia. *Journal of Educational Change, 5*(3), 267-288.

Bohm, D. (1988). *Wholeness and the implicate order*. New York, NY: ARK Paperbacks.

Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (2005[1999]). *The new spirit of capitalism* (G. Elliott, Trans.). London: Verso.

Bourdieu, P. (2000[1997]). *Pascalian meditations* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Méditations pascaliennes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).]

Bourdieu, P. (2004[2001]). *Science of science and reflexivity* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Science de la science et réflexivité* (Paris: Éditions Raisons d'Agir).]

Bourdieu, P. (2005[2000]). *The social structures of the economy* (C. Turner, Trans.). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Les structures socials de l'économie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).]

Bourdieu, P., Chamboredon, J-C., & Passeron, J-C. (1991[1968]). *The craft of sociology: Epistemological preliminaries* (R. Nice, Trans.). Berlin, Germany: Walter de Gruyter. [Originally published as *Le métier de sociologue : préalables épistémologiques* (Paris: Mouton).]

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992[1992]). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. [Originally published as *Résponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive* (Paris: Seuil).]

Buber, M. (1981[1923]). *I and thou: The dialogic principle*. New York, NY: Dutton. [Originally published as *Ich und du: das dialogische prinzip* (Germany: Darmstadt).]

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. (1988). *The self managing school*. Lewes, UK: Falmer Press.

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. (1992). *Leading the self managing school*. London: Falmer Press.

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. (1998). *Beyond the self managing school*. London: Falmer Press.

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. (2013). *The self-transforming school*. London: Routledge.

Callahan, R. E. (1962). *Education and the cult of efficiency*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Capra, F. (1975). *The Tao of physics*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications.

Colley, H., Henriksson, L., Niemeyer, B., & Seddon, T. (2012). Competing time orders in human service work: Towards a politics of time. *Time & Society, 21*(3), 371-394.

Duncheon, J. C., & Tierney, W. G. (2013). Changing conceptions of time: Implications for educational research and practice. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(2), 236-272.

Eacott, S. (2011). Liberating schools through devolution: The Trojan horse of the state. *Leading & Managing, 17*(1), 75-83.

Eacott, S. (2013a). 'Leadership' and the social: Time, space and the epistemic. *International Journal of Educational Management, 27*(1), 91-101.

Eacott, S. (2013b). Asking questions of leadership: Using social theory for more than critique. *Leading & Managing, 19*(1), 18-31.

English, F. W. (2002). The point of scientificity, the fall of the epistemological dominos, and the end of *the field* of educational administration. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 21*(2), 109-136.

English, F. W. (2006). The unintended consequences of a standardised knowledge base in advancing educational leadership preparation. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 42*(3), 461-472.

Fahy, K. M., Easterby-Smith, M., & Lervik, J. E. (2014). The power of spatial and temporal orderings in organizational learning. *Management Learning, 45*(2), 123-144.

Forbet-Betancourt, R., Becker, H., Gomez-Muller, A., & Gauthier, J. D. (1987). The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom: an interview with Michel Foucault on January 20, 1984 (J.D. Gauthier, Trans.). *Philosophy & Social Criticism, 12*(2-3), 112-131.

Foucault, M. (1977[1975]). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. M. Sheridan, Trans.). London: Penguin. [Originally pubished as *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard).]

Grek, S. (2009). Governing by numbers: The PISA 'effect' in Europe. *Journal of Education Policy, 24*(1), 23-37.

Gunter, H. (2001). Critical approaches to leadership in education. *Journal of Educational Enquiry, 2*(2), 94-108.

Kanigel, R. (1997). *The one best way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the enigma of efficiency*. New York, NY: Viking.

Kellerman, B. (2013). Leading questions: The end of leadership – Redux. *Leadership, 9*(1), 135-139.

Klikauer, T. (2013). *Managerialism: A critique of an ideology*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lingard, B. (2010). Policy borrowing, policy learning: Testing times in Australian schooling. *Critical Studies in Education, 51*(2), 129-147.

Nowotny, H. (1994[1987]). *Time: The modern and postmodern experience* (N. Plaice, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press. [Originally published as *Eigenzeit. Entstehung und Strukurierung eines Zeitgefühls* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp).]

Pellizzoni, L. (2011). In search of community: Political consumerism, governmentality and immunization. *European Journal of Social Theory, 15*(2), 221-241.

Samier, E. (2006). Educational administration as a historical discipline: An *apologia pro vita historia*. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 38*(2), 125-139.

Sellar, S., & Lingard, B. (2013). The OECD and global governance in education. *Journal of Education Policy, 28*(5), 710-725.

Smyth, J. (2008). Australia's great disengagement with public education and social justice in educational leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 40*(3), 221-233.

Smyth, J. (2011). The *disaster* of the 'self-managing school' – Genesis, trajectory, undisclosed agenda, and effects. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 43*(2), 95-111.

Smyth, J. (Ed.). (1993). *A socially critical view of the self-managing school*. London: Falmer Press.

Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Thomson, P. (2010). Headteacher autonomy: A sketch of a Bourdieuian field analysis of position and practice. *Critical Studies in Education, 51*(1), 5-20.

Thrupp, M. (2003). The school leadership literature in managerialist times: Exploring the problem of textual apologism. *School Leadership & Management, 23*(2), 149-172.

Timar, T. B., & Kirp, D. L. (1988). State efforts to reform schools: Treading between a regulatory swamp and an English garden. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 10*(2), 75-88.

Tynack, D., & Hansot, E. (1982). *Managers of virtue: Public school leadership in America, 1820-1980*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Weber, M. (1978[1922]). *Economy and society: An outline of interprise sociology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. [Originally published as *Wirtschaft und gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden soziolgoie* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr).]

