

TOWARDS A NEW INTERPRETATION OF
SCHOOL GOVERNORS' ROLES IN THE 1980s

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ABSTRACT

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The powers acquired by governors during the 1980s seem to have indicated expectations that governors would control and direct schools' managers. It is suggested instead, that governors developed covert functions predisposing them towards being supportive and protective of the principals and staffs of their schools. Existing education elites absorbed governors and prevented them from becoming contenders for power. Governors concurred with this.

The first of governors' covert functions has been termed consent. This confirmed principals' rights to leadership. Consent legitimated headteachers' centrality in policy determination and confirmed the rightness of policies selected by principals. Secondly, governors protect headteachers by providing a forum through which heads referred, and deferred, decisions. Governors also protected heads through deflecting criticisms away from them and towards government and parents. Governors were particularly protective of curricular policies, accepting the professional leadership of teachers concerning the content of education and thus, performing the function of educational protectionism.

The belief that governors should become more powerfully involved in school management arose from a renewed emphasis upon the value of accountability. School governing bodies became more representative to make this accountability a reality, but a fourth covert function of governors was to create the illusion of democracy rather than its reality.

The explanations for the development of covert functioning are searched for within a framework of structural, political imperatives. The thesis examines the extent to which governors' covert functioning was related to their legal position, their political resources and their political will. Their legal status gave them a powerful position as government but their modes of action made them more like pressure groups. To extend their influence, governors needed to have interests for which they had the political will to bargain and resources critical to the survival of their schools. In the 1980s, governors had neither.

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Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind? -
He much, the old man, who, clearest-soul'd of men,
Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen,
And Tmolus hill, and Smyrna bay, though blind.

But be his
My special thanks, whose even balanced soul,
Business could not make dull, nor passion wild;

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole.

Matthew Arnold - To A Friend, 1849

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"In a governor...the fountain of all excellent manners is Majesty; which is the whole proportion and figure of noble estate, and is properly a beauty or comeliness in his countenance, language and gesture apt to his dignity and accomodate to time, place and company; which, like as the sun doth its beams, so does it cast on the beholders ... a pleasant and terrible reverence"

Elyot, (1531), The Governor, II, ii

The changes in the composition of governing bodies, and the extension of their powers, between 1980 and 1990, have given governors a position from which they should be able to cast on their beholders the pleasant and terrible reverence which Elyot defined as characteristic of a governor.

The hypothesis on which this thesis is based, suggests instead, that governing bodies have developed a 'hidden curriculum' of covert roles which have predisposed governing bodies towards being supportive and protective of the principals and staffs of their schools. These existing education elites have absorbed governors and prevented them from becoming contenders for power in schools. The 'public curriculum' of governing bodies is their overt functions, i.e. those that are codified in the laws. These would seem to place upon governors, the expectations that they would control and direct their schools' managers. Governors' rights to be controllers arise from their being, overtly, democratically representative of the communities to which their schools are expected to be responsive. Covert

functioning, it is surmised, has restricted this representation to produce, what has been termed in this thesis, the illusion of democracy.

One way of distinguishing the two types of governors' functions, is to define overt functions as intentions, and covert functions as activities. Intentions have been described as meaning those functions which the participants think are the objectives of their organisations. Activities are those functions which the participants are observed to be performing (Gross,1969,p.284). Covert functions can also be thought of as unintended outcomes of activities (ibid,p.279) or, as the, usually, subconscious operations of participants (as in Hoyle's micro-political analyses,1982;1986). Covert functions can arise simply from being a governor, not necessarily from doing anything. Passive governors can be as functional as active ones. It is important to recognise that covert functioning can be subconsciously performed since this thesis does not intend to suggest a generally, instrumentalist interpretation. Its standpoint is better described as deterministic.

The subconscious perspective for covert functioning, can be described as:

"members' provinces of meaning...deep-seated interpretive schemes...[which have] shaped and constituted...organisational structures"
(Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood,1980,p.7)

This covert functioning produces a substructure, or, informal structure (ibid,p.2), which is only loosely

coupled to the intentions of the organisation (Weick,1976). The loose coupling enables some members of the organisation to dominate, notably those whose value preferences are supported by sectional interests (Ranson et al,1980,pp.7 & 8). Amongst school governing bodies, this thesis postulates that the group with the strongest, sectional interest is that of the educational professionals. Educational professionals are likely to have goals which they must achieve to survive and this distinguishes them from communal groups (Gross,1969). Communal groups have relationships which can survive with or without collective goals, which would seem to be true of governing bodies.

It is suggested that the terminology of covert functioning will contribute to the means of classifying governors' activities. Previous studies by McCarty (1971), Macbeth (1980a & 1980b) and Kogan (1984) have suggested alternative frameworks (Chapter 2) which have brought coherence to the otherwise undifferentiated lists of actions which governors are advised, or directed, to perform. This thesis offers an additional categorisation. The remainder of this chapter outlines how the thesis addresses and develops this categorisation.

RESEARCH OUTLINE

During the late twentieth century, there have been three influences which have particularly affected the development of the powers of school governors. First, there has been a movement towards more open, or more democratic, government,

which aimed to empower previously non-participant members of the polity. This empowerment was predominantly concerned with control of public services. It has encompassed such issues as the appointment of worker directors, the establishment of consumer councils and the returning of nationalised industries to private shareholding. A corollary of this individualised, citizen empowerment has been the growth of the corporate state in which pressure groups have gained a legitimised place in the policy making process. It has been suggested that, both in Britain and elsewhere, this empowerment has largely been initiated by, and permitted within, guidelines determined by central governments (Cooper,1989; Angus,1989; Cibulka,1989; Codd,1989; Whitehead and Aggleton,1986).

This opening of government to new participants, was intended to ensure that the services provided by the state were made more accountable to citizens' wishes. This became subsidiary, however, to the second major influence on the development of governors' powers, i.e. the desire to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness from investments in public services. The economic problems experienced by Britain, from the late 1960s, directed political debate towards whether or not, better 'value for money' might be obtained from the substantial public sums devoted to, for example, education. There were criticisms made that our economic decline was partly caused by our education system's inability to achieve standards comparable to those

reached by the Japanese, or the Germans. Since it was not feasible to respond to these criticisms, economically or politically by providing more money, an obvious solution was to direct, more appropriately, the spending of what money there was and to monitor how it was spent.

A third influence on governors' powers was the changes in the state's provision of education. For the future, the local authorities are no longer to be the main providers and directors of the education service. Commercial sponsorship is now encouraged and central government has resumed its role as a direct provider and controller of education. The new emphasis within the education system could be viewed as a movement from state provision, to state subsidy.

To accommodate these changes, governing bodies' powers and composition have also been altered. The three major Education Acts of the 1980s all affected governors and 1990 would, therefore, seem a reasonable point at which to assess how governors are using their increased powers. The first stage of this process of assessment required a review of existing studies of governing bodies and this provides the content of Chapter 2. This summarises descriptions of governors' roles which incorporate lists of the legal powers, rights and duties of governors. Chapter 2 concludes with a description of how these functions have been interpreted by governors, drawing on evidence arising from a survey of Leicestershire's governors undertaken for this research in 1986/87.

The context within which governors' have been given greater powers, was described briefly above. Chapter 3 extends this analysis. deliberate changes and for extendeds have been linked responsiveness of public institutions to both public wishes and economic imperatives. The development of this movement, from professional self-accountability, to lay monitoring through performance indicators, is discussed in Chapter 3.

The thesis suggests that the roles which governors have adopted are linked to the structures of the political systems within which they work and these are discussed in Chapter 4. The thesis attempts to avoid placing value judgements on governors' powers and to see them simply as functions of political systems. They are neither good nor bad but are functions that have to be performed within any government organisation.

Governing bodies can be seen as the basic cell of the macro-political system of education government, the other participants in which are central and local government. Within this frame, governors are the link to ensure that schools are responsive to the communities they serve, given that the governors are the closest of the three levels of government to those communities. Within the micro-political systems of schools, governors share responsibility for school management. They negotiate, and bargain, with the

other actors in the school's political system, to obtain the resources they need in order to carry out their responsibilities. In so far as governors are also at the boundary of the macro- and micro- systems, they can be compared with similar, inter-face, groups, such as boards of company directors.

These three frames provide the possibility of different perspectives which underpin the analysis of this thesis. The macro-system accords governors a legitimate place by law which delineates their overt functions. Governors possess a certain amount of autonomy and are able to bargain as one of several interested parties in a pluralistic system. Some interpreters of governors' functions see their autonomy limited by the state and by existing educational elites. Others envisage governors having to make subjective interpretations of their roles which micro-analysts would expect to be subconsciously chosen. This would support the suggestion, advanced by this thesis, that there exists a covert layer of governors' functions, subjectively, and largely subconsciously, chosen by governors and headteachers.

Chapters 6 through to 11, discuss this hypothesis that governors have covert functions. These functions are those of consent, protection, educational protectionism and provision of illusory democracy. The modes in which governors have operated their overt functions have resulted, in showing consent to headteachers and, thereby,

legitimizing principals' power to direct their schools.

Chapter 6 discusses this consent.

Another function of consent is to provide protection for headteachers, from the stresses of school management. Heads can gain such protection, it is surmised, by using governors for referral of decisions, for deflecting criticism from themselves and for avoiding stress through an emphasis on collective forms of management. Chapter 7 examines these possibilities.

Governors' consent and protection are particularly evident, it is suggested, in matters relating to the curriculum. The term, educational protectionism, has been used for this function which has been given separate treatment because of the central importance of the curriculum in schools. Chapter 8 seeks to ascertain the extent to which governors support professional interpretations of the curriculum. Further evidence to support all three of these covert functions is advanced in Chapter 9, which concentrates upon material from the governors' Annual Reports to, and Meetings with, parents.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, a major reason for changes in the overt powers of governors, and in the composition of governing bodies, was to extend democracy. It is argued, on the one hand, that there should be more populist representation in order to decrease the growing alienation of the people from the organs of government,

and, on the other hand, it is conjectured that increased enfranchisement increases alienation because only those already benefiting from the system become representatives (Jones and Ranson,1989). In addition, it has been suggested that any new groups enfranchised by the system become 'co-optated' into existing power elites (Bacon,1978). New groups are assimilated into supporting the existing rulers. Any extension of representation, therefore, provides an illusion of democracy. Chapters 10 and 11 investigate the applicability of these ideas to school governors.

To inform this investigation, Chapter 10 investigates the types of people who have become school governors. It discusses the extent to which governors replicate existing elites and/or, are representative of those who send their children to state schools. The information on which Chapter 10 was based arose from a survey, undertaken for this thesis, of Leicestershire's school governors in 1986/87. The results from this were compared with surveys in other areas and at different dates. Chapter 11 contains descriptions of the contacts which governors are able to make with their constituents in order to ensure that they know the views of those whom they represent. The encouragement given to new contenders to stand for election is also considered together with electoral turnouts.

Chapters 12 through to 16, investigate possible explanations for the development of covert roles for governing bodies. These relate to governors' modes of

operating which are first compared with those of pressure groups, in Chapter 12. Chapters 13 and 14 discuss factors which can affect the strength of particular governors, in terms of the groups whom they represent. It surveys the extent to which the sectional interests of governors are evident in their activities. To highlight what might be expected to be differential strengths, separate consideration is given to the elected and to the selected governors.

The final discussion of the hypothesis centres around the proposition that governors' have acquired covert roles because they do not have the resources, nor the will, to develop their overt powers. If a group within an organisation, wishes to become powerful, it must control resources critical to the survival of that organisation and must have personal capabilities to enable them to bid successfully for the resources held by others. Other actors will then be dependent upon them and are likely, therefore, to accede to their wishes. The critical resources for schools include finance, community power, knowledge and personality power and these are discussed in Chapters 15 and 16.

The conclusions to the thesis reassess the hypothesis and consider the possible developments in governors' roles during the next decade.

CHAPTER 2

SCHOOL GOVERNORS' ROLES-PREVIOUS STUDIES

During the last 15 years, while governors' powers and training have been growing, so has the literature on school government. It can be grouped into five themes. The first of these describes and analyses the roles of school governors. The second consists of surveys of governors' backgrounds and occupations and of governors' own views of their roles. Thirdly, there are Handbooks provided for the practical guidance of governors. These have been produced, mainly, by local authorities for their own governors. Some have originated from national bodies such as N.A.G.M. and, latterly, from several commercial publishers and from the D.E.S. Training materials for governors, and evaluations of these provide a fourth source of literature and finally, the Annual Parents' Reports and records of the Annual Parents' Meetings provided primary sources. Literature from each of these five themes is described below, together with the conclusions drawn from each of them about the roles of governors. The views which have emerged about these roles, provided the starting point for the analysis undertaken in this thesis.

DESCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSES OF SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

Very few studies relating to the period prior to the 1970s are available. One unpublished dissertation provides a brief, superficial, review of the history of secondary school governors (Brophy, 1983). Several of the handbooks

described below make brief reference to school governors' activities prior to this century (Mahoney,1988,p.1; Leonard,1988,p.1; Sallis,1988,pp.101-106).

The only published history of school governors is Gordon's study of the Victorian period (Gordon,1974). This reveals some similarities with the present concerning the functions of governors, the possibility of parent governors and the social composition of governing bodies. Since the 1988 Act, school governors have, largely, re-acquired the functions held by their Victorian counterparts, including, for example, their power to dismiss unsuitable staff, which, Gordon reports, was much used in the nineteenth century. The Cross Commission Reports, 1888, (on the Elementary Education Acts) welcomed the idea of parental participation, although they did not wish to see parents as the predominant element amongst managers, a view reiterated by parents' groups in the 1980s. Gordon's survey of the social composition of school managing bodies, showed predominantly middle class groups taking decisions about working class education. These decisions were taken within a framework of centralised control through a national curriculum, national examinations and rewards for good results, which left managers with relatively little discretion. This description might be termed applicable today. (Gordon's social survey is discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.)

The conception of modern studies of governors' roles can be found in Baron and Howell's research for the 1968 Royal Commission on Local Government in England. Prior to this there were only brief mentions of governors in other publications (e.g. Cole, 1956; Peschek and Brand, 1966). Cole, who was a councillor in London touches on her role as a governor and the importance of the link with the local authority. Peschek and Brand compare the division of powers in two L.E.As between their education committees and their governing bodies. They discuss a case in which a governing body, together with support from the Ministry of Education, forced an L.E.A. to take action in 1949, an activity which Leonard (1989, p.145) recommended to governors as their role for 1989.

Baron and Howell's work outlined the development of school governing since 1944. The authors interviewed 165 C.E.Os to see how their Authorities viewed the role of governors and, in addition, they consulted all school governors who were on the staff of London University, where the researchers were themselves employed, as they felt this was their most readily accessible group. From these interviews, a list was drawn up of what governors do, and some comparisons made amongst the roles of political appointees, university appointees and chairmen. Governors' relations with parents, teachers and heads were also discussed. The research was undertaken because it was felt that a reassessment of roles might have arisen with the growing size of l.e.as. It was

hypothesised that this might require greater devolution to schools, because pressure groups were wanting more part in political life generally, and because teachers were feeling sufficiently qualified to govern schools without lay intervention.

Baron and Howell looked to the possibility of extending the powers of governing bodies as being part of a move to an increase in participatory democracy generally. They recommended, however, that governors' powers should not be increased because governing bodies were a:

"potentially disruptive and unpredictable element" (Baron and Howell, 1968, p.194).

Baron and Howell also felt that governing bodies should operate as advisors to schools, filtering local views. They proposed other changes, including suggestions that the majority of governors should be other than l.e.a. nominees, that there should be opportunities for chairmen to meet and exchange views, that there should be encouragement of interest in school government, both nationally and locally, by the radio and the press and that the names of governors and explanations of their functions should be published. The 1980, 1986 and 1988 Acts have implemented all of these.

The role of school governors was briefly discussed by Birley (1970), who concluded that their functions were ambiguous. He saw them as pushing the claims of their schools to the l.e.as and acting as a bridge to the local community. Both of these overt roles are still cited as

important for governors in the 1980s and 1990s. He also raised one possibility for a covert function (though he did not himself use that terminology) in suggesting that governors should protect heads from the l.e.a. It is suggested in this thesis (Chapter 7) that this protectiveness remains a function of governors and extends more widely than Birley anticipated.

Interest in governing bodies grew with the Taylor Report (1977). The Report concluded that governors were insufficiently representative of their schools' communities and, therefore, the composition of governing bodies had to be changed. The Taylor Committee viewed the representative nature of governing bodies in sectional terms, a view which seems at odds with the operation of governing bodies then and now, and with the views advanced in handbooks for governors. This issue is explored further in Chapter 12,13 and 14 below.

The flow of descriptive literature increased following the Taylor Report. Joan Sallis, who was a member of the Taylor Committee, published her reactions very shortly after the report (1977). She discussed the issues of accountability, why there had been pressures to change the system and what were the roles which governors played within it.

Bacon's research on Sheffield's governing bodies was published shortly after the Taylor Report (1978). He delineated governors' roles as those of deflectors of

pressure from the l.e.as, of channels for community accountability, of inspectors and as legitimators of policies. The first and the last of these indicated two of the covert functions which form the subject of this thesis, although Bacon did not use the term, 'covert functions'. Bacon felt that the, possibly unconscious, objective of extending governors' powers had been to absorb potential contenders for power into the system, to avoid their operating outside it to the detriment of education. The action had, therefore, resulted in the system remaining oligarchic. Bacon concluded that the movement to enhance governors' powers might not extend any further because it was not a genuinely grass roots demand but was a policy pushed from the top.

Bacon's book was primarily concerned with Sheffield L.E.A. and it was not until 1984 when Kogan's major work on governors was published that a generalised study was available. Kogan's material arose from a comprehensive study over three years, of eight governing bodies from four local authorities. The study set governing bodies within the general frame of accountability. The work suggested four models as descriptions for the behavioural tendencies of governing bodies. These models were termed, advisory, (concerned with the school but having a secondary interest in testing and legitimating the work of professionals), mediating (bringing together different interests and negotiating between them), supportive (looking outward from

the school to advance its interests) and accountable (looking to see if the school was performing satisfactorily). This raised the possibility, for the first time, of a framework for analysing governors' roles.

In Baron and Howell (1966), Bacon (1978) and Kogan (1984), reference was made to the effects of the backgrounds of school governors but clearly more information needed to be gathered. This was one of the reasons for the social survey undertaken for this research. The social status of governors could be regarded as one of their resources. Other possible resources, and constraints upon their use, were discussed by Whitaker (1986). He described constraints on governors' actions because of their lack of knowledge, their lack of control over agendas and meetings and over the views of headteachers. He also discussed the bases for governors' legitimacy.

There has been some useful research on governing bodies in other countries which helped illuminate themes for this study. Other countries in Western Europe, and other Anglo-American polities, have introduced changes in school government which are similar to changes made here. The results of developments elsewhere provided some useful comparisons although there are some differences in contexts. Bacon (1981), for example, detailed the general history of lay participation and then included studies of school government in Canada, U.S.A., England, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany, Italy and

Scandinavia. Bacon concluded that his views arising from his earlier study of Sheffield were right. Despite changes in school governing bodies in many countries, authority remained with their educational elites and there had been a movement away from giving governors real power.

Macbeth's study (1984) gave an outline of the systems of school government in the member states of the E.E.C. describing how governors saw their roles variously as trustees, delegates, stakeholders, representatives or participants. The research classified governors' roles into deciding, ensuring, advising and informing which, like Kogan's models, (1984) did help to clarify their activities in comparison with the long and usually undifferentiated lists that characterise governors' handbooks. Effectiveness was assessed in relation to heads, teachers, parents and pupils and brief mention was made of the social background of governors.

Macbeth had previously described Scottish School Councils in depth in 1980. He titled the study, Policy Making, Participation or Irrelevance? which echoed Bacon's views. Although the structure and powers of Scottish School Councils were not identical to those of English and Welsh governing bodies, they were sufficiently similar to make some comparisons possible. Macbeth's conclusions on the roles of Scottish School Councils were that they lacked involvement in issues of major educational concern. Macbeth's suggestions on the training needed by

governors, however, indicated an approach which contained elements not usually incorporated in English governor training, such as the philosophy of participation, how to get to know other groups on one's governing body and how to make best use of the P.T.As.

A further study of Scottish School Councils was made in 1989, after their powers had been extended. The research described the work of the school boards in Dumfries and Galloway, which were piloting the extended powers shortly to be acquired by all Scottish boards (Munn and Brown,1989; Munn and Holroyd,1989). Munn and Holroyd concluded that the major roles played by the governors were to support their schools, to express parents' viewpoints and to help refurbish their schools (1989,p.27). Governors recorded considerable frustration because they felt they had achieved nothing (ibid,p.29). Munn and Holroyd predicted that these feelings of inadequacy might result in governors becoming:

"disillusioned and disheartened and [the]
boards will fail" (ibid,p.35).

The solution would be for boards to seek greater powers (ibid,p.36). (The Scottish boards lack the financial power which English governors will have once LMS has been implemented.)

Italian school government seems to be following the pattern predicted by Bacon for English governing bodies, in his 1978 Sheffield study. Corradini's paper (1983) on Italian

experiences, indicated that the accountability movement in Italy had expressed itself in demands for greater participation in school government and for greater powers for governors. This movement quickly waned, however, partly because, Corradini suggested, the demands had never been the result of popular requests.

The powers and composition of American school boards have similarities with both English local authorities and school governing bodies so commentaries on their roles can offer some comparative reflections. Iannaccone and Lutz, for example, provided a useful survey (1970). Stelzer's study, (1975) which looked at the process of co-optation, is valuable. He used the word 'co-optation' in its political sense of absorbing potential conflict bases which was the same interpretation as that adopted by Bacon in his 1978 Sheffield study. McCarty's and Ramsey's American study in 1971 delineated four models as categorisations for school board functions. Their definitions were a mixture of descriptions of the structuring of activities (factional, pluralistic) with descriptions of the modes of performance (sanctioning, dominated).

Within this genre of descriptive studies, are a number of studies concerning the roles of the teacher and parent governors specifically. Golby (1985a), Beavin (1987) and Perks (1987) discuss teacher governors and their research has been utilised in Chapter 13 below. Beattie (1985), Hammond (1986) and Cullingford (1986) considered parental

involvement in schooling generally as well in school government in particular.

Beattie's work (1985) described the recent history of the movement for parental involvement, finding the same factors arising in all five of the countries of Western Europe included in his research. (France, Germany, Italy, England and Wales). From the late 1960s, he saw traditional elites as having struggled to maintain control of power, which had become increasingly difficult because of deteriorating economic circumstances. They had retained power through administrative devolution, and through extensions of offers of power sharing to new groups. This had left the traditional power structure unaltered because extending the numbers of groups incorporated into the power structure, legitimated the existing structures.

This view accorded with that of Bacon (1978) but Beattie did not share Bacon's pessimism because Beattie perceived another theme, i.e. that developments in school government additionally arose because of a wider vision that more democracy would generate more democracy, i.e. the best way for people to learn to think for themselves is to think for themselves. Beattie felt that governments could see that dialogue with governors could produce better solutions to problems and encourage more support for schools. Parents could see that, in order to express their views usefully, they needed access to sources of information and knowledge of how to present their cases in appropriate ways.

Beattie's wider vision was founded both in the views of parents themselves and in those of the government. He concluded, however, that parents had become disillusioned on finding that little real power was devolved to them. There was some element of hope, Beattie maintained, because the relationship of the political system to new participants was symbiotic, with each dependent on the other to varying degrees. He did not develop this into a discussion of the degrees of dependence and here a resource analysis was felt to be helpful in extending this (Chapters 15 and 16 below).

Beattie optimistically concluded that:

"Parent participation may develop more dynamically and interestingly, and have a greater impact on education than many 'professional parents' presently think" (1985,p.237).

He was not sure how this would develop. Beattie felt it was too soon to judge the outcome of such a young movement to change the power relationships in society but he tended to the view that governing bodies would support traditional elites in power.

Hammond (1986) reiterated Beattie's views since he indicated that the relationship between the professionals and the laity was not much of a partnership despite legislative changes. Possibilities of creating the more effective role hoped for by Beattie were reported in Davies (1986). She described one way in which governors might become innovators. This followed her own establishment

of a school policy group in her school, separate from the governors, comprised of all staff and any parents who wanted to attend (rather similar to the French Conseil d'Ecoles). This did take an active part in decision making although the success of this participation might have rested as much on the willingness of teachers to accept parents' involvement as on any particular form of structure adopted for this decision taking. Taylor's study of accountability (1983) foreshadowed Beattie in suggesting that governors could more effectively carry out their functions with improved communications with their electorate.

The sense of unfinished business which permeated Beattie's book was also found in Kogan's chapter on parents and school governing bodies in Cullingford (1985). As well as repeating some of the findings of his major research project, Kogan commented on the 1984 Green Paper, Parental Influence at School. He concluded that school governing bodies had not been able to function very effectively, that D.E.S. proposals did not always accord with the results of his research but that the proposals of the Green Paper represented an important stage in England's political development. Kogan suggested that there was a collective searching for better devices for representational involvement (a view with which Hirst concurred in 1988).

SURVEYS OF GOVERNORS' BACKGROUNDS, OCCUPATIONS AND ROLES

Gordon's study of nineteenth century school managers (1974), included an analysis of their social backgrounds, as did Bacon's research on Sheffield's governing bodies in the 1970s (1978). Surveys of governors' backgrounds and occupations since then have included, Golby and Brigley(1988), Munn and Brown(1989), N.F.E.R.(1989b), Northants.(1989) and Thody(1987b & 1989c). The social analyses of these surveys have been used in developing the ideas in Chapter 10 which details the contents of the surveys.

Some of these surveys, and some of the descriptive works cited above, included questioning governors about how they, themselves, interpreted their roles. The responses were broadly similar from them all and the results from the research undertaken in Leicestershire (Thody,1987b) for this thesis are outlined here as typical of governors' comments on their functions. In this particular survey, governors were asked to describe their roles in their own terminology. Many governors took considerable trouble to provide detailed answers, as just one example illustrates:

"Equal with all the governors, putting the interests of school and pupils first, optimising the effectiveness, independence and efficiency of management. Implementing duties and responsibilities listed in the Instruments and Articles of Government, ensuring availability of resources and facilities to enable efficient fulfilment of the school's aims and objectives; supporting the staff and head with direct school experience of good practice and with constructive criticism, whilst protecting professional independence of

the head and staff. Representing the community interests in the school and, as a parent representative, providing and enhancing school/home links and fostering relationships; giving conscious commitment to creating the right environment to begin formal education for present and future generations and supporting the school's development and welfare"

The role descriptions in this survey, provided from almost 2,000 responses, showed certain commonalities. These are summarised below:

TABLE 1-GOVERNORS' VIEWS OF THEIR ROLES

1. Advise on curriculum,buildings, staffing, discipline	21%
2. Support/encourage head & staff	12%
3. To put childrens' view	10%
4. To represent parents	8%
5. Liaise with those outside school. Bring in outside ideas	8%
6.To take an interest in the school/take part in school activities	8%
7. To represent teachers	7%
8. Not sure of role	4%
9. To represent the community	3.5%
10.Make policy,manage the school	3%
11.Obtain resources from the l.e.a.	3%
12.To prevent party politics on governing bodies	3%
13.To see that school is happy; maintain morale	2%
14.To represent the Church	2%
15.To check that school meets legal obligations and govt. policies	1.5%
16.To represent non-teaching staff	1%
17.To see resources are used efficiently	1%
18.Public relations	0.75%
19.To represent headteachers	0.25%

At the time of this survey, the advisory role over curriculum, staffing, buildings and discipline was the one given most prominence in the Leicestershire's governors' handbook, so it was not surprising to find that it was the role most often cited, especially as it offered governors

something very specific on which to concentrate their efforts. Some governors said they would only give advice when requested to do so and, although they stated that they were not to be regarded as "rubber stamps", a considerable number indicated that their principal function was to support the head and the staff. One response declared:

"100% support to the head and staff...
in the difficult task of running the school"

The difficulty a school might have in being responsive to all the views of governors, was illustrated in the width of attitudes to the curriculum that the responses on the advisory role indicated. A few extracts show the variety:

"I hope to ensure that the children...are afforded every opportunity to take part in multi-cultural activities"

"I pray regularly for the school and the staff for God's guidance in the decisions we make and I must do my best to see that a caring, loving and Christian attitude prevails within the school"

"To see that the school performs its primary task of educating the pupils to the best of their ability and its secondary task of producing caring citizens"

"To see that [the education] is best calculated to turn out well-rounded citizens"

"To see equal distribution of resources amongst academic, cultural and sporting facilities"

"To maintain academic standards"

Governors were very aware of their role in providing links for schools to the community outside. This was indicated in the following response:

"A school is the centre of the community. It gives a sense of purpose and direction. Outside of that community, there is a larger one in which we are all members. Schools and schooling should not be left to the professionals and the skills of the professional teacher should be harnessed to meet local needs"

In liaising with outsiders, governors generally felt they should adopt the role best encapsulated in the phrase used in one response, i.e., the 'honest broker'.

With the exception of Church representatives, governors did not see themselves as putting sectional views to their schools, although some suggested that each governor should have a particular interest in which each could specialise. A Parish Council nominee reversed the outside representation role by stating that her job was to tell the Parish Council if the school had needs with which the Council could help. A university nominee was unsure of whether or not he had a sectional, representative role:

"I suppose as a university representative, I'm supposed to provide views, expertise and help in the field of academic standards but my duties have never been explained"

Another university nominee had visited her Vice Chancellor for advice on appointment, but was told that the university had no views on what role the governor should play.

Very occasionally, a sectional view was expressed, such as the governor who saw his role as:

"To represent Wycliffe branch Labour party"

Parent governors saw themselves as representing parents' views but so did many non-parent governors. There was

desire to express parents' concerns about inadequate staff, resources or buildings and to discuss these anxieties in order to avoid any escalation of potential disputes.

Teacher governors are in a minority on governing bodies but there were many non-teacher governors who appreciated that their role was to protect teachers:

"To be vigilant and alert to...the stresses and strains that [teaching] disturbed children can bring for the staff"

"I like to feel that the teaching staff consider me as a friend...who is available whenever the need arises"

The teacher governors themselves interpreted their role as principally being to provide professional experience and advice to the governing body. Some indicated that, in doing so, they would never express a view contrary to that of the head, but one gave a different perspective:

"I give a different view to the head's. I provide the governors with views that can't appear in the head's report"

Some governors felt that their main aim was to achieve that which Leonard (1988,p.145) envisages as an important role for them in the 1990s, i.e. to pressurise the l.e.as to obtain resources for their schools. Hence, one governor was willing to support the head:

"in any conflict with County Hall...provided that the head has persuaded the majority of [the governors] of the righteousness of his case"

Those who cited this as one of their roles, were, nonetheless, very realistic about their chances of success in persuading the l.e.a to help their schools. One wrote of his feelings of "powerlessness" as the politicians failed to provide the income needed to repair the school. Another governor stated that one had to bear in mind the difficulties of the l.e.a. when pressing for special consideration for one's own school; the l.e.a, he said, had to ensure equitable distribution of resources for all schools.

There were some interesting examples of the ways in which governors interpreted their role of becoming involved in the life of the school and participating in school events. One had invigilated examinations during the teachers' dispute. Others were running the community coffee bar, (the proceeds from which went to increase school funds), taking assemblies or teaching French on a voluntary basis. There were some who attended the usual prize givings, concerts and sports' days, although one stated he did not wish to be seen as a:

"mere provider of raffle prizes".

This contrasts with the governor who had donated prizes to the school, "after consultation with the headmaster".

Many reported on visits being part of their role. The format of these visits varied from a formal, buildings' inspection, to informal chats with the children and pupil and staff shadowing.

One perspicacious governor defined the role as being,
"to guard against centralisation",
but it would seem that governors have not achieved that.

Some of the survey respondents recorded their dissatisfaction with the role. One described it as "increasingly frustrating", which was the same view as that made by Scottish governors four years later (Munn and Holroyd, 1989, p.35). The frustrations did not all arise from lack of resources, or lack of powers, but also from the behaviour of fellow governors, whom one respondent criticised for their:

"party politics, self-glorification, refusal to retire, long service as chairs; parent governors are also too personal and not objective"

The general conclusions reached by the governors about their roles ranged fairly widely:

"90% of the time, I'm not needed"

"Most of us would value the opportunity of doing more for the school without impinging on matters which are rightly within the jurisdiction of the head and staff"

"Any governor should strive to be level headed, fair minded, cheerful, a good liaison person with a real determination to preserve all that's good in the school and to improve matters where necessary and possible. what any school needs is a mixture of angels and saints, with hard working, sensible and practical people. I reckon I belong in the second category"

GOVERNORS' HANDBOOKS

Official handbooks

Most local authorities issued their own handbooks which were given to new governors on appointment, together with the rather more legalistic Instruments and Articles of Government. The handbooks were uniformly bland and, generally, extremely cautious in defining the governors' roles. One wonders, for example, what a new governor would have made of the statement in Leicestershire's Handbook, that governors' powers over the curriculum are vague and "deliberately" so.

The amount of information which local authorities chose to include in their handbooks varied widely. ILEA, for example, had very detailed and extensive guides designed for different types of schools. In contrast, Berkshire had a very neat, pocket-sized guide which asked, and made a good attempt at answering, the query most often raised by governors:- "How can I be an effective governor?". Leicestershire's Handbook came between these two extremes, offering three pages of general guidance covering everything with which governors might be involved, followed by a fairly bulky, and detailed, account of precise powers over, for example, buildings, staffing, and multi-cultural policies. This larger section was clearly for reference only, as were most of these guides. No-one would presumably want to read through all the details of their precise powers until they became relevant, although the

chairpersons would need to have been aware of all of them. The relative unimportance of the Handbook was illustrated by the fact that Leicestershire's was out of print for three years. No new governors received copies although this was the period during which many parent and teacher governors were first appointed.

The general impression gained from these handbooks, is that governors' roles were unclear. Leicestershire's Handbook, for example, which was issued just before the 1986 Act was passed, concluded that few areas of governors' responsibilities were "clear cut". The Handbook instructed governors that they had to inspect their schools' buildings and report on these, periodically, to the L.E.A.. Governors were also advised that they could determine the use of school premises out of school hours. Beyond these two functions, the Handbook indicated that there was a lack of clarity about the meaning of governors' powers to direct the conduct and curriculum of the schools, and about the overlap between the duties of heads and those of governors. The Handbook suggested that governors should be informed and knowledgeable so that they could *advise their* principals, but governors also had to understand:

"the delicate balance and relationships"
(Leics. Handbook, 1986, p.2)

between all the parts of the system of education government. They must:

"form an essential link between the school and the community...They may act as a brake...against action which may be too hasty or sweeping...[they] will act as a moderating influence" (ibid,p.3)

The Leicestershire Handbook concluded that it was difficult to state, categorically, what governors should do because:

"every school, and every governor, is different" (ibid,p.1)

and it was important to preserve these differences.

Since the Handbook was published in 1986, there have been national moves to standardise the education service through increased centralisation. This has been reflected in the centralisation of Handbooks. In 1988, the D.E.S. issued every governor with a reference guide to their powers. This was produced as a loose leaf file with the recommendation that local authorities should produce their own local supplements. The D.E.S. Handbook provides a clear exposition of governors' rights and duties but:

"it [does not] try to explain how governors carry out their duties, since the organisation of training is a matter for the l.e.a." (D.E.S.,1988c,1.1)

This appears to be a non-sequitur unless it implies that the role is to be determined by the training. If that is the case, then it would seem to indicate that there should be variations locally in interpretation of governors' powers. The only other reference to governors' roles which the D.E.S. guide contains, is the encouragement to governors to work closely with each other and with their principals.

Non-official handbooks

The various, commercially produced, governors' handbooks, offer the same descriptions of governors' legal powers as do the l.e.a. and D.E.S. publications but they also aim to provide the role guidance which the official booklets eschew. The major authors of books in this group are Joan Sallis(e.g.1979,1980a,1980b,1982), Barbara Bullivant (1974,1979,1988), Burgess and Sofer(1975,1985), Wragg and Partington(1980), Harding(1987), Mahoney(1987) and Leonard(1989). All these have the advantage of readability compared with the local authority and D.E.S. handbooks and some, like Bullivant(1985) and Harding(1987) are designed as distance learning texts. Collectively, one might apply to all of these Handbooks, the reviewer's comments on Barbara Bullivant's 1988 book:

"sensible, down-to-earth and contrives cleverly to give guidance on the governor's job...I commend it wholeheartedly as a training manual for the tiro governor"
(Education,20/1/89.p.57).

All these books cover roughly the same ground as the local authority handbooks. The subjects usually include meeting procedures, what to do on visits, selection and appointment of staff and discipline and suspensions. Various topics are then added according to the interests of the authors.

Sallis, for example, generally includes some emphasis on the roles parent governors can play. Burgess and Sofer discuss accountability of governors to the appointing l.e.a.; this accountability is stressed even for the

elected parents and teachers, although Burgess and Sofer point out that governors are free to criticise the l.e.a. Elected parent governors are reminded that they are representatives of parents, rather than delegates for them. Bullivant includes background on local and central decision making processes and this topic is also included in a guide published by the Mid-Essex Association for the Advancement of State Education (undated) which is one of the better guide books produced. Brooksbank and Revell (1981) describe the context of school government and provide practical advice on matters such as school transport, suspensions and the Local Commissioner for Administration.

The collective view on governors' roles which emerges from these books is that, firstly, there is much uncertainty about the direction in which governors should proceed and, secondly, that they should proceed with caution in developing power sharing with headteachers.

Harding, for example, states that governors must:

"make policy decisions and recommendations within rules set out in their Articles of Government...Unfortunately the exact nature of their powers and functions is somewhat obscure" (Harding, 1987, pp.87 & 88)

Bullivant's suggestions were that governors should:

"bring common sense to their task...[in] the best interests of the pupils" (1988, p.7)

In her chapter entitled, 'Who makes the decisions?', she reminds governors that headteachers have always dominated school policy making. There is no reference made to

governors sharing this policy making power with heads and the governors' rights to be involved in schools, arise, it is stated, because one of their functions is to be:

"the local representatives of the l.e.a."

(Bullivant,1988,p.23)

(This comment was directed at all governors, not just the l.e.a. appointed governors.)

Mahoney's 1988 guide aims to provide governors with the knowledge they need in order to activate their powers. He is not directive on what their role should be, but stresses that it is important for governing bodies to discuss what roles they should be playing. Mahoney strongly supports the view that governors should be active participants, suggesting, for example, establishing working parties and making:

"frequent, well planned and purposeful visits"

(p.90).

He reminds governors that, in respect of writing the Annual Report, they:

"have a strong claim to assume responsibility"

(p.108).

Despite the views above, Mahoney concludes by inferring that the governors' role is best summarised as being to take an informed stance on educational issues and to be supportive of teachers in these, very difficult, times.

Leonard's book (1989) has the advantage of being the first guide published since the 1988 Act which formalised so many of the governors' powers. He predicts that:

"the task faced by a governing body in the 1990s is to be very different from what it has been in the past" (ibid,p.135).

Despite this statement, the roles he suggests are little different from those proposed in the pre-1988 handbooks. Like Mahoney, Leonard feels it is important for a governor to be knowledgeable and to work as a team with fellow governors (Leonard,1989,p.22; Mahoney,1987,p.16). The purposeful visits suggested by Mahoney, are translated by Leonard into practical suggestions for becoming involved in classroom activities. Like the earlier writers, Leonard stresses the importance of being appreciative of teachers and emphasises, strongly, that the governors' role is not to be that of an inspector (p.22).

The final section of Leonard's book has a title that presages new developments in the governors' role; its heading is, The governing body as a driving force. In this section, governors are directed to use their:

"full power and influence at LEA level where matters are beyond the school's capability to solve and not towards intervention in the school...it is not in the interests of either party,...that governors will be attempting to take over the detail of the day-to-day running of the school" (Leonard,1989,p.145)

This sounds like the roles suggested in the pre-1988 handbooks but, as Leonard states in his companion study for headteachers, of the 1988 Act:

"In practice, although [the head's role] may appear to be restricted by the introduction of a new tier of management, the power of the head is more likely to increase" (Leonard,1988,p.104).

Sectional handbooks

Within the handbook section, are a few guides issued for particular groups of governors. Publications for specialist groups are limited, which may indicate that sectional interests are not supposed to be encouraged, a view discussed below in Chapters 12, 13 and 14. Amongst these handbooks are, for example, the Socialist Educational Association's guide for Labour Governors (1982) and the Labour Party's own Advice Notes for School Governors (1981). The N.U.T. issued hints for teacher governors after the 1980 Act. Haig's 'The School and the Parent' (1975) could also be classified within this group, although it relates to parental involvement in general rather than to the role of parent governors. Industry Matters produced a set of very well designed cards (1988) specifically for governors from the business community. These cards provide very succinct guides to the powers and functions of governing bodies and the governors' roles are defined as:

"To SUPPORT the school - To INFORM the
school - To INFLUENCE the school" (Card 1 - sic)

The cards also suggest activities in which business governors might feel best able to become involved, such as speaking at careers conventions, participating in mock interviews, helping establish mini-enterprises or offering work placements (Cards 11 and 12). There is no discussion of power-sharing with heads.

All these sectional guides conveyed the same message as the general handbooks, i.e. that governors should be supportive

of their schools and cautious in any investigatory activities which they might wish to undertake. The only guide to suggest a different approach was the 'Wreckers' Charter' produced for Trotskyite governors (Mahoney, 1988, pp.228-230). This advised governors to undermine the head, to encourage factionalism in governors' meetings and to create a fifth column amongst staff.

TRAINING MATERIALS AND EVALUATIONS

Training materials can show first, what assumptions there are about governors' roles. What is selected for inclusion is a response to how the providers expect governors to act. Secondly, training materials are important because they add to the resources available to governors and can persuade governors to interpret their roles in particular ways.

The Open University course, *Governing Schools*, (P970), led the way in the production of training resources. As well as descriptive material, the course included exercises, videos and audio cassettes which guided governors towards roles in monitoring schools, choosing staff, advising at meetings and liaising with the community. *Although the course is now out-of-date*, its videos are still widely used and it was the model for much that followed.

George(1984b) has evaluated this course, looking at the type of students recruited and how the materials were used by both individuals and groups. Scattered throughout George's book were observations on governors' roles, and

these recorded reactions to the ambiguities and general ineffectiveness of governors' roles.

A much smaller study than George's was made by Gent and Mahoney(1983). This described the evaluation of Leicestershire's first courses, utilising questionnaires to elicit views on what governors felt they had gained from the course and to obtain information on what type of governors were attracted to the courses according to age, sex, type of appointment and years of service.

Just as Bacon's was the first major study of school governors' roles, so he also provided what were, probably, the first governors' courses and an evaluation of these both in his book(1978), and in an earlier article(1974). Bacon found that governors wanted to know what their powers were, wanted to acquire a knowledge of the jargon of education and learn about education finance and administration. He discovered that governors were largely unaware of techniques they might employ to manipulate meetings and lacked confidence in themselves as decision takers. His courses were designed to meet those needs and according to the evaluation, were reasonably successful in doing so though Mann(1975) took a rather more cautious view of the outcomes.

The National Association of Governors and Managers has produced a variety of training materials. They regard training as best carried out through simulation exercises

and have produced several scenarios covering issues such as how much money schools should allocate amongst budget heads and how to short list and interview staff. Simulations also form the basis of the Training Package(1986) produced by the S.E.O., and the N.A.H.T. Joan Sallis also suggested simulations for training(1982). Cambridgeshire produced a simulation concerning Pegworth, a mythical primary school faced with various problems for its governors to solve. Some of the other materials produced for local and national courses are discussed further in Chapter 16 below. This also includes details of the main comparative evaluations which have been undertaken, N.C.C.,(1986), N.F.E.R.(1989b) and D.E.S.(1988) and an assessment of the messages about school governors' roles which these training materials have purveyed.

Since the 1986 and 1988 Acts, the training materials available have greatly extended. These include the handbooks discussed above and many video and audio cassette courses (e.g.B.B.C.,1989; Devon C.C.,1988; Focus in Education,1988; Forum T.V.,1989; D.E.S.,1989). The effect of this increase on governors' resources of knowledge is assessed in Chapter 16 below.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Some of the evidence for the functions suggested for this thesis was obtained from governors' Annual Reports to parents and from records of the Annual Meetings with

parents. Those obtained were from schools in three L.E.As, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, and the schools concerned are listed in the bibliography.

When the 1986 Act introduced the requirement that there should be these Reports and Meetings, governors were apprehensive about them and uncertain of the need for them. Since then, the apprehension has largely disappeared but the uncertainty remains. The roles which governors envisage for themselves have not been seen to be enhanced by these Meetings because of the paucity of parental attendance. This very paucity does, however, illustrate the covert functions which governors perform, as Chapter 9 below, suggests.