Wolf, A. (2002). *Does education matter? Myths about education and economic growth*. London: Penguin.
Wolf, F. A. (1980). *Taking the quantum leap*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FOR A RELATIONAL PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION

Mainstream rhetoric in educational administration promotes rationality, consciousness, structural arrangements, linear concepts of temporality and the unique context of each location while also seeking to construct universal lists, frameworks, capabilities or standards for leadership. There is, and not surprisingly, substantial alignment between the managerialist orthodoxy of the contemporary condition and scholarship in educational administration. Although a crude synthesis, managerialism is advanced through the School Effectiveness School Improvement movement – or its contemporary manifestation as 'Successful Schools' (see Gurr, Drysdale, & Goode, 2010; Leithwood & Day, 2007) – and other forms of 'textual apologists' (Thrupp & Willmott, 2003) or explicitly challenged by the critical school (see Eacott, 2011; Gunter & Thomson, 2011; Smyth, 2011; Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013). Despite this diversity, it is possible to argue that the value and significance of educational administration as a discipline has been exhausted. This claim is not new, as William Taylor (1969) noted over 40 years ago:

> Millions of words are to found on the role of the school superintendent, the role of the principal, the role of the school board member; on supervision, evaluation, delegation, communication, professionalization, certification and a dozen other processes. There are paradigms and models, theoretical constructs and conceptual taxonomies, analytical schema, dichotomous, bi-polar, ideal typical continuums and factorially structured four celled frameworks. The effort required to read even a representative selection of the books and articles available is considerable, and apt to seem not particularly rewarding. (p. 97)

An enduring problem for educational administration as an area of knowledge production has been a relatively weak quality profile within the already weak quality profile of educational research (Eacott, 2010; Gorard, 2005; Griffiths, 1959, 1965, 1985; Immegart, 1975). A significant portion of early, and it is possible to argue contemporary, inquiry into educational administration does not move beyond the ordinary language of the 'applied' field. As Bobby Calder (1977) argues, 'leadership' (as the contemporary label of choice) is a label that originated in everyday discourses – that of the 'spontaneous sociologist' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]), p. 66) – and its common-sense meaning has been appropriated into scholarly discourses. As a result, in a scholarly sense, the bulk of early work in the area lacked substantive theoretical development as it did not engage in any form of epistemological break with the practical working of the day-to-day work of school

administrators. This position was evident in the early preparation and development programmes where former school administrators taught classes primarily through 'war stories' of lived experience being in the field of practice (Walker, 1964). The experience in the field, or practical knowledge was privileged over any form of scholarly disciplinary knowledge. While such a position is often – and this continues – argued for on the basis that educational administration is an applied field, the minimal engagement with the underlying generative principles of research in the area frequently, if not always, results in research being embedded and embodying functional/technicist versions of the world. To think with Clifford Geertz (1973), following Gilbert Ryle (1971), these accounts are 'thin descriptions' of the social world, concerned primarily with description of the surface level of social activity. While this may seem like an attack – and to some extent it is – the outcomes and outputs of these studies remain valuable for the construction of knowledge. As Duane Ireland and colleagues (2005) contend, consistent with the growth of sophisticated research methods in other disciplines, the results of primarily case-oriented, anecdotal, and topic-driven work reflects interest in examining a particular phenomenon. This is an important observation as it stresses that early investigations provide the foundations from which further activities can occur. The task of the scholar therefore is not to simply fill gaps in the literature or pick-up where someone else has left off, rather it is to delve deeper into the phenomenon in question through more sophisticated understandings that build from previous work. My argument here is not the use of, or foundation provided, but rather the minimal (as it is not an absolute) of many in the discipline to move beyond these elementary studies. Please do not be mistaken here, my intention is not to disregard all that has gone before, or to suggest that all work is consistent with the claim, rather to provide a productive means of delving deeper into the ways of knowing, being and doing educational leadership, management and administration. As Duncan Waite (1998) argues:

> Like it or not, the area of educational leadership (a.k.a. educational administration) has a reputation for being deeply conservative. But conservatism is not the path to renewal. New and different voices are required to offer us alternative ways of being in the world. (p. 92)

It is however worth noting, as Robert Donmoyer (2001) argues, and Martin Thrupp and Richard Willmott's (2003) book *Educational management in managerialist times* demonstrates, as a domain of inquiry, educational administration exists in a state of tacit agreement where those with whom we disagree, we treat with benign neglect. Within the Australian academy, work by both Bill Mulford (2007) and Richard Bates and myself (2008) argues that scholars fail to acknowledge the contributions of each other, both past and present, working on the same topic. For example, Stephen Dinham and colleagues' (2011) work on 'breakthroughs in school leadership development in Australia' overlooks work by Bates and myself (2008, 2009; Eacott, 2011) and pays superficial attention to work by Simon Clarke and Helen Wildy (Clarke & Wildy, 2010, 2009, 2008; Clarke, Wildy, & Pepper, 2007; Clarke, Wildy, & Styles, 2011; Wildy, Clarke, & Slater, 2007; Wildy,

Clarke, Styles, & Beycioglu, 2010). I cite this as not a mere example of a dented academic ego, rather as a pedagogical observation about the often hidden role of discourse communities and the potential bounded manner in which they go about their work. This goes beyond peer-reviewed papers (and is arguably evident to a greater extent beyond the academy of peer-review). Brian Caldwell's (2012) 'Review of related literature for the evaluation of empowering local schools' for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations reduces the critical literatures (of which there are many) on school-based management and its many facsimiles to a single citation – John Smyth (1993) – and a very short single sentence tacked on to the end of a paragraph, '[r]obust criticisms were mounted' (p. 8). Although these may seem like innocuous examples more reflective of academic ego or bias than anything else, I believe them to be symbolic of a more substantive issue for educational administration as a discipline. That is, it is quite possible that a great deal of disruptive and innovative work is taking place but it exists at the margins or periphery of the field (Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013) and very little change occurs in the mainstream discourses and various traditions within the discipline. As a result, while for many the diversity of traditions within the discipline is a strength, or at least evidence of a degree of scope, it does little in facilitating a coherent and robust response to questions of its scholarly significance and intellectual value.

The discipline, and arguably consistent with Waite's (1998) appraisal, has responded to questions of its legitimacy through an expansion of leadership, management and administration to the extent that the labels are now mobilised to refer to: individuals; groups; networks; institutions; roles; structures; and practices, just to name a few. The various social constructions used to bring the epistemic 'leadership' – as the contemporary label of choice – into being are themselves constructing ontologies and epistemologies for the discipline. That is, discourses of administration, management and leadership serve as an organising rhetoric for the social world. This is why the argument for the epistemological break and problematizing the intellectual gaze in Chapter Two is significant. However, while they are socially produced ways of understanding the world in which we live, they cannot be solely reduced to the social, as objects such as Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends In Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and National Assessment Programme, Literacy And Numeracy (NAPLAN), those performative regimes privileged in contemporary discourses, not to mention school budgets and governing boards are expanding the materiality of educational administration and its product and producer, policy. In combination with this expanded materiality is the mobilisation of a particular theory of temporality, one that plays a significant role in the constitution of what is frequently thought of as 'leadership'.