Evidence from the Annual Reports and Meetings has been selected because these were new aspects for governors' roles introduced by the 1986 Act. These requirements within the Act aimed to ensure greater accountability of schools to their communities, presumably because they would serve as a means whereby questions, comments and criticisms could be raised. It was reported, however, that:

"parents' meetings [ran] the risk of becoming a ritual for reaffirming confidence and enthusiasm in the school with very little interrogation of...heads...the professionals appeared to be the main beneficiaries of the exercise since parental backing for them dominated most meetings...headteachers and key governors may have encouraged a protective attitude...Both large and small meetings often developed into rallies at which all sides united".

(survey by Exeter University, reported in Education, 1988b, p.53).

The researchers concluded that this meant such meetings were in danger of being only superficially relevant to attempts to ensure accountability.

CONCLUSIONS

Studies of the activities of governing bodies in fulfilment of their legal rights and duties, have recorded ambiguity in interpretations but have indicated some accepted generalities. Governing bodies' main roles were found to be those of advising the head, liaising with outside communities, inspecting, representing parents, children and teachers and expressing accountability to them. A few studies briefly mentioned, what this thesis has termed, the 'covert' functions which arise from these roles, such as the deflection of pressure from l.e.as, legitimation and protection of headteachers. It is towards the delineation of, explanations for and extension of these covert functions, that this thesis is addressed.

Three studies produced classifications of governors' activities (McCarty and Ramsey, 1971; Macbeth, 1980; Kogan, 1984). These indicated that there are certain general patterns of behaviour amongst governors which predispose their governing bodies towards models for their activities. McCarty and Ramsey termed these factional, pluralistic, sanctioning or dominated. Macbeth delineated trusteeship, delegation, stakeholding, representation and participation. Kogan defined the models as advisory, mediatory, supportive or accountable.

These models recognised the potential power which governors have but found that governors were frustrated about their lack of actual power, both in England and Wales and elsewhere in the world. This lack of power may arise because of the unquestioning attitudes of governors themselves, because of governors' unwillingness to operate factionally or because of governors' absorption by traditional power holders. All these explanations are investigated further in this thesis.

Absorption by traditional power elites may have been encouraged by the similarities of background between governors and those whom they are charged with governing, as surveys of governors' occupations have revealed. Those surveys which included collecting governors' own opinions on their pre-1988 roles, showed that governors' views reinforced the research findings arising from the other studies. Governors were found to be somewhat frustrated by lack of power but, in general, saw their functions as being to advise their schools, to support the head and staff. to liaise with outside bodies and to pressurise the l.e.as for more resources.

These studies of the roles which governors have adopted, show that governors have, largely, behaved in accordance with the advice given to them in their training manuals and handbooks. These resources for governors' guidance, whether produced by the l.e.as, by the D.E.S. or by commercial publishers, and whether produced before, or

after 1988, all suggest that the governors' role is to support and inform their schools and make themselves informed about schools. Governors are advised to work in partnership with their heads and not to become involved in the detail of managing their schools.

Annual Reports to parents, and Annual Meetings, have been used throughout this thesis, to provide illustrations to amplify role descriptions. One Annual Meeting, for example, provided an opportunity for a governor to explain how he interpreted his role, since he was asked to define his functions in response to a parent's question (John Cleveland College, Leicestershire, Meeting, 1988). His response provides a useful summary with which to end this chapter surveying previous work on school governing bodies:

"To help provide resources for teachers; to help staff with curriculum development; to look at the fabric of the school in order to check on building work completed and chase up County Hall if it's unsatisfactory; to liaise with feeder schools; to distil the views of parents to teachers."

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTS FOR A GOVERNORS' ROLE ANALYSIS-ACCOUNTABILITY

This chapter continues the literature survey. It focuses on the context of accountability because it is within this that the governors' roles described in the previous chapter have emerged, as have the origins of the role analysis hypothesised in this thesis.

The outline which follows is not an attempt to analyse all the lines of thought associated with accountability since these have been well covered elsewhere (Kogan, 1986). Instead, it tries to indicate how themes within the accountability debate have impacted upon developments relating to school governors. The outline is, therefore, divided into three chronological periods, roughly coincident with the major legislation relating to governors. Each section describes literature, and government policies, relating to accountability. It is realised that the themes in the accountability debate do not fit discreetly into each time period though there is some evidence of particular emphases at certain times.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY DEBATE-OVERVIEWS

It is generally acknowledged that governing bodies provide a means through which schools can be made accountable to society. This idea was last openly acknowledged in the late Victorian period. Both then and now, there was the perception that state funding for education had to be justified by, for example, showing its relationship to

pupils' results and teacher behaviour. Between these two periods, education could be said to have become more inward looking. The teaching profession became almost self regulating and notions of professional evaluation replaced those of responsiveness to constituencies outside schools.

The renaissance of political demands for accountability emerged with the inauguration of the Great Debate in 1975. Political interest was reflected in academic discourse in the title of that year's conference of the British Educational Management and Administration Society - Autonomy and Accountability in Educational Administration.

By 1980, however, it was still possible to write:-

"Accountability has not been a prominent issue in British studies of educational organisations" (Welton, 1980, p.25),

although American discussions of accountability have been much more prolific (Kogan, 1986, p.10).

Within discussions of accountability, the role of governors has been a recent addition. In 1971, for example, Musgrove's book, Patterns of Power and Authority in English Education, made no mention of school governors. Musgrove concluded that schools needed more power to achieve their aims, but this was to be made effective by:

"a general expansion in the power of teachers at all levels of the school hierarchy" (Musgrove, 1971, p.13).

Bacon's seminal study of school governors in 1978, brought governors clearly into the accountability issue by using for its title, Public Accountability and the School System.

This coincided with the publication of the Taylor Report in 1977 which proposed elevating the importance of governors in securing accountability and since then, successive governments have enacted its suggestions.

The political and academic interest in the governors' role in ensuring accountability, was only slowly matched by governors' expectations of themselves. In 1982, it was reported that governors:

"did not expect the schools to be accountable to them, nor did they expect to be held accountable for schools - although they did feel a responsibility that all was going well"
(Becher, Eraut and Knight, 1982, p.115).

In 1984, governors' roles in ensuring accountability were described as:

"immanent rather than actual" (Kogan, 1984, p.18), and only one of four suggested models for governing bodies was delineated as being 'accountable' in emphasis (ibid, pp.146-151). In 1988, Sallis was still discussing how to use governors in a partnership for accountability.

This thesis hypothesises that public accountability through governors had not become a reality by 1990 and that governors had adopted other roles which tended to support a professional interpretation of accountability. Before discussing the evidence for this hypothesis, it is helpful to investigate some of the issues concerning accountability. These have provided the context which may help explain the emergence of particular roles for governors.

During the period discussed below, (1965-90), various meanings for accountability have been advanced. These have ranged between rather vague generalisations of answerability of teachers to outsiders who can influence the profession, to quasi-constitutional responsiveness to non-professionals who have the power of sanctions and rewards to enforce their views. By 1990, it was this latter definition, advanced by Kogan in 1986(p.25), which had become the dominant one. The precise nature of the rewards and sanctions was being defined by 1990 and the governors' part in applying these was being discussed from the late 1980s.

Twenty years previously, debate began with discussions of whether or not schools should be accountable at all. If they were to be, the prevailing thought was that accountability should be through professional, internal evaluation. This model came to be increasingly discredited by central government because of dissatisfaction with the results of schooling. Distrust of professionals, combined with economic recession, amongst other factors, (a useful summary of these can be found in Ranson,1989), directed public and political attention to the achievements, (or the perceived lack of achievements), of the education system. Accountability was considered to be one of the ways of improving the results of the system. School governors already existed and their role as agents of accountability could be enhanced.

This choice happily coincided with the needs of the democratic state to empower its citizens and demands for such empowerment grew during the 1960s and 1970s. Extending participatory democracy, however, can create organisational problems for any society, as Mintzberg indicated, for example, when writing about large business corporations which were trying to extend participation to enhance their responsiveness to society (1983,p.567). To overcome the organisational problems, representatives of interest groups, rather than of individuals, become the chosen vehicle for extended empowerment. The state's role is then to reconcile the competing interests of these groups.

The right of governors to have a part in ensuring accountability, arose from their being representative of the interest groups within the immediate communities of schools. By 1990, however, the national community appeared to have acquired greater importance, since central government had decided to take the dominant part in reviewing school outcomes. It is arguable that this policy was chosen by central government because of elitist imperatives of maintaining power for themselves. There have also been some suggestions that it indicates the possibility of neo-Marxist interpretations of the accountability movement (Whitehead and Aggleton,1986, summarise these).

A pluralist interpretation is, nonetheless, possible if one sees central government intervention as being aimed at

correcting an imbalance in interest group representation. During the period 1965-90, this thesis suggests that governors became more responsive to teachers' attitudes than to the views of groups outside school. This reinforced the professional model of accountability which rested upon concepts of teacher, and school, self evaluation. This model had, however, been rejected by central government early in the period because it restricted the access of groups other than teachers, to both participatory democracy and to the benefits of state provided education. To avoid its revival, therefore, governors' power was circumvented by central government increasing its own powers, justified as responsiveness to the needs of the national electorate.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOUNTABILITY - 1965-1980

The first stages of the accountability debate centred around which type of people were the most appropriate for positions as governors. 'To whom should account be rendered?' was the question which provided the principal, initial focus for the debate rather than questions about how, or why schools should be accountable or about what was the meaning of accountability.

From about 1965 onwards, a few l.e.as experimented with new categories of school governors. The society to which some schools became accountable included consumers (community and industrial representatives), workers (teaching and non-teaching staff), clients (parents), customers (pupils) and local electors (through the l.e.a party representatives).

These moves were to counter criticisms that accountability was constrained to indirect, formal, and infrequent, changes of distant governments rather than to continuing, and close, public responsiveness.

While these practical developments were taking place, the academic discussion of accountability was stressing that the extension of governor representation was a possible means of balancing the professional autonomy of teachers with political control (B.E.A.S. Conference, 1975). Some of the writings of this period suggested 'answerability' as a possible substitute phrase for accountability (Becher and Maclure, 1978; Kogan, 1975; Sockett, 1976). This may appear to soften the meaning, but Welton (1980) explained that the definition included the possession of sanctions and rewards. These would enable the persons to whom schools were accountable, to insist on their views being accepted.

The practicalities of securing this, were considered by Mann (1976) and Male (1974), although both related to U.S. society. These authors analysed how schools should become responsive to community needs. They accepted the value of accountability, but revealed the problems of lack of clarity about what accountability could mean. Does the word mean participation, representation, involvement, influence or power? To which of these words should governors look when deciding how to operate in judging schools?

The prevailing mood of this period could have been characterised as accepting of the value of accountability in general and of extended representation as its vehicle, in particular. Spooner's article suggested some slight criticism of this (1975). He suggested that moves to increase governors' powers and extend membership to teachers and parents were wrong, since governors were there to represent the l.e.as to schools and vice versa; hence governing bodies should be composed of local authority representatives only.

The Taylor Report of 1977, provided a major impetus to the practical implementation of new interpretations of accountability. Its underlying rationale was the expectation that school governing bodies should be altered in functions and membership in order to make schools more accountable to society. The report did not address the accountability issue per se, but it was present in all its recommendations, which centred around the assumption that responsibility for the general conduct of the school should be with the governing body. Governors should be allowed to consider every aspect of school life, however major or minor. In carrying out responsibilities for accountability, the notion of partnership with all those concerned in the life of the school was essential, Taylor considered.

The Report had great significance in encouraging the translation of accountability into legislative form, beginning with the 1980 Act. This Act concentrated upon the

categories of people to whom schools should be accountable. Neither the report nor the legislation was helpful in setting precise performance indicators for accountability against which governors could measure their schools or could themselves be measured. Taylor cautiously recognised that different schools could have different outcomes and this was a reason for each school having its own governing body.

Writing at the same time as the Taylor Report was published, Davies and Lyons(1977/78) thought this recommendation might conflict with the generalities of accountability since it might be better for there to be neighbourhood governing bodies for linked schools which covered a child's whole school life. Davies and Lyon also discussed the difficulties of ensuring accountability through governing bodies; they pointed out, for example, that the cost of servicing and training individual governing bodies would be prohibitive (ibid,1977/8,p.9/10).

Taylor pointed out the conflicts noted by Kogan in 1975. There were increasing demands for more teacher autonomy which might seem to be in conflict with external accountability. Responding to this, Davies and Lyons (1977/78,p.11-12) advised governors to keep a clear distinction between the spheres that might properly be considered academic decisions and those that might be considered industrial relations. Here, then, was an attempt to delineate which areas of school activity should come

within the purview of different agents of accountability.

Barnes felt that the Taylor Report helped support a professional model of accountability. He welcomed the suggestion of a board of governors for each school since this would encourage:

"the protection of professional freedom, the encouragement of innovation and the preservation of a variety which has been a source of strength in our schools too valuable to be foregone in order that a child may move from Penrith to Plymouth without changing his text books"
(Barnes,1977/8).

At the time that the Taylor Report was discussing increasing the numbers and categories of agents of accountability, Tapper and Salter were analysing the role of one of these agents, i.e., the D.E.S. (1978). This was the agent of change, they considered, because it could interpret society's demands and alter education to fit these. It was not only accountable, but it was in a position to ensure that the results of accountability were put into effect and it had its own bureaucratic imperatives pushing towards particular policies.

Salter and Tapper's subsequent analysis in 1981 carried this line of argument further. The bureaucratic imperatives of central government meant that discussions about popularising accountability mechanisms were:

"better understood as a stage-management of popular consent"
(Whitehead and Aggleton,1986,p.441).

The Great Debate about curriculum control, which had been

continuing since central government had initiated it in 1975, was not a means for ensuring popular involvement in decisions, but a method of ensuring that the decisions wanted by the D.E.S. could be implemented behind a popular front (ibid). The 1980 Education Act could be interpreted as having erected that popular front, since it concentrated on amending the composition of governing bodies. In particular, it extended the directly elected categories.

Although the 1980 Act concerned the composition of school governing bodies, it stimulated discussion on other aspects of accountability. In 1980, for example, Pateman suggested five values which had to be achieved, namely, efficiency, professional freedom, the requirements of society, the requirements of children and the needs of education. These were to be decided, he suggested, through democratically elected boards of parents.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOUNTABILITY - 1980-1986

After the 1980 Act, the focus of accountability discussions remained on the issue of who should represent those to whom schools are accountable but the dimension of how accountability could be measured was added to the political debate. The decisions wanted by central government included that of finding a method of raising standards in schools. The accountability debate, therefore, raised the suggestion of using governors as quality control officers, a theme appropriate to what has been described as a period of:

"managerial and instrumental critiques of
teacher power" (Kogan,1986,p.20).

Davies' and Lyons' article proposed using governors as inspectors in 1980. In order to achieve quality control in schools, Davies and Lyons suggested the first need was to set targets for various aspects of school life over a period of, say, three years. Against these targets both the school and the governors could be judged although, in proposing these targets, (pp.35-36), the authors supported their suggestions with various advantages, none of which related to accountability to the wishes of the schools' clients.

Davies and Lyon suggested that accountability was, and could be, provided through bodies other than school governors. This was an interesting contrast with their earlier views that:

"if governing bodies did not exist, we would
have to invent something like them"
(Davies and Lyon,1977/8,p.10).

Once one has added inspection of the product to the practice of accountability, it becomes salutary to remember Elliot's 1981 warning, recalled by Kogan, that the:

"product model of accountability places
control of schooling in the hands of powerful
social groups and fails to do justice to the
interests which should be represented".
(Kogan,1986,p.151)

When that was written, Bacon's survey of Sheffield's governing bodies (1978) had shown that governing bodies were largely middle class in composition. Surveys of

governing bodies in the late 1980s (Chapter 10) confirmed that the publics to whom schools were made accountable, continued to be restricted to already powerful groups, despite the extension of representation brought about by the 1980 and 1986 Acts.

This would appear to provide evidence for the neo-Marxist perspective which would see the state as empowering the interests of the already powerful. This view suggests that the apparent devolution of control that has characterised the accountability movement has resulted, not in pluralistic control, but in centralised state control enhancing bourgeois hegemony. This is the opposite of what it claims to have done. Codd's analysis, for example, of New Zealand's experience, which parallels that of England and Wales, utilised this interpretation of events (1989). He indicated that citizens became alienated from society because there was no real participatory democracy. This outcome is further discussed by Jones and Ranson (1989) in relation to late twentieth century political systems in general.

The 1981 B.E.A.S. conference highlighted growing demands for the interpretation of accountability as 'quality control'. The practicalities of achieving this were discussed in Becher's, Eraut's and Knight's 1982 study. They considered how pressures for accountability had grown and described the East Sussex Accountability project. This went much wider than the school governors' issue, providing

material on what parents and teachers expected from schools and looked at how school based accounting might work. They suggested various means of ensuring accountability, such as staff appraisal and system monitoring and both of these would provide activities in which governors could be involved.

The East Sussex Accountability study considered how the complementary roles of l.e.as and schools in promoting accountability could be developed. They pointed out, however, that the effectiveness of procedures for accountability would be limited without rewards and sanctions being available. In the early 1980s, it seemed that rewards and sanctions were not, politically, acceptable since, in 1982, Becher et al felt able to write:

"schools are not like industries where results can be measured in terms of profit and loss and the weaker sections hived off or closed down "
(Becher et al,1982,p.6).

They stated that accountability to parents:

"does not belong in the world of representative democracy ...but in the world of consumer legislation and the Ombudsman"
(ibid,p.50).

This last quotation gives rise to reflections about what was happening in the accountability debate outside of education. During these same periods, other public services began to be subjected to demands for quality control, and one means of ensuring this facet of accountability was to be by returning publically owned enterprises to private,

share ownership. Shareholder influence through boards of directors could be seen as the commercial equivalent of school governing bodies.

The personnel on the boards of directors were to include worker directors as a means of ensuring accountability to the labour force in both the public and private sectors. The pressure for this particular development was largely unsuccessful and had died away by the end of the 1970s. In education, the idea of worker directors, (teacher governors), did become a reality but they were not to have the major influence on governing bodies which they occupied in countries such as France.

A stronger movement in commercial accountability could be detected in demands that companies should become socially responsive. This was interpreted in three ways; first, companies should produce and provide, goods, investments and services which were socially acceptable; secondly, companies should participate in their communities through, for example, providing work experience for students or charitable donations; thirdly, there could be community representatives on company boards of directors. These themes were investigated by Mintzberg in his 1983 study of power in American organisations. He concluded that the most effective way of making companies accountable to society's wishes was by democratising them (1983, pp.544-567 & 659) through interest group representation. Interest groups would have a legal right to participation and there would

be a "constitutionally planned review" (ibid,p.567). This is a solution akin to that of school governing bodies, although Mintzberg envisaged that interest group representatives would serve on advisory working parties in businesses rather than on the main boards of directors.

A particular facet of interest group representation, as a means of ensuring educational accountability, lay in central government's pressure to increase the numbers of parental representatives. The interest in this category of governors can be traced back to the Plowden Report of 1967 and its emphasis on the importance of parental involvement in childrens' schooling in order to ensure the best results possible.

The 1984 Green Paper, Parental Influence at School, and the 1985 White Paper, Better Schools, reiterated the theme and called for extended parental representation. It has been suggested that this emphasis was selected by central government because of a belief that parents were inclined towards supporting central policies concerning control of teachers and because it was a corollary of general sentiments about the need for renewal of society through family values (Whitehead and Aggleton,1986,p.444). Central government recognised, however, that this renewal was not possible by unaided parental action. Hence, central government gave support, first, through the practical suggestion of increasing the numbers of parent governors and, secondly, through political articulation of what has

been termed 'moral suasion', or, in similar circumstances in the U.S.A., the 'bully pulpit' (Welton,1989,pp.6 & 7).

This thesis suggests, inter alia, that the movement to ensure accountability to central government policies through school governors in general, and parent governors in particular, was not as successful as had been hoped. It is suggested that this is because parents who become even a little knowledgeable about education, then begin to realise the difficulties which are faced by teachers and respect how well these are overcome. Joan Sallis is an example of one such parent and these particular views are clearly evident in her 1988 study, 'Schools, parents and governors' (Chapter 1).

The extension of the numbers of parent governors (arising from the compositional changes of the 1986 Act), without a corresponding increase in the numbers of teacher governors, might suggest that central government, early, realised the potential of governing bodies to support teachers' views and moved to circumvent this. Parents themselves, indicated that they did not wish to be used as agents of central government nor did they want the major responsibility for accountability to rest with their group. When the 1984 Green Paper, 'Parental Influence at School' suggested the idea of a parents' majority on governing bodies, it was resoundingly rejected by parents' bodies who preferred the Taylor quadripartite representation (Hammond,1986,p.136) which supports the view that:

"responsiveness to parents may not be what all teachers or parents want" (Kogan,1986,p.151).

The 1985 White Paper, Better Schools, responded to these views by rejecting the idea of a parental majority on governing bodies.

Similar moves to involve parents in the nineteenth century, when accountability was last demanded, had similar outcomes. In the late nineteenth century, there was found to be little evidence of real, parental pressure to be allowed to become school managers (Gordon,1974,p.151) but support for the idea came from the major government reports of the period. One Victorian clergyman also welcomed the idea of parent governors as a practical channel for accountability since parents would address their complaints to them instead of to him, the overworked clergyman (ibid).

The period 1976-88 could be said to mark the time during which central government explored the possibilities of using governors as a means of ensuring accountability to the way that central government intended the education system to develop. This included investigating the use of school governing bodies to replace l.e.as as the major channel for enabling responsiveness to public wishes. Both Labour and Conservative parties welcomed the Taylor Report, for example, possibly because it was seen as a means of bypassing time consuming negotiations with l.e.as when governments wanted to implement national policies quickly. This prompted the question:

"what price local education authorities
at all by the end of the decade?"

(Tipple,1984,p.54).

Meanwhile, however, there had been the critical, parental response to the 1984 Green Paper. Disputes between governors, schools and l.e.as in the Poundswick, Honeyford and McGoldrick cases also indicated that governors would not be passive users of new powers. During this period government was experimenting with new means of directing education through the type of funding used for T.V.E.I. (Central funds made available only for specific aspects of education and for which l.e.as had to tender and had to render account.) This perhaps demonstrated to central government that there were quicker means of control than through indirect exhortation of either l.e.as or governors.

Kogan's 1984 and 1986 studies concluded that the position of governors in securing accountability by the end of this phase, varied according to the interpretations of the governing bodies themselves, of their heads and of their l.e.as. This variation could be seen as valuable because if is so difficult to assess the outcomes of different modes of accountability (Kogan,1986,p.147), but it is these outcomes which have provided the major forces within the accountability debate in its most recent phase.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY DEBATE -1986-1990

The 1986 Act could be said to represent almost the high water mark of governors' powers although it was ambivalent

about the division of control over the curriculum amongst governors, l.e.as, central government and the chief of police. Two years later, the ambivalence was clarified; both governors and l.e.as lost control over the direction and content of the curriculum since central government was to establish a National Curriculum. Governors, under the 1988 Act, are to check that their schools achieve the standards required by the National Curriculum.

Governors have become, therefore, more obviously accountable to central government whereas, in the previous periods, the emphasis appeared to be more on their accountability to their local communities. This may be the final resolution of the problem summarised by Kogan (1986,pp.18-19) concerning the location of the right to hold educators to account. Since there are various bodies who might be held to have some claim to determine how educationalists behave:

"there is the potential for perpetual conflict" (ibid) amongst them. Partly as a means of avoiding the possibility of this conflict developing, what has been termed, 'the public control-contractual' model for accountability appears to have become the dominant one (Kogan,1986,pp.101-106).

Within this model, schools contract to achieve certain standards. Governors are responsible for reviewing and reporting on these achievements and will, after 1993/4, be

able to reward, or impose sanctions upon, staff for fulfilling (or failing to fulfil) their contracts. The sanctions and rewards can be applied as a result of mechanisms to test outcomes, such as appraisal (for the teachers), new examinations (for the pupils) and performance indicators (for the schools).

Governors can then be held to account for their schools' results. In the previous periods, the stress seemed to be on making schools accountable to governors but now the emphasis appears to have moved to making governors accountable for schools. It is the governors who render account to the parents, with a governors' report on the activities and finances of their schools. It is the governors who are called on to answer questions at the Annual Parents' Meetings. It is the governors who have to submit development plans to the l.e.as and make curriculum returns to local and central governments. It is the governors who are to be called to account if their schools prove to be unsatisfactorily managed.

The l.e.as retain their role of ensuring accountability for the outcomes of education through their power to revoke delegation of budgets to schools which do not manage their finances in a satisfactory manner (1988 Act, Cl.37). It is not clear from the legislation, what will constitute an unsatisfactory result. In the U.S.A., the term "academic bankruptcy" has been used to denote cause for intervention in the affairs of failing school districts. In South

Carolina, for example, over thirty school districts have been deemed to be educationally impaired and specific improvements have had to be made before they could be removed from the category of academic bankruptcy. In 1989, seven states' governments took over from school boards whose inadequate leadership has resulted in their schools being deemed to be failing (Leslie et al, 1989, p.63). In England and Wales, the application of this strand of accountability cannot occur before full financial delegation in 1993/4. In the meantime, the meaning of 'failure' for a school is being clarified. For example, schools have been required to publish their examination results and in 1990, a range of performance indicators against which schools can measure themselves was announced. The choice of which of these each school should use, and the format in which they should be published, is to be decided by governors and staff, so there is to be some slight return to acceptance of professional self-evaluation as a means of achieving accountability.

Much stronger evaluation is to be provided through accountability to the consumers of education (Kogan, 1986, pp.107-8). This strand in the accountability debate has been emerging gradually during these three periods and it has operated to set schooling within the individualism of the market place. Parents are seen as consumers who only want the best quality product and to obtain this, they need the freedom to 'shop' wherever it is

provided. 'Shops' providing poor quality goods will not attract customers and will, therefore, close down. Sallis, (1988), points out, however, that customers do not feel the need to run shops themselves. The customer accountability model helps ensure the dominance of central leadership because accountability to parents is accountability to individual parents. Each is a customer on behalf of their own children. Customer accountability gives choice to parents but choice divides them (Sallis,1988,pp.62-63). It decreases the likelihood of corporate activity by parents and hence prevents a strong parents' movement.

Despite all these developments, it has been questioned whether or not the these moves to implement accountability have improved schooling. Questioning has come from both academics, (for example, Welton,1989,p.8) and from governors (for example, Munn and Holroyd,1989,p.31). Perhaps the effects of accountability will be the focus for the next decade?

CONCLUSIONS

The themes which have emerged from the brief outline of the literature concerning the accountability debate, centre around the issues of, first, the people to whom schools should be accountable and how responsibilities should be shared amongst them, secondly, the aspects of education for which these people should be held accountable and thirdly, the mechanisms through which accountability can be achieved.

Initially, there were discussions about whether or not schools should be accountable at all. The first models suggested that accountability would be best achieved through professional, self- and institutional, evaluation. At the same time, there were those writing in favour of increasing school responsiveness to greater numbers of lay, extra-school, bodies and it was this model of external accountability which became the accepted one. Discussions on the objectives and mechanisms of accountability then began to develop and, by 1980, the public control, contractual model had emerged. Within this, part of the governors' role is to be quality control officers. Schools are to be held to account by being measured against national standards and rewards, or sanctions, applied in response to school success or failure.

The thrust of government policy was first, directed towards ensuring that the people to whom schools should be accountable, would be those in their immediate communities. The views of these communities would be mediated through school governors. In order to ensure that these were representative of schools' communities, there was a widening of the categories whom governors represented, a particular extension to the numbers of parent governors and a decrease in both the numbers of l.e.a. governors and the powers of l.e.as over schools.

School governors received a corresponding increase in their powers but, at the same time, so did central

government. Accountability to national interpretations of what is meant by good education, appeared to over-ride accountability to governors' interpretations. The innovation of a National Curriculum, and the extension of the mechanisms of targeted funding, were two of the means used by central government to achieve this.

A third means was by making the governors responsible for their schools. In the early years of the period reviewed, representation was extended in order to make schools accountable to governors. Governors were the outside, or boundary, controllers. The increase in governors' powers over management, staffing and the finance of schools put them more inside the schools, and made governors accountable for their schools' performance to both parents and to central government.

This was accompanied by the development of measures by which school outcomes and productivity could be monitored. This could be seen as providing the management information necessary to make accountability more practicable. It need no longer rely solely on qualitative judgements which are time consuming to obtain and which require the detailed knowledge of institutions which governors might have been able to provide. It has also become possible to provide rewards and sanctions for those schools who achieve (or fail to achieve) the right outcomes. Some of these rewards can be gifted by the governors which may enhance their role in ensuring accountability.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXTS FOR A GOVERNORS' ROLE ANALYSIS - THE POLITICAL SPHERE OF SCHOOL GOVERNMENT

School governors are one of the groups through whom the accountability discussed in the previous chapter is intended to be mediated. The themes which emerged from that discussion showed governors developing as agents of, and responsible to, central government and the interest groups whom governors are deemed to represent. These themes are related to governors' positions within, and between, the macro- and micro-political systems which administer education. This chapter describes the context of these political systems and this concludes the literature survey.

Governing bodies can be seen as the basic cell of the macro-political system for education government and, therefore, as the link to ensure that schools are responsive to the communities they serve. Within the micro-political systems of schools, governors share responsibility for school management and can be viewed as a means of protecting schools from pressures for external accountability. At the boundary of the two systems, governors could be compared with an interface group such as boards of company directors. Each of these three positions is discussed below, together with their implications for role analyses of governors.

MACRO-ANALYSIS

Governors might be said to enter the political system through the techniques described in Archer's studies (1979,1981), i.e. they would use both her external transactions and her political manipulations. External transaction, Archer stated, begins outside of education as new groups ask for additional provision. These groups opt into the system by negotiating with insiders. Archer considered that any group opting in, must have considerable resources (which she defined as finance, expertise and social standing) to enable them to become part of the system. Chapters 15 and 16 below, indicate that governors do not have such resources. This should not, however, destroy the applicability of Archer's analysis to governors because her approach does not, presumably, preclude differing levels of success at becoming incorporated. Hence, governors with few resources could still easily negotiate into the system but once in, their lack of resources would ensure their rapid co-optation by existing elites. This is what Bacon concluded had happened when he analysed Sheffield's governing bodies in 1978. A group with few resources, which has been co-optated, could then become protective of the existing elite which has absorbed them and it is one of the hypotheses of this thesis, that this has occurred in the case of school governing bodies (Chapter 7).

Once a new group is within the system, political manipulation is used by 'high' politicians (Archer's terminology) who are outside the educational system (D.E.S. officials, ministers, local government officers and councillors) and who wish to control it. Governors could be seen as one means by which the high politicians are attempting to gain access in order to control multitudinous schools, which might otherwise be less manageable simply because of the large numbers of schools in the system. Thomas (1983) considers how educational bodies are used by political bodies to maintain or augment the power of the political groups and, although governing bodies are not discussed in his study, they would seem to provide a relevant example. Governors themselves are manipulated rather than the manipulators.

Kogan's study summarised the situation prior to the late 1980s when school governors were, formally subordinate to the l.e.as. (Kogan,1984,p.36). Within the local, political-administrative system, l.e.as determined the existence and status of governing bodies. The Articles and Instruments of Government delineated their powers and their categories, and most l.e.as also issued handbooks which amplified the Articles and provided an l.e.a interpretation of governors' roles. The degree to which l.e.as' interpretations varied, was found to be related, inter alia, to the party political composition of different l.e.as (Kogan,1984,pp.41-45).

The locus of power in educational administration moved from the l.e.as to central government in the late 1980s. The rhetoric of the importance of devolution and partnership continued, but the partners were redefined as governors and central government, rather than as central and local government. Governing bodies could be described as continuing to be directed, as they had been previously, but by a different body.

In his discussion of similar developments in Australian education government, Angus described how the new situation left the inequalities of power unchanged. The new participants in the system, took for granted the existing imbalance of power (Angus,1989,p.23). They felt that their interests were being served by an apparent increase in power given to institutional governments whereas existing power holders had only preserved the status quo (ibid). The role of governing bodies, therefore, remains unchanged if one adopts this line of interpretation.

This particular interpretation has been termed the "realpolitik perspective" by Cibulka (1989) and is akin to the elitist analysis of Bacon's study of Sheffield's governing bodies (1978). Cibulka (1989,p.3), summarises realpolitik thus:

"political regimes will maximise their power to govern through whatever means are available to them. The maintenance of power is a paramount concern...particularly if the regime's power is threatened...state officials will employ whatever means are at their disposal to achieve their ends"

Following through this interpretation, it could be said that, in order to reduce the power of the l.e.as and the teachers' unions, central government recreated the powers of governing bodies. A great many small bodies are much easier to control than are large, national associations of l.e.as and teachers. Whitehead and Aggleton (1986) utilised this perspective in their interpretation of events leading to the Taylor Report. Further evidence underlining governors' role as central government agents appeared after the 1986 Act, when governing bodies were inundated with requests for their comments on central government policies. The amount of time which governing bodies needed to spend on discussing these policies, distracted them from their roles as school managers.

Whether they are operating as agents or managers, governors are contributors to the management of change in education. For this, one might set them within Salter's and Tapper's theory (1981) since it involved both sociological and political interpretations in investigating the dynamics of change between classroom and state. Salter and Tapper did not, however incorporate governors into this study, nor in their previous analysis (1978), concentrating instead on the high politicians (though that does not preclude these politicians having used governors as agents of change). Perhaps, like Thorp (1985), Salter and Tapper restricted governors to having a external, boundary role.

If one adopts solely the realpolitik perspective, one must, however, ask oneself why central government decided to retain governors at all. It would be feasible to govern schools without them, as Davies and Lyons intimated (1980) and as Scottish school governors agreed (Munn and Holroyd, 1989, p.31). The policy of according status to school governing bodies could be explained by considering a social, organisational perspective. In this view, community organisation will be able to replace state, political organisation. Government's role is to empower the people's own abilities to govern themselves. It is difficult to see how this might apply within the analysis of the role of governing bodies, since it would appear to presuppose that the government could wither away once the empowerment had occurred. There are signs that the reverse has happened and that the role of central government in education has grown but it might be possible that this is a stage on the way to entrusting more responsibilities to governing bodies once they become more mature.

This social, organisational perspective seems still to have echoes of realpolitik in that the empowerment of governing bodies is an idea originating from the state itself. It could be said that there was no, very great, evidence of grassroots' demands for an extension of governors' powers. The national governors' associations, for example, were not strong, nor were they so even by 1990. Since the 1986 changes, it has not been possible to fill all the elective

places on school governing bodies, the numbers of governors for colleges of further education has had to be reduced because it seemed as if it would be difficult to find adequate numbers to fill the places and attendance at Annual Parents' Meetings has not indicated major public interest in governing schools. In Scotland, there was opposition to the full extent of powers proposed for school councils and, consequently, the powers were reduced.

Nonetheless, there was some pressure from governors for greater empowerment at school level and this would accord with a liberal, pluralist interpretation. In this view, the state is one of the participants in the bargaining process that characterises policy making and, in addition, it is the participant whose role it is to reconcile conflicting interests to achieve consensus from the bargaining.

Governors, collectively, played relatively little part in this national bargaining process before 1990, although there were shifting coalitions which involved them, as Whitehead and Aggleton described (1986). They may become more important as governors' national pressure groups expand and are encouraged to participate by central government, as appears to be happening in 1989/90. A pluralistic view seems appropriate at local level as Kogan's analysis showed (1984). In this, the governing bodies' involvement in policy making was related to style of schools and l.e.as.

It has been suggested that pluralistic styles have been adopted by realpoliticians as a disguise for their elitist modes of operation (Cibulka,1988,p.3). Realpoliticians have needed to do this because of the values attaching to pluralism in democratic societies. Useful sources for setting governors within a democratic framework are found in Abrahamson (1977), Pateman (1970), Newton (1976) and Hill (1974). The recent extension of governors' powers and of their electoral bases, could be linked to the value of democracy by views such as those of Hirst. He pointed out that:

"Representative democracy is such a powerful tool of legitimation of the actions of government that no serious politician...will question it". (Hirst,1988,p.180)

Hirst continued, however, by suggesting that democracy should be questioned and this echoes Archer's view (1979,p.227) that the extension of control over education by more groups is not:

"necessarily synonymous with a more democratic distribution of it". (Archer,1979,p.227)

If nothing else, adding to the powers of school governors has added a further layer into the decision making structure of the school. Will governors be able to give the time required to participate fully in this extra layer? If not, then democracy is considered to be compromised (Bush,1986,p.62).

Archer felt that democracy was compromised in that the gradual extension of the benefits of state education to

more groups left a much smaller group of those who received nothing from the system (1978,p.229). These 'have-nots' no longer shared any characteristics with the 'haves'; the new elites either colonised, or were colonised by, the old elites and this created a superimposition of elites. The occupational survey of governors undertaken for this thesis showed that this did occur in the case of governors.

A more neutral frame for analysing governors roles can be found through the application of systems theories, beginning with Easton's seminal work (1965). From the language of systems' theorists, one could devise a functional analysis considering the activities of governors as classifiable within, for example, the categories of interest articulation and aggregation, gatekeeping, rule determination, implementation and adjudication. A modified version of a functional analysis has been utilised in Chapter 12 and the lines of thought suggested by the systems analysts, influenced the delineation of the functions of governors suggested in this thesis.

Subjective modelling can also have bearing upon the development of interpretations for governors' roles (for a summary of these theorists, see Bush,1986,Ch.6; Hoyle,1982,p.82). Subjective models emphasise participants' own interpretations of their intentions. Greenfield (1973) suggested that organisations derived, not from their structure, but from the attitudes and experiences which the participants brought from the wider society of which they

were part. In this interpretation, governors' functions are as important in determining the outcomes of education as are the structural changes in governing bodies which have been introduced by central government. Central government has given governors their overt functions; governors' attitudes and experiences have expanded/changed these to covert functions, as this thesis will argue.

MICRO-ANALYSIS

Kogan's analysis identified the importance of different types of relationships within schools, to the behaviour of their governing bodies (1984,Ch.4). The effect of governors on educational decision making was found to be influenced by the behaviour of the other actors in the system and the skills which governors had to express their points of view. These may be considered within the frame of micro-politics, the genesis of which is owed to Hoyle (1982,1986). He distinguished management, which performed deliberately designed procedures, and micro-politics, which were more sub-conscious, often unco-ordinated, activities.

Governors, as internal agents, become part of the micro-political system, although none of the analyses of micro-politics have included school governors (e.g.Hoyle, 1982,1986; Glatter,1982). Despite their omission, micro-politics, with its emphasis on how groups and individuals work to obtain resources within a system to support their hegemony, would seem a possible model within which to fit the study of school governors. Training governors would

seem to increase the resources of knowledge at their command, for example, and would enhance their strategic bargaining position and observing governing bodies at work reveals micro-political tactics being used.

Micro-political literature is not extensive and none of it is related to school governors. Glatter (1982) explained why he saw school management as micro-politics rather than as business, which helped to clarify the sub-conscious aims towards which governors might be tending. Organisation theory would seem to provide another way into a micro-political frame. Weick's study (1976), for example, of educational institutions as loosely coupled systems (tied together weakly, infrequently or with minimal interdependence) would seem a very applicable model within which to locate school governors and to ascertain what skills they have available for coupling and uncoupling in order for a group of governors, or an individual, to have leverage in the system. This assumes, of course, that someone wishes them to have leverage in the system and this thesis investigates whether governors, or anyone else could be said to have such an interest.

The micro-political skills of other actors in the system were considered by Hughes (1980). He discussed how professionals could 'gang up', and the extent to which effectiveness was related to the degree of participation of particular actors. Although his comments were designed to elucidate the manager/subordinate relationship, or the

professional/administrative interface, the concepts would seem to be equally applicable to a study of school governing bodies.

Group dynamics were discussed by Landers and Myers (1980). These indicate strategies which governors might employ to achieve their ends, as was also briefly mentioned in Thomas (1983). The operation of group dynamics is evident in Davies' case study (1986). Here, there was a possibility of governors pursuing an innovatory role although, in this case, the innovation was well managed by the head and her micro-political skills were evident.

Bargaining and negotiating theories would seem applicable to the micro-political frame (e.g. Blau, 1964; Bacharat and Lawler, 1980). These theories reveal tactics which governors might use (or fail to use) as well as providing information on how other political actors behave. Bacharat and Lawler stressed that coalitions in organisations attempted to resolve conflicts in the way most advantageous to their own interests, with each party wishing to give as little as possible and take as much as possible. The possible coalitions within governing bodies, and the extent to which they use their bargaining powers, is investigated in Chapters 13 and 14.

Bacharat and Lawler suggested that bargaining is an ubiquitous feature of organisations (1980, p.108), that it can be tacit and involve little communication between

groups, with the parties implicitly affording legitimation to each other's part in decision making. This thesis suggests that this view would be a description applicable to the behaviour of governing bodies (Chapter 6). The type of bargaining behaviour that most seemed to characterise the processes found during this research within governing bodies, would best be characterised as integrative bargaining (Walton and McKenzie, 1965). This type of bargaining arises from a positive relationship aimed at joint problem solving by finding common ground. The resolution of problems does not rest on the distribution of resources amongst the contributors. Bacharat and Lawler felt, however, that tacit bargaining was most likely where there was a win/lose situation, i.e. one in which people did not bother to bargain because compromise was seen as unlikely. In school governing bodies, this thesis suggests that tacit bargaining is a likely format because governors have nothing to win or lose and, therefore, do not bother to bargain.

Micro-politics could also be seen from the perspective of Archer's 'broad politics' which she defined as:

"attempts (conscious and organised to some degree) to influence the inputs, processes and outputs of education, whether by legislation, pressure group or union action, experimentation, private investment, local transaction, internal innovation or propaganda". (Archer, 1981, p.29)

Groups operating within broad politics do so by the same external transaction and political manipulation techniques as do her 'high politicians' in the macro-system. The

success of these tactics is helped where there is 'superimposition' of elites (1981,p.36) as occurs in the case of school governors and senior school managers (Chapter 10 below).

To conduct a detailed study of the micro-political techniques of governing bodies would require extensive observations such as those made by Kogan (1984) and Macbeth (1980). Gronn's articles (1983 & 1984), indicate a possible way to approach such a study. Existing case studies also provide some suitable evidence. Ebbutt (1984), for example, used information from the Cambridge accountability project based on interviews and observations at meetings and this revealed the workings of consensus groupings. Saran provided a case study concerning initiatives by primary school governors to improve information sent to parents (1985). Analyses of the disputes in which governors have been involved could also be utilised (e.g. Auld,1976; Nunn,1987).

THE INTER-FACE

A description of governing bodies which sets their role at the interface of the macro- and micro-systems, is provided by Kogan's delineation of one of the two types of governing bodies which form the poles of his spectrum of analysis for professional and lay relationships on governing bodies (Kogan,1984,pp.92-94). These governing bodies have a concern with broad, educational issues. They exhibit joint professional and lay decision making and the

governors see themselves as representatives of interest groups. This could be interpreted as a model analogous to that of commercial boards of directors.

This analogy has been used within this thesis for analysing the extent to which governors can command resources. Possession of resources will influence governors' ability to bargain and to resist domination by those working within a realpolitik interpretation. This analogy with commercial boards of directors may, at first, appear inappropriate. Company directors lack the national connections which governors could be said to have through the indirect route of the L.E.A.s (if opted in) or indirectly through the D.E.S. (if grant maintained or a C.T.C.). Similarities emerge, however, because business directors and governors do share responsibility for their institutions' accountability to those who fund them and to those who 'buy' their products. Directors have a more obvious way than governors of checking their companies' accountability performance, through sales and profits, but such performance measures are increasingly becoming available for governors through more open access to schools and through their control of their schools' finances. In making comparisons with Boards of Directors, this thesis has utilised particularly the work of Zald (1959) and Mintzberg (1983, Ch.6).

Mintzberg's conclusions on the various roles which boards of directors may adopt, show close parallels with Kogan's

descriptions of the role tendencies of governing bodies (Mintzberg, 1983, pp. 91-92; Kogan, 1984, pp. 162-3). Mintzberg suggested three classifications:

"1. The board as a control device really seeks to act as vehicle for external control of the organisation, sometimes on behalf of some dominant external influence"

This description is close to that of Kogan's mediative governing bodies.

Mintzberg's second grouping is akin to Kogan's supportive and advisory bodies:

"2. As a tool of the organisation, the board serves it by coopting external influencers, establishing contacts and raising funds for it, enhancing its reputation and/or providing it with advice"

His final classification has some features of Kogan's accountable governing bodies:

"3. The board as a facade appears where some individual or group, such as the top management, ... has full control of the organisation and chooses to exploit the board neither as a controlling device nor as a tool"

CONCLUSIONS

Different frameworks for governing bodies create the possibility of different interpretations of their powers. School governors enter the macro-systems of education government as the basic cell of national educational administration, but, as its weakest group because of their lack of resources and because of their dependence on local and central governments. If this weakness is set within a realpolitik, or elitist, interpretation of the state's activities, then governors can only be seen as being

manipulated by the state. A pluralistic view accords a more autonomous status to governors. More neutral frameworks for analysis are found within systems theories and subjective modelling. For the purposes of this thesis, the macro-framework is the basis of its context since it establishes the legitimate place of governing bodies.