Through an engagement with what I see as some of the contemporary issues of educational administration as a field of knowledge production I have built an argument for a *relational* approach as a viable alternate research programme to mainstream discourses in the discipline. This is based on the central belief that the only way to change the world is to construct new ways of seeing, doing and being

in the world. The generative *relational* research programme being argued for in this book is concerned with the theoretical question of the legitimation of the social world. Playing out in multiple ways in the empirical, the central programmatic question, working with the original stimulus outlined in Chapter One, building from the analysis presented so far in the book, and using the mainstream labels of the field, of the *relational* programme is:

> *How are leadership, management and administration structured by and structuring of the contemporary condition?*

In asking questions of the constitution and legitimation of educational administration in contemporary times impacts on methodology, I therefore ask:

> *In what ways can we come to understand the leadership, management and administration of educational institutions so that we build a distinctive and innovative programme of research?*

Through an engagement with these questions the *relational* approach offers a viable alternative for the scholarship of educational administration that provides a supportive scaffold without a prescriptive 'how to' approach. In particular, the *relational* approach offers the following:

- An explicit means of overcoming the current proliferation of 'adjectival' leadership;
- A methodology for empirically grounding the scholarly narrative;
- Destroys the myth of universal leadership;
- Provides a degree of rigour to scholarship;
- Moves beyond the unhelpful binary of theory and practice;
- Non-prescriptive in its approach; and
- Sees theory as methodology and vice versa.

To articulate the potential significance of the *relational* research programme, I devote the remainder of this chapter to spelling out how the above listed points are enacted in ways that offer a means of advancing scholarship productively.

THE PROLIFERATION OF ADJECTIVAL LEADERSHIP

In discussing the mobilisation of Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *habitus*, Karl Maton (2008) argues against what he sees as a proliferation of adjectives – for an example specific to my argument, consider the 'leadership habitus' of Bob Lingard and Pam Christie (2003). For Maton, the need for the adjective is based on an under-developed analysis of context – or what I would label more specifically, time and space. In the context of scholarship on educational administration, there are a few things at play here. First I would like to be clear regarding my comment above relating to Lingard and Christie. They make no claims to be doing anything but developing a normative stance on school leadership. I may even go so far to suggest that their focus is actually the role of school leaders (the official roles

recognised in organisational charts) in policy and school reform. As a Bourdieusian scholar, I raise this observation as graduate students beginning to work with Bourdieu in educational leadership frequently seize upon the notion of 'leadership *habitus*' and then seek to mobilise that in the analysis of their empirical object without paying due attention to Lingard and Christie's contextualising and locating their claims. In doing so, much of the arguments from the front end of this book around the need for an epistemological break are overlooked in the haste to engage with the empirical.

The expansion, both conceptual and material, of 'leadership' has somewhat created a situation where an adjective is applied to demarcate where 'leadership' takes place. This is problematic for two major reasons (although arguably many more): one, it partitions the social world in ways that are only epistemic and therefore serving as a matter of scope or scoping for the research; and two, it offers very little in relation to knowledge advancement in 'leadership' studies, rather more so for the actual context in question. While doing so might be useful for setting the parameters of a project, it is difficult for such conceptualisations to get beyond bureaucratic roles, and if you do, there is little to distinguish 'leadership' studies from sociology of organisations. The privileging of context reduces the advancement of our understanding of 'leadership' as a phenomenon to the mere mapping or application of existing knowledge to a (possibly) new context. In doing so, the existing theorisation of 'leadership' remains intact, and the intellectual contribution to the context is questionable as what has taken place is little more than the addition of a new label to name a certain aspect of the empirical.

While not explicit, yet definitely implicit in the case of using an adjective to add a context, this add-on, where the focus is really on the context (or at its most simple, a role – e.g. teacher) rather than 'leadership' per se, could be described as a pitch to increase the appeal of the topic in the contemporary context which privileges managerialist discourses, and therefore places greater value on leaders, leading and leadership. My concern with the use – or proliferation – of adjectives is that there is a diluted, if there ever was a concentrated, focus on what 'leadership' actually means. While I note that critiques have led to the expanded gaze of leadership scholarship to be more than the designated school leader (the principal), the issue of the original construction of the research object and its mobilisation in the analysis of the empirical remains under-developed. The overarching issue with the use of adjectives is the adjective is used to compensate for the lack of contextualising of 'leadership' in the socio-temporal conditions.

The *relational* approach I have argued for in this book pays explicit attention to the construction of the research object. Working with the notion of the epistemological break to break with the language of the everyday, bringing to the fore the ontological complicity with organising, the *relational* approach negates the need for adjectives. In doing so, the *relational* approach refocuses scholarship on the construction and ongoing maintenance of the research object more so than an adjective serving as a marker of scope. To support the work around the research object the *relational* approach also calls for empirically grounding the scholarly narrative as opposed to universal appeals.

CHAPTER 8

EMPIRICALLY GROUNDING THE SCHOLARLY NARRATIVE

With the rise of China and other economic powers not located in the traditional Anglophone north, the role of indigenous research has attracted increasing attention in mainstream (Anglophone) publications. Most importantly, notions of indigenous research seek to move discourses beyond content and contextualisation to an explicit engagement with epistemology and the political nature of research. Peter Li (2012) defines indigenous research as:

> … any study on a unique local phenomenon, or a unique element of any local phenomenon from a local (native as emic) perspective to explore its local implications, and, if possible, its global implications as well. (p. 851)

In the case of educational administration, despite the universalism of education, I contend that the organising of education is a local phenomenon. At the very least, we cannot assume a utility of ways of organising even if educating is ubiquitous with developed and developing nations.

The idea of what qualifies as indigenous research is however a contested space. Anne Tsui (2004) contends that indigenous research requires location-specific contextual factors that must be indigenous, but the theoretical lens can be borrowed. Similarly, David Whetten (2009) argues that any research qualifies as indigenous if it covers an indigenous phenomenon or topic, even if theories or concepts are adopted. Why is this important? Educational administration scholarship frequently argues that each and every school is unique and that context matters. Therefore, any abstraction of the scholarly narrative from the time and space in which practice takes place destroys that which it claims to study. Some examples being those I used in Chapter Six where Stephen Dinham (2005) claims 'there is danger with such attributes or factors in that context is not sufficiently recognised' (p. 354) and David Gurr and colleagues' (2010) note their work 'does not explain why these interventions work in some circumstances and not in others' (p. 124). Both mobilise a form of entity thinking, where 'leadership' is separate to context. Without empirical grounding – attention to the time and space of practice – educational administration scholarship struggles to provide any more than vacuous lists of factors, behaviours, interventions, all of which lack a solid grounding in a specific context. From the *relational* approach that I am arguing for, it is the context in both temporality and socio-spatial terms that gives behaviours or interventions meaning and significance. Similarly, the values, philosophies or other aspects of the individual articulated in lists conforming to a neo-trait perspective only exist through practice. They cannot be separated from the self just as much as the individual cannot be separated from their location in time and space. The lack of attention to the locating and specificity of contexts leads to a privileging of the directly observable features of practice rather than the underlying generative principles.