Micro-political analysis offers a different position from which to view governors since it provides a framework which structures their roles principally within schools and considers the behaviour of political actors as being often sub-conscious, rather than deliberate. Micro-politics concerns the means by which people obtain the resources they need in order to increase their bargaining strength. These resources include those which individuals hold in their personalty and those which are enhanced, or created, by group operation. Micro-politics provide the primary locus within which the analysis of this thesis proceeds, based upon observations of meetings and discussions with governors about the tactics which they, and other actors in the system, use.

At the inter-face of the macro- and micro-political systems, useful comparisons can be made with similar bodies such as boards of directors. This context is used for the discussion of governors' resources in Chapters 15 and 16.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research originated from an evaluation of governor training provision in Leicestershire in 1986/87. The L.E.A. was required to report on its use of an Education Support Grant for governor training and commissioned the author to undertake the evaluation. Its objective was to describe the training courses, to suggest any improvements which might be needed and to offer a model which other l.e.as might copy.

During the course of producing the report, it became clear that assumptions had been made about the roles which governors should adopt, by both trainers and the L.E.A., and these assumptions had informed the content and methods of the training. The survey for the evaluation, asked governors to describe how they interpreted their roles and this provided an additional perspective to those of the trainers and providers. Experience as a school governor, and as a tutor for governor training courses, gave cause to reflect on these different views and on those described in the literature on school governors (Chapter 2). The collective result of these inputs was to suggest the need for the hypothesis presented here.

The official evaluation of Leicestershire's training was a major source of evidence for the hypothesis especially as all of Leicestershire's governors were included in the evaluation, not just those who attended training courses.

The evaluation provided, first, a survey of how governors viewed their roles and also of their backgrounds and occupations. Secondly, the survey collected comments on introductory training courses from the L.E.A, the tutors, the visiting speakers and from both trained and untrained governors. Evaluations of previous governor training courses in Leicestershire, dating from 1982, were also utilised as were those from other Authorities.

The ideas which began to be formulated after the survey, were further informed and extended by personal observation at governors' meetings and training sessions and at Annual Parents' Meetings in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. Personal experience as a governor, as a governor trainer and as a training consultant in Leicestershire, Dudley and Brent provided opportunities for further observation. Other governors, parents and teachers, encountered on training courses, offered information. Some of this arose from informal discussions and some came from more organised, participant observation.

These sources, and their contributions to this thesis, are discussed below, preceded by a description of the two L.E.As from which examples were principally obtained. The literature which informed the study has been described in the previous three chapters. The period during which the research was undertaken was 1986-1990 but experience as a governor trainer prior to these dates, has been utilised.

L.E.As INVOLVED

Leicestershire and Northamptonshire were the two, principal, Authorities from which information was obtained. Although politically and geographically they are not dissimilar, their interest in governor training has been very different.

Leicestershire was, and is, a hung Council; none of the parties has overall control but the Liberal/SDP group hold the balance. Leicestershire was one of the pioneers of governor training and they began initial training courses in 1982, to which advanced courses were added in 1984. The number of courses was much increased after the L.E.A. received an E.S.G. for 1986-88 and this source of funding has since been again obtained, The Authority was one of the few who used the W.E.A. as the provider of its training, following pressure from the local Labour Party. In 1989, the L.E.A. appointed a governor training co-ordinator. There are approximately 4,000 governors in Leicestershire.

Adjacent Northamptonshire has slightly fewer governors. Political control is finely balanced but the Tories retain control because the one Independent usually votes with them. They offered no governor training until 1987, when a few pilot, introductory training courses were run and Leicester University organised advanced courses in Northamptonshire. Since then, the adult education service has become the provider of courses and a .5 co-ordinator has been appointed.

Experience as a governor training consultant, and from personal contacts, made available information from Dudley, Brent and Buckinghamshire, to compare with that from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

SURVEYS-GOVERNORS' ROLES AND OCCUPATIONS

A priority when this research was initiated in 1986, was to survey governors' occupations and other personal characteristics and to obtain governors' own views of their roles, since there was no current information on either of these. A questionnaire was, therefore, sent to all Leicestershire's governors in 1986. The role descriptions, which governors provided, produced the survey reported in Chapter 2 and informed the suggested role analysis and descriptions of governors' modes of operation described in this thesis. The analysis of the types of people who had become governors, is the supporting material particularly for the ideas advanced in Chapter 10.

There are only two surveys available relating to governors before 1986. Gordon's study of Victorian school managers (published in 1974), included an analysis of returns to the London School Board showing the occupations of 1,475 school managers in 1884. Bacon's research in Sheffield, (1978) included an occupational survey of approximately 1,000 governors. Both these studies have been used in this research in order to provide comparisons with the information collected for this thesis.

It was decided to make comparisons here with the studies of Bacon and Gordon (ibid) because it was possible that results from Leicestershire might not be considered likely to be analogous with results from urban Authorities. The Sheffield material would enable that hypothesis to be tested. Although Bacon's survey was undertaken before the Acts of 1980 and 1986, Sheffield had already anticipated changes in composition and extended representation during the 1970s. Bacon conducted his survey by asking governors on his training courses, to ascertain the social composition of their governing bodies. 23% refused to provide such information, since they objected to classifying people socially, but his sample nonetheless related to 50 boards, approximately 1,000 governors.

The material presented in Gordon's survey of the 1884 London School Board managers (1974) has been included in this thesis, in order to ascertain the extent of change in the last hundred years. The information for this survey was extracted from returns to the London School Board which requested governors to state their occupations.

Since 1987, governors' backgrounds have been surveyed in several different research projects, in order to assess the effects of the 1986 Act which was not in force at the time of the Leicestershire survey conducted for this research. Localised studies have been made amongst parent governors in Devon (Golby and Brigley, 1988), amongst the pilot governing boards in Scotland (Munn and Brown, 1989) and

amongst all governors in Northamptonshire (Northants.L.E.A.,1989). A national survey, which obtained information from the governing bodies of 346 schools, was conducted by N.F.E.R. (1989). The rewriting of this thesis has provided the opportunity to include comparison with these surveys. The organisation and content of the 1986/7 Leicestershire survey is described below.

Survey organisation and response

Access to the whole population of Leicestershire's governors was facilitated by the L.E.A. The decision to circularise all the governors was the L.E.A's since lack of time and money would otherwise have precluded such large numbers being approached. The questionnaires were posted to each governor with the regular, termly mailing of items for governor comment and publicity about training courses. Completed questionnaires were collected at governors' meetings by the Clerks, who were all L.E.A. officers and who were briefed about the importance of collecting the questionnaires by senior officers.

Approximately 46% of Leicestershire's governors returned completed questionnaires. It was not possible to be precise about the rate of return because the total number of governors was not accurately known. Leicestershire's records contained names of schools, each with their lists of governors. Some names would appear more than once since some governors held multiple governorships. The records

also contained names of governors who had resigned. Leicestershire's usual practice when sending information to governors, was to produce enough of any material to cover each name listed for each governing body, irrespective of multiple governorships. In addition, an extra two copies of any materials, are sent to each governing body together with a copy for each headteacher, irrespective of whether or not the head is a governor.

5,840 questionnaires were, therefore, despatched but the number of governors could be between 4,000 and 6,000. The closest possible estimate would be 4,171. This figure arises from George's statement that there were about 4,000 governors in Leicestershire in 1981 (George,1985b,p.126) and this number would not have altered by the time of the survey. An attempt to obtain a more accurate number was made by using known figures relating to the percentage of governors holding multiple governorships (ibid) and this produced a figure of 4,171 governors. 1,918 questionnaires were returned.

The majority of these (representing a 34% return) had been received by December, 1986. The results were computed from these returns in order to complete the training evaluation in the time required by the L.E.A. to meet D.E.S. requirements. More questionnaires had been returned by April, 1987 and the results from this smaller group were found to replicate those of the larger sample.

The extent to which the distributions of returns might have biased the results had to be considered. The returns showed no patterns of concentration from particular areas of the county nor from particular types of schools. The distribution of responses between secondary and primary schools matched the total distributions of governorships between the phases. The number of late returns gave an opportunity to check the likelihood of the original respondents being typical of the governor population as a whole since late returners are considered to be typical of non-returners. It was found that the late returners responses mirrored the responses of the original 34% return.

Survey questions

Personal characteristics about which questions were asked concerned the occupations, age and sex of governors. The social analysis of the sample was based on the governors' occupations which were classified according to the Registrar-General's social class and socio-economic groupings. Undertaking a social survey was not the main objective of the questionnaire (which was designed for a training evaluation) so it was felt that questions about, for example, income or educational qualifications, would appear too intrusive and might deter respondents. It was reported that even the occupational question caused some annoyance to governors. It was considered important to include it because the stress of the accountability debate

at the time of the survey, was on the need for governing bodies to reflect the communities of the schools they serve. There was concern about possible under-representation of industry and commerce, and over-representation of the teaching profession but no figures were available to indicate the real extent of the percentages of governors from these groups.

It is recognised that the social classifications that were made from the governors' occupational designations can only be a very simple guide to status but the Registrar-General's categories have generally accepted validity and are easily understood. There were some difficulties in classifying certain occupations, first, for teachers, who are grouped with occupations not requiring qualifications of university standard and, secondly, for those whose descriptions were vague, such as 'engineer', or 'manager'. It was decided to retain teachers in socio-economic grouping 5.1, since there was little certainty of which teachers would have a degree and which would not, and because teachers might have claimed that, at the time, their salary levels did not merit a higher grading. The imprecise categories of 'managers' and 'engineers' were grouped in 2.2. Part time workers were classified by their paid occupations and the non-economically active were categorised according to their previous occupations. Only the few who failed to state their present or past occupations could not be classified. Using the Registrar-

General's classifications made it possible to see if Leicestershire's governors were representative of the whole population of Leicestershire since the socio-economic groupings for 1981 Leicestershire were available from the national census.

The survey also included an open ended question asking governors to describe their roles. It was decided not to offer defined options against which governors could indicate their preferences in order to avoid pre-determining the answers. It would have been much easier to analyse answers had a pre-defined format been adopted since the amount of material which some governors produced in their answers was prodigious. It would, however, have made the questionnaire responses much less entertaining to read and would have provided much less evidence for this research. The care which many governors had exercised in giving full answers to this question reflected the seriousness with which governors regarded their roles even before their powers were extended by the 1986 and 1988 Acts. Not all the respondents were enamoured of the job which indicated that the questionnaire did not just attract responses from the committed governors.

TRAINING EVALUATIONS

The survey described above formed part of an evaluation of Leicestershire's governor training. The information from this, and from other evaluations of l.e.a. training provision, (Bacon,1975; Brigley and Stoyale,1988; D.E.S.,1988a;

D.E.S.,1989; Gent and Mahoney,1983; George,1984b; Herrick,1987; Mann,1975; N.A.G.M.,1978,1985; N.C.C.,1986; N.F.E.R., 1988; Northants. L.E.A.,1989; Packwood,1983; Whitacker,1987) formed the basis on which governors' resources of knowledge could be assessed. These resources are important to the development of governors' power and this idea, and its supporting evidence from training evaluations, is discussed in Chapter 16.

Training evaluation-organisation

In designing the evaluation for Leicestershire, reference was made to the published evaluations of governor training. The scheme adopted required some overlap with that of Gent and Mahoney (1983), since their work related to Leicestershire and, by using some of the same questions, comparisons could be made. George's scheme (1984b) revealed the need to question a sample of governors who had not attended training and this was, therefore, done for the Leicestershire evaluation.

Leicestershire's pilot and final evaluations involved 100 governors on training courses in the Summer and Autumn terms of 1986 and in the Spring term in 1987. The governors were from both primary and secondary schools.

There was almost a 100% return of evaluation questionnaires. Securing this response rate was eased by the evaluator being a governor trainer herself, and by the L.E.A's support for the project. The tutors, including the

evaluator, were used to working together and had assisted each other on previous occasions in the gathering of information. Tutors were involved in planning the evaluation. The tutors explained the project to the governors on their training courses, stressing its importance in relation to the development of governor training. Completed questionnaires were collected during training sessions although they were mainly completed outside of the sessions.

Questionnaires were issued at the end of every session, and at the beginning and end of the courses, to the governors, the tutors and to the visiting speakers. An attempt was made to use a more open ended method of evaluation through the use of student diaries. Volunteers from one of the courses being used to pilot the evaluation, were given notebooks and asked to write any comments they wished after each session. The notebooks were handed in only after all the sessions had been completed. The results were perceptive, entertaining and often contradictory. The number of comments was extensive and very wide ranging which made categorisation very difficult and time consuming, and the diaries took much longer to read than did the pilot questionnaires. As a method for the larger scale investigation of the full evaluation, it seemed unsuitable but the interest engendered by the diary approach amongst the students, persuaded the evaluator to retain the use of diaries for evaluating one of the

advanced, updating courses which were not part of the official evaluation.

The attempt to use diaries underlined the need for an evaluative method which would provide some quantitative data, partly to simplify the collection of opinions and to clarify guides to decisions, but also to reassure readers through the presentation of 'hard' data. For these reasons, it was decided to use only questionnaires for the evaluation.

Training evaluation-questions

To assess the effect of training on governors roles, the first group of questions centred around the need for training as perceived by governors. Governors were asked what they hoped to gain from their training. Governors who were not on training courses were asked why they had chosen not to attend. In order to see if there was any relationship between desire for training and different categories of governors, those undertaking training were asked what types of schools they represented, what was their length of service, their age, their sex and the sources of their appointments.

The second group of questions concerned the process of training in order to ascertain the extent to which particular contents and methodologies affected governors' knowledge gains. Finally, at the end of the courses, governors were asked to state what they felt they had

gained from the courses and how they now viewed their roles as governors. The differences between views on roles before and after training, and between anticipated and achieved gains, were used as simple criteria for showing the effect of courses.

OBSERVATIONS

The role analysis proposed in this thesis, began to emerge during the surveys described above. Observation was used to extend and test the ideas and this evidence was used to support the suggestions for governors' functions and for their modes of operation.

Personal observation was possible because the researcher was, and is, a school governor, a governor training tutor and a training consultant. As a governor of Leicestershire's largest upper school for five years, the researcher has participated in meetings, sub-committees, Annual Parents' Meetings, school events and governors' visits.

Other observers also provided information. Teacher governors, and other staff attending the researcher's courses at Leicester University, reported on Annual Parents' Meetings, governors' meetings and visits. Local parents kept records of their schools' Annual Meetings. Governors, elected to the post 1988 governing bodies, reported on co-option meetings. At two Annual Parents' Meetings there were observing participants amongst the

governors, parents and teachers, hence making comparisons possible amongst accounts of the same meetings.

The original intention had been to use only the researcher as an observer, in which case, unstructured observation would have been the approach adopted. As other people volunteered to provide information, some guidance had to be given on what information to collect. The observers were asked to keep records of all the questions asked at Annual Parents' Meetings, of all the responses and, if possible, the names of the questioners and of the respondents. Those reporting on governors' meetings were asked to note any comments on training and were later asked if they felt any particular groups of governors had dominated the proceedings of their governing bodies. At co-option meetings, governor observers were asked to record who suggested the names of the co-optees, whether or not voting occurred and, if so, how were the votes cast, who were proposed as co-optees and who were chosen. Governors newly elected after the implementation of the 1986 Act were particularly forthcoming with their reactions to their first meetings and their encounters with longer serving governors.

The observers were not given a list of governors' roles and asked to find evidence for these. This type of analysis is very difficult to undertake while observing especially if one is also participating (Thody, 1989e). In addition, it was felt that to ask governors to follow a pre-determined

list would prejudge what was being observed and, in fact, the list of covert functions suggested in this thesis had not been devised when the observations began. Macbeth's study (1980) and Kogan's work (1984) both used observers on a considerable scale and these were given a more structured brief. None were, however, participants at the same time, as were the observers used for this study.

The observation used by this research was not set up specifically for it. The participants were available and able to observe as part of their usual roles. This had the disadvantage that observers could not be disposed to cover the whole research field in an ordered fashion. On the other hand, it had the major advantages that the observers had no problems gaining access or acceptance. For small scale research, such as this was, observation by real participants avoids the large costs in both time and money which are usually associated with participant observation. Using existing participants as observers also meant that there would be understanding of the processes and meanings of what was being observed; the jargon, the hidden agendas, and the background context were all known. In addition, no-one was aware that they were being observed and so would not have amended their actions in response to being watched.

Governors' meetings and the Annual Parents' Meetings are relatively easy to record. The organisation is formal and the number of active participants is very small. The

participant observers were themselves only intermittently involved and could usually take notes during the proceedings.

Annual Parents' Meetings and Reports

It was decided to use these sources for evidence because they can claim to represent the summation of the whole work of governors. The Annual meeting, as defined in the 1986 Act (C1.31):

"shall be the opportunity for discussion of the governors' report and the discharge by the governing body, the headteacher and the local education authority of the their functions in relation to the school"

The Annual Parents' Meetings and Reports, introduced as this research commenced, were expressly intended to ensure greater outside influence on schools and a more public role for governors. This could have resulted in an increase in governors' powers. It seemed important, therefore, to test the ideas of governors' covert functioning against evidence from the Meetings and Reports.

Information from these sources was readily available. Records of thirteen Annual Meetings in Leicestershire, in 1987, were made by parents acting as unofficial observers. Reports of a further fourteen meetings were obtained from governors attending a training course held during the period when the first Meetings occurred. Further comments came from a discussion evening organised at Leicester University in 1987, attended by 45 Leicestershire governors, to decide how to make the best use of these

Annual Meetings in the light of experience gained from the first Meetings. Leicestershire W.E.A. (Mahoney,1988), and Leicestershire L.E.A. (1987), also published reports about the Meetings and Parents' Reports. Annual Reports were obtained from governors and teachers on training courses.

There was very poor attendance at Annual Parents' Meetings during, and since, 1987 and this lack of parental interest will be shown to underline the covert functioning of governors. A survey by Leicestershire L.E.A. (1987) found that of 415 meetings, one school had no parents attending, seven schools gained one parent each, eight schools reached two parents each, five schools had three parents at each of their Meetings and only 63 schools had more than 50 parents attending. 19% of schools had quorate meetings (i.e. the number of parents present had to be equal to at least 20% of the number of registered pupils at the school). A W.E.A. survey of Leicestershire found that 60% of schools had fewer than 60 parents present and only 6% of schools had more than 100 parents present. The average attendance at Derbyshire's school Meetings was thirteen at primary schools and 27 at secondary schools (Mahoney,1988,pp.12-13). Thody and Wilson reported that:

"Of 14 Leicestershire schools, three primary schools had fewer than 12 parents attending (number of pupils on roll - 40, 220 and 269 respectively). In contrast two small, rural primary schools had turnouts representing 75% and 108% of their pupil numbers but a Buckinghamshire secondary school attracted so few that governors and parents adjourned to the staff room for a cosy chat and a coffee. In general, the Leicestershire sample produced

between 3% and 9% in the primary schools and
3% to 14% in secondary schools"

(Thody and Wilson, 1988, pp. 42-42)

These figures all related to the first Meetings in 1987. Similar studies of Meetings in 1988-90 have not been carried out but the numbers attending are reported to be declining. (One Leicestershire school, for example, with 1700 pupils on roll, had 117 parents attend in 1987, 40 in 1988, 22 in 1989 and 20 in 1990.)

SUMMARY

The suggestions for governors' roles, which are investigated in the following chapters, resulted from reflections arising from experience as a governor, as a governor trainer and as an evaluator and consultant on governor training. That experience was informed, and extended, by the literature discussed in the previous three chapters, by a 1986/87 Leicestershire survey of governors' views of their roles and of their training and by the results of surveys conducted elsewhere. Observations by other governors at meetings, on visits and at the Annual Parents' Meetings, completed the evidence used.

CHAPTER 6

GOVERNORS' ROLES - CONSENT

Governors' consent is here defined as the function of legitimating the pivotal position of principals in the determination of policy for their schools. This consent also appears to operate for the purpose of confirming the rightness of any policies determined by headteachers. The existence of this covert function is important both politically and managerially. Politically, it could be said to establish the basis of the state (defined here as the micro-polity of the school) because consent supports and, thereby, legitimates the head. Managerially, it provides a means of avoiding the problems which might have arisen had governors fully adopted the questioning, critical role implied by the legislative changes of the 1980s.

The changes introduced by the 1980s legislation, regarding composition and powers of governing bodies, made it more apparent that governors were part of the macro-political system. They were to be the means of ensuring that schools became more accountable to the needs of the state; they were to be the means whereby schools became more democratically representative and hence more accountable to the needs of the community. To ensure accountability, the state both devolved powers to governors (while giving them also, more directions on how to use these powers) and allowed for the expression of community views through extension of the representational base of governing bodies.

Liberal democratic systems could be said to regard elections and representation as the means through which consent for a government would be mediated. Governors, therefore, now have the basis for consent.

The first part of this chapter examines the extent to which theories of consent, developed for the macro-state, can be considered applicable to what one might term, the 'educational state' of a school. Subsequently, there is discussion of the timing and mechanisms of governors' consent and suggestions are then offered to explain why governors do consent to the heads' leadership. Finally, reference is made to occasions on which governing bodies have withdrawn consent.

APPLICABILITY OF CONSENT THEORY TO SCHOOLS

Discussions on consent theory have usually been couched within the context of the state. Explanations for the obligations of citizens to their governments, or to other citizens, have been formulated to distinguish democratic from non-democratic governments. In a democratic system, a government is deemed to have a right to be in power because those who are governed have consented to be ruled by that government. It is in this last sense that consent is discussed here.

Apart from a brief mention of the term 'consent' in an article by Angus (1989), no studies have been located which address how issues of consent theory might be applicable to

the micro-polity of the school. There seems no reason, however, why consent, which might be termed the theoretical basis of any liberal democracy, should not be used as a framework for analysis if it is accepted that schools are micro-polities.

The term 'micro-politics' was introduced to education studies by Eric Hoyle (1982;1986) and has also been used by Glatton(1982) and Dimmock(1982). These used the concept as the background for describing appropriate managerial skills required to cope with such an environment, though they did not include governors in their analyses (nor did they, however, expressly exclude them; they were not mentioned). This omission might have been because at the time these studies were undertaken, extensive governors' powers to manage schools had not achieved legal recognition.

Further support for the idea that schools are micro-polities, is found in the work of Bacon(1978) and Baron (1981). Their studies both indicate that governors do have political roles which implies an assumption that schools are political states. Writers on organisational themes relating to school management use terminology which might seem applicable in political arenas (see, for example, Bidwell,1965; Bush,1986; Davies,1973; Greenfield,1986; Handy,1984). Case studies, such as those of Carspecken (1984), Ebbutt(1984) and Gronn(1984) could be said to be set in a political framework while Macbeth(1980a) and Davies(1983) use 'policy making' in the titles of their

researches and policy making could be defined as central to an understanding of political processes. On the other hand, Bernard Crick, for example, would probably have excluded schools from any form of political analysis since he considered that politics could properly only be regarded as the province of the nation state (1964).

If it is accepted that schools can be described as micro-polities within which consent theories can be discussed, there is still the question of whether or not a distinction should be made between the participants in the consent process in the macro-state and those in the consent process in schools. In the state, one is concerned with the extent to which the citizens can be considered to have consented to the use of power by those who govern them. In a school, the term, 'citizens', might refer to pupils, parents, staff or to the wider economic and social community. Those who govern them could be variously identified as the staff, the head or the governors. Governors are not themselves the citizens. They do, however, represent some of the citizens, which the head does not and one of their roles is to indicate to the head, the consent of all the governed. The 1980, 1986 and 1988 Education Acts explicitly recognised the governors' representative role which made governors the mouthpiece of the citizens who could be said themselves, to consent to rule by the governing body.

Governors have always provided an important mechanism through which consent could be expressed. It could be said

that this was recognised in Kogan's analysis (1984); two of the four types of governing bodies delineated by that research were given the descriptions of 'supportive' and 'mediatory'. Both of these terms could be deemed to arise from the outcome, and the operation, of consent. Writing of American school boards in the 1960s, McCarty and Ramsey (1971) were less complimentary, suggesting 'inert' and 'dominated' as possible descriptions.

Whenever governors consent to the head, their effect is to legitimate regularly, the rule of the head. Governors' meetings provide the opportunity for a termly confirmation that all is well. Heads can use governors' meetings to certify the rightness of their decisions. The meeting often becomes, in effect, a supporters' club. The Chairpersons, who usually visit their schools weekly, reinforce this function. There will often be questioning of the head at meetings, but usually the outcome is reaffirmation of consent. This becomes particularly evident when the governors report to their 'constituents' through the Annual Report to parents and when governors confront parents at the Annual Parents' Meetings. Evidence in support of the consent function, drawn from Annual meetings, is presented in Chapter 9.

Theories of consent are not taken to imply unquestioning acceptance of everything a government (head) may do since political theorists indicate that basing the rights of government on consent is to protect the natural rights of

the individual to freedom to determine their own actions.

Men are:

"at one and the same time, both subject to,
and superior to their government...they are
bound by [it] and can question [it]"

(Pateman, 1979, p. 245).

Observations from most governors' meetings would be found to show that governors do question their headteachers but the generally supportive tone of their questions, suggests that they feel their subject status rather than any superiority. Questions are rarely extended to difficult supplementaries, for example, and in some l.e.as, governors have been advised not to raise questions in meetings without first discussing them with their heads (Leicestershire, 1989). This advice might suggest to governors that concerted action with their colleagues is inappropriate behaviour, yet group action could be seen as a necessity if governors wished to change policies.

Consent theories indicate that citizens (governors) must have freely accepted their political/moral obligations in order for consent to form the basis of a ruler's legitimation. Citizens (governors) can then withdraw consent if they consider that governments have acted unreasonably (though what is unreasonable is a major area for dispute amongst consent theorists). Within a nation state, it might be suggested that withdrawal of total consent could be prevented because rulers have sanctions and physical force available to maintain them in power. Pateman argues, however, that the legitimacy given by the

mechanism of consent in a macro-polity, ensures the:

"smooth running of the machinery of state with the minimum of recourse to overt coercion and force" (Pateman, 1979, p.251).

Heads' leadership of governors would not appear to be reinforced by either overt coercion or force, yet governors' consent rarely ceases and their support usually reinforces the heads' position.

Pascal reflects this situation in discussing part of her argument under the heading 'Support versus accountability' (1987, p.199). She concluded that evidence indicated that the supportive function was the dominant one (ibid, p.199 - 200). The Birmingham governors whom Pascal studied, were found to be supportive of their schools and yet, at the same time, were also expected to hold their schools to account. Consent resulted in support, but was justified by accountability. This arises because governors are internal to the school and, therefore, support it but are also external to the school and are, therefore, required to control it.

In giving their consent, Pascal concluded that governors' actions were best described as non-participative, an opinion confirmed by Angus (1989). Perhaps not surprisingly, he described the results of this non-participation as failure to cause any significant educational changes (1989, p.24). Angus was writing of experiences in Australia, but the extent of their devolution of control to governors is very similar to that

in England and Wales so his conclusions might be considered transferable. He expressed his conclusion in the terminology of consent, suggesting that:

"participation may be at the utmost minimal: it may take the form merely of passive consent" (ibid).

The acceptance that governors perform the function of consent could be said to have been underscored by the legislation of the 1980s. The Acts include areas where governors can delegate their powers formally to headteachers (e.g. in some aspects of finance). There exists also, the general authorisation for heads to act on behalf of governors in the day-to-day management of the school since governors are not present all the time at school.

The studies by Pascal and by Angus, lend credence to the view that the consent function is reinforced by the passivity of many governors. Golby describes the development of two types of governors, those who take an active interest weekly or even daily and:

"the ceremonial types who are the 'advice and consent' governors".
(Quoted in Harrison, 1989)

These are described by a practising governor as those who "freewheel", pretending they have, for example, read all the many documents with which governors have had to deal (Harrison, ibid). The amount of work required of governing bodies from 1988-89 could well have encouraged such freewheeling passivity. The D.E.S. pamphlet (1988b) which

aimed to recruit governors, indicated that there would only be one governors' meeting per term and that all one needed to be a good governor was a general interest in a school. Governors have generally found this to be untrue and this may account for the numbers who are reported to have resigned since 1988 (approximately 12% of Leicestershire's and Dudley's governors, for example).

The function of consent is not confined to the passive governors. All governors, whether active or passive, would be defined as consenting governors in the terms of this analysis. All governors can be deemed to be consenting because, as Plamenatz states:

"we have consent wherever the right of one man to act in a certain way is conditional upon another man's having expressed the wish that he should act in that way"
(Plamenatz, 1968, p.4).

By voting for particular policies, governors indicate that they consent to heads implementing such policies.

Governors' legitimation of heads through their consenting behaviour does not mean that they must accept all the principals' policies without question, nor do they do so. They still operate consent in the sense that Plamenatz envisaged when he stated that the type of consent embodied by representative democracy would provide a general consent to action rather than a consent to particular actions (ibid, pp. 18 & 21). Governors cannot abrogate their responsibility for particular outcomes. Giving consent does not absolve them of the need to question a head's policies

even though they have indicated a general consent to a head's right to decide outcomes.

Summary

This section has suggested that consent theories developed for the political macro-state are applicable to the micro-politics of schools. Within these mini-states, governors represent the citizens who consent to the heads' rights to hold power. The giving of consent by governors does not imply unquestioning acceptance of everything headteachers may do, but governors usually pose their questions in a supportive fashion. They rarely withdraw their consent to heads' dominance although heads lack the coercive resources with which governments in macro-polities support their dominance. Governors' general passivity indicates their consent, but consent is equally expressed by the active governors as well. The legislation of the 1980s has underlined aspects of consent by making it possible for governors to delegate some of their powers to heads.

TIMING AND MECHANISMS OF CONSENT

Consent theorists have expended considerable thought concerning when, and how, consent to a state's rulers can be deemed to have been indicated. In claiming that consent to a head's rule is a function performed by all governors, then the issue of the nature and timing of that consent must also be discussed in the context of schools. If consent is to achieve support and legitimation for rulers, then it should be possible to show that it has occurred.

Timing of consent

The original social contract theorists envisaged consent as having been given by all people before the state was formed:

"A Common-wealth is said to be instituted when a Multitude of men do Agree and Covenant, every one, with every one, that...[a] Man or Assembly of Men, shall be given by the major part, the Right to Present the Person of them all"
(Hobbes,1651,p.90).

In looking for a precise moment when this type of Covenant was made, Locke(1690) concluded that it was at some distant, past time when our ancestors bound us to obey. Later theorists argued about whether or not all must agree and if it was possible to be precise about when such a covenant had been made. It was generally concluded that such an agreement was mythical. In commenting upon Locke's ideas, Pitkin(1972), for example, suggested that the consent point could also be in the present and that all could be bound to obey by the consent of the majority. Simmons(1976) considered that the timing was less important than the conditions. Consent had to be given:

"intentionally...knowingly...voluntarily"
(ibid,p.276).

Transferring these ideas to school political systems, there could be said to be evidence of the above interpretations of consent. In the cases of Grant Maintained Schools and City Technology Colleges, there has had to be a conscious consenting by parents or sponsors to establish such schools. The Grant Maintained Schools can be established by majority vote and a majority vote of the governors can

determine whether or not the issue of opting out should be put to the parents. There is, therefore, a specific point at which the new 'state' is established. If the governors of the original school then decide to continue as governors under the new status, then they could be deemed to have consented to the head. The sponsors of a C.T.C. likewise can be seen to be consenting at a particular point in time and since they also play a major role in appointing the head, there is clearly consent to the head.

The head of the first Grant Maintained School, Audenshaw High, recognised the support which this consent point can give in a speech at a conference in September, 1989 (B.E.M.A.S., Leicester). He said that when parents had approached him to ask his views on the opting out which they proposed to request, he said he would be happy to remain head of the new school but he insisted that the new governing body must include a lawyer, an accountant, a public relations professional, a building expert and a personnel manager. Here was an example of a head, in a sense, 'selecting' his own governors which would reinforce their consent to his exercise of authority.

Within the local authority maintained sector, an obvious consent point is harder to delineate. When new schools open, there might be said to be a consent point. Given falling school rolls, such cases are rare although changes in political attitudes may create more opportunities for the establishment of new schools. In 1989, for example, it

was announced that Buckinghamshire's Tory councillors were proposing to set up four new grammar schools. Elsewhere, the effects of demographic change and of the pressure of market forces as schools respond to parental choices, may cause schools to merge. New governing bodies would then have to be created which could provide what might be described as a consent point.

It could be claimed that there was a consent point for the heads of all maintained schools when the reconstructed governing bodies were formed in September 1988. This consent point will be repeated every four years from 1988 (from 1989 for voluntary aided schools). Although many governors continued to serve on the same governing bodies as previously, they are considered to be a new legal entity. Those who opted to continue service could be held to have actively consented to their principals since they were aware of the nature of the person to whom they were consenting. Governors who were elected might even be considered to have their own consent reinforced by the consent of the electorate to them.

Opportunities for consent to be expressed arise, for example, at governors' termly meetings when, traditionally, heads report on what they have done during that term and on future plans. This provides a regular point for indicating support and legitimation (or lack of it) for the principals' policies. The Annual Parents' Meetings, described in Chapter 9, provide a public forum to display

consent. The reports made on governors' visits (Chapter 8) reveal how governors may disguise their criticisms and hence emphasise their support for heads.

In the circumstances above, consent might be defined as being actively expressed, but the effect of the activity is limited. It cannot affect the head's tenure nor that of other staff either; there is no choice over to whom they can give consent. When those giving consent in the macro-state become active, there is at least an acceptance that such activity could result in changes in the personnel of the government. When those giving consent in the school become active, the main part of school government remains unchanged, i.e. the head and the staff.

Only when a new head is to be appointed, does the exercise of consent allow for choice. The 1986 Act increased the governors' powers in the selection of a new head although, in the majority of schools, the interview panel must include at least three l.e.a. *appointed representatives* in addition to the governors. Once a head is chosen, however, the consent point has gone and one has to return to a Hobbesian interpretation to accept that the original consent binds future governors. The binding nature of this original consent was recognised in the 1986 Act; Section 41 requires an l.e.a. to take note of governors' views concerning the suspension or dismissal of staff but these views are only 'recommendations'. The governors cannot dismiss a head themselves because the actual power to

dismiss remains with the l.e.as. Governors can give consent but there is no legal mechanism for its withdrawal.

Where heads are appointed on fixed term, reviewable contracts, there will be the opportunity for governors to reaffirm their consent. Recent research on school effectiveness reinforces the desirability of temporary appointments; ILEA's 1988 findings, for example, indicated that heads are at their most effective between three and seven years of their taking post (Mortimore et al,1988,p.222). A school in Solihull offered the first such contract in the maintained sector in 1989. The governing body of Dorridge Junior School advertised a headship appointment on a five year, temporary contract. Very few applications were received and the N.A.H.T. opposed the idea. The acting head accepted the post and, at the time of writing, the governors were deciding what were to be the performance indicators against which this head would be judged in five years' time.

Mechanisms for the expression of consent

In all the circumstances discussed above, governors' consent can be actively, or tacitly, expressed. If tacit, could this be considered to meet Simmons' criteria that consent must be given knowingly and willingly in order to constitute real consent? (Simmons,1976,p.276)

Locke (1690) felt that tacit consent was evidently given simply by virtue of ownership of, or residence in, any part

of a state. Few would now accept this view and it would be difficult to envisage how school governors might be considered to reside in, or own, the school. Hobbes had already taken the idea of tacit consent further on in 1651.

"Signes of Contract, are either Express, or by Inference...[the latter are] sometimes the consequence of words, sometimes the consequences of Silence; sometimes the consequences of Actions, sometimes the consequences of Forbearing an Action"
(Hobbes, 1651, p. 69).

This description would seem akin to what happens at governors' meetings. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the idea of the social, or general, will became the medium through which tacit consent might be considered to have been expressed. A very brief summary of these theories might state that rulers will behave in accordance with the wishes of the governed because the rulers do what the people would do if they were as wise as the rulers; the rulers are the expression of this general will and, therefore, the citizens are deemed to have consented to them. Are heads to be considered wiser than governors? The survey on the composition of governing bodies (Chapter 10) shows that the largest grouping of governors was in Social Class III whereas heads would be ascribed to Social Class II; governors include many professionals whose qualifications would match those of heads but there are many more who are not likely to be as well educated as are heads. Not many would be able to match heads' knowledge of education. The effect of this 'knowledge difference' is discussed in the penultimate chapters of this thesis.

School governors would probably feel happier with the Hobbesian/Lockean interpretation than with the general will theories. Plamenatz (1968,pp. 7-8) takes up Hobbes' views and suggests that consent can be indicated by inaction, by silent acquiescence or by a small sign (such as nodding the head) or by a written confirmation. In Angus' analysis of Australian governing bodies, it is accepted that the conditions for tacit consent can be satisfied by non-participation. Quoting from Srivastva and Cooperrider, Angus states that:

"non-participation itself must be recognised
as a form of participation"

(Angus,1989,p.24).

All these forms of inaction/action can be deemed to have given tacit consent to a head provided that the action, or inaction, is made with the intention of informing the ruler that the governed accept the ruler's right to make decisions on their behalf. Such indications could be considered commonplace at governors' meetings.

Using a similar situation to school governing bodies, that of a meeting of a company's board of directors, Simmons concluded that:

"genuine instances of tacit consent...are
relatively frequent"

(1976,p.278).

Simmons gave as an example, the chairman announcing a change in the timing of the next meeting; all the board members remained silent when the chair asked for any objections, hence they could be deemed to have consented to

the chair's right to determine the times of meetings. Governors could recount instances where much more important issues than the timing of meetings have been announced by the head and accepted in silence.

Silence or inaction constitutes consent, according to Simmons, provided that the individual is aware that silence will be taken to signify agreement. It must also be possible for dissent to be easily expressed. The outcome of expressing consent must not be detrimental to the dissenter and there must be a reasonable period during which dissent can be expressed. The ending of this period must be clearly made known (Simmons, 1976, pp. 279-280).

All these conditions seem to apply at governors' meetings. Simmons does state that the first condition would not have been met if an individual were asleep. Prior to the changes of the 1980s, governors were sometimes depicted as being 'half-asleep geriatrics' but perhaps the amount of work now expected of governors makes it difficult for anyone to sleep, whatever their age. The analysis of the composition of governing bodies in Chapter 10, however, shows that the number of over 60s amongst governors was less than 20% before the 1988 changeover and recent evidence indicates a slight decline in this age category. The 'geriatric' gibe does not, therefore, appear to be substantiated.

Some governors might suggest that, in practice, it is difficult to meet Simmons' criteria that the conditions must

be such that it is reasonably easy to express dissent. Governors on training courses have stated that they lack the confidence to speak at meetings. Simmons states that

"nervousness about talking" (ibid)

cannot be taken to mean that governors do not consent. He suggests that difficulty in expressing consent would apply if, for example, it were made a condition that consent could only be indicated by performing

"a perfect back handspring" (ibid)

which could not reasonably be expected of governors. Talking can reasonably be expected of governors. Some governors might disagree with this, although it must be noted that they generally report being inhibited more by chairpersons and other governors than by heads.

Procedure at governors' meetings would seem further to accord with Simmons' requirement for tacit consent i.e. that any expression of dissent will not prove seriously detrimental to the dissenter. Apart from a cost in leisure time foregone, most governors have no personal stake in the outcome of decisions although some parent governors might refuse consent to decisions which could adversely affect their children, such as part of the budget being directed away from facilities or subjects wanted by their child. In those circumstances, they might actively not consent and their consent would have to be covered by accepting the view that majority agreement binds all.

Governors' meetings usually meet Simmons' conditions concerning the timing of consent. Those consenting must be given reasonable time in which to express objections. In governors' meetings, time for objections is allowed and even if this time period is

"fairly informally and loosely set" (ibid), this would satisfy the conditions for tacit consent to have been given.

Digressing briefly from the internal to the external business of governors' meetings, it is interesting to speculate on whether or not Simmons' conditions for tacit consent have been met in relation to the many new policies of central government on which governors have been asked to comment and for which their consent has been requested. Angus described Australian experience which required governing bodies to consent to many central initiatives

"within what most members regard as 'unreasonable time frames'" (1989,p.24).

Governors in England and Wales were likewise given very little time for, nor information on, for example, the major changes of the National Curriculum and the formulas for sharing finance amongst schools. The time taken up by governing bodies having to formulate responses to central initiatives also made tacit consent to school policies more likely; there was little time for discussion of institutional issues.

The complexity of the issues presented by the Australian government was also reported by Angus (ibid) to increase the consent of governors to heads and to officials acting on their behalf in making submissions to government. Governors felt that their role was to respond rather than to take initiatives (ibid). Having accepted such a role towards central policies and having consented to heads acting on governors' behalf in this aspect of the work, the acceptance of consent to the heads' leadership in other areas could have been reinforced.

The first report on the Scottish pilot scheme for greater devolved power to governing bodies, reaches similar conclusions (Munn and Brown, 1989, p.8 [3]). The boards' numerous statutory responsibilities absorbed a considerable amount of the governors' time. The researchers identify, in particular, school lettings and procedures for staff appointments as responsibilities so time consuming that one governing body, for example, consented to these powers being delegated to the head.

The Simmons study discussed above (1976), concluded that neither active nor tacit consent were adequate grounds for obligation in the macro-state since so few of the citizens had ever done either. In the micro-state of the school, however, all the governors could be said to meet Simmons' conditions for giving tacit consent on many occasions and most might meet the conditions all of the time. Governors also have the opportunity to give active consent.

Summary

Two important issues for consent theorists concern the point at which consent can be deemed to be given and the manner in which it is indicated. When new schools are established or a new head is appointed, there is an obvious consent point. More frequently, governors can indicate consent when they accept the heads' reports at the termly governors' meetings, when they write supportive reports on visits to their schools and at the Annual Parents' Meetings. There is, however, no legal mechanism for the withdrawal of consent.

The expression of consent by governors is largely indicated by inactivity which political theorists have accepted as implying tacit consent. Even if governors feel too nervous to speak, this is not taken to mean that consent has not been given since governors are aware that silence constitutes consent and time for objections is allowed. In recent years, however, time for discussion has been reduced by the requirement that governing bodies should be consulted on major, central government initiatives. The number and detail of these initiatives has ensured their acceptance by tacit consent of most governing bodies and has decreased the time available for governors to consent actively to heads' leadership.

REASONS WHY GOVERNORS CONSENT

In the context of the liberal democratic state, theorists have debated whether or not the obligation to consent to a ruler arises because the ruler has been selected by the citizens. (A useful summary of arguments concerning obligation and consent is found in Pateman, 1979). In the micro-polity of the school, participation in the selection of the head could hardly be considered the basis of the governors' acceptance of their obligations to support and legitimate heads because choosing a principal happens rarely. Amongst other suggestions from political theorists for the justification of consent are, first, that consent is given because it is in the interest of all to consent. Secondly, it has been conjectured that citizens consent because it is natural to obey and this is reinforced by their personal knowledge of, and, therefore their faith in, particular rulers. The third reason arises from perceptions of freedom; once citizens have consented to be ruled, they feel happy to accept direction - their consent has been freely given.

The possible applicability of these three to school governors' consent will be addressed in this section. It is also necessary to consider why citizens could cease to consent and this provides the final part of this section. Theorists have centered their arguments concerning the withdrawal of consent around the issue of whether or not citizens consent to obey all governments or only those

which can be seen to be acting justly. Examples of cases where governors might be said to have withdrawn their consent to heads are used to illustrate this debate.

Consent in the interests of all

School governors might appear to be a good example of Plamenatz's views that individual rights of free action:

"must be reconciled ... with the necessity of organisation and co-operation in the interests of all" (1968,p.145).

In the role survey outlined above in Chapter 2, governors were found to perceive their two main roles to be that of supporters for heads and representatives of the childrens' interests. Their supportiveness arises because they feel that schools are generally performing well and, where they are not, this is perceived by governors to be caused by parsimonious governments rather than inefficient school staff. The governors on the pilot school boards in Scotland, for example, were described as:

"very supportive of their schools and all are convinced that their schools are doing a good job" (Munn and Holroyd,1989,p.25).

This conclusion was made at the end of the first year's operation. An earlier study of the Scottish experience after only the first four months of operation (September - December, 1988) recorded that the researchers were:

"struck by the expressions of positive support for the schools expressed to us both privately and in interviews and publicly during board meetings" (Munn and Brown,1989,p.8[6]).

The supportiveness was so strong that the Scottish

governors found it difficult to envisage that they were themselves necessary or could themselves do any good for their schools which had managed without them before the changes in the law. (Macbeth, 1980a and 1980b discusses the situation in Scotland prior to the 1988 legislation when schools did not have their own individual boards.)

This supportiveness provides evidence for the theorists who have suggested that it is not the giving of consent that obliges one to obey but the nature of government itself. Pitkin, for example, presents Socrates' argument that citizens consent to accept leadership by others because there is:

"nothing basically wrong with the system, no justification for resistance"

(Pitkin, 1972, p.67)

and Tussman's ideas that:

"if it is a good, just government doing what a good, just government should, then you must obey it"

(Pitkin, 1965, p.999).

She concludes that these theories only merit the title 'hypothetical consent' and do not move the debate on beyond Lockean interpretations but for those seeking a pragmatic explanation for governors' actions, the ideas would seem to provide some useful possibilities.

Tussman's views offer an additional reason which could be used to explain governors' consent. Governors interpret 'the interests of all' as meaning acceptance of the guidance of heads because heads' government has been

validated by, what Tussman terms, the "aware elite" (Pitkin,1972,p.61). Heads could be considered by governors to be members of such an elite (Chapter 10). Those within governing bodies who consider themselves to be in the elite with the headteacher (because they have the same social standing or the same level of qualifications as heads) consent because the head's dominance gives them the outcomes they want. The socio-economic similarities amongst heads, some governors and those parents who attend the Annual Parents' Meetings, could be said to ensure the delivery of the approved socio-economic outcomes for the existing elite.

The naturalness of obedience

The discussion in the earlier part of this chapter pointed out, however, that consent is given by all governors and not just by those who might be said to have a vested interest in its outcomes. Consent is given by all, it has been suggested, because it is natural for citizens to obey. (This theme is discussed in Pateman,1979,pp.251-253). Consent, it is argued, is an extension of political socialisation; the citizen's first lesson is of unquestioning obedience. Only later, does the citizen realise that obedience to authority is only a convention and that obedience might be questioned. By then, however, the habit is established (ibid, p.251). Schools can be seen as a major agent of political socialisation. This could be interpreted to mean that schools develop in children the

notion of the rightful obedience due to authority. Governors absorbed their own lessons in political socialisation when they were pupils and may feel themselves in the position of pupils again when they return, which could reinforce the consent they give to heads. (This is discussed further in Chapter 8.)

This habit of obedience is not lightly broken by governors. An example from one of London's governing bodies in 1987-88 helps to illustrate this reluctance. In 1988, a vote of no confidence in the head and governors was passed at the parents' statutory annual meeting for Roehampton Church of England Primary School in southwest London. The vote arose because there had been allegations of ballot rigging for the parent governor elections in 1987. The head and certain governors were suspected. The ballot was held again and resulted in a different candidate being elected. A report into the rigging was withheld by the governors and, as a result, the vice-chairman of the governors resigned. Clearly, the governors were not united in their opposition to the head so the vice-chair could only make a lonely protest. The vote of no confidence obviously required much effort on the part of a few parents and governors to mobilise the vote. Even then, as one parent said:

"Most of us found it wholly distasteful to have to make our point in this way. The votes took place out of sheer frustration at the bungling incompetence ...over a long period"
(The Telegraph, 11/7/88).

Despite the no confidence vote, governors and head refused

to resign (August, 1988) but they did suggest that a meeting should be held with parents to discuss anxieties.

Governors' sense of natural obedience is compounded by their personal knowledge of their heads. According to McPherson (Pateman, 1979, pp. 249, 253-4), citizens are particularly likely to consent to obey when the officers of the state are known to them personally. Pateman dismisses this argument because so few officers of a macro-state could be known to the citizens personally but adds that:

"It is true that friendship, or other personal relationships, can be relevant to a specific decision about political obligation"
(ibid, p. 254).

In the micro-state of the school, heads are well known to all their governors. Heads are always present at governors' meetings and may have a vote if they have exercised their option to become a school governor. It is usual for governors to meet the head on any visits they make to their schools. All this reinforces the governors' natural inclination to consent.

This natural inclination to consent because of a personal relationship was illustrated by a case in Dorset in 1986/87. The governors of Budmouth School, Weymouth, came into conflict with the l.e.a over the matter of who should be their new headteacher in 1986. The governors wished to include on the short list the school's acting deputy head, whom they would have known well, but the Authority considered he was not amongst the best three candidates for

the job. The governors then refused to participate further in the selection process. The problem was 'solved' by the D.E.S. issuing an Order of Mandamus forcing the governors to carry out their duty of appointing a head or face court action. Such enforced consent could hardly be helpful to the new head and this was recognised by the provisions of the 1986 Education Act relating to appointments. (This Act was not in force at the time of this dispute). The likelihood of governors preferring the known to the unknown in appointments was recognised in Leicestershire L.E.A.'s policy that deputy heads could not be appointed to the headship of the schools where they were employed as deputies. This policy was ended in the mid 1980s. The Socialist Educational Association advised governors, in 1989, that they should appoint from outside their schools in order to bring in fresh ideas.

The McGoldrick case, 1987-8, showed governors supporting their head and, as in the Dorset situation, the 'opposition' were the l.e.a. officers who would obviously be less well-known to the governors than would the head. Brent Borough Council disciplined, and suspended, one of their heads, Mrs. McGoldrick, for an alleged racist remark. The L.E.A. allowed the governors to conduct an enquiry into the allegations and the governors supported Mrs. McGoldrick and requested her reinstatement. The L.E.A. disagreed and obtained the Court of Appeal's judgement that the governors' views were not binding on an l.e.a. (the same

judgement that had been made in Honeyford v. Bradford City Council in 1986).

Consent is freely given

Plamenatz provides a final reason why governors readily consent to legitimate heads' actions. He writes:

"It is a psychological fact...that men reconcile themselves more easily to obeying persons whose power to give orders is dependent upon their wishes" (1968,p.147).

Governors feel they have freely consented and so the consent continues. It must, however, be reinforced by the principal's behaviour. What might constitute behaviour designed to reinforce consent is described below in Chapter 9, so one example will suffice here. The head of a school where major changes were being implemented was described as follows:

"As far as the governors were concerned, [the head] made sure that he met with his Chairman of Governors frequently; he wanted to make sure that he was taking the governors with him as far as the new developments were concerned. Indeed, he need not have worried on that front as the views of the governors were very similar to his own...he involved the Board [of Governors] in all aspects of the life of the school. He sees them as a great support...They are encouraged to come into the school as often as possible"

(Goodchild and Holly, 1989, pp.40-41).

The governors' natural propensity to consent can be encouraged by effective management.

Withdrawal of consent

Governors' natural propensity to consent is, nonetheless, very strong and it is rare for governors to withdraw their

consent from a head. Withdrawal of consent is likewise rare in other forms of political organisation; it is only considered right to withdraw consent when governments are acting tyrannically, unjustly or as no rational government would (Pitkin, 1965, p. 999). Such extreme cases seem unlikely to occur in schools but there have been instances where some governors have perceived their heads to be acting unreasonably and have, therefore, tried to encourage their colleague governors to withdraw consent. The cases illustrate that withdrawing consent is not a procedure to be lightly undertaken, that it requires much energy and commitment on the part of the disaffected governors and that it will be very difficult to persuade all the governors to act collectively.

Carhill primary school, 1985-1989, provides one such case (Galton and Patrick, 1989, Ch. 7). Parents and some governors objected to the headmistress playing strip poker with the children at the end of term. This was the culmination of a series of alleged other inadequacies and unsuitable behaviour such as regular late arrival at school and misbehaviour on a school field trip. There were also criticisms of the teaching; too much time was taken up in attending swimming lessons for example. Most of the governors were, however, very reluctant to withdraw support from the head and, since the L.E.A. appeared to procrastinate over taking action, it took a considerable time for governors and parents who had 'withdrawn their

consent' to achieve her removal. Even then, the removal was engineered on grounds of ill health rather than incompetence.

A similar forbearance on the part of governors was evidenced during the William Tyndale school's problems in the mid 1970s. Of the 13 governors of William Tyndale School who were neither teachers nor heads, only four were involved in making representations to the head and the Local Education Authority voicing their concern over the school. Despite, therefore, the serious difficulties being experienced at William Tyndale, (about 50% of the parents withdrew their children from the school) less than one third of the governors raised the issue outside the school and all the governors remained supportive of the school. The four who did complain were praised by the Auld Report (1976) for the exemplary way they showed their support for the school. As the dispute proceeded and the situation worsened, three of the four purveyed their criticisms in an inappropriate manner, according to the report (though their failure to be effective up to that point might have forced such action) (Auld, 1976, pp. 45-47, 66-67, 96-97, 109-111, 113-118, 156-185, 190-202 and Ch. VIII).

Withdrawal of consent can also occur on a more regular basis though this would be much more difficult to document. An interview with a Northamptonshire head in 1989 provided one example of a head who feels that his governors do not consent to him (or, perhaps, an example of

a head who is unaware that consent cannot be taken for granted, although it can be easily gained if tactics such as those described in the Goodchild and Holly study mentioned above [1989,pp.40-41] are used). The head commented:

"I do not feel able to ask the advice of my board in anything touching on education...They have, for the most part, very little idea of what constitutes quality...That is fine, as long as they will rubberstamp my policies... As it is, they have difficulty in appreciating what we teachers are trying to do and vote for measures which may be irrelevant, or difficult to pursue".

The result of this relationship has been "sharp passages of arms" in governors' meetings with the head, and the head had to call in l.e.a. officers to reinforce his views.

Summary

The unwillingness of governors to withdraw consent, illustrates the strength of governors' grounds for obligation to accept the heads' authority. Governors consent because they feel that schools are performing well. In addition, governors feel that heads are an elite who understand how to run schools better than do governors. These feelings are engendered by what have been described as the naturalness of obedience. The inherent inclination to obedience is reinforced by the political socialisation acquired in schools by their pupils. When pupils become adult and acquire governorships, they retain their feelings that it is right to obey the headteachers. Personal knowledge of their heads strengthens these feelings as does the governors' realisation that they have freely consented

to obey and thus could, if they wished, withdraw their consent. They rarely do so, which makes the consent function more effective.

CONCLUSIONS

Accepting that schools are political organisations makes it possible to use them as a context within which one can discuss the applicability of consent theories to the roles of school governors. Heads' rights to leadership arise from the consent of the governors. This consent ensures the smooth operation of the political system. It does not, nor should not, preclude governors from questioning heads but, in so doing, their attitudes are supportive rather than critical. Consent is a function performed by all governors; it is not confined to the passive, non-involved governors.

Major occasions for signifying consent arise when new schools are established, when existing schools are merged, when new governing bodies are appointed every four years, at the termly governors' meetings when heads present their regular reports for approval and when new heads are appointed. The way governors behave at meetings and on visits to their schools show that consent is given regularly. Governors' support can be either actively, or tacitly expressed. Whatever its form of expression, it is deemed to constitute consent if it is given intentionally and voluntarily and when reasonable time has been allowed for any expressions of dissent.

Governors give their consent voluntarily and intentionally because they feel it is in the interest of everyone that they should do so because most governors consider that schools are already being well managed by their heads and are providing a good education. Governors also consent because obedience is natural and this is reinforced by political socialisation and governors' personal relationships with their heads. Finally, governors consent because they perceive themselves to have free choice whether to do so or not and psychologically, this conditions them to consent more readily. Wise heads encourage these feelings by involving their governors fully in their schools. Where there have been examples of unwise management, some governors have withdrawn their consent but only with great reluctance and difficulty.

This acceptance by consent of the authority of the head to take decisions accords with what John Locke expected to find in the body politic once consent had been given:

"every man, by consenting with others to make the body politic under one government, puts himself under an obligation to everyone of that society to submit to the determination of the majority and to be concluded by it"
(1690,p.165).

The function of consent provides an important service i.e. it supports heads in what can be seen as lonely occupations which can carry heavy responsibilities. Consenting by governors indicates the existence of collective responsibility. The existence of this collective

responsibility, and the consent which it implies, makes governors managerially functional whereas to view them in a more questioning, critical role may appear as a managerial dysfunction.

The tenor of the developments in educational policy since the mid 1970s would seem to have stressed a movement away from the centrality of heads and towards greater community involvement in school decision making. Consent by governors might, therefore appear to be preventing this. It is possible that this result has occurred because central government has become increasingly directive towards schools. Governors have reacted by becoming protective towards their schools, an idea explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 7

GOVERNORS' ROLES - PROTECTION

Protection arises from the governors' function of consent but extends beyond it. Legitimation by governors' consent, as discussed in the previous chapter, lends support to principals and can help to protect them from some of the stresses of school management. Heads can gain protection by using governors for referral of decisions, for deflection of criticism from themselves and for avoidance of stress by emphasising the collectivity of management. These three results of protection are discussed below and particular illustrations are drawn from governors' meetings and from the parents' Annual Reports and Meetings.

DECISION REFERRAL

Heads can tell staff and parents that issues have to be referred to governors' meetings for decision. This requirement for referral could be utilised to delay, alter or otherwise hinder, policy decisions about which the head is not happy. It could also be used to give heads time for reflection if they themselves are not sure if the policies they are planning are quite appropriate. Heads do not then have to appear to be overturning staff or parental wishes since it is possible for them to claim (quite legitimately) that the governors would not agree to a particular request. When policy is submitted to governors for decision, it is possible that governors would amend it (this being part of their overt role), but such amendments seem rare and it is

in the choice of what to refer and how it is referred that heads are enabled to make use of governors' protection.

The 1986 and 1988 Acts stated, more precisely than previously, what are the powers and duties of governors and which are the powers and duties that properly belong to heads. Certain issues must now be referred by heads, to governors, for decision. These include the general direction of the curriculum, the inclusion (or exclusion) of sex education, the act of collective worship, the pattern of spending and staff selection. This exactitude might appear to militate against protection by decision referral since the heads' freedom of choice over what to submit to governors, appears to have been curtailed. There is still, however, ample scope for heads to exercise discretion. The powers of governors, in terms of what is, for example, included within their responsibilities for the 'general conduct of the school', are not precisely delineated and the head still has to decide where day-to-day management of the school ends and general direction by the governors begins.

The D.E.S. handbook, issued to all governors in 1988, stated that governors:

"have a general responsibility for the
effective management of the school"
(Section 3).

Articles of Government for Leicestershire schools, included the clause:

"the conduct of the school shall be under the direction of the governing body".

These statements appear to be sufficiently open to enable heads to claim that issues need to be referred to governors should heads wish to delay decisions. The 1988 D.E.S. Handbook underlined this since Section 3 stated that:

"the head and the governing body will work in a close and balanced partnership...The head will also want to keep the governors informed about the use of powers given directly to the head"

The 1986 and 1988 Acts further reinforce the governors' protective role. Governors are now firmly identified as being, themselves, the school managers who have legal rights and duties to participate in policy making and execution of policy. They are likely, therefore, to identify even more closely with school staff. In the past, governors could have been seen, albeit rather vaguely, as a channel for outside influence, to reflect, for example, the views of parents and to express these views to the school managers (i.e. the senior staff) and the l.e.as. Now, governors are the school managers; they can be considered responsible for what the school does. Are they likely any longer to reflect parents' views if these views could be construed as critical of themselves? This absorption of governors into becoming defenders of the status quo is strengthened by the superimposition of elites (Chapter 10) and educational protectionism (Chapter 8).

Analysing some of the major issues presented to one Leicestershire school's governing body by the principal in 1986-87, provided several examples of instances where the head had used the governors' protection. First, teachers wished to create a farm as a mini-enterprise for work experience for the pupils and a motor cycle track for traffic education. Both issues had major resource and public relations implications and both these came to the governors for decision. Both were strongly debated by governors with some powerful opposition expressed. The head took little part in the debate and the requests were introduced by the teacher governors, although the head did express general concurrence with the ideas. Both ideas were, in the end, accepted but it appeared very much as a governors' decision. Had the ideas not been accepted, the head could not have been accused by staff of not permitting developments.

Secondly, where heads feel uncertain, or where decisions are likely to be controversial, protection from governors could seem useful. The same governing body was asked, by the head, whether or not the school should adopt the TVEI initiative. The principal expressed his concern that the school would be unable to reach the 30% requirement for science and technology because of lack of staff and material resources. He was urged by his governing body to make the bid nonetheless on the grounds that the school would come fairly near the 30% and with a:

"bit of fudging of the figures which everyone does", then there would be adequate proof that the requirements of the TVEI bid had been met. The bid was accepted and happily, by the time that proof was required, adequate resources were in place. If that had not been the case, at least the head could have consoled himself with the knowledge that the governors had agreed to the bid.

Thirdly, governors' protection can also be utilised to enable staff to raise issues at a higher forum than only within a school's internal management structure. Where heads know that they cannot take action to solve a problem, they can permit staff to have the issue discussed by the governing body. Staff can then feel that some notice is being taken of their problems. An example of this arose from the overburdening of staff which resulted from the introduction of the G.C.S.E. At a local school, teacher governors presented a detailed report to the governors listing the extra hours work entailed. The report was endorsed by the governors and passed on to the l.e.a. for consideration for the appointment of extra staff. There was nothing the governors could do to relieve the staff but the head had raised the issue with them at least.

Two final examples both related to the contentious topic of AIDS education. The head asked the governors whether or not the issue should be covered for all pupils or only for the sixth formers. In addition, he enquired about showing a video on the topic. While it is for the governors to decide

what topics should be included within the sex education syllabus (or if there is to be a sex education syllabus at all), one assumes that the resources used should be a matter for professional choice. The governors decided to view the video with the sixth formers in order to decide if it should be shown to the younger pupils. The head was thereby protected from any possible parental objections by being able to claim the support of the governors. A similar protectiveness was also evidenced in another Leicestershire school's Annual Parents' Report which stated that governors had been invited to view a play on the theme of AIDS.

"Discussion followed the meeting and there was strong support for the play being shown to fifth and fourth year pupils"

(Sir Jonathan North School, 1987).

It might be thought that the presence of teacher governors at meetings could prevent heads using governors' protection, but teacher governors can only act as a marginal check on what heads choose to submit to governors. Teacher governors even in a small school, would not be involved in every issue concerning the school. Therefore, they could check on relatively little of what the head chooses to submit, nor would teacher governors be involved to any great extent with the Chairpersons. Teacher governors, like heads, might be said to have a vested interest in only transmitting part of the truth so are unlikely to question the head unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is not to claim that teacher governors will not dispute with the head, as Golby's research made

clear (1985), but generally they are likely to combine with the head against outside criticism. This may be because they share the same background as the head, or because the members of any organisation will 'close ranks' against outsiders, or because they are frightened to speak out against the Head (Latham, 1982, supports the latter view, for example). The outcome of protection is the same whatever the reasons for its existence. The discussion of the effect of teacher governors is considered further in Chapters 8 and 13.

DEFLECTION OF CRITICISM

A second function of governors' protection is to deflect criticism from heads and the staff. This deflection has been mainly towards the l.e.as, but, by the end of the 1980s, there were some indications that this particular anti-government direction of criticism might move from local to central government. Governors blame school ineffectiveness on governments' failure to provide adequate resources. Governors also divert adverse comments on school performance by indicating parental responsibilities for outcomes. One wonders how long this diversion will survive. Research during the 1980s into school effectiveness emphasised the important influence that a head particularly, can have on school performance. (Reynolds, 1985; Willms and Cuttance, 1985; Cuttance and Goldstein, 1988; Mortimore, 1988).

Two examples from Annual Reports will illustrate the general tone of governors' protectiveness through deflection of criticisms. Where a school has 'failures', such as poor behaviour by pupils, the manner in which this is reported by the governors' Annual Report can protect teachers. Weston Favell's Report, for example, stated:

"Suspension is always the last resort after many hours have been spent by teachers trying to help difficult pupils...This number is greater than it used to be and a cause for sadness. It is part of the society which we have created and as believers in comprehensive education we feel it is right that pupils should mix with others from widely varying backgrounds, but we do not wish to disguise this aspect of our school nor hold back our admiration for teachers who have to work with disturbed children".

The requirement that schools must show their examination results in the Annual Reports, brought varying degrees of protectiveness. One school reported that they used:

"a computer analysis of examination results which showed parents something of the relative performance between departments as a way of 'defending' the departments which inevitably produce 'poor' results because of the students who select...those subjects"
(Tomlinson, 1988, p.16-17).

Some schools produced detailed lists for each subject, showing the numbers achieving each grade but giving no indications of percentages or comparisons with previous years. Others provided only an outline, as these examples show:

"Of all the G.C.S.E. entries, 89.7% gained an average result or above, and of those, 35% were grades A-C"

(Sir Jonathan North School,1989).

"The G.C.S.E. results were comparable with the previous two years"

(City of Leicester School,1989).

Without a knowledge of the meaning of 'average', or the results of previous years, it would be difficult for parents to know how well the pupils were performing. Governors absolved staff from responsibility for any examination problems by reminding parents of, for example:

"the obstacles created by delays in the completion of the syllabuses...the lack of textbooks, staff training problems and inadequate funding", none of which "were the fault of the school"

(City of Leicester School,1989).

One school head, nonetheless, appeared to feel that the information provided on examination results had to be very carefully presented, in a way that was:

"as honest as is professionally acceptable" because "I suspect that if we can trust parents to support us, they will give teachers the support they undoubtedly deserve".

(my underlinings; Tomlinson,1988,p.17)

Parents' Meetings provided the opportunity for more active reiteration of protection by governors. At the Annual Meeting for a Leicestershire upper school, for example, a parent, who criticised the careers training at his son's school, was confounded by a governor. The governor quickly responded to the question that he too had had his reservations about the careers department and had decided, therefore to make that department a target for his visit of

inspection. He had found:

"thorough preparation of students for employment. I have been wrong in judging this school as deficient...there are many and diverse opportunities for work experience"
(John Cleveland College,1987).

At another school, a parent demanded to see how the school's results compared with those of other schools. The Chair stated he disliked league tables for comparisons and he did not wish to see children judged solely on academic attainment. The head, and other governors, endorsed these views. The league tables were then, reluctantly, revealed showing the school to be the leader in the vicinity. The reluctance seems a good method of protective public relations (Lancaster Boys School,1987).

Educational protectionism extended to individual teachers. Possibly the most likely subject for a parent to raise at an Annual Parents' Meeting would be criticism of an individual teacher who was deemed to be adversely affecting the parent's own child. Criticisms of individual teachers were, however, discouraged. Parents at Leicestershire's meetings were told that these meetings were not for such individual comments because teachers could not be present to defend themselves.

The physical arrangements of the seating at Annual Parents' Meetings also emphasised the collectivity of the governors, ranged against the parents. Headteachers were usually seated peripherally to the governors. The governors formed a phalanx facing the parents. The calmness and lack of

criticism that seems to have characterised most meetings would seem to indicate that protection was successful. Of 14 school meetings reported in a Leicestershire sample, (Thody and Wilson,1988), all were reported as having been amicable. Where there were reports of hostility they always seem to have happened in someone else's school and one suspects the stories may have been apochryphal or, at least, to be dependent on one's personal perceptions. One meeting was reported variously, as follows:

"a riot, personal abuse against a teacher,
spread like wildfire round the room and the
Chair lost control" (Governor)

"There was a bit of an upset about an
individual teacher but it was soon sorted out
- we got on to more important things and the
complaint will be dealt with later"
(Governor)

"It was a very quiet evening" (Parent)
(Thody and Wilson,1988,p.43).

Governors also deflected criticism from the teachers to parents as evidenced in some Annual Reports. Parents' duties were clearly stressed in the report which stated:

"The staff have made tremendous efforts to prepare for the G.C.S.E., and you can help them. A child only spends about one third of the time at school and parents' attitudes are the most important thing in making sure a child does well. Children are sometimes inclined to try to pull wool over their parents' eyes and persuade them that, for instance, 'nobody does homework any more'. May we make a few suggestions?"

asked the governors. They then proceeded with a little homily about students not having part time jobs and doing their homework before being allowed to watch television. (Denbigh School,1987).

Responsibility for failures (or for avoiding failures) was also placed on parents rather than the school. Most governing bodies included the school rules in their reports. Since pupils would not be reading these reports, the rules could be said to have been included as a reminder to parents of their duties to discipline their children. By implication, this becomes a protection for the teachers. One report, for example, stated firmly that:

"We will not put up with inconsiderate behaviour towards staff, fellow students or the buildings" (John Cleveland College, 1987).

Another report reminded pupils to attend school regularly and to understand that the main activity in school was learning. (Sir Jonathan North School, 1987).

Criticisms that were made at meetings tended, as did those in the Annual Reports, to be deflected towards the twin scapegoats of inadequate L.E.A. resourcing and of too many new central government policies being introduced into schools too quickly. An L.E.A., for example, was blamed for staff reductions by the governors of one primary school:

"We were notified of the loss of the 0.2 part time teacher and have campaigned on behalf of the school...Letters have been sent ...to the LEA...but we have been told that unless our school reaches 46...the part time teacher will not be reinstated" (Mears Ashby, 1987).

Another primary school's governing body phrased its Report carefully to indicate the governors' intention to deflect any possible criticism away from the school itself:

"The aim of the school is, within the constraints placed upon it, (my underlining) to educate the whole child" (Barwell, 1987).

Protectiveness of the school, by attacking the l.e.a., also found expression in the Annual Reports, in matters relating to finance. Parents who felt aggrieved, for example, because their children were not amongst the chosen few able to remain on the school premises for lunch (during the teachers' dispute, 1986-88, received an Annual Report which informed them that available supervision was inadequate to ensure childrens' safety. This was because no-one seemed attracted to the job of dinner supervisor because of low rates of pay offered by the local authority. (Sir Jonathan North School, 1987).

The requirement that a school's accounts should be shown in the Reports, was taken as an opportunity, by some governors, to point out how little money was available from the l.e.a. Governors stressed, for example, the paltry £1900 for all repairs and maintenance. One school illustrated the inadequacies of capitation by relating it to expenditure per child:

"The school has been allocated £682 capitation expenditure for books, stationery and materials (which is approximately £5 per child per term)" (Mears Ashby, 1987).

Another Report stated that lunchtime facilities:

"Have not been able to cope to the satisfaction of the Headteacher and the Governors. Consequently the Authority has been approached to improve the situation...but it has to be said that the Governors still feel there has been a deterioration over the years due to inadequate funding" (Broughton Astley, 1987).

A case where the governors' views had been ignored by the l.e.a. was also reported; school land had been sold despite

representations from the governors to the l.e.a.

The protection which governors have given heads by transferring blame for failures to the l.e.as, may be about to rebound onto the governors themselves. Once the clauses of the 1986 Act relating to local resource management are implemented, l.e.as will be able to claim that failure to find resources for developments desired by parents or pupils, failure to appoint staff or allow particular pupils to be admitted, will be the fault of the governors. In minor ways, l.e.as could use governors' protection before the changes to local resource management. When two schools were amalgamated in Leicester in 1987, for example, there was much local dispute about the choice of a name. The l.e.a left the decision to the governors so they would have to absorb the hostility from the groups which felt aggrieved by not having their choice of name adopted.

It has been suggested that the realisation of the usefulness of governors' protection for the l.e.as has come too late. L.e.as may have neglected this potentially powerful supporter to their loss now that l.e.as have, in their turn, become neglected (Sallis, Education, 1988).

Sheffield L.E.A. recognised the potential usefulness of governors' support in 1989. They decided to discontinue the existing l.e.a subcommittees and substitute instead, committees representative of the Authority's governors because:

"governors must be drawn into responsible decision-making about the system as a whole...Perhaps more important the governing bodies could not then become a divisive element" (Education, 1989).

It is interesting to reflect that Sheffield was one of the leaders in co-opting new contenders for power into their governing bodies in the mid 1970s (Bacon,1978). The need to co-opt governors into the policy making system generally was recognised by Stewart in 1977 who foresaw that the most important task for educational administrators would be to

"work out how community pressures could be reconciled with administrative form and process" (Welton,1989,p.4).

Local resource management, combined with the advent of the national curriculum and the possibility of opted out schools, may mean that governors will become the unwitting protectors of central government as well as of heads. The 1986 and 1988 legislation has tried to emphasise that, if schools fail to meet parental expectations, it will be clear where responsibility for this rests; it will rest with school governors, not central government. It could be suggested that this was one of the government's intentions for the outcomes of decentralisation of powers to governors. For example, a study of New Zealand (where decentralisation has likewise been implemented) commented:

"Most public dissatisfaction with education, therefore, is to be vented at the local level and thus diverted from central government" (Codd,1989,p.8).

Jones expects, however, that the changes will produce the opposite reaction and:

"will encourage an anti-government attitude,
alienating the public from the government"
(Jones and Ranson, 1989, p.3).

This would seem to be the more likely result; where governors have previously protected heads by blaming i.e. as for failing to provide adequate resources, the blame can now be transferred to central government since it is now more obvious that their decisions influence how much money is received by the schools.

STRESS RELIEF - COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

It could be claimed that governors' protection has become particularly valuable since executive stress has been recognised as a managerial health hazard and methods for alleviating it have provided the subject matter of many books and courses in the 1980s. Suggestions for relieving stress include delegating one's problems to someone else or sharing them with someone else. The existence of governing bodies offers heads the opportunity, not only to discuss problems with other people, but also to have those same people share the responsibility for the decisions. The pressures contributing to stress amongst headteachers are deemed to have greatly increased, arising, in part, from central government's development of a national curriculum and national testing, the decision to delegate more powers to schools and the advent of requirements for greater accountability for schools. Collective responsibility, traditionally associated with British cabinet government, is a managerial solution for protecting against stress.

The word 'protection' is not used here in the sense of meaning a barrier against attack although some governors expressed the view that such a barrier might be needed at the first Annual Parents' Meetings. These meetings were, as described above, and in Chapter 8:

"far from being occasions to beat the teachers
and condemn the schools as was feared"
(Mahoney, 1988, p.19).

Parents generally were very supportive of schools and teachers. Nonetheless, whether or not the meetings had become hostile, the presence of the governors jointly with the head emphasised that heads were not alone. The unity so presented could be said to obviate the necessity for a barrier against attack. Collective responsibility could help dissuade potential attackers from mounting any hostilities. The general tone of the Annual Reports indicated governors' support for schools and affirmed that the head's decisions were right (i.e. there was consent as discussed in the previous chapter) because they had emerged from a collective consensus.

This collectivity of school management was that of 'the governors'. The letters of invitation to parents to attend the Annual Meetings all used some variant of:

"the governors are pleased to invite you
to...", "the governors are submitting this
report to you", "please come and meet your
governors".

The head was not separately mentioned. It was intended that governors should play a substantial part in writing the reports, although this did not prove to be the case in

practice. Nonetheless, all reports adopted phraseology which indicated that they had been produced by the governors and clearly showed that the governors were responsible for what happened in the school. This was true even for areas which are usually considered to be within the head's purview, such as:

"We do everything we can to ensure that we treat students as individuals".

Since governors have very little contact with individual pupils, such statements must really mean that the head and staff try to ensure such treatment of students. Such protectiveness for the head's policies found emphasis from the governors who wrote:

"We have backed the Headmaster in the short term suspension of 15 pupils"
(Weston Favell, 1987).

All reports were written in collective terminology; a few used the pronoun 'we' but the majority were impersonal using forms such as, "the governors feel", or, "It is considered that", or, "There have been curriculum developments". Very occasionally, the phrase, "The Principal and governors" appeared and once, from the chair, "My fellow governors and I". The reports, therefore, met the statutory requirement to be a report on how the governors had managed the school, although the content was a report on the decisions made by the staff.

As required by law, most of the reports listed the governors. Fifteen of twenty reports studied had this list right at the beginning, immediately after, or very close

to, the letter of invitation, thus signifying the role the governors are supposed to play in sharing the responsibilities of leadership with the heads. One school made this sharing very clear in the opening statement of the report. Their school was one where the head appeared very protected by the collective approach:

"An exciting new opportunity has arisen for your school: an opportunity for the governing body to be responsible (my underlinings) for the major part of the expenditure that takes place... The headmaster submits a report to us...we also call in teachers to describe to us their particular responsibilities...Governors are attached to various departments in the school and are expected to make contact with the staff" (Weston Favell,1987).

Another school reported its curriculum review process, involving all the governors (and parents, pupils, staff and local employers). This had taken approximately 18 months, with open meetings, working parties and questionnaires. The resultant Statement of Intent was announced in the Annual Report:

"The College will seek to provide a balanced, broad-based and relevant curriculum in which all students, regardless of gender, race or creed will be offered the widest possible range of learning experiences. All students should have the opportunity to come to a realistic understanding of themselves and their potential and be encouraged to develop their skills and talents in a disciplined, caring and stimulating environment."

(John Cleveland College,1987)

The College Principal could, one imagines, have written that statement in five minutes but the protection offered by consultation and approval by the governors meant that everyone could own the statement and would therefore be

less likely to argue about it (John Cleveland College, 1987). It would also have made the participants in the process aware of the difficulties of reaching agreement on curriculum aims which would help encourage the educational protection discussed in the next chapter.

CONCLUSIONS

Governors have functioned to protect heads, first, by providing a forum to which heads can refer decisions. This can permit heads to arrange deferment or amendment of policies about which they, themselves feel unhappy. Secondly, governors function to deflect criticisms from heads to l.e.as, parents and central government instead. Changes may be occurring in this aspect of the function of protection of heads because local authorities are beginning to use governors to protect l.e.as and because central government may also be envisaging that governors can be used as a barrier against possible attack on itself. Finally, governors can still protect heads by helping them cope with the stress occasioned by their increased duties. Sharing decision making relieves heads of solo responsibilities.

The idea that heads use governors for protection may sound rather manipulative, or even Macchiavellian since the protection will help maintain the head in power. This may, indeed, be the effect but it is unlikely that heads are always consciously aware of using governors in this way. Wise principals have always incorporated governors into

their decision taking. The value of deflecting responsibility to governors has been recognised by heads who have themselves chosen not to become voting governors. In that way, they avoid having to be identified with any particular factions amongst the governors and can disclaim any part in unpopular decisions.

The views of a Leicestershire principal provide an interesting conclusion on the values of governors' protection. He was asked to what extent he found it helpful to have governors making visits to, and reports on, his college. He responded:

"Once on boarding a Piccadilly Line tube at Acton Town, it unexpectedly took the line for Hounslow rather than for Uxbridge. Arriving at South Ealing, some two thousand people traipsed across a footbridge to catch a train in the other direction. A few commuters gathered angrily around the driver's cab of the misdirected train giving vent to their feelings. 'It's no good shouting at me' wailed the unfortunate driver, 'I just go where the rails take me'. I often recount this story when people ask me how, as Principal of one of England's largest comprehensive schools, I manage to sleep at night. While I see myself as having the driver's everyday responsibility for the welfare of staff and passengers on the train, I am careful to avoid the stress of planning the route singlehandedly. Our Curriculum Review has involved 1700 students, 115 staff, 20 governors plus many parents and local employers, to develop a collective vision of our destination. My job is to manage the journey towards this at a realistic pace. Judging this pace is difficult. The governors' visits to the College put them in the position of viewing the same journey from a different perspective. This will enable them, at governors' meetings to offer advice from the standpoint of an interested and impartial adviser. I can't get that advice any other way and I value it enormously. It helps me sleep at night"

(Thody and Middleton, 1989,p.11).

CHAPTER 8

GOVERNORS' ROLES - EDUCATIONAL PROTECTIONISM

"I prepared this detailed report on curriculum policy within the school. They nodded sagely and immediately went on to discuss something else. Perhaps they just don't want to appear critical"

(Munn and Holroyd, 1989, p.22)

The Scottish headteacher who made this comment about his governors, was reporting an attitude found amongst many governing bodies. Governors do not feel that they should direct the curriculum and their consent and protection are particularly evident in curriculum issues. The governors' role in this respect has here been given a separate category, educational protectionism, because of the central importance of the curriculum in school life. Educational protectionism is defined as meaning the governors' support for the professionals' interpretation of the curriculum. Governors defer to the head and the teacher governors when curricular issues are discussed. Heads, and senior staff, initiate curriculum policies. The discipline arising from educational protectionism ensures that the staffs' suggestions are, almost always, effected, whatever the legal powers of governors over the curriculum may be. The governors' educational protectionism supports the teachers' views of the curriculum and their right to determine policy on the curriculum.

A similar "ideology of professionalism", which likewise produced "an effective abrogation of the role of the board", has been described as happening also within the

directorship of commercial companies (Zald,1968,p.103). Professional protectionism arises, it has been suggested, because the non-executive directors (who would be the equivalent of the lay school governors) tend to "go native" (Parker,1988,p.138) and become socialised into accepting the views of the executive directors because these are regarded as most knowledgeable about the affairs of the business. To try to avoid this happening on commercial boards of directors, it has been proposed that non-executive directors should serve a maximum of two, three year terms (ibid). Beyond that time, it is felt that they cease to be useful critics. Six years of office would probably be the average for school governors yet they seem to become absorbed early into the prevailing ethos of support for the views of the professional educators.

This chapter explores the possible reasons for this. Governors' powers over the curriculum will be outlined before this exploration and the chapter will conclude with an investigation into the effect of educational protectionism on central government's involvement in curriculum direction. This latter is included because it appeared, from the 1986 Act, that central government decided to give governors extensive powers over the curriculum. The introduction of the National Curriculum by the 1988 Act, restricted the governors' powers. It is arguable that this change may have been chosen because the educational protectionism of governors was beginning to be recognised.

GOVERNORS' POWERS OVER THE CURRICULUM

In 1976, James Callaghan, the then Prime Minister, initiated the Great Debate. This was intended to inaugurate lay participation in influencing the curriculum, which had become regarded, by that time, as largely a matter for professional decision. The Taylor Committee, which was set up to consider lay involvement in school government, reported in 1977 and its first legislative outcome was the 1980 Education Act. This Act was concerned with the composition of school governing bodies but not with what the governing bodies had power to do. It contained no mention of the curriculum. Representation of teachers and parents was introduced but the Act:

"nevertheless allowed political nominees to predominate,...and head teachers to retain effective control"

(Whitehead and Aggleton, 1986, p.442).

The 1986 Act altered the composition of governing bodies again, by increasing the representation of parents to equal that of the political nominees. Professional representation was not increased. Governors were given powers over the curriculum. It was to be:

"the duty of the governing body to consider ...what, in their opinion should be the aims of the secular curriculum for the school...and to make, and keep up to date, a written statement of their conclusions...and... to consider...the question whether sex education should form part of the secular curriculum of the school"

(Clause 18).

It seemed, however, that central government decided these powers needed to be amended even before there had been a

chance to try them out. The powers of governors relating to the curriculum were reduced by the 1988 Act which introduced a National Curriculum. The contents of this were to be detailed by central government so, although governors retained the power to set the aims of the curriculum for their school, governors' aims have to be compatible with the National Curriculum and with their l.e.as' policies. This left little scope for choice by governors. They retained the power to decide whether or not there should be sex education in a school's curriculum and, if so, what the contents of this should be (Cls.18, 46, 1986 Education Act). Even this power appeared to have been curtailed almost as soon as it became operative since central government was detailing the contents of the national curriculum for science which included reproduction and birth control.

Governors have no power over the contents of the National Curriculum. Governors were consulted during the drafting of the structure of the National Curriculum but the time allowed for sending in their views was extremely short and the information provided for governors was minimal. Their duties under the 1988 Act do, however, include the responsibility to ensure that a school's curriculum is balanced and broadly based and that the National Curriculum is implemented (Clause 1 of the 1988 Education Act). Governors are, therefore, no longer strongly placed to influence the general direction of the curriculum although

this is the area for which their knowledge of the needs of society outside school might uniquely fit them. This leaves governors with scope to advise the professionals on details of content and pedagogy, both aspects about which non-professionals are likely to feel uncertain. This uncertainty is reinforced by the factors discussed below.

REASONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROTECTIONISM

The educational establishment of a school could be said to dominate its governing body because governors feel they lack knowledge equivalent to that of the professionals. They therefore feel unable to discuss curriculum issues from a position of parity. Bacon reported such feelings amongst governors in his 1978 study of Sheffield's governing bodies:

"When [governors]...visited their child's school they found that education was a complex, highly sophisticated activity,...they were unfamiliar with the policies, techniques, philosophies or even the linguistic codes used in their child's school. Consequently, most parents were forced...to look towards the headteacher for guidance [and]...to enter into a de facto pupil relationship"

(Bacon, 1978, pp. 128-9).

The very nature of schools has been described as encouraging the continuance of the pupil relationship into adulthood. Research by Wilson (1972), studying the possibility of student participation in high school government in the U.S.A., found the experiment failed because schools naturally functioned to encourage participant apathy, schools negated the possibility of real participation because the non-experts were taught to

recognise the authority of experts and because there was an expectation of submission. Governors who report feelings of inadequacy in contacts with the professionals could be considered to be expressing feelings arising from the functioning of schools as described by Wilson. Wilson also deemed the participation a failure because the new participants expected too much of their role and quickly became disillusioned at the lack of 'real' power. They, therefore, effectively opted out.

Angus's Australian report in 1988, also found that the governors were constrained by:

"expectations about the nature of
education...and the entrenched roles of
education participants" (p.24).

All those involved in school government were described as having common expectations of what constituted the roles of pupils, teachers, parents, heads and governors and all conformed to these role expectations. Governors felt unable to question heads even when clarification was essential, as was also shown in the study of Scotland's school boards in 1988 (Munn and Holroyd,p.9).

Evidence from an interview with a Northamptonshire head in 1988 showed the contempt of one head for his governors' lack of knowledge:

"My experience is that my governing body does not understand many of the nuances of my reports, and of other educational documents...the truth is that they are not frightfully interested...do not understand the significance of results of standardised

tests...have no criteria for judging work...[I] had to give them a blackboard lesson on age groups".

While one hopes that such arrogance would not be generally found amongst heads, other heads have reported similar findings though they have expressed their feelings in a more kindly manner (e.g. Adams,1989,p.18).

Governors seem very aware of their lack of educational knowledge and deem themselves unsuitable for a role of controlling the professionals. Research at Exeter University (Golby and Brigley,1988) found that governors preferred to leave what they deemed to be the important decisions relating to the curriculum, to the professionals. They were interested in the curriculum. They liked to be involved in, for example, working parties, but not to intrude into making decisions on matters which they deemed to be the prerogative of teachers. A Gallup Poll in 1988 supported these findings. Of a sample of 1028 parents, 42% considered that teachers should have the greatest influence in running the education service (25% supported l.e.a. control and 5% supported central government control; 5% did not know and 19% supported their own control). (Coryton,1987,p.436). A spokesman for the N.C.P.T.A., in a radio broadcast on 24/9/87, asked the question, "Who are we parents to judge what is a good school?

Governors' feelings of inadequacy concerning curricular issues, were evidenced during Leicestershire's training sessions devoted to curriculum developments in 1987. They

proved to be very popular evenings. The most common reaction of governors to the activities was to express relief that they now understood what teachers were trying to achieve and they felt even happier than they had before with the education being given by their schools.

A brief historical digression reveals that this feeling that lay people are not sufficiently qualified to comment on the professionals' decisions on the curriculum is not a new development. In evidence to the Cross Commission in the late nineteenth century, the idea of parental involvement in governing schools was decried on the grounds that:

"only a small minority of parents are fitted...parental strictures upon a school curriculum are invariably limited to finding fault with the writing, the arithmetic, the geography and the absence of colloquial teaching of modern languages"

(Gordon,1974,p.174).

Respect for professionalism is reinforced when governors are also parents. During training courses in Leicestershire, governors, who were parents, said they were wary of arguing with the professionals for fear there might be repercussions for their children, a view expressed also by the parent governors in Bacon's survey (1978,p.130). Parent governors, additionally, saw teachers as their allies on the governing bodies against the political representatives of whose motives they were suspicious. They would not, therefore, wish to be seen to disagree with the professionals' views (Golby and Brigley,1988).

The unwillingness of governors to criticise the curriculum offered in their schools was evident in William Tyndale school in the mid 1970s (Auld,1976) and in Carhill school in the late 1980s (Galton and Patrick,1989,Chapter 7). In the Carhill case, the governor who emerged as the leader of the protest was a parent governor but he was also a professor of primary education. He was the only governor whose professional judgement could be considered to 'out rank' that of the head and of the L.E.A. officials, which was presumably why the other parents approached him for assistance. Even he, however, behaved with the exemplary caution one generally associates with governors. He tried to obtain information from the head on her curricular policies before pressing for action and also assisted with the teaching himself rather than push for more drastic action.

Another university professor resigned because he felt it was "neither realistic nor proper" that governors should be given powers to intervene in matters which should be reserved for professional judgement (Browning,1989,p.29). While he strongly supported the principle of parent representation, he believed they were not equipped to question the professionals. The professor is a professional who insisted that other professionals' rights to exercise their judgement freely should be respected. A similar view was expressed by Halstead (1989). In his article, Halstead was generally enthusiastic about extended involvement by

governors but stressed that:

"detailed planning for the curriculum should be a matter for the school's professional staff".
(Halstead,1986,p.435)

Halstead is a professional A.E.O. Views like his are likely to be supported by other governors with professional backgrounds and/or with education related occupations. Studies of governors' occupations show that both these groups have substantial representation amongst governors (Chapter 10).

These surveys also reported governors' age groups; governors were not found to be predominantly the over-60s which popular myth sometimes depicts them to be (Boulter, 1988,p.467). In deciding to devolve some curricular control to governors, it is possible that central government thought that there were numerous elderly governors who might not be inclined to support teachers' views. Elderly governors are not, however, numerous nor are they, noticeably, more or less reactionary than other age groups.