The study of universal constructs (e.g. school leadership), without adequate attention to locating practice in time and space – the underlying generative principle of indigenous management research – significantly reduces what can say about the research object. Empirically grounding scholarship does two specific

things: first, it is based on the generative principle that context gives meaning to action; and second, it raises the need for scholarly work and not just description of the world.

As has been noted in multiple places throughout this book, actions are given their significance through locating them in temporality and socio-spatial terms. While it is frequently argued that every context and every individual is unique, these differences exist at the micro-level. A great many things of schooling and its organisation are highly predictable – patterns of actors, teachers, students, and so on meeting in a location (usually a building) over and over again. For this regularity to exist, it need not even be the same people who repeatedly interact (Fay, 1994). It is this macro-level of predictability that gives the impression of a universal of educational administration. However, it doing so the attention is primarily directed at the easily observable and most memorable actions of actors. This leads to faddism and work that is swept aside as the next fashion comes along. A central feature of the *relational* approach, is that organising action cannot be separated from the contemporary conditions in which it is enacted. As a result, scholarship needs to integrate the macro with the micro to generate nuanced account of what is taking place. It is the achievement of this blending of the macro and the micro that creates the enduring, and demanding of, scholarly attention to the work of thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. The work is both sophisticated yet grounded empirically.

The front half of this book is very much dedicated to spelling out the importance of scholarly work in understanding educational administration. Empirically grounding the work requires careful attention to the construction and legitimation of the research object and the relations between the researcher and the researched. Attention to these matters opens potential avenues for exploration across research traditions and enables the author to make empirically defensible – even if not universal – claims. The *relational* approach is very much anchored in a scholarly perspective that pays substantive attention to the research object and locating that in temporal trajectory and socio-spatial terms. Importantly, the *relational* approach goes beyond the construction of entities to generate understandings based on relations.

THE MYTH OF UNIVERSAL LEADERSHIP

As noted above, there is a degree of predictability in schooling and this serves to generate a belief in, or lack of questioning of, a universal ‘leadership’. The holy grail of educational administration scholarship, dating back to its earliest beginnings, is to find a core set of behaviours, traits, conditions that are most important or impactful on performance (whatever that is deemed to be) that can then be packaged or measured for the greater good. The *relational* approach engages, and debunks, the myth of a universal. To do this, it explicitly goes beyond the ordinary language of the everyday and stresses the particular through empirically grounding the narrative. This is all based on a relational ontology that negates the possibility of a universal entity that exist separate to time and space.

Failing to simply accept the act of recognition that is commonplace in educational administration scholarship, the *relational* approach explicitly seeks to challenge the ontological complicity of the everyday. Arguments for a universal set of traits or behaviours takes scholarship back to the work of Chester Barnard, Herbert Simon, and for the most part, the Theory Movement in educational administration. It leads to an essentialised argument of either have and have nots, or that through appropriate teachings all actors can become 'leaders'. There is however a well-recognised body of work that no one size fits all raising questions about the possibility of the universal.

The notion of a universal 'leadership' is based very much in an entity perspective. A knowable entity that is separate to other entities. It is this ontology that the *relational* challenges. From the *relational* perspective, we can only understand the world in relations. Objects only become known in relation to other objects. This may appear a subtle difference, if different at all, but the distinction does matter. The universal 'leadership' is based on an entity perspective that focuses on individual entities and is consistent with an epistemology of an objective truth, and also a clear separation of individual entities, and the researcher-researched. For the entity perspective, 'leadership' is centred on individual perceptions and cognitions as they engage in exchanges and influences with other entities. The space in between the entities is not considered, making time and space separate and of less importance. In contrast, for the *relational*, individual actors and institutions are part of an ongoing, and inexhaustible, legitimation that makes time and space as opposed to exists in or separate to it. In doing so, the universal 'leadership' position leaves relational dimensions of the social untheorised. If, as I have argued, practice is only given meaning by context, then the need for, and legitimacy of, a universal 'leadership' is questionable.

A DEGREE OF RIGOUR TO SCHOLARSHIP

Educational administration research has long been called to account for its lack of rigour. It has been challenged from within, and beyond. The former is important. Early attempts to bring rigour sought legitimacy through logical empiricism and 'scientific' method. The orthodox approach to rigour in educational administration studies remains deeply rooted in logical empiricism, or at least in the application of sophisticated methods. The desire by Kenneth Leithwood and colleagues in the International Successful School Principals Project to replicate the virtues of large-scale quantitative research – as though this is the desirable form of inquiry – is evidence of the legitimacy of logical empiricism in research (see Leithwood, 2005). Interpretive approaches are tolerated in educational administration studies, but their value to the scholastic endeavour is frequently questioned. This highlights a deep paradigmatic division in educational administration. One where a particular form of research is constructed as more rigorous and the lesser paradigm/s are measured against the desired. This binary thinking is not necessarily productive in thinking through rigour. Nor is the contemporarily popular practice, often

promoted in the technicist research training units of universities, of adopting a mixed methods approach to overcome the weaknesses of the two major paradigms.

The *relational* approach offers a resolution to this situation. Rather than engaging in paradigmatic thinking, the *relational* works with research traditions – a far more productive space to think through scholarship in my opinion. However, instead of remaining within any one particular tradition, the *relational* facilitates inter-tradition dialogue through its attention to generation opposed to blind adherence to tradition specific methods. Such a move is theoretically desirable as it is concerned with alignment of theoretical question, empirical problem and modes of inquiry. This ensures an empirical grounding and explicit attention to rigorous inquiry. As a result, the significance of the *relational* approach lays not in concepts, methods or empirical observations, rather in the manner in which they are generated. It is the *modus operandi* that matters. Unlike a prescriptive method of data generation, the *relational* substitutes rigidity for rigour. This rigour is achieved through attention to the scholastic enterprise. Beginning with the construction of the research object – something that is not absolute but instead an enduring exercise accomplished throughout the work – rigour is demanded through the epistemological break with the language of the everyday. The grounding of observations in time and space make them empirically defensible. The locating of this type of inquiry with a more European notion of science as opposed to the more US-centric usage tied to logical empiricism, means that the focus is on rigorous and robust inquiry not prescriptive procedures.

The attention to description is a key shift in thinking here. Unlike the pursuit of explanation (causality) or the overlaying of empirical data with a pre-existing normative (and evaluative) orientation, the *relational* approach is centrally concerned with description. Developing an understanding of what is taking place and how that fits within a trajectory. It is the integration of a theoretical question (in this case around the legitimation of the social world) in an empirical problem (the organising of education) and an emphasis on robust description that brings rigour to the *relational* approach.

MOVES BEYOND THEORY AND PRACTICE

As an applied field, educational administration is prone to the enduring debate of theory verse practice. Such a debate is based on an entity perspective of the world which divides these two apparently separate practices based on a division of labour. The practical is concerned with what works and constructed as highly relevant. The theoretical may be significant, but it is not necessarily translatable. In many ways this division – to which I am not claiming holds up – has led to the contemporary rise of translational research. Built upon the science-into-service perspective, this is where blue sky or basic research is given an applied use. Instead of engaging with how the *relational* approach might overcome the theory verse practice division, I am simply going to argue that the division itself is false. This perceived problem has more to do with knowledge production than an empirically defensible division.

There are two parts to my argument: first, the matter of audience; and second, the need better theoretical resources. In relation to audience, a central concern in the construction of the division is a mis-understanding of scholarly communication. There are various possible outlets for scholarship. The traditional ones remain peer-reviewed journal articles and monographs. For the most part, these are written by academics for academics. Their purpose is the explicit articulation of scholarship to peers. Are these always accessible to the everyday reader, not always? Do they need to be, no. It is important to not ask such outputs to be accessible to all. The simplistic basis of the theory and practice divide on the inaccessibility of scholarly outputs is considerably flawed. Scholars have, and continue to, also make their work available through professional publications (not to mention teaching as a form of knowledge translation). In this case I am thinking of the magazine style publications of major professional associations and school systems. These are written in less dense language and usually offer something for the reader. With the advent of technologies, mobile devices, and alternate publication platforms, there is currently a proliferation of different forms of scholarly communication, including blogs, websites, forums, twitter, facebook. My argument here is that any division based on accessibility of scholarship needs to take into account the intended audience of the work. This is however a minor concern in relation to the larger matter of the need for better theory.

Theory does not need to be accessible, but it does need to adequately describe or explain something. Herein lays a problem in educational administration studies. This speaks to the inter-play of the macro and micro mentioned earlier. Research that is so intimately grounded in a single site to the exclusion of historical or socio-political conditions is of little value to anyone beyond the immediate site. Similarly, accounts which lack empirical grounding yet also do not have universal appeal, are again of limited value. For me, this is at the heart of the theory and practice divide – a disconnection between the theoretical explanation or description offered by work and the empirical manifestation.

The *relational* approach offers a means of overcoming this divide. The attention to the construction of the research object opens dialogue around what exactly is being studied and the empirical grounding of the work ensures that any theoretical description is defensible. The perceived distinction of theory and practice has done little to advance knowledge production in educational administration. Universities have contributed to this with doctoral programmes. The contemporary division of the traditional Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and the more ‘practical’ or applied Doctor of Education (EdD) is a case in point. The idea that the former is a theoretical based exercise designed to generate a contribution to the discipline whereas the latter is a professional project that is of use in the field to the candidate is problematic. The theory and practice divide has been an enduring question for educational administration and one that will arguably be ongoing. The *relational* approach as articulated in this book offers a means of mobilising scholarly resources capable of overcoming such a division.

NON PRESCRIPTIVE IN ITS APPROACH

Something that is particularly attractive in the competitive marketplace that is the contemporary academy is a prescriptive 'how to do it' approach to scholarship. The outlining of a how to do it guide makes it more secure for the uncertain researcher and gives criteria from which an approach can be assessed as coherent with its claims. The difficulty with such a position is that it is based on a static notion of a particular approach. A technicist version of how to do things that is independent from time and space. I have seen how researchers have taken Pierre Bourdieu's articulation of how to study a 'field' in *Invitation to a reflexive sociology* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992[1992]) and used that as *the* way to mobilise Bourdieu in scholarship. This misses some of the larger aspects of Bourdieusian based scholarship and most importantly, Bourdieu's own position of not defining how research should be done forever more. But what are the implications of such approaches? If one is to build a research project around a 'how to do' approach, the outcome is a mapping of a terrain using imported intellectual resources. This is arguably not a problem, but it does leave the terrain and theorisation intact. It may be described in different language, and with some novelty, but not necessarily rethought. As a result, the prospect of theoretical intervention and seeing the research object in new ways is constrained, if not removed.

Prescriptive adherence to method is equally, if not more so, problematic. The unquestioning acceptance of a set of procedures for data generation and analysis may be popular with those seeking certainty in process, but can often lead to premature empirical work. With greater attention to process, the scholarly work around the research object and the relations of the researcher to the researched are overlooked or seen as peripheral. This prescriptive approach is built upon an entity perspective that enables the partitioning of scholarly work. This is where you hear the doctoral candidate talk about being up to 'writing up' as though the writing is separate to the research. Although much of the contemporary research training programmes in universities compartmentalise research, I want to argue that this partitioning and prescription is flawed.

In dividing research up into discrete parts to enable prescription – although this is often mobilised under the guise of being pedagogical, I do question why adopt a pedagogy that is responsible for learning something counter to the approach you are trying to teach – fails to engage with the interplay of theory and method. In other words, how theoretical dispositions, ontological and epistemological positions, are both product and producer of data and vice versa. It is inappropriate to make claims to the open nature of theory yet also provide a step-by-step guide of how to do research. Therefore, prescription only works, and is valid, if you believe in a static external world and the privileging of a set of procedures above all others. In contrast, the *relational* approach is non-prescriptive in its approach. It is more concerned with rigorous scholarship around a theoretical problem and the mobilisation of appropriate intellectual resources to engage with the empirical. As a result, it is not inclusive or exclusive of any particular approach. The key being does the work align with the key features of the *relational* programme concerning

the epistemological break with the everyday, the locating in time and space, and the absence of binaries for the purpose of productively thinking in new ways.

The lack of a prescriptive how to makes methodological books such as this one a challenge. If the work is too abstract to be meaningfully thought with, then the book is far too esoteric to be of value to all but a few like-minded scholars. On the other hand, if the book lacks sophisticated argument for the sake of ease of translation, then it lacks the degree of rigour that the book calls for. Getting the balance right is a challenge. But this is a challenge that I cannot answer. Rather, it is for the reader to make this call. What the *relational* programme I am arguing for does is provide an intellectual scaffold from which scholarship in educational leadership, management and administration can proceed with. Throughout this book I have articulated what *is* the *relational* approach and also what *is not* the *relational* approach. For some, this may be taken as an implicit, or even explicit, articulation of how to do a *relational* approach. However, for me, this is a very different approach. The *relational* research programme is a generative way of thinking about educational administration. The interpretation of what it is, and what it is not, is an ongoing – and enduring – question. This is why I cannot prescribe a how to, only to stress that theory is methodology and not separate entities.