For example, only 18.2% of Leicestershire's governors were found to be over 60 with the largest group being between 31 and 40 years of age. (34.4%). What older members there were might be those most likely to retire in reaction against the additional duties imposed by the 1988 Act. Observing one Leicestershire governing body at work, it was found that the supporters of radicalism were spread throughout

the age range, the social and occupational classifications and the different types of appointment sources. Developments, including restructuring the school's banding system to allow fuller access to opportunities for more pupils, building a motor cycle track, introducing Aids education, or adopting T.V.E.I., all created enthusiastic, not critical, discussion. (This is a school with a strong grammar school tradition, special attention is paid to the gifted, pupils' successes are still celebrated with a prize day and the Chairman was himself a pupil at the school in its more traditional days.)

Heads can encourage the natural propensity of governors for educational protectionism. Macbeth noted that, in the schools' councils his researchers observed:

"head teachers assumed a leadership role"
(Macbeth, 1980b, p.15).

Heads can use their leadership role to make governors who try to disagree with the prevailing orthodoxy feel that their views lack credence since such governors have no educational knowledge. Bacon describes some of these tactics, (1978, p.130). Similar approaches were used by teachers at William Tyndale school and these are described in the Auld Report (1976, p.94, para.293). The result of such tactics has been described by one of the governors in the Scottish pilot study who reported:

"feelings of being slammed down...[being] a nuisance to the teachers and the head"
(Munn and Holroyd, 1988, p.25).

An alternative, and equally successful policy, is for heads to involve governors in helping to formulate policies. Governors are then less likely to feel alienated by them. At a Leicestershire school, for example, all its governors were asked to contribute ideas in writing to curriculum review, their attendance was invited at curriculum review meetings, (those governors who attended these sessions were praised and thanked at governors' meetings) and governors were asked to view an AIDS video and discuss it with sixth formers. The very forceful chairman of another Leicestershire school's governing body reported that:

"the boss was really pleased with our ideas of dividing the governing body into sub-committees with staff involved; mind you, he sees himself as the chief executive - I'm not quite sure what to do about that"

(Interview with the author, May, 1988).

Studies in Sheffield and Scotland have also shown how heads have made their governors feel involved. Sheffield L.E.A. reported how its heads had educated their governors:

"Many heads have reported fully on the school's policies and aims: some have encouraged members of their staff to come and talk on particular aspects of school work and organisation, others have summarised the arguments on major educational issues. Some schools have successfully involved governors in visits, fetes, extra sewing classes and fund raising activities so that they might gain a live appreciation of what the school is trying to do and the problems it has to overcome"

(Mann, 1975, p.25).

The 1988 Scottish survey reported similar approaches by heads, including making the language of written reports more suitable for governors, providing clear explanations

of curriculum developments and teaching governors to play the glockenspiels in order to display the music curriculum (Munn and Brown,1988,p.8; Munn and Holroyd,1988,pp.17 & 21).

Governors' training courses also contribute to encouraging educational protectionism. The training is brief and can serve to underline governors' lack of educational knowledge. The trainers are themselves professional educators and one would, therefore, expect them to be supportive of schooling in general. Kent, for example, began planning its school governor training in 1988, seconding two primary headteachers who had previously developed management training (School Governor,1988, p.32). Staffordshire seconded an early retiring head to run training courses. He was surprised to find that governors:

"didn't understand the jargon we use in discussions, reports, job descriptions and interviews...had only a hazy idea...of the structure of curriculum patterns"
(Adams,1988,p.18).

Dudley's governor training co-ordinator is an *ex-head* and Calderdale's courses are all co-tutored by a head and a governor (Haig,1988).

In Northamptonshire, a new structure for governor training was devised in 1988. The Steering Group contained no school governors. It was proposed that resources, such as videos and books, should be provided on loan for governors. The L.E.A. representative proposed that these should be kept at the Teachers' Professional Development Centres because the L.E.A. was "philosophically opposed" to the separation of

governors and teachers. Governors attending the centres to borrow resources would "receive many other messages" and could work on the materials together with teachers (Meeting, 6th September, 1989).

In Sheffield, the training courses were criticised by heads because they were regarded as an:

"invitation to governors to attack and undermine the head's position"

(Mann, 1975, p.26).

The L.E.A. therefore included talks from heads in order to redress the balance. In 1989, Morley-Jones still felt that heads should take the lead in training governors. he considered that the:

"professional expertise of the headteacher is often undervalued in training".

Where training has been provided by outside agencies, (such as the W.E.A. in Leicestershire), the tutors have been professional teachers, although some of them are also governors. The funding comes from the L.E.A. which *might* militate against independence.

It is possible that the growing number of sources of information available to governors to supplement the training, may encourage more questioning of teachers. Such organisations as the Association for Governor Information and Training, which began in 1986, are adding their voice to the older established National Association of Governors and Managers. The Prospect Trust was launched in 1988 to provide information for parents on education. 1987 saw the

publication of a new magazine solely for governors, School Governor. The tone of this is certainly not one of attacking teachers but more of explaining modern educational developments so that governors will understand what teachers are trying to achieve. The T.E.S. brought out supplements in 1987 and 1988 for governors, introduced an problem service in 1987 and a regular page for governors in 1988. It is not possible yet to assess the effectiveness of the greater availability of information. Governors already claim they have insufficient time for governing schools. Will they have time to read about governing schools?

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNORS' ROLE IN THE CURRICULUM

Educational protectionism may have been encouraged by the need for teachers to obtain a power base as the control of education has become increasingly centralised. In analysing the politics of decision making as states have centralised, Archer reflected that, as centralisation proceeded, the education profession could only function as an interest group whose autonomy was increasingly limited by the state, (Archer, 1979, p.259). To combat this state direction, Archer described how teachers formed alliances amongst the central organs rather than with local power bases. An example of this was the collusion amongst the N.U.T., A.M.A. and N.A.S./U.W.T., with the T.U.C., the leaders of the Local Authority Associations and the Secretary of State, to resist the full implementation of the Taylor Committee's Report (Whitehead and Aggleton, 1986, p.437). After that, the

teachers' unions appear to have lost power, as evidenced by the 1986 and 1988 Education Acts, the 1987 Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act and the government's ruling, in 1989, against the formation of a general teaching council.

For protection, therefore, teachers can only try to use local bases and this might explain the colonisation of governing bodies by educational professionals. Lawn and Ozga have chronicled the decline of the teaching profession, from partners to "state functionaries" (1986, p.226), with the apotheosis of the partnership period being while Gould was at the N.U.T. and Alexander at the A.E.C. in the 1960s. By 1989, the partnership was no longer between teachers and government but was meant to be between teachers, parents and other lay governors at school level. Having lost leadership elsewhere, however, teachers might have felt that they wished to retain their dwindling power at school level. This might explain why teachers did not respond to the advances made towards them in the late 1970s, by Consumer and Parent groups who hoped for a broadly based, national alliance with teachers (Whitehead and Aggleton, 1986, p.439). The Consumer and Parent groups then turned to the new Conservative government instead.

In response to this, the government introduced changes in both the composition and powers of governors under the 1980 and 1986 Acts. It was suggested that this was to encourage:
"parents to become agents for the
implementation of central government policies"
(Sallis, 1984; Patten, 1986; quoted in
Whitehead and Aggleton, 1986, p.444).

Whitehead and Aggleton argued that the state intended to manage the incorporation of parents into educational policy making (ibid 1986,pp.442-3). This extends the views of Bacon (1978) and Taylor (1983). Bacon saw governors as having been co-opted by the schools and the local authorities, and Taylor (1983) also stressed how l.e.as had managed governing bodies.

Central government may have decided, at this point, that the teachers were likely to be more successful at managing governors than central government would be, unless action was taken to avoid this. Action took the form of the Education Reform Bill, 1987, which proposed increasing the powers of central government. The decrease in governors' powers over the curriculum as a result of the subsequent 1988 Act, could have been aimed at reducing the possible effects of educational protectionism and also, the power of teachers. Archer's analysis of developments in educational decision making in general would seem to support this (1979,pp.226-234).

Archer showed that as the state education system began to serve a plurality of interests, specialisation and differentiation of educational personnel occurred and with it their professionalisation and formation into strong groups. In order to prevent these groups gaining power, government restricted their rights, as happened to teachers in the mid 1980s. The threatened group, therefore, had to find other allies to support their power; in this case, the

teachers 'found' school governors.

It is worth noting that the similar events have occurred in Australia, Scotland and the U.S.A. In these countries, governors have been distracted from decision taking concerning the curriculum, by emphasis on 'who' should participate in school government rather than on 'what' they should be influencing. Colonisation of governing bodies has also occurred. Angus pointed out that reforms of school government in the state of Victoria, concentrated on the form of participation rather than its substance. This emphasis on process:

"can overshadow what participants are participating in and why" (Angus,1989,p.25).

Early evidence from the pilot school boards in Scotland (which do not have curriculum powers) found a similar concentration on how participation was to be organised; so few issues of educational importance seemed to come before the boards that "the overwhelming feeling from the members is that they have done nothing" (Munn and Brown,1989,p.6). In the U.S.A., several states have devolved power to school governing councils but those directing the change made sure that power passed to the teachers and school administrators. Only in Chicago are parents in the majority on the councils.

The effect of educationalists' colonisation of school governing bodies, will depend upon the the extent to which governing bodies operate as pressure groups and how well

the education professionals act collectively as an interest group within them. These issues are explored below in Chapters 12 and 13.

CONCLUSIONS

If central government expected that their reforms would be supported by school governors, it appears that the chances of such support were few. Governors' consent to, and protection of, teachers' attitudes and beliefs, were particularly evident over curricular issues. Governing bodies tended to support the professionals' views of what should be included in the curriculum and how it should be taught. Since the 1988 Act, governors' power to decide the content and aims of their schools' curricula was displaced by the introduction of the National Curriculum. The governors' role from 1988 is principally to be that of monitoring (to ensure that the National Curriculum is implemented and that their schools provide a balanced a broadly based curriculum) and of advising on details of content and pedagogy. Neither of these roles are ones with which governors are likely to feel confident. Their general advisory role, given by the 1986 Act, but overtaken by the 1988 Act, would have been easier for them to fulfil.

Governors are protective of the professionals' interpretation of the curriculum because governors feel that their own knowledge of education is much less than that of the teachers. Feelings of professional inadequacy can inhibit governors who adopt a pupil status vis a vis

their schools' staffs. Parent governors, additionally, fear repercussions on their own children if they dispute with the professionals. Those governors who are themselves from other professions, feel it inimical to intrude in matters of professional judgement. Heads use tactics which encourage governors' educational protectionism and governor training can emphasise governors' lack of knowledge. Educational protectionism may have been encouraged by teachers because of their need to obtain a power base as the control of education has increasingly moved away from the profession and back to central government.

Developments during the 1980s have aimed to give governors more powers and to extend the use of these by offering skills training for governors. Such developments may bring to the surface the usually latent value differences between teachers and governors. Teachers could be described as wanting, what might be termed, a monolithic autonomy over their choice of curriculum content and pedagogy, while governors could be seen as seeking to maintain the rights of pluralistic interests. If governors' participation increases, value conflicts could emerge. Teachers could see these conflicts as being against their interests and could take action to ensure that educational protectionism continues.

Where power holders are threatened by potential contenders, one of the techniques to ensure continued protection by absorbing the new contenders, is to confine the contenders'

decision making powers to relatively minor issues (Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood,1980,p.8). Examples of this technique emerged from the governors' Annual Reports and Parents' Meetings and these are discussed in the following chapter together with other examples of consent, protection and educational protectionism.

CHAPTER 9

CONSENT AND PROTECTION - GOVERNORS' ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Governors' consent to, and support for, the professionals' direction of education, is illustrated here from the operation of their powers relating to the Annual Reports to Parents and the subsequent Annual Parents' Meetings and from the visits of inspection governors can make to their schools.

When governors take office, they are not likely to be aware that they are consenting to a particular head who represents them in the school and who manages the school on their behalf. This point was made clear when the 1986 Act stated that there was to be an Annual Parents' Meeting and Report whereby the governors would report to the parents on how they, the governors, had managed the school during the past year. Heads had not been seen, prior to 1986, as being under governors' orders, as might now be implied from this clause. The Annual Meetings and Reports, examples of which are discussed in the first part of this chapter, offered the governors the chance to be responsive to client views. In the event, they became instead, an opportunities to protect the professionals' views.

Reports from governors' visits can also provide examples of the operation of the functions of consent and protection and the second section of this chapter contains two such reports and a commentary on these. Visits are commonly accepted practice in most Leicestershire schools and are

intended as a means whereby governors can extend their knowledge of their schools and can be made aware of any problems their schools are facing. They are not intended as tours of inspection (Leicestershire L.E.A.,1989) although governors may interpret their function in this way. In 1989, for example, N.A.G.M. proposed that governors' visits should be used to provide information for teacher appraisal. One might, therefore, expect that reports on visits would reveal governors' criticisms as well as consent and protection.

ANNUAL REPORTS

The writing of the Annual Reports to Parents provided an active means for governors to express their consent. In practice, the expression of that consent was largely tacit since few governing bodies wrote the reports themselves, being content with heads' undertaking most of the task. Consent could be said to have been made evident by this action (or lack of action) because there was such satisfaction with heads' government that the governors largely trusted heads to write their schools' records.

Lest it should be felt that this trust in the head represented a failure on the part of governors, one should reflect on a comparison with business practice. A Board of Directors of a company does not write its annual report, although the report is sent out in their names. The work is undertaken by the managing director, company secretary and accountant, with the approval of the chairman of the Board.

Other, non-executive directors would see the report before publication and might well discuss or query it but it is not their task to write it because they lack the necessary, detailed knowledge. This was recognised in, for example, Leicestershire L.E.A.'s advice to governors on the writing of the first Annual Reports. It was suggested that the Reports should be written collaboratively by the headteacher and the chairperson because:

"the head would have immediate access to information which would not be so readily accessible to governors"

(Leicestershire,1987).

In view of this advice, it was not surprising to find that only 3% of Leicestershire's reports were written solely by governors. Educationalists were thus able to protect themselves, with the concurrence of the governors. 45% of the reports were written jointly by heads and chairs. 52% bypassed the governors, being written entirely by heads (35%) or by heads and clerks (17%) (Mahoney,1988,p.4). In contrast with these findings, there was confident comment in the editorial of the Times Educational Supplement:

"Fortunately, many governors did write their own reports" (7/8/87).

Even without the Leicestershire survey indicating how few Reports were actually written by governors, it would not be difficult to infer, from the choice of language, that teachers had had the main responsibility for the drafting. Examples of 'teacher speak' were very numerous so only a few are selected here:

"T.V.E.I. has emphasised the need for relevance in the curriculum, particularly in the acquiring of skills, decision making and problem solving. The need for a revised methodology has made it necessary to move away from a highly fragmented, subject based science curriculum...there is freedom to encourage cross-curricular links"

(Lord Grey School,1987).

"We recognise...the advantages of a negotiated learning programme...We are exploring structural ways of meeting...criticisms...[of] the damage that can be done to an individual's self confidence by failure"

(John Cleveland College,1987).

"The aim of the school is...to educate each child in oracy, literacy and numeracy...the basic reading scheme used is Reading 360 (published by Ginn) supplemented by Open Door (published by Nelson)...The basic mathematics scheme is also published by Ginn, but as this has been found wanting in the early years, it has largely been replaced"

(Mears Ashby, 1987)

It is likely that, in the latter case, only an infant teacher could assess the value of the information.

In the few instances where governors wrote their own Reports entirely, the language contained less jargon but the support for the teachers' views was still strongly evident:

"There have been some interesting developments in the school curriculum. An example is the new Information Technology course...an interesting overlapping of computers, business studies, modern languages and graphics... exciting new courses in electronics and robotics...Trips abroad...have included visits to Hamburg...and perhaps most intriguing, a visit to Russia. The staff has made tremendous efforts to prepare for the new GCSE exams and you can help them".

(Denbigh,1987).

The only Report studied which seemed not to exhibit a pro-teacher view, was written as a satire by a C.E.O. (Westoby,1986).

Whether or not governors wrote their Reports, they still consented to them. Most governors seem to have been given the opportunity to check the Reports before publication, to ask questions and to make alterations. Amongst a group of governors from 28 different schools in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire in 1987/88 (the governors were attending University of Leicester training courses), it was found that all governors had been given the opportunity to comment on the Reports. This was despite the very short time available for consultations because of the requirements of the L.E.As for receipt of Reports for typing and duplication.

The Annual Reports studied contained no criticisms of their schools. Here was clear evidence of consent to the rule of the head and staff. The only criticisms were of the l.e.as for failing to provide adequate resources or, obliquely, of central government for placing so many demands upon the teaching profession in such a short time with so few resources. In this respect, they provided a further parallel with business examples. Perusing, for example, the report of Trans National Transport for 1986, one finds mention that the Australian part of the corporation had not achieved as well as was hoped but this was due to:

"cost increases and a weakening domestic economy" together with "severe over-capacity in shipping tonnage resulting from new shippers entering the market" (pp.4 & 6).

Readers may infer from this that these were factors beyond the control of the company.

Annual Parents' Reports likewise aimed, it would appear, to act as good public relations vehicles for their schools and took the opportunity to praise what had been achieved.

"There has been a considerable amount of progress in the campaign to repair, improve and generally lighten the whole College site. Major undertakings...have been successfully completed. It is of great credit to the caretakers that they managed to complete this on top of their usual work...It is important to recognise how cost effective our provision has been" (John Cleveland College,1987)

"Room 14 is now attractively decorated and usefully equipped with Nimbus computers which are providing developing opportunities." (Sir Jonathan North School,1987).

All the Reports studied, listed outings and 'events'. One school where the head had initiated a major curriculum review devoted several pages to this (John Cleveland College,1987).

The consent evident in two Reports in particular, produced a positive celebration of achievements. The tone of the Reports and the matters they chose to highlight, brought them closest, of all the examples perused, to a business report. Whereas most Reports opened with the statement that a Report had to be produced because it was a statutory duty to do so, these welcomed:

"the opportunity to show the breadth of the concerns involved in the management of the modern comprehensive school...the school has enthusiastically pursued the development of a curriculum which accurately reflects the comprehensive ideal...Opportunities are now unrestricted and no career doors are closed".

Staff involvement in inservice training was reported in glowing terms in these same reports; by helping with INSET,

their staff had been able to demonstrate to other teachers how far advanced was the work at their own schools.

Most schools recognised the value of making consent apparent although most were rather less adulatory than the example above. Their Reports tended to collate a few good points in their conclusions, under a School Achievements label. The two schools, mentioned in the previous paragraph, were much more fulsome in their praise. Media studies, and T.V.E.I., for example, produced:

"exciting developments...the most important stimulus for curriculum review for years...[rewarded with] County and National recognition...the school is justifiably proud of its curriculum innovations"
(Lord Grey School, 1987).

The second school reported on:

"interesting developments in the school curriculum. An example is the new Information Technology course which includes uses of computers, business studies, graphics and modern languages in a most interesting overlapping of these and other subjects and won first prize for a project at the Milton Keynes Energy World Exhibition...exciting new courses on electronics and robotics...the exam results for this department were excellent...the conduct of our pupils on trips abroad has won golden opinions wherever they have gone
(Denbigh School, 1987).

Changed l.e.a. policies were noted in these two Reports but the tenor of the response was to show that the school's management had coped with these, finding:

"educational value and experience"

in the most unlikely places. After the school meals service had ended, for example, the pupils were gaining the

opportunity to run the school tuck shop as a limited company (Lord Grey School,1987).

All the Reports studied included at least a paragraph of thanks to teachers for all their hard work. The best example of this was one (written by the governors themselves) which stated, in conclusion to the Report:

"The teachers are a key element and during the last few years they have had to work in an atmosphere of questioning and cuts...teachers.. find themselves blamed for bad behaviour which is often caused by circumstances quite beyond their control...Against this turbulent background the head has captained a good ship, a ship staffed for the most part by teachers who are more than willing to go beyond the call of duty. The governors express their gratitude to them for this"
(Weston Favell,1987).

No head could ask for greater consent than this.

This consent appeared less sincere in other schools, when it was realised, after many Reports had been perused, that most had simply copied the format of words suggested by the l.e.a. Northamptonshire Education Department proposed that Reports might conclude with:

"The governors would wish to record their satisfaction with the high quality of work undertaken within the school, not only by the teachers and pupils but also by all members of the caretaking, catering and educational support staff. They would also wish to express their thanks to the parents for their continued support"
(Northamptonshire,1987).

So well were governors adjusted to giving consent that one school which had no education support staff, still repeated the standard formula.

Governors were universally supportive of inservice training. Comments ranged from the eulogistic to the prosaic:

"It is good that staff members from Lord Grey are invited to contribute to the training of colleagues elsewhere in the country and it is a measure of the high level of experience and expertise within the staff team"

(Lord Grey School, 1987)

"During the year, a wide range of courses has been attended, implementing a practical curriculum"

(Wilby, 1987).

Commonly expressed parental concern at the numbers of supply teachers to whom their children had been subjected while their own teachers were undertaking Inset, was not reflected in the governors' Reports.

Examination results had to be included in Reports but it would require a trained teacher, a skilled statistician and a sociologist to interpret them or to make any comparisons amongst schools. Teachers are wary of being judged on results and the tables reproduced in the Reports were rarely simple percentages. Frequently, the number of pupils entered was not stated. In other cases, *so many details* were produced that any noteworthy results were often concealed.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

The Annual Parents' Meetings proved to be occasions when both governors and parents showed their support for schools and their keenness to learn more about education.

The meetings were far:

"from being occasions to beat the teachers and condemn the schools" (Mahoney, 1988, p.19).

The likelihood of governors being critical was remote because, as one head explained, his governors felt very

insecure at the prospect of their first Parents' Meeting. This was despite the fact that over the last few years they had:

"honestly sought to increase their knowledge and understanding of education...[but they were still] relatively remote from the vibrancy of school life". (Smith,1987).

These governors would still much more happily discuss the state of the school buildings or the health and safety of pupils than they would their education (ibid).

Observation at Meetings showed that the parents were often as supportive as the governors and their questions could be termed only mildly critical. This provided an interesting contrast with the almost paranoid hysteria which afflicted some governors before the first Annual Meetings. Discussions amongst governors on training courses revealed a great many worries about what would happen at the meetings but parents who raised questions at the Annual Meetings seemed to collude with the governors' consent. A parent concerned about the overcrowded classes of his child's second year enquired, for example, whether or not the low numbers in the succeeding first year indicated school policy on the annual intake. He did not make clear his concern about large classes but seemed satisfied with a factual answer irrelevant to his problem. A criticism of a school's music teaching, which had moved from an emphasis on instruction on traditional instruments to using electronic keyboards (for which the parents have to pay to

provide the batteries), subsided immediately when another parent praised the system.

Parental criticisms of staff were expressly excluded from the Annual Parents' Meetings. It was announced at Leicestershire's Meetings, that no comment could be made on individual teachers. This seems to have arisen because it was suggested that the law of slander might not apply to Annual Parents' Meetings; teachers would be open to what might be untrue or unfair comment without the possibility of reply or redress. Circular 8/86 stated:

"the Chairman should try to ensure that any such discussion is kept calm, positive and reasonably brief".

The teacher concerned should be offered the chance for defence either immediately or at a later, more appropriate time, the Circular concluded.

Analysis of the questions posed at Meetings, revealed that curricular issues were in the minority with the peripherals taking precedence. Such issues as the state of the tennis courts, the venue for school meals and the timing of sporting events were raised. There were, however, a significant number of questions about the curriculum. Whatever the content of the questions, however, the answers were invariably given, not by the governors to whom they were addressed, but by the head or teachers with specific responsibility for the issue in question. Lacking the detailed knowledge required for the answers, the governors had to deflect the questioners to the educationalists.

Of the responses at a secondary school Parents' Meeting, for example, 14 were made entirely by the staff, head, vice-principal, senior teacher or the teacher concerned with the area of the question; 7 more were answered jointly by the head and a governor; one was answered by the chair alone and one by the parent governor only; 2 were answered by several governors. The governors involved in the 9 questions were the teacher governors (5 questions), the parent governors (2 questions), the L.E.A. governor (2 questions), the chair (2 questions) and the university representative (one question). 11 governors did not speak. Of the 9 questions answered by governors, 3 concerned the composition of governing bodies.

One school had a totally silent Parents' Meeting. The Chair read the report and asked for questions, of which there were none, and the meeting concluded after 20 minutes. Such was the strength of consent that it was not until the following day that the observer was informed, by one of the parent governors, that the village was seething over the failure of the head to respond to the educational changes they wished to see. The governing body was, apparently, divided into two groups, one for and one against the changes but no-one had expressed this at the meeting (Wilby Church of England School, Northants, 1988).

Annual Meetings could be said to have conveyed consent by the physical arrangement of the rooms in which the meetings were held. Governors and head (whether or not the head was

a governor), presented a united front literally, facing rows of parents (or, more usually, rows of empty chairs). In schools where very few attended, less confrontational, informal seating arrangements were made, (with everyone around a table, for example) but in these cases the number of governors exceeded the numbers of parents, hence reinforcing the appearance of consent.

One school in Leicestershire chose a format which appeared to emphasise the governors' representation of parents in that they divided the parents into small groups to each of which one or two governors and a member of staff were attached, leaving only the head, chair and clerk at the front. This was, however, not done with the intention of enabling greater democratic involvement but rather to prevent it, since the school in question had been made aware in advance that there was likely to be determined group opposition on a particular issue and it was felt that dividing up the potential trouble makers might avoid this (and so it did indeed prove to be) (Thody and Wilson, 1988,p.43). Another school adopted the same arrangement, though not because they were expecting difficulties. They reported that although:

"the governors were a little apprehensive to start with, they enjoyed the evening and we had to call a halt half an hour later than scheduled"
(Hastings High School, Leicestershire, 1988;
personal letter to the author).

Acknowledgement of the importance of consent came from a head who stated that he wanted better attendance from parents at the Annual Meetings:

"because we want to know that we have their support" (Tomlinson, 1988, p.17).

The head reported that his Annual Meeting considered, inter alia, local financial management, the consequences of staff reductions and tertiary reorganisation. On each of these topics there had been:

"serious and thoughtful discussion...helpful consideration...careful thought" (ibid)

Reflecting on this, one must ask what the head meant by helpful. Parents cannot find extra staff, nor is it currently possible to stop tertiary reorganisation. One can only assume that the head meant 'helpful' in that it revealed parental support for him, since the policies criticised were all l.e.a. initiated. He wrote that he would have preferred a bigger turnout because:

"that would gain increased support for what the staff are achieving" (ibid).

One wonders what might happen were the parents not supportive but it is interesting to note that the head assumed that they would be and realised how vital this was to his legitimisation.

GOVERNORS' VISITS

Many l.e.a. handbooks of guidance for governors suggest that governors should tour their schools in order to evaluate achievements, gain knowledge and show an interest in staff and pupils. Mahoney, for example, advises visiting

because it is:

"only by frequent, well-planned and purposeful visits to your school that you will be able to understand the curriculum" (1988,p.90).

He points out that this is not just to benefit governors, but also to help schools and teachers to gain from the views of others. He encourages governors to ask questions, reminding them that to do so is not to be a busy-body. Governors asking questions are concerned, committed supporters" (ibid, my underlining). Governors and teachers interviewed during Kogan's research, echoed the sentiments that visits were useful, but few actually undertook any (1984,p.87).

In most Leicestershire schools, governors have a termly visiting rota but in neighbouring Northamptonshire the practice of visiting is much more restricted. The pattern of Leicestershire governors' visits is left to their choice (Leicestershire,1989), though, in some schools, any suggestions of a deviation from the usual, general tour of the buildings, is met with resistance. Golby's research showed that teachers were wary of visits (Golby,1984b) because of issues relating to accountability in general and appraisal in particular (both these are discussed more fully in Dimmock,1982,pp.168-170). Teachers were concerned that they might be criticised, yet visits can increase governors' protectionism. Visiting may make governors more aware of, and more sympathetic to, teachers' problems.

To illustrate the effect of visiting, two reports of school governor's visits are included here. These reports are in the form in which they were submitted to the governors' meetings after the visits. The visits were undertaken by a co-opted governor of an upper school during 1987 and 1988. The reports revealed the governor's support for the school. Consent, protection and educational protectionism, inhibited the governor from making criticisms. The criticisms are appended after the reports to indicate what the governor would have liked to have added.

The first visit involved shadowing a pupil, and the second entailed shadowing the head. Golby discussed the effectiveness of pupil shadowing as a method of visiting. A teacher governor claimed that little of benefit to the school emerged from it but:

"honour was served" (Golby,1984b,p.70).

Governors stated how much they liked this approach and Golby felt it was:

"good to find examples of governors taking the trouble to immerse themselves in an activity"
(ibid,p.71).

His overall conclusion, nonetheless, was that visits were unsatisfactory because insufficient time was available for governors to gain enough information. On the other hand, visits provide a quick way of gaining an impression of what it is really like to work in the school and can show how open a school is to allowing governors to see anything they wish, even when confidential matters arise.

EXAMPLE - VISITING GOVERNOR'S REPORT I

Pupil shadowing - governor's report

Introduction

Returning to school as a pupil revived long-forgotten emotions of total incomprehension and inadequacy in algebra lessons. The chance to recall these feelings was provided by my being able to spend my governor's visit 'attached' to a fourth year pupil for a morning. This involved attending registration period, a mathematics lesson, a cookery assessment for G.C.S.E. and a school lunch.

Observation

1. Registration

a) Equal Opportunities' Commission please note: the girls occupied the time knitting, the boys did nothing; girls and boys sat separately; the register was divided by gender.

b) Teachers please note: what a pity 25 minutes could not be more usefully occupied. Nonetheless, a relaxed, sociable start to the day was welcome.

c) L.E.A. please note: time is wasted by teachers because of lack of clerical help; copying out lists of marks does not require teaching skills

2. Algebra

Very enjoyable. Entertaining lesson, every minute utilised. Appropriate individual help given.

a) Secretary of State, please note: we governors are unlikely to be able to assist with teacher appraisal; I felt it would be presumptuous to judge a teacher unless I had more educational background and time to consider the whole teaching scheme.

b) Governors' note: the Maths. Dept. shows excellent management of its resources. A visit to the Departmental Staff room is recommended.

3. Cookery

Classroom management at its best. Organising a session for G.C.S.E. appraisal required very careful organisation and, although these pupils are only in their second term here, they were well trained to work without teacher direction. The amount of work involved in G.C.S.E. appraisal is clearly extensive.

Governors N.B. - excellent chocolate cake available. A visit at coffee time is highly recommended.

4. School lunch

I don't think anyone has yet devised a really palatable school lunch.

5. General

Where are the problems with which Grange Hill has made us all so familiar ?

6. Conclusions

What a pity the media does not seem to find 'normal' schools doing a good job - like this one.

EXAMPLE - VISITING GOVERNORS' REPORT II

Shadowing the Head - governor's report The Principal's Activities

The Principal, Mr. X., agreed to be the subject of my governor's visit. My thanks for his openness and that of other staff must be recorded.

An American principal, interviewed in the course of research on headship, wondered "how important is all of this work I do? ". Another principal described his job as "hell". (Wolcott, 1973,p.310,318). Comments arising from observation of heads in Britain stressed the complexity of the job (Hall et al, 1984,p.217). The records which follow may help fellow governors to form their own judgements.

Performance indicators against which Mr. X was measured were provided from research in England and America. The comparisons did not prove odious (Hall et al,1986,pp 15 & 52-62; Martin and Willower,1981,pp 72-78).

Tabulated reports follow overleaf:

Task Analysis - Comparison of % of time spent by U.S. Table 1 secondary principals with that spent by Mr. X		
Task	U.S. Principals	Mr.X
Organisation maintenance (Overall management, staff routines, pupil relations, health and safety)	36.5%	41%
School programmes (Teaching methods of staff and own curriculum plans)	17.5%	49%
Pupil control (Dealing with difficult pupils, their teachers and parents, touring to monitor discipline)	23.8%	1.4%
Extra-curricular activities	14.7%	3.6%
Miscellaneous	7.5%	0.5%

Task analysis - % of time spent on various tasks by English
Table 2 secondary school heads (measured over one day),
compared with time spent by Mr.X (measured over
two thirds of a day).

Task	School
Teaching	A - 14% B - 14% C - 0% D - 0% Mr.X - 11%
Figurehead	A - 12% B - 9% C - 13% D - 9% Mr.X - 2%
Educational policy and curriculum	A - 0% B - 0% C - 37% D - 0% Mr.X - 23%
Operations maintenance, routine administration	A - 25% B - 35% C - 33% D - 39% Mr.X - 10%
Staff and pupil management	A - 36% B - 33% C - 14% D - 35% Mr.X - 42%
External management, governors, parents	A - 1% B - 6% C - 3% D - 17% Mr.X - 14%

Task analysis - Methods of conducting tasks. A comparison
Table III of % of time spent by U.S. secondary
school principals with that spent by Mr. X

<u>Method</u>	<u>U.S.A. Principals</u>	<u>Mr. X</u>
Desk work	16%	8%
Telephone	5.8%	0%
Regular meetings	17.3%	46%
Unscheduled meetings	27.5%	8%
Brief exchanges	9%	6%
Pupil control	5.5%	6%
Touring	7.7%	5%
Trips out of school	2.2%	Not timed
Observing teachers	2.4%	0%
Alone	5.1%	4%
Teaching	0.1%	10%
Clerical chores, admin., legal matters	0.7%	7%

The report also included a diary of a day's activities (Thody, 1989b).

Conclusion

These visits were extremely enjoyable and made me, as a new governor, feel an insider sooner than I might otherwise have done. The school showed itself accountable to its governors, and the communities we represent, in freely accepting my presence. I was able to see the pressures of G.C.S.E. assessment, an issue over which our support as governors was later requested. I also became aware of the complexities of school management. I think the visits made me a better public relations officer for the school since I can sing its praises with insider knowledge.

REFLECTIONS ON THE VISITING GOVERNOR'S REPORTS

Both these reports indicated consent and educational protectionism. This becomes more apparent when one considers the additional comments which the governor concerned would have liked to have made but neither report included criticisms.

The report on the pupil shadowing, for example, excluded, at the head's request, that fact that at the Registration period, the teacher had arrived late, stating:

"I'd forgotten you were coming otherwise I'd have been here on time".

25 minutes of what seemed like, wasted time followed. Why, with such a small class, did the teacher need to call the register? Why could she not simply see who was there or not? The teacher occupied her time transferring marks from one register to another for the benefit of a year tutor and then read the school bulletin to the group. It was a disappointing period, especially when one reflects that the number of tutor periods totalled 2.5 hours per week which represents one wasted morning every week. The issue was raised briefly at the governors' meeting but the teacher governor's assurances that registration was a most valuable time for the tutor to become acquainted with the group and to organise some social education, were accepted by the governors.

Other points of criticism which were not included in the reports, were the awful school lunch, which was stodgy and

cold, and the head's failure to leave his office all morning except to walk to a class to teach and then to go to lunch. Neither of these criticisms were raised at a governors' meeting although the head raised both privately. The head himself remarked on how the tracking had surprised him by showing how static he was and the cook-supervisor has since been changed.

The knowledge gained from these visits had the effect of increasing the governor's consent and protection; awareness of the complexities of running a school made it far less likely that the governor would be critical of the school. During the shadowing, it was possible to see the beginnings of issues which came to governors' meetings much later. The beginning revealed the complex chain of events that ensued from the head's actions. Where could governors usefully intervene in this chain? What suggestions could be made at a governors' meeting that would not result in a tangled chain? The governor's knowledge was increased but did it make the governor any more able to operate effective pressure? The visits encouraged the feeling that the governor belonged to the school's government. Criticisms were stifled because of a feeling of collective responsibility.

Similarly ambivalent feelings have been reflected in the views of others who have considered the role of the governors' visit. The teacher governors in Golby's research were doubtful about any benefits which might accrue. One

reported that the Chairman of governors said such visits had never been felt necessary in all his 19 years as a governor, though there had been a bit of a walkabout to see the toilets which had been modernised (Golby,1985,p.68). Another reported that the head was not keen on the idea and visits were not made because:

"some of the governors are rather sycophantic towards the head". (ibid,p.69)

The shadowing visits reported above could be described as sycophantic though it seems preferable to refer to them as fulfilling governors' covert functions. Other teacher governors felt visits would be resented and Golby concludes that visits:

"run the risk of being cosmetic and superficial exercises" (ibid,p.70).

Kogan found that governors on visits were regarded as guests, rather than colleagues:

"involved in a shared task and, it was suggested, guests did not gain an independent view of school life". (Kogan,1984,p.87)

It was reported that some teachers did value the visits. They felt that visits showed commitment to the school but governors were reported as believing visits to be not worthwhile except for public relations. The governors' underlying assumption here would appear to have been that public relations were relatively unimportant. The public relations role of governors could, however, be one that will increase in importance in the 1990s.

CONCLUSIONS

The period 1986-88, from which the material in this chapter was drawn, might have been expected to offer some indications that governors were beginning to emerge as more equal partners with the educational professionals. Examples from governors' Annual and visiting reports, and from governors' activities at the Annual Parents' Meetings, showed that consent and protection were still evident. Annual Reports and Meetings provided new mechanisms for governors to show their responsiveness to their constituents. They proved to be opportunities to reaffirm governors' support for the professionals' views.

CHAPTER 10

GOVERNORS' ROLES-THE ILLUSION OF DEMOCRACY-REPRESENTATION

"There is no difficulty in showing that the ideally best form of government is that in which the sovereignty...is vested in the entire aggregate of the community; every citizen not only having a voice in the exercise of that ultimate sovereignty, but being, at least occasionally, called on to take an actual part in the government, by the personal discharge of some public function, local or general" (Mill, 1859, Ch. III).

English democracy, and especially the justification for its extension into local units, rests on philosophy such as Mill's. In the state education system, it has become accepted that the people should govern the peoples' schools, helping to determine those policies which most nearly affect them and to constrain leaders to work within parameters acceptable to those they govern. In selecting a mechanism whereby the people could participate in school government, indirect representation was the chosen mode until the 1980s. This indirect representation was mediated through party political choices by the local authorities and through co-option. During the 1980s, participatory democracy replaced part of this indirect representation and these two chapters discuss the extent to which this change has resulted in more populist representation.

In a joint article, Ranson, in discussing similar changes in other aspects of our political system, has argued that such modification was needed to prevent the developing alienation of the people from the organs of government.

Jones, however, has responded that populism would result in greater alienation because only particular sections of the people would gain power. He argued, instead, for more participatory politics (Jones and Ranson, 1989). School governing bodies now embody both representative and populist modes in the arrangements for their composition while their new powers offer more opportunities for participatory politics. All these developments would seem to meet the needs of democracy better than did the pre-1980s governing bodies. Chapters 10 and 11 aim to investigate whether or not these overt changes have resulted in school governors providing more than, what might be termed, an illusion of democracy.

A discussion of the development of illusory democracy opens this chapter. The subsequent evidence considers first, the extent to which governing bodies can be considered to be representative of the clients of schools. In this context, governors' occupations, sex, age, length of service, ethnic, and social class, origins are analysed. Secondly, those who are excluded from representation, and the non-elected governors, are discussed. The following chapter inquires into the means whereby governors make contact with those whom they represent.

DEVELOPMENT OF ILLUSORY DEMOCRACY

Representation and co-optation

One may claim that school government democracy is illusory in the same sense that any attempt to involve

large numbers of citizens in government must be. The practical problems of managing any polity mean that only a very restricted number can be the decision makers. The roles of the other citizens in the process are to stand as a perpetual reminder to those in the government, that someone is in a position to check their actions. The rulers must, therefore, be responsive to the wishes of this group otherwise a government may lose power. Such responsiveness often appears very tenuous but the existence of representative bodies is the mechanism which ensures that responsiveness is seen to be done. Moreover, it is more difficult for citizens to claim that government has been acting autocratically if there are opportunities for representatives of the people to put their views.

In setting out arrangements for popular representation on school governing bodies, the 1986 Education (No.2) Act raised the number of elected governors. Between two and six parents have to be elected and one, or two teachers (the number varies according to the size of the school). A further three - five are indirectly representative since they are nominated by the l.e.a (in practice, by the political parties). The remaining governors (about one third of the governing body) are selected by the parents, teachers and l.e.a governors deliberating together. The only guidance from the Act on this selection, is that the governing body must ensure that the local business community is adequately represented (though what

constitutes 'adequate' is not stated), and that no governor may serve on more than four governing bodies. Regulations issued in 1989 prevented governors being chosen from amongst those who have served certain prison sentences.

One consequence of this extension of representation through direct election and indirect, popular nomination, is that it allows potential dissidents to be co-opted into the polity. This emasculates the opposition by making it an accepted part of the system of government. Bacon's study of Sheffield's governing bodies in the 1970s suggested that this process had occurred (Bacon, 1978).

Central government's commitment to extending participatory democracy has developed since the time of Bacon's study. Prior to 1978, the 1944 Education Act, and subsequent regulations, supported the idea of parent representation, but only eighteen local authorities had such governors by the late 1960s when Baron and Howell's research was conducted (1968 and 1974). Most governing bodies were mainly composed of party political nominees. About this point in time, some l.e.as began to institute wider representation, including both parent and teacher governors and this, no doubt, influenced the Taylor Committee. Evidence presented to this Committee indicated very wide support for increased participation though, equally, very divergent views on the form this participation might take.

Central government moved relatively quickly after the publication of the Taylor Report (1977) and, during the 1980s, they legislated for the powers and composition which Taylor indicated were wanted to ensure greater involvement by the people in school government. The Taylor Report seemed to reflect a grass roots demand, particularly by parents, for more participation in decisions affecting their childrens' schooling. This was evidenced also in the growth of such organisations as the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations, the increasing strength of the National Association of Governors and Managers and of bodies such as the Advisory Centre for Education and the Council for the Advancement of State Education.

The Labour Party appeared to endorse the idea that the extension of representation was not necessarily meant to result in greater, democratic control. In its Parents in Partnership campaign (April, 1988), the Labour Party stated that parents wanted more information about their children's' schooling:

"rather than [to] be given control over teachers and classes"

(Education, 29/4/88, p.356).

Parents should go into schools as supporters but not with the intention of running the school. This was in contrast to Tory reforms, which only saw parents as pawns of central government's aims, concluded a Labour spokesman. Labour's proposed reforms could also be interpreted as having the same effect. In both parties' plans, the illusion of

democracy is useful although its use is to create support for different policies.

Decline in demand for governors' involvement

Once the legislative changes of the 1980 and 1986 Acts began to take effect, the governors' desires for involvement seemed to fade. Governors on training courses in Leicestershire, for example, complained because there was too much work requiring specialised knowledge which they did not feel that they had. By 1990, Leicestershire found that there had been 500 governors' resignations since the 1988 reconstitution of governing bodies.

Writing of a similar situation in Australia, Angus commented that this apparent withering away of interest, happened because the policy of extending representation had not been a strong grass roots demand and it would not, therefore, be asserted and defended by the newly enfranchised citizens of the schools. The policy could, instead, be described as:

"delivered from the centre to be implemented in a bureaucratically efficient and politically neutral manner"

(Angus, 1989, p.24).

In a sense, this might be interpreted as saying that the demands for increased democracy were, themselves, an illusion. More prosaically, it is possible that governors had begun to realise how much work would be involved in managing a school with its own finances and staffing and with increased requirements concerning curriculum decisions

and for checking that the national curriculum was implemented. Hence the new participants themselves might be seen as adding to the illusion of democracy. The new governors were present but not very actively so. The pilot study of the Scottish school boards found this to be the case, with governors feeling that there was little for them to do when schools had so few problems (Munn and Brown, 1989,p.8[6]).

The more the illusion moves towards reality, the more can one expect that other stakeholders in the system might become concerned about the powers of those who have increased their functions as school governors and the more they might try to limit them. For example, one of the protesters about plans to extend governors' powers was the National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations whom one might expect to be in favour of governors becoming overtly functional. In October, 1987, they raised objections to the suggestion that school governors should have powers over the keeping and dissemination of pupil records.

Such extensions are also likely to be opposed by governors themselves. Evidence from the history of governors' training courses illustrates this issue. When governors' training courses began in Leicestershire in 1982, the trainers might well have described their students as characters in search of a role. A frequent request was for the trainers to suggest how governors could become more

involved in their schools and what further activities they might undertake. During 1987-88 training courses, the most frequent request was for the trainers to suggest ways in which governors might cope with the work load. Several governors were considering ending their service when their term of office expired because they were unwilling to take on the added responsibilities. One governor walked out half way through a training course remarking that if anyone expected him to do all that work then they had another think coming and he was off to resign - which he promptly did. J.S.Mill stated that representative government fails:

"when the people want either the will or the capacity to fulfil the part which belongs to them in a representative constitution"
(Mill, 1859, Ch. IV)

It is possible that this may be the case with school governors and indeed, that it was meant to be the case.

Elsewhere in the world, there are parallels which indicate that extending representation of school clients into school government has not resulted in a major extension of democratic power. Bacon's, Macbeth's, Beatties's and Angus's surveys (1981; 1984; 1985; 1989) show that governments in Western European and Anglo-American polities responded to similar pressures to extend the powers and composition of school governors. Once the responses were made, the pressures seemed to die away and governors did not appear to want to use their new powers.