SEES THEORY AS METHODOLOGY

The technicist research methodology courses of the contemporary university partition research into stages for pedagogical purposes. This often leads to an entity perspective of the scholastic enterprise, where literature, methods, data generation and analysis are all conceived of as individual, even if interdependent, elements. Throughout this book, I have demonstrated – hopefully with some success – that methodology is the enactment of theoretical resources through method. They are not, and cannot be, separated. It is not blind empiricism that brings us to the focus of our inquiries. Nor do we externally construct the research object. Theory is both product and producer of the scholastic enterprise, whether it is acknowledged or not. It is not a case of theory 'and' method, rather theory as methodology. The individual methods mobilised by a researcher are consistent with their ontological and epistemological position. The methods are consistent with the knowledge claims the researcher holds to be true. That being said, this is not to suggest that there are not contradictions in writing. Simplistic paradigmatic thinking, those built upon the division of quantitative and qualitative, can display such contradictions. The misguided belief that there are paradigm specific methods (e.g. quantitative – questionnaires; qualitative – interviews), makes a whole bunch of assumptions about the generation and analysis of data that do not necessarily hold up. It is quite possible that the use of interviews for data generation, that believed to align with the qualitative paradigm, can be analysed through a frequency analysis of words used as though the words reflect a static empirical reality. The counting of data is considered consistent with the quantitative paradigm. The result is a contested

space for paradigmatic thinking. The notion of mixed methods only goes part of the way to addressing this matter.

The *relational* approach to scholarship is just that, an approach to scholarship. As I have argued throughout this book, the scholastic enterprise is one of relations – relations between the researcher and the researched, and relations between the objects which constitute the generated scholarly narrative. The questions we ask, the theoretical resources we mobilise are all related. They cannot be partitioned and thought of as individual entities independent of one another. As a result, theoretical and methodological resources are not simply mapped on to a project but are generative of the project. This argument is not new, nor is it profound. However, it is problematic in a space where researchers (and potentially funders) have substantive vested interest in the research object. The argument here is simple, the methods mobilised are an extension of the researcher's theory of knowledge and vice versa.

FOR A RELATIONAL APPROACH

As an intellectual space, educational administration has a tendency – as to many disciplines – to provide only minority status or even othering of approaches which do not conform to the hegemonic position (Wilkinson & Eacott, 2013). With its status as an applied field, educational administration has for the most part, ignored scholarship that asks questions. The *relational* research programme I have built and defended in this book is a viable alternative for educational administration. It balances the rigour and robustness sought for legitimacy within the academy with a systematic focus on the organising of education. It stresses the process over the product giving it a dynamic relationship with temporality and socio-spatiality. In doing so, the *relational* approach models the perspective for which it argues. This attention enables a specific focus on the structured and structuring nature of administration in the social world. The *relational* is however but one approach of engaging with the dynamics of the social world in a rigorous and robust way for the advancement of scholarship. But it is one for which I believe holds substantive potential for contributing to our understanding of educational administration.

REFERENCES

Bates, R. J., & Eacott, S. (2008). Teaching educational leadership and administration in Australia. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 40*(2), 149-160.

Bates, R. J., & Eacott, S. (2009). Teaching educational leadership and administration in Australia. In H. M. Gunter & T. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Educational administration and history: The state of the field* (pp. 69-80). London: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (1992[1992]). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. [Originally published as *Résponses: pour une anthropologie réflexive* (Paris: Seuil).]

Calder, B. (1977). An attribution theory of leadership. In B. M. Staw & G. R. Salancik (Eds.), *New directions in organizational behaviour* (pp. 179-204). Chicago, IL: St. Clair.

Caldwell, B. J. (2012). Review of related literature for the evaluation of empowering local schools. Report to Empowering local schools section of the National school reform support branch

curriculum assessment and teaching group – Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations (June).
Clarke, S., & Wildy, H. (2010). Preparing for principalship from the crucible of experience: Reflecting on theory, practice and research. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 42*(1), 1-16.
Clarke, S., Wildy, H., & Pepper, C. (2007). Connecting preparation with reality: Primary principals' experiences of their first year out in Western Australia. *Leading & Managing, 13*(1), 81-90.
Clarke, S., Wildy, H., & Styles, I. (2011). Fit for purpose? Western Australian insights into the efficacy of principal preparation. *Journal of Educational Administration, 49*(2), 166-178.
Dinham, S. (2005). Principal leadership for outstanding educational outcomes. *Journal of Educational Administration, 43*(4), 338-356.
Dinham, S., Anderson, M., Caldwell, B., & Weldon, P. (2011). Breakthroughs in school leadership development in Australia. *School Leadership and Management, 31*(2), 139-154.
Donmoyer, R. (2001). Evers and Lakomski's search for leadership's holy grail (and the intriguing ideas they encountered along the way). *Journal of Educational Administration, 39*(6), 554-572.
Eacott, S. (2010). Bourdieu's strategies and the challenge for educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 13*(3), 265-281.
Eacott, S. (2011). Preparing 'educational' leaders in managerialist times: An Australian story. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 43*(1), 43-59.
Fay, B. (1994). General laws and explaining human behaviour. In M. Martin & L. C. McIntyre (Eds.), *Readings in the philosophy of social sciences* (pp. 54-110). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. London: Hutchinson.
Gorard, S. (2005). Current contexts for research in educational leadership and management. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership, 33*(2), 155-164.
Griffiths, D. (1959). *Research in educational administration: An appraisal and a plan*. New York, NY: Teachers College.
Griffiths, D. (1965). Research and theory in educational administration In W. W. Charters (Ed.), *Perspectives on educational administration and the behavioural sciences* (pp. 25-48). Engene, OR: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration.
Griffiths, D. (1985). *Administrative theory in transition*. Melbourne: Deakin University.
Gunter, H., & Thomson, P. (2009). The makeover: A new logic in leadership development in England? *Education Review, 61*(4), 469-483.
Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Goode, H. (2010). Successful school leadership in Australia: A research agenda. *International Journal of Learning, 17*(4), 113-129.
Immegart, G. L. (1975). *The study of educational administration 1954-1974: Myths, paradoxes, facts and prospects*. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University.
Ireland, R. D., Webb, J. W., & Coombs, J. E. (2005). Theory and methodology in entrepreneurship research. In D. J. Ketchen & D. D. Bergh (Eds.), *Research and methodology in strategy and management* (pp. 111-141). Sydney: Elsevier.
Leithwood, K. (2005). Understanding successful principal leadership: Progress on a broken foot. *Journal of Educational Administration, 43*(6), 619-629.
Leithwood, K., & Day, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Successful school leadership in time of change*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer-Kluwer.
Li, P.P. (2012). Toward an integrative framework of indigenous research: The geocentric implications of Yin-Yang balance. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 29*(4), 849-872.
Lingard, B., & Christie, P. (2003). Leading theory: Bourdieu and the field of educational leadership: An introduction and overview of this special issue. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 6*(4), 317-333.
Maton, K. (2008). Habitus. In M. Grenfell (Ed.), *Pierre Bourdieu: Key concepts* (pp. 49-65). London: Acumen.
Mulford, B. (2007). *Overview of research on Australian educational leadership 2001-2005*. Winmalee, NSW: Australian Council for Educational Leaders.

Ribbins, P. (2007). Leadership and management in education: What's in the field? *South African Journal of Education, 27*(3), 351-376.

Ryle, G. (1971). *Collected essays*. London: Hutchinson.

Smyth, J. (Ed.). (1993). *A socially critical view of the self-managing school*. London: Falmer.

Smyth, J. (2011). The disaster of the 'self-managing school' – Genesis, trajectory, undisclosed agenda, and effects. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 43*(2), 95-111.

Taylor, W. (1969). Issues and problems in training the school administrator. In G. Baron & W. Taylor (Eds.), *Educational administration and the social sciences* (pp. 97-123). London: The Athlone Press.

Thrupp, M., & Willmott, R. (2003). *Educational management in managerialist times: Beyond the textual apologists*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Tsui, A. (2004). Contributing to global management knowledge: A case for high quality indigenous research. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 21*(4), 491-513.

Waite, D. (1998). Editorial: on the occasion of the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 1*(1), 91-93.

Walker, W.G. (1964). Teaching and research in educational administration. *Journal of Educational Administration, 2*(1), 9-22.

Whetton, D. (2009). An examination of the interface between context and theory applied to the study of Chinese organizations. *Management and Organization Review, 5*(1), 29-55.

Wildy, H., & Clarke, S. (2008). Principals on l-plates: Rear view mirror reflections. *Journal of Educational Administration, 46*(6), 727-738.

Wildy, H., & Clarke, S. (2009). Using cognitive interviews to pilot an international survey of principal preparation: A Western Australian perspective. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 21*(2), 105-117.

Wildy, H., Clarke, S., & Slater, C. (2007). International perspectives of principal preparation: How does Australia fare? *Leading & Managing, 13*(2), 1-14.

Wildy, H., Clarke, S., Styles, I., & Beycioglu, K. (2010). Preparing novice principles in Australia and Turkey: How similar are their needs? *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 22*(4), 249-252.

Wilkinson, J., & Eacott, S. (2013). Outsiders within? Deconstructing the educational administration scholar. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 16*(2), 191-204.

CHAPTER NINE

SOME CONCLUSIONS

TOO SOON

In a book articulating and defending a research programme, any sense of a conclusion seems premature. Therefore, in this final chapter I am going to return to my original challenge and engage with what I was able to do. In particular, I have asked questions of educational administration as a scholarly space. In doing so, I have brought questions of epistemology and ontology to the fore. This has enabled the asking of questions about the philosophy, logic and empirical of educational administration. I have also raised questions about the pursuit of science in educational administration. In short, I have elaborated a coherent discussion from possibly fragmented discourses of contemporary educational leadership, management and administration thought and analysis to sketch an alternate research programme. In the introductory chapter I articulated my aim to:

– To break new ground methodologically for the 'scientific' study of educational leadership, management and administration.

I interpreted this aim widely and based my discussion on the following guiding questions:

– What are the large scale theoretical, and empirical, problems on which educational administration is based?; and
– How can we study them?

The recognition, but not separation, of the theoretical and empirical problem is a key move. Rather than privileging the empirical problem and overlaying that with theoretical resources, the *relational* research programme explicitly integrates the two, seeing them not as separate entities but as two sides of the one enterprise. In doing so, particular attention is paid to the construction of the research object and the relations between the researcher and the researched. This is why early chapters were devoted to problematizing the intellectual gaze of the educational administration scholar and asking questions of the contemporarily popular label 'leadership'. The epistemic split between subject and object that has pervaded science is rejected in the approach I am advancing. This is not to say I have dismissed the notion of science, instead, I call for a widening of what we have come to know as science. When the idea of a detached observer first emerged in the West during the 15th century it was a breakthrough in thought that paved the way for modern science and industrialised society (Berman, 1981). This separation

gave credibility to empirical research and allowed advances beyond the dominant theocratic ideology of the middle ages (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). In educational administration this has played out through the primary concern of third-person research. Publications report the so-called unbiased analysis of data, a phenomenon that is strictly separated from the researcher. Few, if any, still hold on to the belief in an independent external knowable reality. However, as Colin Evers and Gabriele Lakomski (1991) note:

> Ironically, however, the natural sciences go from strength to strength and, certainly over the last four hundred years, have been delivering knowledge hand over fist. Hardly any part of modern life remains untouched by the application or use of some aspect of natural science: for example, medicine, transport, and communications. So at a time when natural science has never been more successful in explaining and predicting phenomena and in enhancing our understanding of the world, paradoxically its methods and content are increasingly questioned or even denied in the social sciences. (p. vii)

As with Evers and Lakomski, who accept the various criticisms of empiricist epistemologies raised by the scope of alternate perspectives but argue that they do not seriously affect the value of science as a scholarly endeavour, I see the issue not as the need to reject science, but the need for a broader engagement with what it means to scientifically inquire. For the most part, the limitations placed on science in educational administration have been limited to an equating of positivism – or really logical empiricism – with science. There is little doubt that there has been, and continues to be, a recognition in the weaknesses of positivist versions of science. The *relational* research programme offers a resolution to this situation through the provision of a theoretical frame from which to base scholarship. It recognises the blurred boundaries between the researcher and the researched and provides the theoretical resources to engage with this. After all, I seek to pursue, and even increase, anchorage in a rigorous empirical science, which seems to me to represent a fundamental contribution of the work developed in the frame of this *relational* programme.

This is however not a straight forward case of replacing one master narrative with another. Such a move would be counter to my argument. I am not attempting to raise one perspective over others, nor am I suggesting that there is 'one true' variant of a relational approach to scholarship. That said, I would not have written this book if I did not believe there was substantial intellectually gain to be made from adopting the *relational* research programme as I have articulated it. What I am arguing is that the ontological emphasis of the *relational* approach is that educational leadership, management and administration cannot be known independently and outside of the scientific observer. Furthermore, from a *relational* perspective, educational leadership, management and administration is not a trait, behaviour, role, rather a phenomenon generated in relations between actors in time and space. In other words, the *relational* perspective focuses on situated – temporally and socio-spatially – actions. This represents a significant shift from content specific issues (e.g. strategic planning, improving outcomes – entities), as such content are not 'facts' of an objective reality but epistemic

constructs, to social practices. The move to a focus on situated practice is not consistent with traditional theory-building approaches and requires new standards for validity, reliability and trustworthiness that are often uncomfortable within entity based perspectives. Stability and certainty are not the goal nor conceivable. Conservative notions of validity are challenged when the idea of an independent scientific observer is rejected and the lines between subject and object blurred. Generalisability, a quintessential of scientific value, is de-emphasised in a temporally and socio-spatially grounded description. Not to mention that the scholarly practice that I have outlined in this text may be difficult to operationalise for some researchers given the paucity of methodological preparation in conventional university programmes. As I have noted in multiple places throughout this book, educational leadership, management and administration is an inexhaustible social activity. It is messy, dynamic and situated in time and space. Rather than attempt to overlay order and structure, this messiness is to be engaged with and the *relational* research programme is one way to do that.