In Scotland, for example, the government proposed giving

much wider powers to school governors than were to be introduced in England and much wider powers than had been recommended by Macbeth's research for the Scottish Office (1980a & b). There was something of an outcry of opposition (Rosie, 1987) and the powers eventually enacted were less extensive than had been originally proposed. The first reports on the working of the new powers in practice indicate that there have been few changes in the type of representation and no great influence on the schools (Munn and Brown, Munn and Holroyd, 1989).

In France, the first elections for the new School Councils resulted in approximately a 70% turnout of voters; by the time of the second elections in 1986, the voting rate was about one third of the electoral register. Full democracy could be said to have been offered; the illusion had been substituted, although by the choice of the people.

HOW REPRESENTATIVE ARE GOVERNING BODIES?

Asked to state their expectations of the types of people who formed the majority of school governors, teachers responded with:

"a geriatric in a dog collar",
"a well meaning lady"
"a local shop keeper".

(The teachers were heads of science on a management course in 1987). The C.E.O. of Cumbria held similar views, having stated in 1988, that governing bodies should extend their membership beyond that of:

"retired people, married women and vicars"
(Boulter,1988,p.467).

Such views seem to have influenced the changes in composition specified by the 1986 Education Act, and the campaign begun by the D.E.S. in 1988, to encourage people from a wider range of occupations to offer their services as school governors.

The Leicestershire survey undertaken for this research, and subsequent surveys in other localities and for the nation as a whole, (outlined in Chapter 5), all indicate that the campaign by the D.E.S. failed. There have been no significant changes in the composition of governing bodies in the last one hundred years. The surveys did show, however, that it is a misconception to assume that governing bodies are, or have been, dominated by geriatric clerics or by housewives.

Occupations

In terms of occupations, one could certainly claim representativeness in Leicestershire in the width and variety of the jobs which governors did. An alphabetical list showed the ecleticism of the employments in which governors were engaged. Ambulancemen, biochemists, coachbuilders, dinner supervisors, estate agents, fire officers, finance brokers, graphic designers, hairdressers, knitters, information consultants, local government officers, metallurgists, an officer in the Royal Navy, prison officers, registrars, surgeons, T.V. technologists,

upholsterers, and wardens of retired persons' homes.

Contrary to the expectations which introduced this section, those without gainful employment did not figure prominently on Leicestershire's 1986/87 governing bodies. 18% were non-economically active (retired, housewives, students, unemployed). Only 8% were retired (including some with part time jobs) compared with 22.4% in the population of Leicestershire as a whole. Less than 10% of Leicestershire's governors were full time housewives.

Northamptonshire's 1989 survey found a similar number of retired workers (9.5%) although both these local survey results were significantly lower than the 17% retired people found by the N.F.E.R. research (Jefferies and Streatfield, 1989). Northamptonshire's governing bodies had a larger group engaged in domestic duties (20.2%) than had Leicestershire. Including the unemployed, Northamptonshire had a total of 31.3% of its governors not in gainful employment (Northants.L.E.A., 1989, p.14). The increase from the Leicestershire figures of two years before, might be accounted for by the increase in the numbers of elected parent governors (the majority of these are female). The N.F.E.R. survey found that, nationally, housewives comprised a large number of the ranks of parent governors (Jefferies and Streatfield, 1989). It is also possible that economically active people may have recognised the increased workload of governors and, therefore, decided not to stand for election.

Bacon's survey, 12 years previously, investigated the question of the proportion of housewives and found that housewives did not appear to dominate numerically. He found only one governing body, (amongst the 50 he studied), which had 40-50% housewives; 40 governing bodies had between 20% and 40% housewives, while nine had no housewives (Bacon, 1978,p.133).

One hundred years ago, 31% of London's governors were not economically active, being classified as 'Ladies and Gentlemen' (Gordon,1974,p.161). While the Cumbrian C.E.O. imagined, incorrectly, that this group dominated the governing bodies of the 1980s, and seemed to regret this fact, the Victorians appear to have regretted having to use those who were gainfully employed. In evidence to The Cross Commission, it was reported that a cab proprietor had been appointed a school manager:

"but he always drove his own cab. You cannot suppose he was a man who could attend and do good service" (Gordon,1974,p.160).

Some professional occupations had fewer representatives in 1986 than in 1884. Legal backgrounds declined to 0.7% from 3% although the classification had expanded to include legal executives and a solicitor's clerk in addition to the solicitors of the nineteenth century. Leicestershire's 1986 doctors had only 1% of school governorships whereas doctors and surgeons in 1884 had 2.5%. The medical occupations covered a much wider social spectrum in 1986 than in 1884, and school governors in 1986 included nurses,

physiotherapists, pharmacists and a nutritionist (making nearly 5% of the sample). Military gentlemen accounted for 1.5% in 1884; Leicestershire produced 0.1%. Twentieth century economic developments accounted for other changes; the number of shopkeepers declined from 10% in 1884 to 1.4% in 1986; new occupations were represented in 1986, such as data handlers, microfilm camera operators, information consultants and telecommunications engineers.

To counter the expectations of large numbers of priestly governors, Leicestershire's figures indicated a substantial decline from 1884. 21% of London's 1884 governors were clerical gentlemen; only 5% of Leicestershire's governors were in holy orders in 1986.

The 1986 Education Act signalled the government's wish for more business representatives but Leicestershire seemed already to have met this. Representation of the business managerial classes was 20.7% of the membership of governing bodies. 1884 London had only 8.5%

The sub-managerial group in 1884 London, consisting of supervisors and head clerks, constituted 21% of London's school managers. In 1986 Leicestershire, the para-professionals, foremen and supervisors, accounted for 31.1% of governors. Professionals do not show such a dramatic rise having crept up from 10.5% in 1884 to 14.4% in 1986.

Despite concern about the absence of the working classes, representation was much higher in 1986 Leicestershire than

in 1884 London, having risen from 4.5% to 26.8%. Gordon described the London group as "labour aristocrats" in the better paid, skilled jobs (ibid, p.164) of carpentry, printing and gasfitting. Leicestershire's 1986 governors in social classes 6-11, included both gas and electric fitters, builders, footwear closers, knitters, miners, mechanics and plumbers. A sprinkling of school caretakers and dinner ladies completed this group.

Other surveys appear to have interpreted the category of 'working class' to be socio-economic groups 8-11, which is rather more narrowly defined than was done in the Leicestershire survey. Northamptonshire had about 2% in these groups; the N.F.E.R. survey found 3.1% and the Scottish study reported that:

"semi- and unskilled workers are conspicuous by their absence" (Munn and Brown, 1989, p.4).

In Leicestershire, the same categories produced 5.9% of the membership of governing bodies. Using this more restricted classification, it would seem that working class representation has increased only marginally in the last hundred years (comparing the Leicestershire and London figures) or, has decreased (comparing the Northamptonshire and national results with the London figures).

The Leicestershire survey attempted to group governors according to whether or not they could be described as having occupations related to education in order to ascertain to what extent there was a recognisable sub-group which might be able to dominate the deliberations of

governing bodies. 35% of Leicestershire's sample were in education related occupations.

Such a high percentage could not have been accounted for solely by the elected teacher governors of whom there cannot be more than two even on the largest governing bodies. Other 'educationalists' were first, elected parent governors some of whom were teachers temporarily 'retired' into maternity or from other schools in the Authority (the L.E.A. initially decided that their own employees could not stand for election as parent governors but then changed the ruling). Secondly, there were university lecturers (Leicestershire Upper Schools were all required to have university representative governors). Thirdly, there were lecturers from f.e. and h.e. who had been asked to stand as L.E.A. or co-opted representatives presumably because of their interest in education and finally there were playgroup supervisors, YTS organisers and 2 road safety tutors.

Following the reconstitution of governing bodies from 1988, Leicestershire's university category was abolished so the number of educationalists on Leicestershire's governing bodies may decline. Studying the lists of parents who offered themselves for election in 1988, however, there seemed a predominance of those with educational backgrounds. Sixteen of the thirty-five candidates for parent governorships at three Leicestershire schools in 1988, for example, had education related occupations.

Northamptonshire's survey showed that the number of governors with education related occupations did not decline after the 1986 Act. 29% of governors were school staff (teaching and non-teaching) and, in addition, there were 32 further education staff, 6 university lecturers and 5 other educationalists (Northants.L.E.A.,1989,p.6). This makes a total of 31%, a decrease of only 4% from the Leicestershire sample before the 1986 Act. The research into the origins of parent governors in Devon likewise found that many were in educational jobs (Golby and Brigley,1989). In contrast, the N.F.E.R. national survey found 16.4% of governors who could be termed educational professionals (Jefferies and Streatfield,1989) but their figures excluded teacher governors.

Dispute about these numbers could be quite significant; it has been suggested that educationalists should be forbidden to stand as school governors (other than as the teacher representatives) to avoid the educational *protectionism* discussed above in Chapter 8. The legislation of the 1980s expressly rejected the recommendations of the Taylor Committee that governing bodies should comprise about 25% teachers, yet, Taylor's suggestions appear to be operating in practice.

One hundred years ago, there was no need for such discussion. 1884 London had only 2.5% teacher representation; there was no category of elected teacher governors and employees of the London School Board were not

allowed to be governors. The 'educationalists' then consisted of heads of colleges and training colleges.

The 1986 Education Act required governors:

"in co-opting any person to be a member of the governing body...to have regard to the extent to which they and the other governors are members of the local business community"
(Cl.6).

Industry itself encouraged such participation. In Leicestershire, for example, the local Society of Chartered Accountants wrote to all its members encouraging them to become governors because:

"we have a lot to contribute to the efficient management of schools and colleges, particularly in the financial field"
Letter from the president, 16/5/88).

The Institute of Directors similarly contacted its members to suggest membership of governing bodies and Lloyds Bank made a list of its managers who wished to stand for co-option and wrote offering their services to the schools whose areas they served.

There seemed to be an assumption underlying these moves that business interests were under-represented. The Leicestershire survey found, however, that 34.5% of the 1986/7 sample had industrial, commercial, scientific or technical occupations. The proportion of governors from these backgrounds remained about the same after the requirements of the 1986 Act had been implemented. Northamptonshire's survey found a total of 25.5% business representation, with an additional 12% working in the

private sector. N.F.E.R's national survey recorded 42% of governors in business, professional, retail and technical occupations. Australian governing bodies likewise showed a preponderance of economic and industrial representatives (Angus,1989,p.22).

Sex

Tables I and II below show that representation of the sexes amongst Leicestershire's 1986/87 governors was roughly equitable and mirrored the proportions in the population of Leicestershire as a whole. Men were in the majority amongst secondary governors and women amongst primary governors but in neither case was the majority a large one.

Table I-Sex of governors. Leicestershire. 1986

	Governors	Leics. population,1981
Male	45.8%	48.9% (over 16)
Female	54.2%	51.1% (over 16)
	n=1,421	

Table II-Sex of governors in types of Leics. schools. 1986

	Secondary	Primary
Male	57%	42%
Female	43%	58%
	n=345	n=1,076

In 1988 Northamptonshire, 49.7% of governors were female and 49% were male, though, as in the Leicestershire survey, the men predominated amongst secondary school governors. The N.F.E.R. survey found 43% of governors to be female but a small survey of ten Avon governing bodies revealed that men outnumbered women by two to one (Browning,1989b,p.26). Females have a slight majority amongst Northamptonshire's parent and teacher governors while men were in the

majority amongst the co-opted and L.E.A. representatives. This was found to be true only for primary school governors in the national survey undertaken for N.F.E.R. (Jefferies and Streatfield, 1989). The Scottish pilot study reported only on the composition of the parent governor group; they found, overall, an equal number of men and women but one of the seven schools in the study had an all male board and women predominated on the primary school boards (Munn and Brown,1989,p.3).

In commenting upon this distribution, Northamptonshire's survey states that the equality between the sexes is

"striking given a higher propensity for women to act as volunteers" (Northants,1989,p.14).

It was suggested that the increased number of elected parent governors was important in ensuring an even distribution between the sexes (although Leicestershire exhibited approximate equality before the extension of the elected parent category). Browning felt that the word 'governor' had male connotations which would disadvantage women at elections (Browning,1989b,p.26). She also reported that the majority of chairs were male, a finding also commented upon by Jefferies and Streatfield (1989,N.F.E.R.). Despite being in the minority, women, nonetheless, seemed to contribute, in meetings, disproportionately to their minority position, as was commented upon by the (predominately) male chairpersons in Browning's Avon survey (1989b).

Age and length of service

The belief that governing bodies were dominated by elderly, retired, long serving governors appears to be a myth. 18.2% of Leicestershire's 1986 governors were over 60 (compared with 16% of the 1981 population of Leicestershire as a whole). By 1989, Northamptonshire's governors over 60 accounted for 10.5% of governing bodies. The N.F.E.R. survey listed 17% of governors as being retired.

Before and after the implementation of the 1986 Act, the largest group of governors were aged 40-59; these comprised 45.1% of Leicestershire's 1986 governors (compared with approximately 40% of Leicestershire's 1981 population) and 56.5% of Northamptonshire's governors. Of the younger age groups, Leicestershire had 36.6% of its governors aged under 40. These included the 2.2% of governors who were under 30. Northamptonshire used different age categories; their under 40s group comprised 30.5% of governors but they measured the under 24s separately and this latter group held 0.1% of governorships.

Governors' years of service indicate that the numbers of longer serving governors have declined although there were still a substantial proportion of experienced governors.

Table III-Years of service of governors

Years	Sheffield.1978	Leics.1986/7	Northants.1989
5+	46%	37.2%	29.2%
1-5	42%	39.7%	39.7%
-1	12%	23.1%	30.8%
	n=50 governing bodies	n=1430	n=2119

The Leicestershire survey subdivided the 5+ category. 16.5% of governors were found to have completed more than ten years' service and 20.7% to have held office for between five and nine years.

The Leicestershire and Northamptonshire surveys were both conducted shortly after elections for the majority of their counties' schools. This would explain the relatively large group with less than one year's service. The figures in this category also indicate the size of the changes of personnel following legislation designed to bring in new governors. Two thirds of governing bodies remain unchanged.

The elderly and longest serving governors were not in the majority. Even had they been, should it be any different? A comparison was made with business 'governors' using information on the Board of Directors of a multinational company, Trans National Transport. In 1986, this company had 15 directors, of whom 8 were over 60, the eldest being 84. These managed to govern an international company with 39,256 employees in five continents, with interests in all forms of transport and an annual revenue of \$2,946,501,000 in 1986 (Trans National Transport, 1986, p.24).

Leicestershire's largest school has 1700 pupils, about 110 teaching staff, all on one site, and with an estimated revenue of £3,250,000 (assuming local resource management had been implemented).

Ethnic origins

There were very few ethnic minority representatives amongst governors even for schools with substantial numbers of pupils of non-British origins. Northamptonshire's survey reported 1.4% of governors from their ethnic minority communities while 3% was the proportion found in the national survey (Jefferies and Streatfield, 1989). The earlier Leicestershire survey did not request information on ethnic origin hence comparisons cannot be made.

SOCIALLY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNING BODIES?

Publically representative institutions in our democracy are sometimes criticised for their failure to reflect accurately the social composition of the nation. School governing bodies can be criticised similarly for failing to reflect the social composition of the communities whose pupils they educate.

Leicestershire's 1986/7 school governors were predominantly from social classes I-III and clustered in the first five socio-economic groups, as shown in Tables IV and V below. Occupations have changed from 1884 London, but social backgrounds have not. The social composition of the governing bodies did not correspond to the social composition of Leicestershire as a whole.

Table IV-Social class of governors, Leicestershire,1986

I	Professional occupations	15.4%
II	Intermediate occupations	52.7%
IIIN	Skilled non-manual occupations	19.5%
IIIM	Skilled manual occupations	6.3%
IV	Partly skilled occupations	5.8%
V	Unskilled occupations	0.3%
		n=1436

Table V-Socio-economic groupings, Leics. governors,1986

Socio-economic group		1986 Leics. Governors	1986 Leics. Population
1.1, 1.2,.2.1,2.2	Employers and managers	20.7%	11.6%
3	Self- employed professionals - work normally requiring university standard qualifications	3.2%	0.4%
4	Professional workers	14.4%	3%
5.1	Work ancillary to professionals, not requiring qualifications of university standard; nurses, teachers, artists	29.4%	8.7%
5.2	Intermediate, non-manual; foremen, supervisors	1.7%	0.9%
6	Junior, non-manual, non- supervisory; clerical, sales communications	16.5%	18%
7	Personal service workers; food, drink, clothing and personal needs	4.4%	3.2%
8-11	Foremen, supervisors - skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled manual occupations	5.9%	46%
12-16	Self employed on own account; farmers, agricultural workers, farmers' wives; members of the armed services	4.0%	7.2%

Categories 8-11 and 12-16 were joined together for the Leicestershire governors' survey because there were so few governors in each of the individual classifications. For ease of comparison, the registrar-general's classifications have been grouped also, although they are not presented in this way in the census.

The Leicestershire pattern replicated that found by Bacon in 1978 (p.133) and by Gordon for 1884 (p.162), as shown in Table VI.

Table VI-Social Class of Governors

Sheffield, 1978 n = 50 governing bodies			London, 1884 n=1475 governors
Governing bodies	professional occupations	blue collar occupations	
Those with 50%+	19	1	Leisure class 31%
Those with 40-50%	12	0	Sub-managerial 22%
Those with 20-40%	15	4	Church 21%
Those with 0-20%	3	28	Professions 10.5%
Those with 0	1	17	Merchant/managerial 8.5%
			Skilled workers 4.5%
			Teachers 2.5%

One of Sheffield's governors commented:

"I am a bit taken aback to find out how middle class we are though largely socialist"
(Bacon, 1978, p.133).

Sheffield's population were described as "predominantly proletarian" (ibid, p.132) but the working classes were unwilling to become governors particularly those who were unskilled workers. Bacon concluded that:

"the sociological reality differs greatly from the utopian expectation" (ibid, p.132).

The 1884 London survey found that certain governing bodies did reflect the economic activities of their areas. Westminster had the strongest managerial representation (20%); Peckham, with a mainly white-collar residency, had 20% from the sub-managerial class while 23% of Southwark's governors were shopkeepers. Such representation was to be expected since there was a residency qualification but the working classes still did not appear in any great numbers.

Central government tried to encourage changes in these patterns in 1988. The D.E.S. began what was described as a:

"massive advertising campaign" (Education,15/7/88)

Advertisements were placed in womens' magazines and Sunday newspaper supplements and millions of leaflets, asking, 'Shouldn't you become a school governor?', were issued. This was followed by national audio-visual materials and a loose leaf folder issued to all governors containing details of their powers and duties.

D.E.S. publicity aimed at attracting new governors, stated that governors should be parents of children at the school concerned. A separate category of "businessmen and women" was also suggested as a source of school governors (D.E.S., 1988). This was the only occupational group mentioned and this might deter those who felt the company might be a little daunting. Other organisations published materials to persuade business people to become governors (e.g. School Governors from the Business Community - Information Pack; Education Needs You.[Industry Matters,RSA,1988]). In co-opting members, however, governing bodies were only 'to have regard to' representation of the local business community (unlike further education colleges where 50% of the governing body must be representative of local business or of occupations associated with the college).

In 1984, London experienced difficulties in finding suitable school governors (Gordon,1974,p.161) but when Sheffield had to expand its governing force from 100 to

5,000 in the 1970s, there were no problems obtaining people to serve (Bacon,1978,p.53). The social class representation, however, remained biased towards the middle and upper classes. Bacon suggested that this might have been because the working classes have a different notion of what constitutes public service and because they are:

"unfamiliar with the relatively abstract patterns of thought and formal administrative procedures" of governing bodies

(ibid,p.133-134).

Macbeth's research on Scottish school councils echoed these views in stating that:

"those from professional and middle class backgrounds seemed able to contribute more constructively than others".

(Macbeth,1980b,pp.12-13)

This comment was also found to be applicable to Australian governing bodies in 1989 (Angus,1989,p.25). Public service on committees could be deemed a middle class tradition and it is possible that school governing bodies discourage working class participants in the same way that Bottomore described in the 1950s:

"Consciously or unconsciously some of the organisations discourage or squeeze out individuals with low occupational status"

(Bottomore,1954,p.368).

His survey related to voluntary organisations in an English county town and although he did not include school managers in his survey, the organisations he studied attracted the same type of membership as do governing bodies today. The 1989 researches in Northamptonshire, Avon, Exeter and Scotland, and the national N.F.E.R. survey, all reported

that governing bodies were still the preserve of the articulate middle classes (Northants. L.E.A.; Browning, 1989b; Golby and Brigley; Munn and Brown; Jefferies and Streatfield).

EXCLUSIONS

The first exclusion is that of the non-teaching staff. The extension of the vote to representatives of the non-teaching staff, was introduced by some l.e.as following the 1980 Education Act although this was not legally required. It was made possible by the 1981 School Governing Bodies' Regulations. This group was disenfranchised by the 1986 Act. There does not seem to be any logical explanation for this; the change brought about by the 1986 Act must have been drafted almost as soon as the first non-teacher governors were elected and certainly before anyone could have had time to consider the effectiveness of the measure. The 1990 School Government Regulations made it possible for non-teacher representatives to serve on governing bodies again.

As far as can be judged personally, the involvement of the non-teaching staff between 1981 and 1988, proved a welcome arrangement both for them and for the rest of the school. To be slightly facetious, one must ask, what governing body could fail to recognise the value of having, as a governor, the caretaker, the real expert on leaking roofs? (Leicestershire schools particularly suffer from the flat roofs of the CLASP era and this topic is a regular

favourite for governors' meetings in Leicestershire). Supporting the value of electing ancillaries, the Chairperson of the N.A.G.M. remarked:

"After all, who really runs the school? We all know it's the caretaker" (Latham,1982).

This small experiment in worker democracy would repay further research. Some schools persuaded their non-teacher governors to remain as co-opted governors after the 1988 changes were implemented. A researcher in Avon felt that this created difficulties because these employees were unlikely to oppose the headteacher and would not feel committed to being governors if they had had to be coerced to remain in office (Browning,1988b,p.26).

The other section of 'the people' who are excluded from the *electoral roll* are the pupils. Writing of the polity as a whole, Dahl comments that:

"Children furnish us with a clear instance of violation of the principle that a government must rest on the consent of the governed, or that no-one should be subject to a law not of one's choosing"

(Dahl, in Laslett and Fishkin,1979,p.121).

Children have been excluded from national politics on the grounds of limited competence. Their exclusion from school politics could be deemed less justified as schools are meant to train citizens and school government could provide an opportunity for active learning. Pupils might also be judged competent in their knowledge of their own school at least. A few schools accepted these arguments and attempted integration of pupils into school decision making

before the issue of their representation on school governing bodies arose. Discussion of these experiments can be found in Fletcher (1985).

Some local authorities experimented with appointing 18 year olds to governing bodies (e.g. Derbyshire) but this was made impossible under the 1986 Act. From a democratic viewpoint, it may seem strange to exclude those who might best know how it feels to be the recipient of the school's education. Such students already have a vote in electing their national and local governments so removing the possibility of their electing representatives for a further layer of government could be termed illogical. Nor does the exclusion match that in further education colleges; 18 year olds there may elect one student governor.

It has been pointed out in American research concerning students in college government, that pupil representation did little to assist participatory democracy (Wilson 1972). In Scotland too, where Macbeth observed five school councils with pupil members, it was found that student governors':

"attendance at meetings was erratic and sometimes poor. Their contributions to discussion were few and lacked confidence [except in one council]"

(1980b,p.14)

In order to help create that confidence, some schools have pupil observers on their governing bodies. One of these schools' headteachers reported that some pupils, like those

in Macbeth's observations, were reserved, but others had become very useful by providing a sounding board for governors. Teachers felt that pupils would find the meetings boring, tiring and confusing but pupils did feel that they had gained insight into how their schools operated (Fletcher, 1989b, p.22).

More pupils may be involved after 1990. The 1989 School Government Regulations made it possible for pupils to be co-opted onto committees to give advice and to comment on proposals although they could not vote.

NON-ELECTED GOVERNORS

About two thirds of governing bodies are not elected. These include the party representatives who are selected by those who have been elected as Councillors. This provides a tenuous link to the democratic process. The role of this group is discussed further in Chapter 14 below.

The remaining governors are co-opted by the governing body. Prior to 1988, the process of co-option included canvassing local groups for suggestions but, more usually, it involved governors being asked at meetings if they had "any ideas" or the chairperson might have phoned fellow governors to obtain nominations. This system resulted in governing bodies replicating themselves since they were most likely to 'know' people from their own social backgrounds.

It was suggested that the requirement of the 1986 Act that governors must ensure that local businesses were represented, would bring in, not only employers, but also members of trades unions, W.E.A. groups or ethnic minority workers' groups (Whitehead and Aggleton, 1986, p.445). In practice, as one governor predicted:

"they will just re-co-opt all the old hands
and nothing will change"

(School Governor, 1988, p.33).

The Leicestershire and Northamptonshire surveys mentioned above showed that this did happen. Only about one third of the personnel of governing bodies changed following the 1986 Act and it was likely that most of those who changed were the elected governors. Of those Northamptonshire governors who had served less than one year at the time of the 1989 survey, 47.6% were elected parent governors (Northants.L.E.A., 1989, p.17). Over 70% of L.E.A. governors and over 50% of co-opted governors, had served as governors before the implementation of the 1986 Act.

The Act had the effect of formalising the process of co-option because all the co-options had to be made simultaneously. Some potential co-optees wrote to their chosen governing body to suggest themselves or a nominee from their organisations. Many governing bodies approached local associations for suggestions if insufficient were forthcoming at the co-option meetings.

There is evidence that the old, informal, personal knowledge system, still continued. The magazine, School

Governor, warned its readers to be aware that l.e.a. governors might try to trick the other governors into accepting their suggested co-optees. They would do this by:

"telling the teacher governors that if they don't want the parents to swamp them they must vote with the LEA"

(News item, School Governor, June, 1989, p.40)

They would then tell the unprepared parent governors that unless they had precise details of their nominees at the co-option meeting, then their suggestions could not be considered. At two Leicestershire schools, one of the political appointees had a list of six nominees ready for the co-option meetings in 1988; five of these were accepted. The outcome of the co-option system was the replication of the types of governors who had already been selected or elected.

CONCLUSIONS

For 'real' democracy to be said to exist, one might claim that 'real' representation must likewise exist. Evidence from the surveys indicated that governing bodies provide the illusion of democracy. They have, however, become more occupationally representative than they were one hundred years ago and they are composed of more than the retired people, married women and vicars which popular myth supposes. These particular groups are not over-represented. Middle and upper class representation is, however, greater than their numbers in the population as a whole and this was equally true 100 years ago and whether the Authority was an urban or a shire one. The professional classes are

in the majority and their position is reinforced by the co-option process.

Governors with industrial and commercial backgrounds comprise over one third of governors and a further third have education related occupations. There are more male than female governors although females predominate on primary school governing bodies. The majority of governors are in the age group 40-59 with the numbers who have served between one and five years as governors being approximately the same as those who have served more than five years. Ethnic minorities are greatly under-represented. Non-teaching staff and pupils were excluded from governing bodies between 1988 and 1990 although some schools co-opted their previously elected non-teacher governors.

Extending the franchise and the categories of elected representatives amongst governors, could be said to be intended (as are all similar developments in national and local government) to ensure that all interests are protected since:

"an exclusive demos will fail to protect the interests of those who are excluded"
(Dahl, in Laslett and Fishkin, 1979, p.127).

In school government, only two groups have been expressly excluded (and these exclusions applied only between 1988 and 1990). The practical outcome of the election, selection and co-option system, however, is to produce an exclusive middle class parliament which could violate what Dahl terms, the principle of equal consideration (ibid).

This illusion of democracy might be counted as a failure of the new policies for the composition of school governing bodies but it is a feature common to all attempts to extend stakeholder participation in government. Participation in public life is undertaken by classes with fairly high incomes and levels of education because their social background leads them to expect to undertake such service. These are the people who have already gained from the education service and take the opportunity for further participation presumably to ensure that this favourable gain continues. This makes for increasingly unequal representation (OECD,1974). A similar argument was advanced by Cohen (1978) in his study of American community schools which revealed the lack of participation in their government. Such attempts to increase participation are unlikely to be successful, Cohen considered, because they do not accord with current social and economic realities.

These realities mean that parents of children who are disadvantaged by the educational system, are not represented on governing bodies. They are:

"disorganised and do not form any recognisable constituency" (Angus,1989,p.22).

Parents' and governors' associations are of the same type of composition as are governing bodies. The parents associations did try to form a coalition of interests with the T.U.C. and the Labour government in the 1970s (Whitehead and Aggleton,1986,p.439) but the Labour government did not respond and consumer and parents' groups

moved to working with the Tories who took office in 1979.

Had there been school governors when John Stuart Mill was writing, (1859), he would no doubt have asked of them the same question he posed in relation to the Parliament of his day:

"Does Parliament, or almost any of the members composing it, ever, for an instant look at any question with the eyes of a working man?...I do not say that the working men's view of these questions is in general nearer to the truth than the other but it is sometimes quite as near; and in any case it ought to be respectfully listened too instead of being, as it is, not merely turned away from, but ignored" (Mill,1859,p.209).

Before one denigrates completely the middle class bias of governing bodies, one should reflect that the middle class representatives are parents of school pupils, are 'consumers' of the products of the system and are providers of employment (and work experience) for those products. They are entitled to representation. One does hear teachers being critical of what they describe as 'pushy' parents (meaning, middle class parents). Writing in The Guardian, one teacher reported the attitude of those teachers who regard the giving of power to parents to have authority in schools as "unwelcome and dangerous" (Berry,1987). Similar views were expressed by teachers involved in the William Tyndale dispute (Auld,1978,p.80,para.278). Given the strength of educational protectionism, it might be an important safeguard for democracy in schools, that the articulate middle classes are well represented.

A final caveat is sounded by Angus (1989,p.24). Writing of Australian experience, he reported that the concentration of the 1980s legislation on the composition of governing bodies tended to deflect attention away from the process and content of their operation. To respond to this criticism, issues relating to the democratic operation of governing bodies form the subject matter of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 11

GOVERNORS' ROLES-THE ILLUSION OF DEMOCRACY

CONTACT WITH CONSTITUENTS

The Education Acts of 1980 and 1986 were much concerned with democratising the process of school government through increasing the numbers of elected governors and through designing a procedure for public accountability through the Annual Reports and Meetings. This chapter reflects upon experiences in these two areas.

The first section of this chapter concerns the elections for school governing bodies. The encouragement given to parents to stand for election, and the extent of interest in the elections amongst potential teacher and parent governors and their electorate, are considered. Secondly, the chapter includes discussion of the value of Annual Parents' Reports and Meetings as means of ensuring continuing contact with constituents. Finally, brief reference is made to the possibility of developing direct democracy to encourage participatory politics.

ELECTIONS

Compared with previous such events, the school governors' elections which took place to appoint the new governing bodies in September, 1988, were extensively publicised at school, local and national levels. It might have been expected, therefore, that there would be considerable interest in these elections, and this would be evident in the number of candidates and the turnout of voters.

In the past, electoral turnout for parent governorships has generally been very low. Governors in Sheffield, in the 1970s, for example, reported that they were very disappointed by the response and felt themselves to be "only partly elected" (Bacon,1978:124). Election meetings attracted only 4% of those eligible to vote. A study of elections in a group of 6 Leicestershire schools (Beavin, 1987) found a response of under 10% of parents (although one school formed a notable exception with 80% turnout for the parent governor elections). Nonetheless, these figures are an improvement on the elections for parent governors one hundred years ago: in 1900, in Friern Barnet in Middlesex, for example, only four parents came to the election meeting, of whom two were elected. The following year's meeting was cancelled because no-one came (Gordon, 1974,p.178). Elections for teacher governorships attracted contests in three of the schools in Beavin's 1987 Leicestershire sample and the elections involved between 75% and 100% of the staff.

In the 1988 elections, parent governorships were usually all filled though not all vacancies were contested, especially in the primary phase. 75% of schools reported contested elections but only 50% of primary schools did so (Jefferies,1989,p.27). There was an adequate number of volunteers for teacher governorships but it was mainly in the secondary sector that elections had to be held since there was some competition for the posts (ibid). Six of the

seven schools in the Scottish pilot study all had more parents standing for election than there were places. The seventh was a one teacher school with 16 pupils but there were three candidates who filled all its vacancies (Munn and Brown,1989,p.20).

Competition for governorship was felt to be disappointing in view of the efforts made to publicise the elections (Jefferies,1989,p.26). Schools and local authorities worked very hard to establish a full electoral register despite confusing disputes over what constituted a parent. (There were arguments, for example, about the right to vote of step parents, foster parents, guardians and adoptive parents.) At over 25% of schools, personal approaches to possible candidates were also made to persuade them to stand (ibid). Almost all parents were sent information personally about the elections and about their right to stand as governors. Some of this information was discouragingly presented as these examples below demonstrate.

How comfortable would parents feel, for example, with the notion of joining a governing body described in the following terms?

"fourteen representatives...Under the existing Instruments of Government the term of office of each of the appointed, elected or co-opted governors varies with each Instrument, but the new Instruments of Government required under the Education (No.2) Act 1986 will result in some changes to the constitution of all governing bodies and may well shorten the term of office"
(Orchard School,1987)

Any parent considering standing for election at another school would have to have felt able to grapple with the following information:

"Prior to the Instruments coming into force, i.e. before the end of the Summer Terms 1988 and 1989 respectively, new governors must be appointed. In the case of parent governors, this means that an election must take place to appoint the numbers of parent governors required by the instrument. The LEA is responsible for deciding on the form of election, and already has a policy which has been adopted for use in connection with existing Instruments of Government. This procedure, with modifications, is expected to be used in connection with future elections of parent governors. Under the existing Instruments of government a person elected to be a parent Governor ceases to hold office if, on the first day of a school year he or she no longer has a child registered at that school "
(Sir Jonathan North, 1987).

A further statement, equally deterrent to prospective candidates, was both confusing and incorrect:

"All governors are renewed in tandem with County Council elections".

Neither parent nor teacher governor elections could be said to have offered an informed choice for the voters. Those standing for election were not identified with any party label nor policy promises nor even known personally to the electorate. Aspiring parent governors in Leicestershire were asked to keep their manifestos short (about 6 lines seemed to be the average) and to confine them to personal details. These manifestos largely described the candidate's occupations, their service on other voluntary bodies, (particularly their involvement in P.T.A. activities) and connections with the school or with education generally.

Candidates reported uncertainties about what to include and Scottish heads:

"wondered if they should correct the spelling
and grammar of some statements"
(Munn and Brown,1989,p.18).

The voting mechanism was simple and did not require parents to attend school to cast their votes. Ballot papers, with the manifestos, were sent home and returned via pupil post. In Scotland, they were posted to parents.

ANNUAL MEETINGS AND REPORTS

Beyond the elections, both parent and teacher governors reported difficulties in making contacts with their constituents, either to keep them informed or to be informed by them. This was true of both Sheffield in 1978 and Leicestershire nearly 10 years later (Bacon,1978; Beavin,1987). One teacher remarked that there was no encouragement to fulfil a representative role (Beavin,1987,p.56) and neither teachers nor parents found communication with their electors easy. Parent governors at a Leicestershire school established an information table at a careers evening which attracted eight enquiries. Taylor's study (1983a) reported governors who commented that parents did not know who the governors were, nor what was the role of governors, nor did they seem to be very interested.

The Annual Parents' Meetings and Reports were intended to overcome these problems by adding to the means whereby governors could make contacts with the parents and hence, presumably, were to try to ensure that democratic

involvement was more of a reality. They would make

"governing bodies...realise that they must
take their responsibility for the school
seriously. Anonymity is a thing of the past"
(Naybour,1988).

Since this was a statement from the Chairman of the Welsh
NCPTA, one assumes that the ending of this anonymity was
seen as the beginning of a new accountability by governors
to parents. A Buckinghamshire governor, however, clearly
felt that the growth in democracy was to add to governors'
powers rather than to the power of a school's clients since
he wrote to the Milton Keynes Herald to celebrate the:

"new importance attached to governors
[indicating] the sense of the democratic
supremacy of the people" (19/7/87).

Evidence from the Reports and Meetings indicated that they
served illusory rather than real democracy.

Reports

Governors were required to report on how they had governed
their schools and this included commenting on how the
schools' policies regarding parental involvement had worked
in practice. All the Reports studied, indicated that
parents had their place and that place was to participate,
usually in fund raising. In the most extensive of the
Reports studied (18 pages), parents were mentioned only in
respect of their being welcome if they wished to attend
school to try out the Domsday video discs. Parents were
also referred to in the community section on working
together in adult education, as well as in the inevitable

fund raising requests (Lord Grey,1987). Practical help was sought by another school's governors. They recorded a tribute to parental assistance with a new Multigym and Rural Studies workshop and parents were encouraged with a "warm welcome for any assistance" (Denbigh,1987). The only other mention of parents in this two page Report, was to remind them of their duties to encourage their children to complete their homework.

While one feels it would be asking a great deal of governors to make themselves openly available to the electorate, how likely is it that a parent would approach a chairman who could only "be contacted through the school" as one Report stated (Denbigh, 1987)? The possibility of contact provides an avenue for democracy; the difficulty of making that contact without the knowledge of the head makes it likely that the democracy will be illusory.

The governors' choice of words (or, at least, the words of which they approved) in their Reports *did not seem likely* to inspire parental involvement. None of the reports proved particularly easy to read as the table below shows. Applying a simple *readability test* to three secondary and three primary school reports (the Flesch formula - Harrison,1980,p.77-79), it was found that four were classified as 'Difficult' or 'Fairly Difficult' (for which a reading age of 20+ would be required, the equivalent of 2nd year undergraduate level). The two remaining reports were in the 'Standard' category (reading age, 14+).

The range was as follows :-

Table I -Readability of Governors' Reports

<u>School</u>	<u>Reading age needed</u>	<u>Reading ease</u> (the lower the number the greater the difficulty)
Secondary - A (Denbigh)	14.4 years	63 standard
Primary - B (Whetstone)	15 years	59.6 standard
Secondary - C (John Cleveland)	18.7 years	48.1 fairly difficult
Primary - D (Merton)	19.4 years	44.5 fairly difficult
Primary - E (Wilby)	19.6 years	42.7 difficult
Secondary - F (Lord Grey)	19.9 years	40.7 difficult

For comparison, a school governor's text book (Mahoney, 1988) needed a reading age of 14.5 years, the reading age of the average adult is taken to be about 16 years and the local newspaper (Leicester Mercury) needed a 16.5 reading age. Report A, which required the same reading age as that of the governors' text book, was itself written by governors. Reports B and D were both almost word-for-word reproductions of the l.e.a. suggested guidelines. Report C was written by the Chair and the Head although it was discussed with, and approved by, the other governors. It was not known who wrote Report F though the choice of words indicated an educational background for the author.

What might be considered to be esoteric language may appear to have been selected to lessen the possibility of real democracy but, there may be alternative explanations (although, whatever the explanation, the result is illusory

democracy). First, given the social background of school governors, they could be said to be using their usual level of language, adopting the formalities deemed appropriate for this type of documentation according to their experience. There is, secondly, the bureaucratic imperative to incline the choice of language away from the simple and towards the esoteric. Clerks who write the agendas for governors' meetings use legal codes of expression and governors assume that this is the correct language. The third reason was suggested by a local governor; he stated that when he appointed teaching staff he liked to feel mystified by them. Academic jargon impressed him and left him feeling that such staff would be able to teach him something he didn't know. The jargon could be considered to create an appropriate public image. This might be held to be true of the Annual Reports also.

A few schools did see their Reports as important to marketing their public image. This action could be interpreted as according some priority to democratic links. A Buckinghamshire school (Lord Grey, 1987) produced a very professional document of 20 pages, with coloured covers, bound, with a front drawing, and well printed. They spent £500 of their income on producing it (the school has local resource management). This was the Report which required the highest reading age in the survey mentioned above.

A group of Leicestershire governors felt that such expenditure was unjustified when there was insufficient for

direct spending on the childrens' education. The average length of Reports in Leicestershire was 3-5 pages. Leicestershire L.E.A. allocated some additional capitation and secretarial assistance for the preparation of the Reports. This amounted to £68 for its largest secondary school (1700 pupils) and 80p for a 20 pupil primary school together with 10 hours extra secretarial help for secondary schools and 5 hours for primary schools. 60% of the primary schools and 80% of the secondary schools considered this to be adequate. The cost of typing and duplicating the Reports for the whole county was £14,606 (Leicestershire, 1987). It seems unlikely that central government envisaged these Reports as having a public relations value since the Reports are intended to be only a brief summary of the governors' activities; in response to this objective, Northamptonshire L.E.A. recommended that Reports should not exceed 3-4 pages of A4. The brevity of Reports, combined with their complex language, could be seen as adding to illusive democracy.

Although the language used in Reports may help promote an image of educational mystique which might reassure some parents, the tone adopted by the governors might be interpreted as lessening the possibility of parents feeling confident enough to participate in the new democracy. Many Reports followed l.e.a. guidelines and opened with an uncompromising, and rather unwelcoming, statement of the law:

"On 7th November, 1986 the Government introduced a new Education Act which requires the governing body of this school to produce a report for the parents of all registered pupils... This report therefore complies with the new act...The governors are required to produce a financial statement"

(Barwell,1987) (my underlinings).

The illusion of democracy could also be said to have been achieved by those governors who decided simply to copy the format of Reports suggested by the l.e.as. If knowledge is required in order for voters to participate democratically, then such similarity might be taken to imply that full information was not being provided (unless our schools were already so similar that the national curriculum is not needed).

Where information was clearly specific to a particular school, its inconsequence might have been taken to indicate the difficulty of creating real democracy, leaving the illusion of democracy to arise from minor issues. Thus one learnt, for example, that:

"cupboard doors had been repaired in two classrooms and one plug socket replaced"
(St.John's,1987)

"The gas meter in the infant classroom is to be boxed in. 4.2 cubic meters of storage space have been created by provision of deep, built in shelving outside the staff room"
(Mears Ashby,1987).

The Annual Reports were prefaced with invitations to parents to attend the Annual Meetings. Generally, such invitations seemed designed to discourage attendance by their formality thus helping to ensure that democracy

remained illusory. The letters could be said to have appeared almost as a legal summons, stating that the report and the meeting were required by law and, therefore, in compliance with the Act, governors were inviting parents to attend the meeting.

Meetings

The need to develop democratic skills became evident at the Annual Meetings. One head reported that:

"Quite a few people were too overawed by a few articulate people to join in the discussion"
(Leicestershire,1987).

The attitude of some governing bodies to allowing questions at the Annual Meetings could well have contributed to parents feeling overawed.

Several schools, for example, included, in their letters of invitation, a note to the effect that only written questions submitted in advance would be admissible. Such information was usually couched in the jargon of meetings:

"Only items notified in advance prior to the meeting can be included on the agenda for discussion at the meeting" (Mears Ashby,1987).

One assumes that this might also preclude supplementaries arising on the night. Such a request for literacy might effectively disenfranchise some of the electorate. At one meeting, a Chairman even declared there was a legal guillotine since:

"this meeting must by law finish at 9p.m."
(Sir Jonathan North School,1987).

This is one detail the 1986 Act does not include.

In practice, governors were usually only too glad of questions. Headteachers, reporting to a Leicestershire L.E.A. survey in 1987, commented:

"The meeting could, and should, have closed within three minutes. It struggled on for fifteen".

"Not a word was spoken apart from the Chair's remarks and some remarks made by me at his invitation".

Where questions were more forthcoming, they were reported as being supportive and helpful, being described as:

"lively, stimulating, and very worthwhile.. constructive, pertinent and supportive...a forum for open dialogue" (Leics,1987).

One governor stated that he felt it gave an opportunity for people, normally too intimidated by heads, to raise questions since they were in a forum where there was support from governors (comment from governor on training course, June, 1987).

Other governors, on the same training course, were not keen on this version of democratic participation, as their comments showed:

"Parents don't seem to value it"

"It attracts the wrong sort of parents"

"Really concerned parents will stay in contact all year".

Despite such adverse comments, one governor recognised the value of the meetings in creating the illusion of democracy since she commented that the meetings were vital because

"parents must feel they have had their say."

Governors expressed concern before the first Annual Meetings that they might be subject to unpleasant verbal

attacks so it is, perhaps, not surprising that governors did not choose to try to move beyond illusory democracy. Deterrent tactics (however inadvertently deployed) proved unnecessary since, not only did very few parents attend the meetings but there were also very few reports of any unpleasant happenings. Only one adverse comment is recorded in the Director of Education's report to the Schools Sub-Committee in Leicestershire (1987). One head stated that his school's Annual Meeting was:

"most difficult. All governors expressed the feeling of mental battering" (ibid,p.5).

Other records of meetings indicated that most were quiet, short and poorly attended. Meetings lasted, on average, about one and a quarter hours, and rarely achieved an attendance of more than 5% of the parents. 16% of meetings failed to have their full complement of governors. Attendance at Annual Meetings since 1987 has steadily declined. Only where the meetings were combined with some other activity, did attendance improve (Education,1988a, p.471), although one head disputes this (Tomlinson,1988,p.16).

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

The Annual Meetings provided the opportunity for direct democracy since the 1986 Act gave parents the right:

"to pass (by a simple majority) resolutions on any matters which may properly be discussed at the meetings...[governors must] consider any resolution which is duly passed at such a meeting and which they consider is a matter for them". (C1.31)

Copies of the resolutions had then to be sent to l.e.as and heads who were required to comment upon them in the following year's governors' Annual Report. To pass resolutions, the meetings had to be quorate (i.e. the numbers present had to equal 20% of the number of registered pupils at the school).

Very few meetings reached that number and very few resolutions were passed; those that were, did not provide the criticism about which some governors had been worried. A group of governors from 14 Leicestershire schools, reported that only two of their Annual Meetings (both at small, rural primary schools) were quorate and at one of these, a resolution had been passed. This called on the L.E.A. to alter the catchment areas for the secondary schools fed by the primary school concerned in order to save transport costs. Governors at other Meetings, allowed resolutions even if the sessions were non-quorate and chairpersons promised that issues raised would be followed up and reports made to parents. This does seem to indicate a willingness to extend from illusory democracy.

An experiment in changing illusion to reality was studied in the U.S.A. in 1978 (Hamilton and Cohen) when parental referenda were used to determine school policies. Hamilton and Cohen concluded that:

"the referendum does not appear to be a superior decision making institution...[there is] little basis for assuming that the majority...amongst those voting will fortuitously coincide with the community

interest, immediate or long range...adequate discharge of [this] legislative function may be quite a chore... All voters are not Athenians, it would be uneconomical for them to be, and the plebiscite doctrine suggests to the voter that his function is to vote his private preference" (p.260).

Hirst also criticised referenda as a means of creating real democracy though not because of the inadequacies of the voters. He was writing about the political system in general and felt that democracy was negated by referenda because they were:

"the ideal tools for government or influential lobbies to acquire legitimacy for a policy or an institution" (Hirst,1988,p.201).

The referenda on opting out could be interpreted in this sense. A referendum has, however, been successfully used in a less politically, contentious aspect of a school's policy and it did enable greater participation by parents and governors than might otherwise have been possible. A Leicestershire school, in 1987, *circulated all parents*, staff and governors with a questionnaire requesting their opinions on the aims of the curriculum at the college for the next decade. An excellent response was achieved from which a joint statement of intent was collated.

CONCLUSIONS

Chapters 10 and 11 have examined the hypothesis that the extension of participatory democracy in school governing bodies would result in enfranchising those who were already powerful. An illusion of increased democracy would be

created which would protect the existing educational and political elites and potential new stakeholders would be co-opted into these elites.

Analysing the composition of school governing bodies showed that the types of people who have become governors are from existing elites, being predominately professional and middle class and including a significant number of educationalists. Governors are not representative of the full range of school clients. Selection and election methods reinforce these outcomes and appear to discourage participatory politics as do the Annual Reports and Meetings discussed in this chapter. These have been described in disparaging terms by one C.E.O. who reflected that these:

"particular flagship[s] of parental involvement and governor accountability [are] floundering badly and heavy dredging is required to refloat [them]"

(Education, 1988a, p.471).

In addition, it is difficult for governors to make contact their constituents. Direct democracy, via resolutions at Annual Meetings, has not been successfully established.

Using the terminology, 'illusion of democracy', may appear to imply support for the conspiracy theory of government. It is not the intention to do so. The consciousness that creates an appearance of involvement may be sincerely committed to the reality of democracy just as much as to the securing of position for those currently in power, a view supported by Grant's analysis of pressure groups

(Spence and Borthwick,1984,p.126).

Angus, however, appears to lean towards the view that illusory democracy has been deliberately created. He states that:

"Participation is...of instrumental value as it is invited within a particular framework that will forward the agreed purpose of the institution".
(Angus,1988,p.21)

This view finds endorsement, also, from Whitehead and Aggleton who interpret the state's support for the extension of democratic participation as mere rhetoric. They echo Bacon's 1978 findings that the reality is considered to be an attempt to manage the incorporation of new contenders for power in order to:

"reproduce what are essentially conservative outcomes with respect to the distribution of power" (Whitehead and Aggleton,1986,p.443).

In these respects, school governing bodies do not differ from other organs of representative democracy. Hirst stated that:

"Once one problematises the notion of 'representation' then modern democracy ceases to be a form of delegated rule by the people and becomes instead a form of rule by professional politicians and government officials over the people" (1988,p.195).

Giving citizens legal rights (as has happened with the extension and codification of governors' powers) cannot make anything more democratic, Hirst argues. It cannot produce a real shift of power but it will provide an extrinsic checking mechanism which will ensure:

"the benefits of competition, scrutiny
and influence". (ibid,p.196)

Similar arguments were advanced by Jones who considered that participatory democracy (like that applicable to the new arrangements for school governing bodies, although he does not discuss these specifically) decreased real representation by giving some citizens more value than others. Sectional interests,

"the vociferous and articulate...the
established powerful groups" would dominate
(Ranson and Jones,1989,pp.3 & 9).

The following chapters discuss the operation of these groups.

CHAPTER 12

GOVERNORS' MODES OF OPERATION-

THE PRESSURE GROUP ARENA

School governors seem obviously to be an integral part of school government. Governors' legal powers, and their overt role expectations, appear to give them a leadership function within the micro-polities of their schools. They are also part of the national system of educational administration since they have functions delegated to them by central and local governments. It may seem surprising, therefore, to find school governors being discussed under the heading of the pressure group arena. Pressure groups are outside of government. They are not given their legal structure by government and they function mainly by attempting to direct government actions through outside influence. It is this last word, however, that begins this debate about the definition of the nature of school governing bodies within the political system. The role analysis of the preceeding chapters has indicated that governors' have functions which make them influential, rather than powerful, and that governors are not yet making substantial use of the new powers given them by the legislation of the 1980s.

The 1986 and 1988 Education Acts focused attention on the roles of school governors, hitherto generally regarded as rather unimportant, but 'dignified' elements of education government. Their few, formal powers seemed to place them

in government. The operation of these powers, being mainly through a little informal influence, indicated they might be more of a vestigial pressure group. The powers they gained in 1986 and 1988, together with their training to learn how to use their influence, lead one to debate where governing bodies might now be placed on a continuum between being government or being a pressure group. This needs to be debated because a dual role could be an explanation for why school governors operate at both overt and covert levels. The ways in which governing bodies resemble both governments and pressure groups, is the main subject of this chapter.

This discussion is preceded by an outline of the ambiguity of the context within which governors operate since this helps to explain why it is difficult to delineate precisely the category into which governors fit. The final section of this chapter attempts to elucidate the debate by considering the part played by governing bodies during the stages of the process of policy making. In any such process, one would expect government to dominate at particular points and pressure groups at others. Finding the points at which governors dominate should, therefore, enable comparisons to be made which would indicate whether governors are more akin to pressure groups or to government.

CONTEXTUAL AMBIGUITY

Any political system could be said to have as an objective, the distribution of power over policy making. School governors, like any other group, seek to gain a share of this power, principally within the micro-polity of the school, sometimes within the regional politics of the l.e.as and, after the late 1970s, occasionally within the macro-polity of the state. The process of politics in which they are involved, allocates power shares by conciliating:

"differing interests...giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and survival of the whole community"
(Crick, 1964, p.21).

Since there is no absolute standard of what might be considered of importance to the whole community, this allocation must arise from the interaction of different interests both amongst governors themselves, and between governors and government.

One of the challenges facing the analysis of the share of power obtained by school governors, lies in trying to delineate the extent to which school governing bodies are part of the pressure group arena or are themselves 'the government', albeit on a small scale. Overtly, they could be said to have the functions of governments both within the schools as their controllers and, in the wider politics of education, as bodies to whom central government has delegated some of its power. In this respect, they have legalised, overt authority. Covertly, their operations could be deemed to belong to those of pressure groups

trying to exert authority through influence on heads, local and central governments.

It is not only from their functions that ambiguity about their role in the political system might be said to arise. The 'political geography' of governing bodies also gives rise to discussions about their status. They are both inside and outside the system of school government while at the same time, they can also be classified as being at the margin, the border, of the inside-outside (Chapter 4).

The ambiguity is compounded by studies of political institutions which treat governments and pressure groups as coterminous. Krause, for example, describes the civil service as having the characteristics of a pressure group because a state bureaucracy not only implements rules but also tries to persuade legislators and public opinion to accept their opinions (Krause, 1968, p.133).

Richardson and Jordan also found that because the policy process is seen:

"as increasingly a struggle between competing groups and between groups and the government, then it becomes difficult to make a clear distinction between the government on the one hand and groups on the other"

(Richardson and Jordan, 1979, p.14).

This view is supported by Latham's earlier analysis (1965); he considered that the only distinction lay in the degree of 'officiality' of groups. The more official groups were 'governments'. Official was defined as:

"authorisation by social understanding to exercise against all groups and individuals certain powers which they may not exercise against [the official group]
(Latham,1965,p.35).

The timing of this debate, at the end of the 1980s, also makes it more difficult to be certain about the position of governing bodies. It is possible that governing bodies are at a change point for the determination of their classification as either government or pressure group. The functions conferred by the 1986 and 1988 Education Acts could be said to have clarified their position in school management. They may, therefore, move more obviously into being 'government'. Equally, their apparent increase in importance to Crick's 'welfare and survival of the community', (op cit) could make them more influential pressure groups.

The debate on the position of governing bodies as government or pressure groups, could be seen as a corollary to the debate concerning whether elitism or pluralism is the better model for our system of educational administration. The pluralist model might be seen as a setting for governors as pressure groups. In a pluralist interpretation, power is spread and varying sections can be powerful in varying degrees, at different times and with differing coalitions (Howell,1981;Kogan,1984). An elitist model might seem more appropriate for an interpretation of governors in a governmental role. Elitists would see governors as having been coopted into a lowly,

governmental role and hence as feeling unable to criticise government because they have become part of it (Bacon, 1978; Beattie, 1978).

Finally, there may be those who feel that there is no debate about the political role of governors. Crick (1984), for example, would not accept that schools are political systems since he considered that politics existed only in the state. Governors, therefore, would be neither government nor pressure groups. In answer to this, Hoyle's work is useful (1982, 1986). Hoyle defines the 'state' of the school as a micro-polity. Within this, one finds interests, interest groups and sets, coalitions, power strategies and exchange bargaining (ibid). Hoyle does not, however, include governing bodies in his discussion of school management but he does not expressly exclude them either. They seem not to have entered into his calculations. Perhaps he sees them as outside the school. Kogan sets them "between the LEA and the level of the school" (1984, p.26) but his work predates the 1986 Act and some of the functions he allocates to l.e.as have now moved to governors.

The following two sections of this chapter elaborate first, on governors as pressure groups and secondly, on governors as part of government. In each case, the analysis is mainly confined to the operation of governing bodies within schools rather than in the state as a whole.

GOVERNORS AS PRESSURE GROUPS

Definitions

Governors can be fitted into pressure group analysis through using a wide description such as Lindblom's This emphasises:

"all interactions through which individuals and private groups seek to influence [government] policy"

(Lindblom,1980,p.85).

Grant (1984,p.124) distinguishes pressure groups from political parties in that groups are defined as having a narrower range of interests. It is helpful that he writes of a 'narrower range', rather than assuming that pressure groups must have only one interest as opposed to the multi interests of political parties. Had this type of definition still been in fashion, then governing bodies would not have been considered pressure groups at all since their interests are wide. Their over-arching interest could be said to be the welfare of the pupils but how this is to be achieved may be viewed from differing perspectives according to the faction on the governing body to which a governor belongs. Pressure groups, continues Grant,

"seek to exert influence on government rather than taking control of, or a share in, government themselves" (ibid).

This would seem to be true of governing bodies.

Using a corporatist analysis of the state, governing bodies seem to fit into being a pressure group. Interest group characteristics, as defined by Schmitter for the corporate state (Grant,1984), are evidenced by school

governing bodies. Schmitter defines corporate state interest groups as being:

"limited, singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered, functionally differentiated, [given] active singular recognition [by the state apparatus by whom there is] exclusion of irregular contacts. [Groups are] recognised, subsidised or licensed (if not created by the state)". Their relationship with public policy making shows "concertation" [with government (in this case, the head), a] "devolution of authority and an internal role in implementation" (ibid,p.129).

Governing bodies are the only outside bodies given Schmitter's 'active singular recognition' as having a legitimate role in school management although the 1986 Act did indicate an additional interest to be cooptated in policy initiation in schools, i.e. the police. Clause 17 (3a) requires governors to take account of representations from the chief officer of police in deciding the aims of the school. It is difficult, however, to define this interest as a group nor are the police in competition with governors since police representations have to be directed to the governors.

Governing bodies seem to reflect Schmitter's criteria further, in that they are created and maintained by the state. They are marginally subsidised by the state, in this case, the l.e.as, which sometimes clerk them, pay for the Minutes and the production of the Annual Governors' Reports, have to provide free training and are empowered to offer travelling expenses. Central government provided free

training materials after the new governing bodies were appointed in September, 1988. The schools provide free accommodation for meetings and usually some sustenance as well.

Insider and outsider groups

Governing bodies seem well to fit Grant's terminology of prisoner, insider groups (1984). One would categorise governors as prisoner insiders because heads can choose the issues on which they wish to consult governing bodies. Heads can act as filters for proposals, selecting the way in which those which reach the governors will be presented. As an insider group, governors are regularly and legally consulted but the head's element of choice means that the group will wish to be seen to be supportive in order to ensure that the management continues to accept governors' involvement in as wide a range of issues as possible. As such, the group's opinion may be considered to be constrained. In that sense, they are prisoner groups, dependent on government for the existence, their finance and their administrative support.

Having indicated above that governors are in a corporatist relationship with government, they become, by definition, insider groups. In order to qualify for this status, Grant considers that both government and group must consciously have chosen it. Obviously central government has consciously established governing bodies and determined their role. Less consciously, many governing bodies have

depoliticised their roles and have chosen not to push for power because of the costs involved.

As insider groups, they have the advantage of access to the important decision makers, in this case, the head and also, via the clerks and political governors, the l.e.a. This right of access deters governors from disruptive tactics since insider groups try to avoid actions which might upset the professional managers and might result in their groups' exclusion. Prisoner groups find it very difficult to disconnect from government. They:

"have traded off certain rights to frustrate the government by all possible means - in return for the predictability, the insurance of consultative status and the 'standing' in the policy making process that insider status confers".

(Richardson and Jordan, 1979, p.100)

This description of insider groups generally would seem to apply to governors. As low profile, insider groups, with relatively few of those whom they represent being aware of their activities, a higher profile might develop if there were more publicity for their actions. The Annual Parents' Meetings offer the opportunity for this though the attendance rate of parents leaves governors still with a low profile. The 1988 publicity campaign to attract people to stand as governors provided governors with publicity, but it was not initiated by the governors themselves nor was it aimed at policy objectives.

Given the lack of policy initiation by governors, it is possible they might almost be said to slip into Grant's

outsider category. Such groups are outside the political process because they lack the necessary political sophistication to know how to operate the system to their advantage (Grant,1984,p.137). Many governors appear to have little political knowledge, if the evidence of those attending training courses is to be believed. With the exception of those governors who are also elected councillors, few are aware of how their local authority operates, nor of how best to access the levers of power. Approaches to County Hall, for example, are often left to the clerk who is in the somewhat uneasy position of representing both sides. Relatively few governors seem knowledgeable in the techniques of persuading colleagues at meetings to agree with their points of view nor of how others in a group may be operating to ensure consensus in their favour.

Role in the state

Legislation has directed the devolution of powers to school governors though the indications from the preceeding chapters are that the power will pass to (or continue to remain with) headteachers. The extension of statutory powers and duties of governors could, however, be seen as evidence for a further feature of 1980s' British politics: increasing numbers of groups see themselves as legitimately involved in decision making and are ready and willing to criticise government at any level. Governments now consult groups as a regular feature of the governing process.

Citizens organise into pressure groups to try to exert influence on government to produce policies catering for the wishes of that group. In giving power to school governors, central government appears to have acceded to the wishes of national pressure groups, such as the N.C.P.T.A. and N.A.G.M. for policies to legitimate and formalise powers for greater public involvement in school policy making.

Other pressure groups likely to be interested in school government must also mediate their views through the governing body since they have the opportunity to propose their members as co-optees of the governing body. Representations from these groups will, therefore, be channelled through the governing body and it could be claimed that this precludes the likelihood of 'irregular contacts' developing as an alternative channel for pressure group influence and reinforces the governors' place as the sole legitimated pressure group.

In return for the legitimation given by the corporate state, school governing bodies recognise the unwritten code which indicates that pressure groups licensed by the government should not be overtly critical of it. As shown in the preceeding chapters, school governors do not attack their schools' managements. They do, however, criticise local education authorities and central government, for example, for the speed with which G.C.S.E. and the National Curriculum were introduced. They are, however, a

long way from having the strength of groups as discussed by Middlemass (Grant,1984,p.125); he refers to the state becoming powerless in the grip of groups which have themselves become governing institutions.

Regional and national governors' associations

Governors can be unequivocally defined as operating as pressure groups where they have formed associations outside of their individual schools' political systems. Within some l.e.as, associations, linking governors from different schools, have been formed. In some Authorities, the initiative for these groups has come from governors themselves. In Northamptonshire, in 1989, for example, a thriving group was established which arranged a programme of speakers and its own training courses.

In Leicestershire, the Chairs of two special schools took the initiative and attempted to establish a support group solely for the Chairs and heads of special schools in 1989. At the inaugural meeting, the Director of Education was reported as trying to dissuade the group from formation because he felt that the group's interests might militate against the prevailing policy of mainstreaming children with special educational needs. The group explained that they wished to invite speakers who could enhance their knowledge of the children whom they were governing since the governors felt that their knowledge of special learning needs was limited. The Director of Education then accepted that such a group should be formed but asked that the

constitution should be submitted for his approval. Interest in the group then seemed to wane since so few attended the second meeting that it was not able to continue.

Leicestershire L.E.A. recognised the usefulness of there being an association for all local governors. The Director of Education tried to encourage the formation of such a group in 1988/89, since it would be advantageous to have a group available for consultative purposes. There was insufficient interest to establish such an organisation. In 1989, in Sheffield, the Director of Education decided that, rather than encourage the possible divisiveness of an association, Sheffield's governors would be invited to become part of the regular consultative machinery and they would be asked to join the committees of the Council. In Dudley, the L.E.A. established a consultative procedure for governors in 1988; each area has a committee whose representatives meet centrally and each area has a representative on the training committee.

The apparent lack of grassroots' interest in the formation of governors' pressure groups locally, is reflected also in the lack of governors' interest in supporting national pressure groups. At the end of 1988, the National Association of Governors and Managers had only 6,000 members out of the total of 300,000 English and Welsh governors. The determination of central government to foster the creation of stronger governors was reflected in the unsolicited offer of £100,000 to N.A.G.M., in 1989.

This was to be used to fund a permanent headquarters' organisation. Effective national, pressure group action by governors in the late 1980s and early 1990s was limited by disagreements within N.A.G.M. itself about the direction which the organisation should take. In addition, the strength of national pressure was lessened by there being a second, national group, the Association for Governor Information and Training. The two groups did not work well together.

Any development of local and national pressure groups could help to foster the confidence of governors which would influence their behaviour on governing bodies. It is then possible that governors might emerge from being prisoner, insider groups.

GOVERNORS AS GOVERNMENT

A government could be defined as a body which is responsible for the authoritative resolution of conflict through the use of its decision taking powers. School governors have to resolve conflicts presented by headteachers who report to them at each meeting. More usually, governors' decision taking powers are put to use approving of the resolutions already determined by headteachers but this could still be defined as a governmental role since governors' formal approval is legally required.

The formal operation of governing bodies gives them the appearance of government. The organised life of governing bodies is called into being by legislation and by regulations issued within that legislation. They are not voluntary creations of the members, as pressure groups would be. The formal powers of governing bodies are manifested at least three times yearly at governors' meetings, or when governors are called upon to appoint new staff members (mainly Heads or Deputy heads). They are required to formalise disciplinary action against severely recalcitrant pupils. It is a requirement that governors meet termly and governors failing to attend three consecutive meetings are, under Leicestershire's regulations, dismissed from their boards. The chair, in consultation with the head, summons the members and drafts the agenda. They can, and do, form specialist sub-committees.

These specialist sub-committees help increase the efficiency of government since they enable governors to increase their detailed knowledge of their schools and to reduce the time which all governors have to spend to keep aware of developments in every aspect of school life. Most governing bodies of secondary schools have permanent, or ad hoc sub-committees, for discipline and staff appointments while, increasingly, boards of governors are beginning to develop specialisms within their membership with particular governors being given responsibility for

e.g. buildings, finance or aspects of the curriculum.

Prior to the 1988 Act, sub-committees were not particularly common. In Devon, for example, Golby found that where they had developed, it had occurred through the initiative of individual governors who had utilised the political negotiating skills usually identified with pressure group operation in order to get such groups adopted officially (1985,p.74). After 1988, governing bodies generally divided their responsibilities amongst sub-committees. The 1989 School Government Regulations gave official sanction to the formation of sub-committees and detailed what aspects could be determined solely by these sub-groups without reference to a school's governing body as a whole.

At a local level, Kogan's 1984 analysis still seems appropriate. He relates l.e.a. attitudes to governors to the degree of political control existing in a local authority. The greater is that control, the more will decision taking be centralised on the Council. Each local government system decides how it will deal with governors' influence either absorbing or resisting appropriately, or adopting them as an arm of their policy making structure (1984,p.13). In some Authorities, the agenda is drafted by the l.e.a. As Kogan concluded:

"a major empirical finding of our study is that it is the local authority which effectively sets the framework for governing bodies' functions, powers and modes of behaviour"
(Kogan,1984,p.14).

Since then the 1986 and 1988 Acts have meant that one could add "and central government" after the words "the local authority" in this quotation. From 1988 onwards, central government began to contact governors directly. Training materials were sent from the D.E.S. for individual governors. More significantly, information leaflets on why and how to apply for grant maintained status were sent directly from the Grant Maintained Schools' Trust to governors of l.e.a. maintained schools.

The section above, discussing the similarities of governing bodies with pressure groups, concluded that they could be defined as prisoner, insider groups. They were largely, passive, inactive groups. If it is accepted that they are, instead, better defined as government, it is still true that they are passive and inactive and could, therefore, fit Krause's typology of being 'caretaker' governments. Krause established a continuum ranging from active governments (aiming at achieving social change), through middle range governments (which he defined as regulatory or maintaining agencies), to inactive, or caretaker governments (Krause, 1968, p.134).

Perhaps the final words in the debate on the governmental role of governors should come from the governors themselves. Governors surveyed in Leicestershire in 1986/7 did not seem to envisage a governmental role for themselves. The 2,000 governors in the survey suggested 21 different role categories but only two of these leaned

towards the governmental (Chapter 2). 3% of the governors surveyed (the total sample was 45% of Leicestershire's governors) considered they should make policy for their schools and oversee its daily management. A further 3% defined their main activity as checking to see that central government's policies had been implemented and that resources had been used efficiently.

THE STAGES OF POLICY MAKING

In order to see at which stages governing bodies are most dominant in institutional decision making, a rationalist model for following the activity of a political system has been adopted here. This depicts a logical progression through four stages. These stages are the initiation of ideas, followed by the determination of which of these will be translated into action. The actions must then be implemented and, finally, evaluated to recommence the cycle with initiation. This section of the chapter discusses the roles of governing bodies at each of these stages. The extent of their involvement at each stage can help to indicate their place on the government-pressure group continuum.

Using this staged analysis is not intended to imply that the supporters of a less organised policy model are incorrect. Theodossin (1981), Glatter (1982) and Richardson and Jordan (1979) all follow a more incrementalist, opportunist approach. Policy making is seen less as the

product of a rational process with long term goals, and more as the outcome of piecemeal reactions to events. Theodossin takes this further, stating that, since policy is expected to be made rationally but is not, then policy makers have to make their actions appear rational after the event. He describes this as:

"post hoc policy making [in which] facts may be denied or suppressed; inconsistencies can be smoothed away " (ibid,p.72).

Governors' meetings do indeed sometimes seem to be undertaking post hoc policy making since heads' reports could be termed records of decisions which have already been taken. Beyond that, however, Theodossin's model seems less applicable to governing bodies since it assumes rather chaotic infighting which does not appear to be characteristic of governing bodies. Governors do give the impression of quiet, ordered rationality and the rational model does also make analysis easier with its clear delineation of stages.

Governments and pressure groups are both concerned with making policies though the dominance of each may vary according to the stages of policy making. Very simplistically stated, pressure groups might be expected to be much involved at the initiation stage. Government would be the leader in the determination of which policies are accepted. Government bureaucracies should have the principal role in implementation of policies though pressure groups will also play a role at this stage.

Governments will lead in the evaluation of their own policies, though often with the advice of pressure groups.

Initiation of ideas

Producing ideas, being consulted as ideas develop and ensuring that ideas reach the political agenda for discussion, are all roles which are considered to be:

"a good indicator of the distribution of power
in society"

(Richardson and Jordan, 1979, p.79).

Governors, in Leicestershire, do have the power to put items on their schools' meetings' agendas but usually, it is the headteachers and clerks who do this. Chairpersons will be asked for their approval but other governors will rarely propose items. In some areas, the l.e.as suggest a standard agenda or ask governing bodies to discuss certain issues, e.g. multi-cultural policies. Since 1986, central government's requirements have tended to dictate the contents of agendas. In deciding, and ordering, the topics for their meetings, governors could not be defined either as influential pressure groups or as part of government. They would be more akin to reactive interest groups.

An inhibitor on governors' powers to propose policies is their lack of control over the 'gate'. Headteachers could be described as the gatekeepers who decide which items will be allowed through onto the agenda. Heads can ensure that relatively innocuous issues come forward for debate, or come forward in a way that predisposes the governing body

towards a particular decision. In addition, heads can prevent issues from reaching agendas.

The reasons for governors' lack of influence can be indicated by considering why the consultation of pressure groups has developed so much in government processes in the wider political system. It has been suggested, for example, that civil servants consult widely because they are unsure of their own legitimacy and therefore doubt their ability to implement policies. Civil servants realise that implementation can only be achieved with the co-operation of groups. They find the expertise of pressure groups helpful and more extensive than their own and feel a kinship with the professional officers of pressure groups.

None of these factors apply in the case of school governors so there is no political need for them to be consulted. The head's legitimacy could be said to be more secure than that of governors. The head has a permanent post; governors serve for four years. The head must rely on teachers, not governors, to implement policies. Governors have no particular expertise; those that have an educational background do not necessarily have knowledge professionally of the stage of education for which their school is responsible. Governors are not professional officers. Consultation is done, not because it is needed in the way outlined in the previous paragraph, but because it must be seen to be done.

Having control of the agenda, heads do use governing bodies as sounding boards for teachers' new ideas, testing acceptability and gauging likely parent reactions. Governors do not seem to operate the process in reverse. During three years as a school governor, I recollect only one occasion when an idea was initiated by a governor. A parent governor suggested that there should be a governors' table at a Careers Evening so that parents would know whom to approach. The idea was accepted with alacrity by the head, though one of the l.e.a. appointed governors dismissed the idea insisting that she wished to attend the meeting incognito so she could listen to what parents were really saying.

Moving from school to local authority level, governors could have an initiatory role in so far as they pass ideas to l.e.as, are consulted over policies proposed by l.e.as and attempt to press l.e.as to accede to policies desired by their schools. In 1984, Kogan found that many l.e.as saw governing bodies as an essential means of obtaining community views. The l.e.as in Kogan's survey also recognised that by keeping governors informed and feeling involved in l.e.a. policies, the l.e.as could create support for their own policies (Kogan,1984,p.36). The extent to which this happened was, however, very variable, according to Kogan, and did not make it possible to draw neat conclusions about its effects. The evidence given above, concerning post 1988 encouragement for the formation

of local governors' pressure groups by l.e.as, confirms that l.e.as appear to have continued to regard consultation as essential. Such consultation was also made a requirement for many central government policies from 1986.

Involvement with their l.e.as is not a statutory requirement for governors, nor has it ever been. No governors in the Leicestershire survey mentioned it as one of their roles and governors on training courses often complained about the amount of time wasted on considering documents, such as the Leicestershire's equal opportunities policy which they did not consider to be of immediate relevance to their schools. The l.e.as in Kogan's 1984 survey did not consult governors on these matters and made it clear they wished their governors to be school-focused (Kogan,1984,p.109). Such policies could, Kogan felt, lead to governors feeling isolated. In such a situation, it would be hard to place governors anywhere on the government-pressure group continuum.

Consultation could also prove counter-productive; instead of producing consent and protection for l.e.as it could decrease support for them. Northamptonshire's governors on a training course in 1988, for example, expressed annoyance over being consulted about the Authority's multi-cultural policy, especially as it was presented in what appeared to be an expensively produced booklet with a glossy cover. The governors felt that the policy was already decided and that they were being consulted as a matter of form. Governors

generally felt annoyed that time was being taken from school affairs but they also developed a degree of cynicism about the effectiveness of such consultation. Macbeth's study of Scottish School Councils found evidence of a similar cynicism (1980b,p.17) even in 1980 before the major era of consultation had begun.

A degree of cynicism could well also describe the reactions of governing bodies to consultation with central government. The government's request for submissions on the national curriculum proposals in 1987 required these submissions to be made during the two months in which the schools were closed for the summer. No governing bodies were meeting at this time. The request for governors' views on the National Curriculum also conflicted with the institutional focus of the curriculum provisions of the 1986 Act which had required governors to devise the aims for their own schools' curriculums. Some governing bodies had already begun to prepare for their initiation role in devising the aims of the school curriculum by setting up specialist sub-committees of their governing bodies; for two years, Leicestershire's governor training courses included sessions on how to draft curricular aims. The coming of the National Curriculum appeared to make these developments obsolete which helped encourage governor cynicism. Such cynicism would militate against them operating the pressure group role envisaged by Grant of:

"communicating government policy to their members" [and hence] "securing their adherence to the implementation of government's policies". (Grant, 1984, p.126)

Policy initiation, usually considered a major pressure group role, was little undertaken by governors prior to 1988. Consultation of governors was more general though the effectiveness of the consultation process was probably not very great.

Determination of policy

At the stage of policy determination, school governors are part of the statutory system of school control and thereby belong in the governmental category. Much of what is done in school is officially confirmed by the governors but in view of the extent of school activities, and the brevity and infrequency of governors' meetings, one might not expect this control to be more than nominal. Only in pupil suspension procedures did the formal primacy of the governors over the head become apparent since the head and responsible teachers withdrew from suspension procedures before a final decision was taken. The head's primacy was re-established in these matters by the 1986 Act but the governors were given more extensive powers over staff appointments.

Kogan (1984) studied the issues raised at governors' meetings and found they covered all areas of school decision making, not just the major topics of setting objectives, or of responsibilities for the main school

issues relating, for example, to the curriculum. Discussions also ranged over what could have been considered day-to-day administration of the school. Governors were not excluded from the possibility of determination. As discussed above, however, issues raised were raised as the head's report, not as the head's request for decisions.

The new Scottish school councils, which took office in January 1989, covered as full a range of topics at their meetings as did the governing bodies surveyed in Kogan's English research in 1984. Munn and Holroyd listed the topics discussed by the Scottish boards as follows, (in descending order of the amount of time spent on them): role of the board; communication with parents; finance; school buildings; staffing; curriculum; general information; community education; legislation; lets. (Munn and Holroyd, 1989,p.5).

In the determination of policy, Richardson and Jordan suggest that the norm in British political life is for pressure groups and governments to proceed:

"in an essentially co-operative and consensual atmosphere". (ibid,1979,p.115)

This would certainly be true of most governors' meetings. Decisions are taken but to what extent this could be termed determination is debatable. Formally, it is so and formally, governors are government.

Execution of policy

In the execution of policy, it is vital that those who implement it should do so in the spirit of the determiners, in order to ensure that it becomes effectively operative.

The governors' role as executors of policy is very limited since they are not the practitioners who teach the students nor are they in schools sufficiently often to become the managers who organise the day-to-day administration of the school.

Governors' delegated powers of literal 'execution' relate only to pupil exclusions and staff discipline. As far as can be ascertained, no research has been done on how governors utilise these powers so observations can only be based on the views of governors on training courses and of governors and local authority officers who have been involved in disciplinary hearings. This evidence indicates that governors try extremely hard to implement the current wisdom of teachers and social workers relating to problem children and how they should be treated. The spirit of those who decided on the need for the disciplinary proceedings seems to be adopted.

The interest which governors take in their disciplinary role was shown by evidence from Macbeth's survey of Scottish experience (1980b, pp.35-37). 93% of governors considered this work very important; 81% of heads supported governors' executive powers in this respect although parents and pupils were less keen. Although many school

councils had disciplinary sub-committees, it was found that 13% of issues discussed at plenary meetings concerned truancy matters. (Although the powers and composition of Scottish school councils differ somewhat from those in England, the conclusions on roles appear similar).

Evaluation of policy

One of the overt functions of governors is to evaluate school policy. Their reactions to what schools are doing should, hopefully, reflect what 'the ordinary person in the street', who pays the bills and sends the children to school, would say. From these reactions should emerge reassurance for the school staff and/or suggestions for change which can initiate new policy ideas. There is little evidence that much of this occurs.

The results of the occupational and social survey described in Chapter 10 could be said to indicate that the majority of governors lack one of the pre-requisites of both successful pressure group operation and of successful government operation, i.e. knowledge. Governments feel the need for pressure group knowledge and therefore, involve groups in consultation, but school governors can offer little knowledge from evaluation in return for being allowed to be involved in the consultative process. Government could be said not to need their involvement. As part of government themselves, governors need knowledge from evaluation in order to make the bureaucracy

accountable to them. Again, governors do not have the knowledge required.

One way of obtaining knowledge for evaluation, is for governors to make visits of inspection to their schools (Chapter 8). In 1989, N.A.G.M. proposed that governors should be involved in staff appraisal and this would have been a major evaluative role. The government decided to delay the introduction of teacher appraisal so no decision was taken on the extent of governor involvement in this aspect of school life.

Further evaluative activities should emerge from the implementation of local financial management. When proposals for local financial management for all schools were announced in 1987, many governors felt that they did not want this responsibility and considered that it was inappropriate for them to advise on such large sums of money. The terms of the 1986 Act had already required governors to decide if a school's use of the capitation element of its finances could be defined as economical, efficient and effective. Local resource management extended this evaluation to cover most of a school's budget. In 1989, the government announced a range of 50 performance indicators from which governors might select those by which they wished their schools to be assessed. Most Authorities began governor training for these new aspects of evaluation during 1989 but the number trained was very small and the training of headteachers took priority. Most governing

bodies, however, set up finance sub-committees so that some of their members could become more expert in this aspect of the work.

It was too early to judge the affect of these changes in 1990 when this thesis was written. Leicestershire had also just been directed by the D.E.S. to delay the implementation of L.M.S. until April, 1991, in order to allow time for disputes over the funding formula to be resolved. It remains to be seen, therefore, whether or not the increased powers of governors relating to finance will result in the development of their evaluative role.

CONCLUSIONS

School governors, like other political actors, are competing for power. To compete for a share of power from a position of being part of government, should give them a stronger base than if they were operating as pressure groups external to governments. If they are pressure groups, it might explain why the roles they have, appear to differ from the roles which legislation expects them to have.

Deciding the category into which governors best fit is complicated first, by the ambiguity of their position at the boundary of schools. Secondly, by political analyses which indicate that governments and pressure groups are very similar and by the uncertainties about how governors' roles will develop following the 1986 and 1988 Acts.

Finally, there are different perceptions of the models of the system of education government within which governors operate.

Within pressure group analysis, governing bodies seem to exhibit the characteristics of prisoner, insider groups. They are created, maintained and funded by the state. Inside the schools, governing bodies are restricted to considering those items selected by the headteachers. Although governors have access to the schools' policy making processes, they lack the political skills which might extend their access and they chose not to become much involved in the process. Most governors also chose not to become involved in local or national governors' pressure groups.

Within a government framework, governing bodies most closely approach being a caretaker government. Their formal powers, their form of organisation and their position in the hierarchy of local and central governments, places them inside government. Their lack of political sophistication in organisation and their passivity, precludes their making use of that insider position.

In the stages of policy making, governors are not greatly involved in initiation, nor in evaluation (where pressure groups most usually could be said to reside) and in decision taking and implementation, their role is only marginally greater (hence they do not fit closely into the

government category). Their powers and legal status, make them government. Their limited participation in the whole government of schools, makes them more akin to citizens outside of government. They have to try to obtain what they want by pushing for influence, as do pressure groups. They could be defined as potential pressure groups within government.

To become active and successful pressure groups, school governors would have to have interests which they wish to advance. Governing bodies represent a variety of interests but there is no collective interest for which governors might pressurise. In addition, governors do not appear to be determined to exert pressure to ensure that particular interests from sections of the governing body are incorporated into school policies. While governing bodies remain as collectives of differing interests and without strong interests in forwarding their sections, then governors will remain as potential pressure groups within government.

An assessment of the strength of these interests and a consideration of the extent to which it might be in governors' interests to pressurise for them, is considered in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 13

GOVERNORS' MODES OF OPERATION

SECTIONALISM AMONGST GOVERNING BODIES-THE ELECTED GOVERNORS

This chapter continues the analysis of the modes of operation of governing bodies. Its focus is on the interests which governing bodies might be considered to represent, and the strength of those interests. Following introductory comments on sectionalism, this chapter discusses the elected governors who represent parents and teachers. The selected governors, representing l.e.as and various community groups, provide the subjects of the following chapter. The potential strength of these differing interests is discussed in order to assess the likelihood of governors taking a more dominant role in school government. It is suggested that only if their interests are very strong, will governors be sufficiently determined to move to more active participation than that which has been indicated in the preceding role analysis.

SECTIONALISM

Within pressure group analysis, the literature usually distinguishes sectional groups (defending their own interests) and promotional groups (concerning social attitudes and values). School governing bodies appear to fit both since they seem to be promoting the sectional interests of others. Using a governmental frame of reference, school governors might be expected not to represent particular interests since, once in post,

delegates are not expected to feel mandated. They are expected to consider the interests of the whole school community to whom they are accountable but, because they come from different groups, they may have different priorities in determining how they will meet the needs of the whole.

Three surveys have indicated that there are vague commonalities amongst governors' attitudes. Leicestershire's governors, surveyed for this research in 1986/87, shared a common belief that governors were there to promote the good of the school and the interests of the children. A rather more sectional interest emerged from the group who emphasised that their principal function was to represent the parents. The choice was not as sectional as might appear since it was not just the parent governors who suggested that this was their major role. In contrast, it was almost only the teacher governors who felt that they should represent teacher views and only the elected non-teacher representatives selected a role of representing the ancillary staff. Agreement on sectional representation was also found amongst those governors who described their role as being to liaise with the community outside the school. While the over-riding impression was that governors were united in their desire to support their schools, there was some difference in the priorities governors awarded to the groups represented by them.

Kogan's role survey reached similar conclusions. It was found that governors agreed they were there to help the school and the children but beyond that there was some sectional divergence (1984,p.81). Some governors felt their job was to ensure the accountability of the school, others that they were there to take action if anything went seriously wrong. Some saw their job as advisory, others to check that l.e.a. policies were observed. Kogan decided there were very few factors which promoted common attitudes emerging; commonalities were found where governors knew each other socially outside of the governing body or where they belonged to the same political party. Only a small minority met either of these criteria (ibid,pp.83-84).

The existence of these embryonic groups within governing bodies did not seem to result in much group-related conflict at governors' meetings. Macbeth's case studies of Scottish school councils, for example, found:

"little conflict...what did exist was rooted in the substance [i.e. the task being debated] and not inter-personal [i.e. arising from emotions relating to personal/sectional interests]. There has been little evidence of personal hostilities" (1980b,p.27).

The observers all reported a complete absence of ideological arguments. In two of the seven councils studied in depth, the observers reported:

"considerable mutual trust...and group loyalty" (ibid,p.21)

but, in general, this was not noticeable except amongst

particular sections rather than amongst the group as a whole. These sections did, according to Kogan's survey, consider they were there to:

"advance the objectives of political or interest groups" (1984,p.81).

These three surveys indicated a lowest common denominator of an attitude vaguely supportive of schools and of concern for the interests of the children. Only where there had been outside threats, or a very specific objective to be achieved, did attitudes coalesce to produce group cohesion. Governing bodies are groups of interest groups. Governors represent different outsider groups and they bring to their governing bodies, the beliefs and values of those groups.

This interpretation partly accords with those of Gross (1969) and of Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood (1980). Writing about the field of organisationsl analysis in general, they see sub-groups, within organisational politics, as having their own goals which will rarely coincide with those of the whole group (Gross,1969,p.278). The organisation analyst studies the extent to which particular groups manage to direct the whole in conformity with their own "provinces of meaning" (Ranson et al,1980,p.7). Conflicts amongst sections are to be expected and certain sections will dominate. School governors can be seen as operating in the same way as Jones described the operation of pressure groups in the corporate state:

"it enhances the political power of the already well-established and neglects not only the weak, poorly organised, inarticulate and badly led, but also the community as a whole [and]...will...lead to...dominance by the sectional interests"

(Jones and Ranson,1989,p.4).

The role analysis of the earlier chapters has shown the first part of the last comment to be true; teachers and the middle classes are in a position to dominate governing bodies. There is, however, overlapping membership between these two groups and amongst these groups and the other sectional interests represented by governors. This has created a congruence of attitudes and it may be this which has avoided the conflicts expected by Gross and by Jones (op cit). It may also be because governors do not feel strongly committed to the groups whom they represent. The remainder of this chapter and the one following, investigate the governors' sectional commitments.

PARENTS

Since September 1988, elected parent governors have comprised 25% of the governing body. Of all the groups within governing bodies, this one might seem the best constituted to operate as a group and most likely to have a sectional loyalty.

First, they will probably live near their childrens' schools and will be able to make contact with each other more easily than with other governors. They are likely to meet at school events, other than governors' meetings, and be near enough to visit their schools fairly frequently.

Secondly, given the general age range of governors, other governors will also be parents so commonality of interests should extend across most of the governing body. This seems to be reflected in the number of Leicestershire governors who felt that their role was to represent children. In the 1986/87 survey, this role was selected by the second largest group of respondents and these comprised more than just the parent governors.

Thirdly, the strength of parental sectionalism could be reinforced by the primacy accorded to this group in selecting the co-opted governors. Once the elected and l.e.a. appointed governors are in post, they then meet to decide who will be the co-opted governors. An inner group feeling could be engendered by this before the whole governing body meets and it does appear to stress the importance that is attached to parental views.

Fourthly, parental governors seem to have a higher attendance rate than other groups of governors. Macbeth reported a:

"consistently high rate of attendance at meetings by parents [in Scotland] (1980b,p.13)

The only exception to this was on one governing body which met during the day rather than in the evening. No similar study of attendance rates of differing categories of governors appears to have been made in England so it can only be suggested, from personal observation and from comments of governors on training courses, that the same

may be true here as in Scotland. Comments from governors on training courses indicate that parent governors are regular attenders while parent governors often complain because other governors are less punctilious about coming to meetings. The parent governors see each other more frequently, therefore, and this should reinforce group attachment.

Fifthly, teacher governors appear to welcome the presence of parent governors and, in Golby's work, conducted before the 1986 Act, teacher governors stated that they would welcome an extension of this category of governor (1985,pp.54-56). Teacher governors found the parental representatives vital because of their support for the school and because they were:

"sympathetic, enthusiastic and well-informed" (ibid).

At national level, teachers were happy with the representations of the parents' associations to the Taylor Committee, in 1977, because the parents stressed their desire for equal partnership with teachers rather than a wish for parent representatives to outnumber those for teachers.

This collusion of interests is supported by the fact that some parent governors have education related occupations. The Leicestershire survey showed that of those who were parent governors, 21% were in such occupations or had been. (Thody,1987b). Of the six parent governors studied by Beavin, four had some connection with teaching or lecturing

(1987,p.37). Of 17 parents offering themselves for election as parent governors at two Northamptonshire schools in 1988, eight had education related occupations (3 secondary teachers, 2 h.e. lecturers, 1 voluntary organisation leader, 1 in educational publishing). One claimed vicarious educational connections:

"My wife is involved with schooling. Education is a frequent topic of conversation"
(Boothville Middle School, Northants. Parent's manifesto).

Similar backgrounds were found amongst potential parent governors in Leicestershire (Chapter 10). One could also surmise that of the teacher governors, many could be parents of school age children. Questions about offspring were not included in the Leicestershire survey so whether or not teachers were parents must remain supposition, but the age range of teacher governors (clustering in the 31-49 groups) might lead one to expect this. Such common interests might lead to a possible increase in the pressure which parent governors could muster.

Sixthly, since parent governors could be termed clients of the school, they clearly have knowledge, at close quarters, of the effect a school is having on its pupils. Kogan considered that this would strengthen their capability to appraise schools and, where their opinions could be shown to command a wider parental support:

"parent governors represent a powerful lobby with the school" (Kogan,1984,p.83).