Although it may appear that I am constructing – or outlining – a problem for which the *relational* programme solves, this is not a problem solving agenda. Instead, it is a problem posing project. What I see happening in the disciplinary space to which I pledge allegiance is a theoretical problem around legitimation. As a means of legitimising the social world, educational administration has sought to focus on relationships. These relationships however are thought of through an ontological complicity with administration and an entity based ontology. There is minimal attention to epistemology and ontology and a preference for practical and/or applied research. I see this as a missed opportunity. An opportunity for scholars to gain a more sophisticated understanding of world through building on, but in new directions, scholarship from the past but more importantly different research traditions and disciplines to bring them face-to-face with key problems in the here and now. To do so, I have sought to break new ground methodologically for the scientific study of educational leadership, management and administration. What this requires is attention to the large scale theoretical problems, such as the legitimation of the social world, and thinking through how they play out in empirical problems (e.g. principal autonomy). All of this is set within an agenda of how can we study them. This is what has been a driving force in the development of the *relational* approach articulated in this book. Sitting at the intersection of sociology, organisational studies, management sciences and educational administration, the *relational* research programme aspires to be a rigorous and robust empirical science grounded in time and space. With as much attention given to knowledge production as it is the understanding of practice.

While the world of educational administration has experienced massive change over the past five or six decades, the theories – despite their proliferation – that we mobilise to examine organisations have not experienced the same degree of epistemological and ontological development. That is, while educational leadership, management and administration as a disciplinary space has grown in size and significance over the past couple of decades, not to mention the rapid expansion of leadership preparation and development on a global scale, the

discipline finds itself in an increasingly challenged position. Not since the establishment of departments of educational administration have the boundaries of the discipline become so blurred. The rise of policy studies and the breadth of the sociology of education field, among others, have encroached on what was traditionally – and conservatively – educational administration's territory. There is growing criticism of educational administration researchers in their failure to develop coherent and progressive approaches to knowledge production that can influence and shape policy and practice. This comes alongside critique for the lack of scholarly robustness in educational administration studies. If not practically useful and not rigorous and robust, then educational administration is in trouble.

Disciplines with greater internal heterodoxy (e.g. sociology) are more open than those with stronger identity defining research traditions. The desire to be scientific – in the traditional sense – and of value to practice is a limitation of educational administration. If, as the current trend for inter-disciplinary scholarship would suggest, traditional disciplinary boundaries collapse (still a big if), then perhaps trying to be more like a conventional discipline is less important than it once was, and being at the crossroads is a productive identity to embrace and encourage. Karl Popper (1963) once said that disciplines are not distinguished by their respective subject matter but by the problems they define. For educational administration there are two key concerns: i) improving organisational performance; and ii) the preparation and development of administrators. These are teased out in many different ways, but essentially, these are the two central concerns of the discipline. Progress however has been slow. Despite countless models, frameworks and perspectives, educational administration has been able to overcome matters of inequities, gender, race, or at scale problematize the notion of performance. The complexity of the task at hand lends itself to broadening our approaches but also in not asking too much of scholarship. A question remains, how do we bring educational administration theory into direct contact with the key problems of contemporary times?

If educational administration is to flourish as a disciplinary space, then it needs means of providing unique voices on a diverse set of problems. This is why I argue for the need to focus on the theoretical problem and its empirical manifestation. Attention to the theoretical problem enables the avoidance of theory fetishism, technical paranoia or becoming too insulated and inward looking. As educational administration scholars we are located in a wider system of knowledge production. Our theories are influenced by our many links. Therefore, while I strongly defend the need to embrace, protect and teach our scholastic history (something that I believe is poorly done at scale – and the value of which is only seen as relevant to those aspiring to the academy rather than the pressing concerns of the practitioner, but that is an argument for another time and space), we must also expand our definition of foundational works if we are to capture the complexity of the contemporary conditions. As students of the social world, our target is constantly moving and changing. This dynamism is temporally and socio-spatially located.

What are the challenges that lay ahead? How does the *relational* research programme grow its own life and flourish in an academic environment prone to

faddism and quick doctorates? When research seminars and robust, rigorous debate is replaced by part-time candidates who are part of credential creep and faculty who are increasingly pressured to publish at both volume and in apparently 'quality' outlets? The test of a research programme is in its take up and dynamism while maintaining its core foci. The increasing growth of the Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Theory Workshop that I host annually is evidence that there remains a core group of internationally connected scholars centrally concerned with theoretical and methodological matters. This is despite the apparent apathy of many journals in the field to seriously engage with theory due to a preference for parallel monologues from logical empiricist projects. The path to full professor – in the British rather than US sense of the title – is no longer based on building and sustaining a research programme but whether one can attract large competitive funding and publishing in a small – and somewhat narrowly focused – set of journals identified as high impact or high quality. Giving the impression of being meritorious, such systems overlook the legitimation process and the discursive nature of scholarly work. This is where the *relational* approach is of worth.

The *relational* research programme is about rigorous and robust scholarship. It is concerned with the theoretical problem of the legitimation of the social world. This is a theoretical problem that plays out in many, if not all, empirical situations. It provides a set of theoretical resources for thinking through the construction and maintenance of the research object, asks questions of contemporarily popular labels, grounds those in time and space and rejects binaries such as individualism / collectivism and structure/agency. Most of all, the *relational* research programme is a productive space to theorise educational administration. It is less concerned with evaluation than it is describing the conditions in which contemporary action plays out. It does not require large scale funding nor does it have an implicit desire to 'scale up'. Most significantly, this is not the final word on the *relational* research programme. It is an ongoing intellectual exercise, one that if you will not join me on, I trust that you will at least support or follow from the sidelines.

REFERENCES

Berman, M. (1981). *The reenchantment of the world*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Bradbury, H., & Litchenstein, B. (2000). Relationality in organizational research: Exploring the 'space between'. *Organization Science, 11*(5), 551-564.

Evers, C. W., & Lakomski, G. (1991). *Knowing educational administration: Contemporary methodological controversies in education research*. London: Pergamon Press.

Popper, K. (1963). *Conjectures and refutations*. London: Routledge.

AUTHOR INDEX

SUBJECT INDEX