Since 1988, schools have become increasingly in the

'market' for parents; there is no longer a certain captive audience of pupils and falling rolls make the need to obtain custom more pressing. In such circumstances, parent governors may be listened too increasingly respectfully on governing bodies. They could be recognised as a group by the other groups.

Seventhly, the common attitude of this group, concern for the welfare of the children, could be said to have been reinforced by the increasingly beleaguered state of schools in the few years before 1988. While parents sympathised with the teachers' dispute, the sympathy decreased as the years passed and more children missed educational experiences which parents felt could not be replaced later. Observations of one Leicestershire governing body, showed that criticisms were, at first, very gingerly expressed, but as the dispute continued, the parent representatives became more outspokenly critical and a sectional divide emerged. The reductions in funding for education by central and local governments became another target for criticism which united parents. The speed of the introduction of G.C.S.E. and T.V.E.I. likewise gave parent governors something outside to attack and could have acted as a unifying feature.

Finally, the strength of a group is related to the extent to which it is able to claim it is representative. The provisions of the 1986 Act made it possible for all governors to make more contact with parents through the

requirement that there should be an Annual Report and Parents' Meeting; for the parent governors, this could be defined as a meeting with their constituents. The importance of these contacts in strengthening the parent group was shown by the evidence from the Scottish pilot school boards in 1989. All of the boards devoted considerable time to devising means of liaising with parents and had:

"not stinted in their efforts to promote contact between the school, parents...and the community" (Munn and Holroyd,1989,p.11).

The portents for sectionalised pressure emerging from the parent governors' groups seem good but there are factors which could inhibit such development.

The first of these is parents' lack of confidence in expressing their views. Parents, unless they are also professional educators themselves, feel out of their depth at meetings. Golby's teacher governors, who observed parent governors at work, found them:

"naturally quiet...they feel a bit powerless
...taciturn, reluctant, humble"
(Golby,1985a,p.55).

Observers in the Scottish study found many parents "over-awed" (Macbeth,1980,p.13). In this respect, the situation appears to remain unchanged from that of one hundred years ago. Gordon's study of nineteenth century school managers found that where there were parent governors, their role was indistinguishable from other governors and they rarely made any special contribution to the proceedings (Gordon,1974,p.178).

Kogan suggested that modern parent governors might be inhibited because:

"their client status entails a degree of dependency which might act to mute criticism"
(Kogan,1984,p.83).

(The causes of governor dependency are explored below in Chapter 15 & 16). Research in Devon in 1988 confirmed Kogan's view. Golby reported that parent governors felt overwhelmed by the number and complexity of L.E.A and D.E.S. documents and that they had, consequently, abdicated from their role in curriculum matters. They were unwilling to become involved in staff appraisal or staff appointments. Such attitudes could have been encouraged by teachers wishing to preserve their professional autonomy (Dore,1989).

The dependency of parent governors on the teachers' professional expertise might be lessened if parent governors could claim dependency on the parent electorate. Studies of parent governors have all indicated that the difficulties which parent governors have had in communicating with their constituents, have meant that parent governors could no more claim to be representing parental views than could any other governor (Beavin,1987,p.38,40ff; Golby,1985,pp.54,82,102; Macbeth, 1980b,p.13/14). Links with P.T.As were usually weak and while parents were usually aware of the work of a P.T.A., parent governors were only just becoming known.

Golby's 1988 Devon study showed that this situation remained unchanged despite the new legislation. Governors had difficulty contacting parents and parents seemed too shy to approach governors. There was little interest in elections. The few active parents dominated, sometimes using the P.T.A. as their power base.

The governing councils established in Scotland in 1988, made special efforts to contact their parent electorate. This is a statutory requirement for the Scottish boards and the pilot councils were reported as:

"having taken this responsibility very seriously"
(Munn and Holroyd, 1989, p.10).

All of the pilot councils organised a variety of means for making contacts with parents but all the governors were disappointed in the lack of response from parents. The researchers noted that the parents' disinterest resulted in a transference of blame to them by the governors (ibid, p.11). This would militate against strong sectionalism developing.

Since it is difficult for parent governors to ascertain the views of those whom they represent, then each parent governor could be said to be expressing an individual view which would lessen group cohesion. Parent governors can also be seen as representing their own children and this could divide the group. Every child's experience of schooling is personal and, as one of Golby's teacher governors commented:

"If their child is doing well, they are very supportive" (Golby,1985,p.55).

Others felt parents would be prejudiced, presumably meaning they would see the school only from the viewpoint of their child. Of the many parent governors encountered on training courses over the last seven years, the author recollects only two who were not supportive of their schools. They were both parents of children with special needs in mainstream schools and the parents considered their children were not receiving adequate help.

Parents' potentiality for partiality was recognised by two of the Scottish school councils in the 1989 pilot study. They chose to elect non-parents as chairmen of their boards because:

"having no children in the school, they have no particular axe to grind and have the interests of the school in general at heart" (Munn and Brown,1989,p.19).

It has been suggested above that parents are partial and that it is not easy for parent governors to ascertain parents' views. It becomes, therefore, difficult to define what is meant by 'parental interest' and this will inhibit the development of strong, parental sectionalism. There seems to be no single view for parent governors to represent. The parent governors studied in Golby's 1988 research in Devon, for example, were reported as being divided into three distinct groups; these were a "grammar school" group, a "service" group and an "egalitarian" group. The grammar school group were strongly attached to

the academic ideals of the grammar schools which had provided their own education. The service group saw education as a process involving more than just academic ends but were most concerned that schools should produce employable citizens. The egalitarians wanted social justice for the whole community to emerge from schooling (Golby and Brigley, 1988, pp. 90-91).

Further evidence of divided parent views came when contentious issues of race relations arose, as the 1985 Honeyford case showed (Nunn, 1987). There were two parents' groups formed outside of the governing body, one group in favour of keeping Mr. Honeyford as headteacher, and the other opposed to his retention. The governing body was divided in its attitudes. A similar case arose in Birmingham in 1989. This involved a community liaison teacher whom some Muslim parents felt was incapable of performing her job because she could not speak community languages. 200 parents formed an action group for her dismissal. It was reported, however, that some parents were afraid of reprisals from the activists if they expressed their disagreement and that they did not all support the views of the action group (News item, Education, 15th September, 1989, p. 222). Divisions amongst parents mean that parent governors have no clear mandate to strengthen any claims they might have for their views to hold primacy.

Finally, one wonders whether or not the development of the 'welcoming' school, open at all hours to parents, might

not, paradoxically, have decreased the potential strength of the parent governors. Parents who are used to coming into school and meeting the teachers, may not feel the need to approach governors to put their points of view and may feel that quicker action will result if they go directly to the head. Such schools would probably be the ones who would welcome greater involvement by the parent governors but not particularly because they were parent representatives.

The balance of the evidence seems to point to parent governors not being a recognisable, or strong sub-group within governing bodies but the lack of sectional loyalty could help the cohesion of the whole.

TEACHERS

The largest sub-set of governing bodies, and the group with most reason to pursue a promotional approach, are the educationalists. Elected teacher governors form only a small minority on governing bodies (a maximum of two is allowed under the 1986 Act) but there are governors from other categories who have education related occupations. These include primary, secondary and tertiary teachers, heads, ancillaries, retired teachers, students, pre-school workers and those from allied professions such as H.M.Is., local education authority officers, M.S.C. and Y.T.S. course administrators and school health and welfare workers. In total, they represented 33% of Leicestershire governors in 1986. It appears that these numbers did not

alter significantly after the 1988 reconstitution of governing bodies. While the range of occupations meant they were not an entirely homogeneous group, one might expect them to be more similar in outlook than any other group.

If any group is to be successful in gaining support for its views, it could be said to need to be able to claim it has strong legitimation for its ideas. This legitimation for the attitudes of professional educators appeared to emerge at the first Annual Parents' Meetings. An analysis of those who raised the questions was undertaken at one Leicestershire secondary school meeting. It seemed more an exchange of professional views than an interrogation of the school governors and staff because 53% of the questions were put by parents who were also teachers. Of the eleven parents attending a Leicestershire primary school meeting, six were teachers, while at another primary school, a prominent supporter of the teaching of French in primary schools was revealed as a modern languages teacher from a nearby private school. Educational protectionism was reinforced. This would please the N.U.T. who supported the idea of teacher governors in order to enhance the professionalism of all teachers (Whitehead and Aggleton, 1986,p.437).

The collusion of attitudes revealed at the Annual Meetings appeared also at governors' meetings. Macbeth's study of Scottish school councils found that although teachers were initially suspicious that the councils would offer

opportunities to attack teachers, it was found that governors were sympathetic and:

"far removed from the caricature of aggressive parents which some teachers seemed to nurse"
(Macbeth,1980a,p.14).

One must add to this the harmony that prevails between the views of heads and those of the other educationalists on governing bodies and a picture of one section dominance does begin to emerge. This might be termed a 'teacher focused' attitude.

Teacher governors were reported as generally having the same outlook as heads, only occasionally following a different way (Macbeth,1980b,p.15). Since most teacher governors were holders of posts of responsibility in schools, (Beavin,1987,p.51; Perks,1987,p.42), one assumes they must be attuned to their particular heads' attitudes. Only those teacher governors who were blocked careerists were deemed to be likely to pursue an independent line (Perks,1987,p.47). Bacon concluded that teacher representation increased the power of heads (1978,pp.115-6) and since heads almost invariably took the lead in governors' meetings, the school view reinforced the professional educationalists' view.

Bacon's Sheffield study evinced concern that this joint approach should occur but it helped ensure that educationalists controlled schools and that governors fulfilled their function of educational protectionism. Obviously, views on the morality and efficiency of this

will differ but its likelihood is little to be questioned. The nature of English schools perhaps assists in its development. Marriott's study of three primary schools, for example, found that heads dominated the decision taking in all three (1981) and the power of heads has been well documented (see e.g. Peters, 1976; Bernbaum, 1976). The supremacy of the professional view is usually assisted by an alignment between the chairperson and the head (Golby, 1985, pp. 49-51).

The power of the educational group to dominate school governors' deliberations was demonstrated, in a global sense, by Sheffield's adoption of new and, what might have been considered, contentious education policies in the 1970s. Elite dominance secured easier absorption of the new approaches (Bacon, 1978). While Kogan did not entirely agree with this analysis, he reported few examples of governing bodies trying to refuse acceptance of new ideas proposed by the professionals and even fewer examples of successful opposition (Kogan, 1984, p. 42). He concluded that:

"professional solidarity suborns the
educationalist into supporting the views of
the school" (ibid, p. 82).

The two thirds of governors who are not within the group of professional educators can only obtain limited information on their schools. The heads' reports obviously present heads' viewpoints on their schools and governors' visits could be said to have limited value in providing sufficient information for an alternative view. Governors' desire for

educational information was shown by the sessions run by the University of Leicester in 1987 to update governors on curriculum developments. They proved the most popular of the sessions offered and it was difficult to prise governors away from hands on experience of creating paper towers to understand scientific principles, learning how to appraise childrens' writing or appreciating the complex movements involved in teaching children to somersault. One head who attended the session, returned to his school and set up a similar session for his own governors, never having realised, he said, the interest governors could have in the curriculum. Could this be termed a further example of educational protectionism adding to the dominance of the professional educators?

Despite the potentiality for what could be described as educationalists' dominance of the deliberations of governing bodies, they capitalised less on their position of superiority than might have been expected. Teachers are not particularly attuned to collective action while the nature of their own education and training, and of their work, is dedicated to the development of individualism. Non-educationalists also tend to feel that they have some knowledge of education because everyone has been educated. The prevailing ethos of education from around the 1960s onwards has been the belief that the teachers' role is to help bring out the ideas already possessed by their pupils, pupils who need less of the specialist content of knowledge

teachers were formerly considered able to provide, and more of a facilitative guidance. Perhaps these attitudes were carried over into governing bodies.

For teacher governors particularly, any disagreement with their heads, was likely to take expression more as a general unwillingness to express any views openly, than as public statements against the views of their headteachers. Such open disagreement was rare in Bacon's view (1978,p.33). Speakers at a 1982 governors' conference noted that:

"Teacher governors...seldom said anything...
because of the presence of the headteacher
...There is nothing you can do about a very
dominant head who has put the frighteners on
his staff" (Latham,1982,p.319).

The 1989 study of Scottish school councils reported that teacher governors had "maintained a low profile", often not speaking at all at meetings. They were concerned not to reveal any disagreements they might have had with their education authority or with their heads (Munn and Holroyd, 1989,pp.23-24).

There is some evidence that teacher governors have become more outspoken. Perks, in his Leicestershire research, (1987,p.31) stated that the position of teacher governors was now well enough established to allow for criticisms to be expressed. The elected teacher governors were usually from senior positions, sufficiently secure to be willing to put their own views even where they differed from those of the head. Golby's analysis (1985b) made similar points.

A letter to the T.E.S. management enquiry service in 1989 indicated that this had happened; a head asked for advice on how to deal with a teacher governor who had made direct attacks on the head at governors' meetings (T.E.S., 15th September, 1989, p.24).

All this evidence related only to the teacher governors and did not include the wider group of educational professionals. Without these, teacher governors would be a very small minority and even more likely, therefore, to present a united front with the head with whom they work regularly.

The likelihood of cohesion between headteachers and the teacher governors, is increased by the difficulties which teacher governors experience in keeping in contact with their constituents. It is, therefore, difficult for teacher governors to claim that they have a mandate from their electorate. At first sight, it may seem unlikely that teacher governors would find problems of communicating with the teachers with whom they work daily in fairly close proximity. Two Leicestershire studies considered this issue and found various inhibitors (Beavin;Perks;1987). Governors found it difficult to represent, conscientiously, the wide diversity of views found in any staffroom and some saw their role as representative, therefore, rather than delegatory. Provision for reporting back from governors' meetings to fellow teachers was patchy; 24% reported regularly, 69% reported sometimes and

the rest did not report at all (Perks,p.46). Most of these reports were recorded as informal discussions (66%) which one would assume meant a chat over coffee with a few members of staff. Teacher governors reported that staff were anyway little interested and in one school, the teacher governor had been told it was the head's job to report back to staff (Perks,p.47).

Teacher governors rarely had a specific brief from teachers as an electoral mandate although points were expressed when specific issues arose. Those governors who had tried to organise staff meetings prior to governors' meetings found good attendance but only at times of crisis (Perks 1987,p.35). A survey of teacher governors in 1989 found that even those who regarded themselves as teacher representatives (rather than representative teachers) still stated that they also expressed their own opinions (Richardson,1989,p.50). Some teachers were restricted in their representative activities because they could not be released from their teaching for governors' meetings or duties and they were excluded from staff appointment panels (Fletcher,1989c,p.30).

The evidence concerning the type of teachers who choose to become governors provides conflicting views on whether or not such teachers are likely to operate with the educational group or not. The senior teachers, who are usually the ones who stand for election, are probably secure enough to argue but are well socialised into an

educationalists view. They may also be thinking of applying for further promotions, and have, therefore, become school governors in order to gain insight into another area of school management. Interest amongst the staff in standing for election seems to vary widely; Kogan and Bacon (1984, 1978) found elections were frequently uncontested, Taylor (1983) found they were always contested and Perks' Leicestershire study (1987) found 12 of the 63 schools in his survey had uncontested elections. Where teachers take an interest in the elections, it is more likely that the elected representatives will return to them to report back and discuss views. The majority of teachers in a Leicestershire survey concluded that:

"communication to and from constituents
was...inadequate" (Beavin, 1987, p.48).

CONCLUSIONS

The period 1985-1990, shows no strong common interests emerging within governing bodies but neither have there been strong sectional loyalties exhibited. Parent governors were, potentially, a very cohesive group but there were many factors which inhibited that unity. The educationalists were even more strongly placed to develop group action but the teacher governors amongst the group needed to make more use of their opportunities for staff contact.

There was no evidence of either parents or educationalists operating collectively at meetings. The study of Scottish

pilot school councils in 1989 revealed that parents and teachers were more likely to act together as one group than two separate ones (Munn and Holroyd,1989,p.24). This reinforced the findings, commented upon at the beginning of this chapter, that there were common attitudes amongst the sections within English governing bodies.

The Scottish research did, however, note a trend which might indicate that separatism will grow. Teachers were found to refer to other council members as, 'they', although parents referred to them as, 'we' and it was felt that partnership was not, therefore, yet achieved (ibid). Fletcher expressed surprise that governing bodies were not actively "courting their teachers" (1989,p.30) since the teachers would have the necessary technical knowledge to help their fellow governors cope with the many changes required of the schools. If one of these groups began to organise and to put forward concerted views, then the other might respond with comparable, sectional organisation. Such a development might have to wait until there is greater interest from their electorates. It may be instructive, therefore, to see what happens in Chicago. In 1989, 285,000 parents voted in the elections for the 5,400 parent governorships. Such a level of interest should betoken strong sectionalism. The remaining groups on governing bodies lack any electoral support. Their strength is assessed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 14

GOVERNORS' MODES OF OPERATION

SECTIONALISM AMONGST GOVERNING BODIES-SELECTED GOVERNORS

There are two main categories of selectees - l.e.a and co-opted governors. L.e.a. governors are selected by the local party organisations represented in each local authority. Co-optees are selected by the governing bodies; the elected, l.e.a. and foundation governors (the latter only in voluntary schools) meet and jointly decide who will be co-opted. It is assumed that these co-optees will have some relevance to the school, possibly through local community connections although this is not, statutorily, required. In selecting co-optees, governors are required to ensure that there is some representation from local businesses although it need not, necessarily, be the co-optees category that is used to provide this. An l.e.a, or parent governor, could be deemed to be the local business representative.

This chapter continues the analysis of the strength of the sections amongst governing bodies, beginning with a discussion of the party political, l.e.a representatives. The following sections consider the industrial and the community governors. These two latter categories cannot be confined solely to co-opted governors since the classifications can include governors from any group except the teacher governors and no study has yet been made which attempts to differentiate the views of, for example, co-opted, l.e.a. or elected industrialists. The overlapping of

all these groups is one reason why sectional loyalties have been slow to develop, i.e. the cross membership of groups. This cross membership also applies to the last category considered here, that of social class. Almost all governors, whatever their source of appointment, are middle class, (Chapter 10). This chapter briefly discusses whether or not this social structure results in the promulgation of class based attitudes.

Foundation governors are usually, but not invariably, denominational representatives appointed by the Church or other providing voluntary organisation. The Leicestershire foundation governors, in the 1986/87 survey, stated that they saw a major role for themselves in ensuring that the views of their appointing agencies were transmitted to their schools. In many areas, there were separate training courses for the denominational aspects of these governors' activities. No studies have yet been made of this group separately; brief reference is included in the section of this chapter relating to community governors.

L.E.A. GOVERNORS - PARTY REPRESENTATIVES

"You can't keep politics out of education,
but packing governing bodies is not on"
N.A.G.M. Secretary, 1989.

Until September, 1988, party political representatives, appointed by the l.e.a or a minor authority, formed the largest group on any governing body. Since then, they have constituted about one quarter, but it is only since 1988 that much concern has been expressed about the activities

of the party nominees. This concern has not arisen because there has been any evidence of party views being strongly pushed at governors' meetings. Rather, there have been fears that this might happen because a few authorities decided to pack their governing bodies with nominees from one party only.

Such fears may seem justified since the function of the party representatives could be interpreted as ensuring that a party viewpoint is expressed at meetings. This function is at the interface between the public and the hidden curriculum of governing bodies. Overtly, one would expect that governors appointed as party political representatives would be aware of their role as transmission agents. This would put the function of party representation into the public domain and, as there may be more than one representative of a party, into being a group function. The party group forms an obvious section. The covert nature of the function arises from querying the extent to which the party representatives realise, and accept, that their role is to further party interests by acting as a recognisably partisan group.

This function could be seen as arising from the democratic imperative, attempting to ensure compliance of governing bodies with the wishes of the elected majority on the l.e.a. Thus it can be seen as a control mechanism used, for example, to ensure equality of the product or accountability to the public, albeit diffused through

several layers. In our democracy, accountability is mediated through the party system, competing groups having recognisably different policy objectives or representing distinctive attitudes. On school governing bodies, these differences do not seem to have appeared nor does the idea of their appearance always seem welcome. In the 1986/87 Leicestershire survey reported in Chapter 2, no governors described their function as transmitting a party line and a small number saw their express function as keeping party politics out.

This may be because of the nature of the local authority. Leicestershire is a hung council; governing bodies' representatives are chosen in proportion to party strength on the council. In 1988, there was a hiatus in this system with the Labour group refusing to nominate governors and places were, therefore, being filled by the Conservative, Liberal and Social Democratic groups. The Leicestershire system meant that a governor from a political party could well be the sole representative of that group on a governing body unless a minor authority representative happened to be of the same party. Sectional loyalty would be unlikely to develop with members of another party; there could be no common interests for which they might pressurise. Having to allot places to representatives of several parties also ensured that party groups were very small, usually a maximum of two, which would preclude concerted sectionalism. By 1990, Leicestershire had adopted

the system of appointing representatives of one party only, to particular governing bodies. The political party from which governors for a school are selected varies according to the dominant political affiliation of the area in which a school is based.

Much of the information on which this section was based arose from studies in Leicestershire, the neighbouring hung Authority of Northamptonshire and one Tory dominated County, Buckinghamshire. (Since the research was completed, Northamptonshire has a Tory administration). In some areas, there seem to be stronger party influences which may affect governing bodies (e.g. Derbyshire, some London Boroughs). Some information is available on these, mainly from news reports, but it is an area which would repay further research.

Governors as partisans?

It was interesting to discover that concern about party politics amongst governing bodies was not new. Lord Eustace Percy (President of the Board of Education) in 1926 was reported as follows:-

"It was to be anticipated that the Lord Eustace's appeal against any admission of propagandist purpose...into local school government...would draw emphatic endorsement.. and that occasion would be taken to renew agitation for some changes of procedure in appointing teachers. While cause may have been given for desiring that the actual appointments should be made by the Education Committee, it is not so sure that the right course is by way of excluding managers from all responsible concern with them. It is not by increasing the remoteness of schools from

communication with the local life that
security against political patronage...or
propaganda, should be sought" (Percy,1926).

A 1989 parent governor expressed the same sentiments. This governor was amazed to learn that some authorities appointed governors in proportion to party strengths on the l.e.as:

"It should be people who care about the school
first, politics a far off second"
(Gibbons,1989,p.33).

One wonders why it is assumed that the party ticket is almost the antithesis of an interest in education. Concern that party politics on school governing bodies could operate in this way, might have been one of the reasons why central government decided to reduce the numbers of political appointees on governing bodies following the recommendations of the Taylor Report (1977).

In Leicestershire, there does not seem to have been any cause for such concern. Leicestershire governors, in discussions during training courses from 1984, vehemently denied that they had ever detected any evidence of a party political line on their governing bodies. They often remarked that they were unaware of which of their fellow governors were the party representatives nor did they always know which party they represented. Those who were party representatives (with the exception of those who were Councillors) were often at pains to point out that they were not really politically inclined and sometimes expressed surprise that they were on a party list for nomination.

They did not feel their role was to press for a particular party view.

Bacon's study of Sheffield's governing bodies in the 1970s indicated there was no mechanism for the transmission of a party line (1978). The local Labour Party responsible for creating the new scheme of government in 1969/70 stated that its objectives were to:

"promote the widest participation in the running of schools by parents, teachers, trades unionists, people from all walks of life" [in order to create boards of managers]
"flexible and sensitive to local needs and interests"
(Bacon, 1978, pp. 51-52).

The research made no comments upon governing bodies becoming mechanisms for party control. In Sheffield, the pressure for change seems to have come from an educational establishment consisting of:

"the metropolitan intelligentsia...which had formed branches of...CASE and NAGM...a group of administrative officials who were dissatisfied with the city's extremely centralised system of organising its educational service...And, finally, a group of local politicians, many of whom were employed in education... and had grown increasingly influential in the city's ruling Labour Party
(ibid, pp. 191-2).

What transmission of views there was from this group to their governing bodies was to whole bodies not to party representatives only (ibid, p. 163).

This contrasts with the situation in Devon described in Golby's research (1985b) where the teacher governors objected to the extent of party political involvement.

Kogan's research constructed a scale of political involvement, describing how the extent of party control varied considerably (1984,pp.30-31). This variation was linked to the type of political control on an l.e.a. In some l.e.as, it was common practice to have governors of only one political persuasion. It has been reported that:

"councillors of the dominant political party and education committee members came to constitute a large proportion of governors in most parts of England and Wales...[they supported]...the ideological preferences of politicians"

(Whitehead and Aggleton,1986,p.435 & 443).

George drew similar conclusions in Derbyshire. He reported that his observations of a governing body in Derbyshire revealed that the:

"political affiliations of most of the members of the group could have been reasonably accurately guessed after a short period of observation"

(George,1985,p.144).

He found that the Labour party nominees felt they were a united group with definite aims and they did meet to decide tactics before meetings. Non-Labour governors reported that they were unhappy at this intrusion into what they considered to be an environment unsuited to party politics. A Labour governor pointed out, however, that there were few issues on which they fundamentally disagreed with other parties (George,1985,p.145).

The 1986 Act equalised the representation of parents and local authority nominees. Teachers and co-opted members now hold the balance and it is no longer possible for party

personnel to be in the majority. It has been suggested that this reduction in the number of governorships available to the local authorities, encouraged majority parties to insist that nominations should come only from the dominant party. Barbara Bullivant, N.A.G.Ms' chairperson, also commented that co-options may have been used to co-opt party representatives where it proved difficult to obtain other co-optees or where the co-options had to be directed to particular groups, such as the voluntary agencies associated with special schools (Gibbons,1989,p.33).

There is no evidence that this 'backdoor' party politicisation occurred but there was much controversy, from 1988, over the extent of the 'packing' of governing bodies in some areas. This controversy, over whether or not the majority political party on an l.e.a had the right to nominate all school governors, might indicate that the party groups were becoming sectional pressure groups within governing bodies.

The effects of packing

It was the Conservative local authority of Barnet which became the first to change from a policy of sharing governorships amongst all parties, to a policy of having Tory nominees only. This change was announced when governing bodies were being reconstituted in June, 1988, under the terms of the 1986 Act. Some l.e.as had already had such a policy before the 1986 Act and it had not been a cause for comment, but public attention was directed

towards those Authorities which altered their arrangements after 1988.

230 Conservative school governors were appointed in Barnet in 1988, when the Tories held 38 of the Council's seats, Labour 18 and Democrats 3. Previously, there had been approximately 280 political appointments divided amongst the parties. In 1988. Another Tory Authority, Kent, took similar action. Only nine of their 2,000 school governorships were given to non-Tories. Amongst Labour Councils, Sheffield restricted new governorships to Labour party members. Manchester refused to accept any Tory nominations and North Tyneside appointed Labour representatives to all its 285 vacancies. Other Authorities changed some of their governors so that the composition of the governing bodies more nearly reflected the composition of the councils concerned (Warwick, Humberside, Northumberland and the Isle of Wight).

By December, 1989, there seemed to be have been little evidence that the party groups in 'packed' or open governing bodies, were acting as pressure groups for party interests. There were, however, some expectations of governors operating a party line. The Barnet Conservatives, for example, voted against allowing governors of opposing political persuasions because they did not wish for the same kinds of influences in their schools as they felt occurred in neighbouring Brent and Haringey (The Guardian, 12/7/88,p.23). Enquiries in Brent in 1986, indicated,

however, that there were, at least, no meetings of the Labour party for their governors.

Expressing opposing views to those of the Barnet Conservatives, the Labour chair of a Southwark governing body suggested that Mr. Baker, the then Secretary of State for Education, had been mistaken in assuming that the new parent governors would be conservative "with a small c" (Gibbons,1989,p.33). Instead, Southwark's governors could be described as politically active:

"concerned about equal opportunities, that
sort of thing" (ibid)

Despite an apparent dearth of evidence about adverse influences from party politics, both national political parties considered legislating to outlaw 'packing'. There were several disputes relating to political nominees and the Conservatives decided not to proceed with the publication of a Central Office journal aimed solely at Tory governors. The Central Office official responsible for the idea of the journal said that it was intended to help Tory governors:

"resist the conquest of schools by minority
political interests"
(News item,Education,28th July,1989,p.66).

His views were dismissed as being politically naive by Party sources since Tory governors were not politically inclined, it was stated, nor would they appreciate central direction. One is unsure to what extent this concern over the extent and outcome of 'packing' was a case of there

being 'no smoke without fire' or whether everyone was being unnecessarily paranoid about the possible results of party political influence.

The Tory party was the first to reflect concern over party power. It was reported in September, 1988, that the Education Secretary was hoping to persuade the Ministry for the Environment to sponsor legislation to forbid the appointment of l.e.a governors solely from whichever party was dominant locally. This law was not forthcoming and in January, 1990, the Labour party proposed a similar Bill which would require l.e.as to appoint governors in proportion to their political party representation.

These proposals for legislation may have been, in part, a response to cases of dispute concerning the dismissals of l.e.a. governors. Two l.e.a. appointed governors of Haberdashers' Aske's Schools in London were dismissed by I.L.E.A. because they failed to support I.L.E.A's policy of opposing the schools' applications to become City Technology Colleges. The House of Lords ruled that the dismissal was unlawful because it transgressed the independence which governors were deemed to have. In Wandsworth, in 1989, the Council decided to appoint Conservative governors only but, following public disquiet, this policy was amended to allow for the selection of one Labour governor for every school with more than 300 pupils.

Warwick County Council, in May 1989, dismissed some governors following a change in the political complexion of the local authority after elections. They were replaced to ensure that governing bodies' political composition reflected that of the Council's. The dismissed governors instituted a court case in an attempt to gain reinstatement. Humberside County Council were asked by the N.A.H.T., in September, 1989, to dismiss two of the local authority's nominees. These were both members of a governing body that had sacked a headteacher after allegations of an indecency offence (the head was eventually proved not guilty) and the governing body was accused of acting with undue haste and of proceeding improperly. They were to be dismissed on the grounds of failing to perform their duties properly.

The outcome of these two cases was not known at the time of writing but if the decisions follow those of the House of Lords in the Haberdashers' Aske's case, then presumably, 'packing' could be deemed illegal without further legislation being necessary and party nominees could not be required to support party policies on their governing bodies. If this is the result, then there should be no need for anyone to be concerned about the presence of party nominees on governing bodies.

It is possible that the publicity which surrounded the cases discussed above, over-emphasised their importance. Only about ten authorities were involved in these disputes and party representative governors themselves were at pains

to stress that their actions were not directed by party policies. For example, in reporting the change in Barnet from mixed representation to all Tory governing bodies, a Chairman of governors at an annual parents' meeting stated that these were not to be political appointments but educational ones (The Guardian, 12/7//88, p.23). At the first meeting of one of the newly constituted governing bodies in October, 1988, it was announced by the chairman (himself a political nominee) that the political representatives were not appointed to advance a particular party viewpoint (Lancaster Boys' School, Leicester). From Northumberland, the Secretary of the Labour party wrote to the T.E.S. to protest the party's innocence of the offence of 'packing'; all they had done, he said, was to change about 60 governorships (from a total of 2,600) to ensure a better balance of representation.

Party sectionalism

Other factors limiting the likely operation of party representatives in pressurising for party policies, lie first, in their method of selection. The parties have to find large numbers of supporters in order to fill the many governorships. In Leicestershire, for example, approximately 1000 have had to be found. Councillors, whom one would expect to be strong party supporters, are limited to four governorships each and given the constraints on their time, it is often these governors who are least able to attend regularly. The other political governorships are

found from a variety of sources. Some have been party workers but more seem to be found by parties selecting people they know who have some connection with education such as retired teachers or those who are employees of other educational institutions such as the university. In the now defunct I.L.E.A., where party discipline was strong, the selection of party nominees was, nonetheless, apparently equally casual (Gibbons,1989,p.33). In Dudley, where it was decided that all l.e.a governors would be representative of the majority Labour party, there were insufficient nominees to fill the posts and so, the Conservatives were given the remainder.

Secondly, party representatives do not seem to have a caucus system. When they meet on a governing body, they may have no contact with each other outside of those meetings unless they are councillors. They are unlikely to sit together and in Leicestershire, there will have been no prior party meetings to set a line which governors must follow. The attitudes of other governors might influence whether or not a party line emerged. Are the political representatives asked, for example, what the views of their parties might be? Do other governors defer to those who are Councillors because of their insider knowledge? Does the governing body seem to anticipate particular views from particular governors? Watching the micro-politics of one Leicestershire governing body would indicate that this is not the case. The limited knowledge of the sources of appointment of one's

fellow governors restrict one deferring to their political leanings. The infrequency of meetings and the fact that such governors will be introduced to colleagues described only as l.e.a representatives, without a party label, militates against such knowledge.

Where a role has been suggested that would be solely applicable to the party representatives, the expectation has been that their function will be to make contacts with local authority officers to whom other governors would not have such easy access (Spooner, 1975, p. 50; Cole, 1951, pp. 126-9). Interviews with Leicestershire governors (both Councillors, the first Labour, the second Liberal) underlined this point. When asked to describe their roles, neither mentioned their party connections:

"My job's to sort out troubles at the school. If a teacher's having trouble with a class, I pop in at lunch time and take him for a drink - that soon sorts it out. I also ring up the director when I want things for my school"
(Labour Councillor)

"My role is to make contacts at County Hall - to see that requests go where they are most likely to have success" (Liberal Councillor)

Developments in party sectionalism

Overt party politics on school governing bodies do not seem to be very acceptable, as the quotation which opened this section indicated. People seem to feel that politics should not be involved in the education of children and by this they tend to mean party politics. The same reactions have been recorded concerning American school boards:

"School systems were rationalised and standardised along bureaucratic and industrial lines and insulated from corrupt politics through the adoption of nonpartisan governmental arrangements " (Boyd,1983,p.6).

There are possibilities that partisanship may develop amongst English governing bodies. First, party political stances may be taken if recognisably partisan issues confront governing bodies (as some l.e.as became recognisably partisan when the comprehensive debate came before education committees in the 1960s and 1970s). The most likely issue to raise this partisanship would be the decision on whether or not a school should apply to become grant maintained or whether or not to become a C.T.C.

Secondly, the possibility ought to be addressed that the formalisation of party sectionalism might be a way of making the governing of schools more democratic. The criticisms of party organisation, described above, seem rather inappropriate in a society that accepts such organisation readily in local and central government. Linking school governors to the policy making groups at either County Halls or Westminster, could be a means of increasing accountability. At the moment, governors are not mandated so there are no policies which they must put into effect as promised. Few governors need to feel that they must acquiesce with their constituents' wishes since few will be eligible for, or wish to, stand for re-election. Attempting to divorce school governing bodies from party politics could decrease community influence on schools.

Sheffield L.E.A. proposed a way, in 1989, to avoid this divorce. The C.E.O. suggested that the existing subcommittees of the Education Committee should be abolished and replaced by committees representing the Authority's governors. In that way, all governors would become part of the policy making machinery. They might, thereby, become more committed to the implementation of policies they had helped to decide and lines of responsibility would be clearer. Party sectionalism would not be necessary since all governors could be considered part of the party policy machinery. This would be one way of meeting what Stewart described, in 1977, as the most important challenge facing the organisation of the education service within local government:

"to work out how community pressures could be reconciled with administrative form and practice" (Welton, 1989, p.4).

INDUSTRIALISTS

A further sub-set within governing bodies can be roughly categorised as those with industrial, scientific, commercial or technical occupations. Governing bodies were regarded as being out of touch with such interests and the 1986 Act expressly enjoined governing bodies to have regard to membership of the local business community in selecting co-optees. Business interests, such as banks and local societies of chartered accountants, issued publicity to attract their members to stand for co-option in 1988.

The Leicestershire survey of governors' occupations in 1986 revealed that 35% came into this category. Their occupational designations were, however, spread widely. The group included 75 different occupations from auditors and architects via company directors, draughtspersons, graphic designers and metallurgists to systems analysts and a lone waterman. Such fragmentation is unlikely to provide the unity needed for strong sectionalism. The brief periods during which governors meet, means they may not be aware of where they do share a linked occupational background.

In addition, there does not seem to be a common cause for which they might pressurise. Other bodies have pressurised for curriculum innovations in which this group might be interested. The Training Agency, for example, ensured a technical and vocational initiative, the National Curriculum enforced a set amount of scientific education, teachers have long since incorporated such matters as coping with money matters, job interviews and careers preparation into personal and social education and mini-enterprise is part of the G.C.S.E.

The likelihood of unity developing amongst industrial governors was decreased after the 1988 reconstitution of governing bodies because of the advent of, what might be termed, the 'sponsored governor'. These might well have felt that their loyalty was to their firms rather than to any collective interest amongst their fellow governors.

The sponsorship was not official, nor was the term 'sponsored governor' adopted, but some business interests, such as Lloyds Bank, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants, wrote to their employees to ask if any of them might be interested in becoming school governors. The names of those interested were then sent to the local authorities for circulation to schools. Large companies, who found that they had school governors amongst their employees, offered them in-house governor training courses, access to company charitable funds for their schools, arrangements for discounts on company products for parents sending their children to schools in which their employees were governors and special newsletters (1989 e.g. Sainsbury, 3M, Digital, Triton Showers, British Gas).

Such activity could be altruistic but it could also be that companies envisaged their employee school governors as promoting each company's image with the ever dwindling pool of school leavers for whom those companies are in competition. This was expressly recognised by the Leicestershire Society of Chartered Accountants who tried to persuade their members to become school governors in order to promote the image of chartered accountancy. 3M were reported as having asked their employee governors to press for the teaching of German as a second foreign language. Individual companies will have different needs. It is unlikely, therefore, that industrialists will form a strong sub-set of governing bodies, although individuals

might dominate because of the access to resources afforded them by their company connections.

American evidence suggests that this might happen. In the 1960s, Krause concluded that, in the voluntary agencies involved in public service urban renewal programmes, the interests of the business community dominated despite the extension of democratic representation to the poor inhabitants whom the programmes were intended to benefit (Krause,1968). In 1989, Cibulka stressed that business people would be the key actors in the new, devolved system of school government in the U.S.A., because they:

"have organisational resources and a vital interest in reform" (Cibulka,1989,p.24).

In Krause's analysis, the poor were members of the directing agencies but were still unable to protect their views; in English school governing bodies, the 'poor' are not even members.

In 1990, however, the business governors on English school governing bodies, remain fragmented groups. It is possible that the advent of local resource management for schools, over the next four years, might lead to some development of group cohesion for this set of governors. They are the ones most likely to serve on the specialist sub-committees which governors are finding it necessary to establish in order to fulfil their role of financial advisers. They may therefore get to know each other better and in presenting reports to full governors' meetings, might emerge as a distinct sub-

group. One is still left to decide exactly what they might pressurise for, other than for more money and that cannot come from within the school.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

The legislation of the 1980s did not, specifically, empower the community and, as Cibulka stated of U.S. experience of educational devolution, community involvement was only a minor theme in the decentralisation process (Cibulka, 1989, p.16). Nonetheless, Leicestershire's governors, surveyed in 1986/87, defined one of their major roles as being liaison with the community in order to bring ideas into the school. A sub-set of this group stated that their function was to represent the views of the church, since they were church appointees and their role was very specifically stated as, for example, checking to see that Christianity was taught. No other groups had such clear cut aims.

In the co-option processes in 1988 and 1989, some governing bodies asked community groups for nominees for governorships while other governing bodies were approached with offers of representatives willing to be governors. On the whole, however, it appeared that very few governors who represented community interests were co-opted (Sallis, undated, p.3). There were, therefore, hardly enough to merit designation as a group at all.

The emergence of any sectional consciousness was also precluded by the difficulty of finding a common, community

interest. Each of the community group governors represents a different community group and, as such, they are not homogeneous. This was the pattern found also in Australia, which was, like England, extending the representation of outsiders in the government of schools (Angus,1989,p.22).

Some of these governors might pressurise for a particular wish of their own group from outside the governors, the strength of their pressurising seemingly determined by their status within their own organisations (Kogan, 1984,p.37 and Ch.7) or, by the strength of their parent organisations. In 1989, for example, a governor of an inner London school, fought, what was described as, a:

"disruptive, abusive and intimidating"
(News item, Education, 22nd September, 1989, p.246).

campaign in the four schools where he was a governor to obtain a change in their multi-cultural policies and curriculum. He stated that he had the support of six groups representing parents of the ethnic minority communities. His methods led to his dismissal since his appointing l.e.a withdrew support for him. Another case involving ethnic minority governors supported by outside groups, also occurred in 1989. Some of the governors at a Birmingham school stated that they had been forced to accept a teacher as community liaison officer who was unable to speak the community languages. A large, parents' action group was set up which reinforced the governors' actions. (News item, Education,15th September,1989,p.222)

In general, however, governors' links with community groups were weak and community groups did not appear to have used governing bodies as an important channel through which they might try to exert influence.

SOCIAL CLASS

Sectional operation by parents and teachers would appear to be unlikely in view of the social class composition of governing bodies which unites all governors, whatever their sectional connections. The social classifications of governors, indicated a pronounced bias towards the middle classes. This might have been expected since it was the middle classes who led the movement requesting an extension of popular control over school government (especially non-economically active, middle class mothers, according to Whitehead and Aggleton, 1986, p.441).

It could be argued that the middle classes do not represent a sectional interest per se since social background provides only a loose coupling of interests and values, nor would school governors probably regard themselves as promoting particular class ends. Nonetheless, a large part of educational debate this century has centred around the extent to which particular classes protect their hegemony, however unconsciously, through restricting access to educational opportunities.

Schools provide access to social and economic mobility and governors began to influence this directly once it became

possible for schools to become grant maintained or to have C.T.C. status. There was also some discretion for governors of maintained schools but the extent of this was not clearly established by 1990. Governors also have powers to suggest the general direction of the curriculum, to appoint staff and, from 1990, powers to appraise teachers and to decide whether or not they should receive accelerated salary increments. They are, therefore, strongly placed to reinforce class interests.

The dominance of the middle classes was pointed out by Bacon in his study of Sheffield's governing bodies in 1978, by Angus's observations on Australian experience (1989) and by Golby's research in Devon in 1988. This middle class primacy on governing bodies makes them comparable with many pressure groups since leadership by this particular class is a common feature. There is a marked tendency for the middle classes to be the most active section of society in pressure groups, even those groups whose aim is to benefit the working classes. In the opinion of Richardson and Jordan, (1979,p.79) *it is only because of this selectivity and class bias that pressure groups are so successful.*

This situation might make a Marxist perception of governing bodies worth pursuing. Kogan pointed out, in 1984, that this perspective had not been applied to governors' attitudes (1984,p.15). Angus feels that middle and working class antagonisms have been masked by an homogenised view

of governing bodies as representing unified parents or community (Angus,1989,p.22). These inter-class differences may have been one of the factors which inhibited the resolution of the Carhill dispute (Galton,1990,Ch.7).

On the other hand, the small numbers of working class representatives make it difficult to envisage governing bodies as being involved in class warfare. Attempting to apply a Marxist interpretation also appears to imply that the middle classes consciously operate to exclude the working classes. Many governors have, however, tried very conscientiously, but with little success, to persuade all types of parents to stand as representatives and to be more involved in school life.

The middle class background of most governors means that social class origins could not form the basis of a sub-set within a governing body but it should help to encourage the cohesion of the whole group. If governors wished to exert pressure, they have a common ethos on which to base their strength. This common ethos is, however, the same as that of the people they are supposedly controlling, i.e. the heads and teachers who have the same class background. There is, therefore, no need to pressurise to achieve middle class aims as these already seem to have been implemented.

CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapter showed that parent and teacher sectionalism had not developed by 1990. The evidence presented in this chapter shows that party political sections do exist but do not seem to have undue influence on school governing bodies. The concerns which have been expressed about the effects of the 'packing' of governing bodies might have led one to suppose that sectional activities and attitudes were developing but political representatives in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire did not appear to have used their position to encourage the adoption of particular party attitudes on issues confronting governing bodies. The party governors were not, generally, recognisably partisan and did not operate as groups.

What party politics there are currently, must arise through covert functioning; the party representatives could, perhaps, be characterised as having attitudes which colour their responses to issues which confront them as governors. Their lack of strong party links in most local authorities, mean that they can readily become cooptated (Bacon, 1978,p.126) into performing other functions since there is no constituency with which they might feel obliged to concur. They become subsumed into other roles. They remain without party norms for behaviour, fitting the prevailing belief that in English government, a representative is not a mandated delegate.

Those governors who could be termed delegates for industrial or community interests, have not displayed strong inter-group cohesion. There were signs that some of these groups' members were showing responsiveness to their parent agencies and this might increase their determination to succeed in pushing their own views. All the sub-groups discussed in these two chapters, are inhibited from the development of sectional loyalties because governors are united through their social backgrounds.

If strong sectional interests were to develop, it has been suggested that this would decrease the influence of the whole body (according to the theories of pressure group organisation discussed by Richardson and Jordan [1979,p.10]). Governing bodies seem to have neither strong sectional interests nor collective influence. Their common agreement is vague. The desire of the chair and the head to retain cohesion (and also the desire of the group members to do so) seems to lead to compromise at the lowest common denominator.

The result is moderation in all things. This result is encouraged because governors have cross-membership of the various sections. This overlapping of membership prevents 'excessive' behaviour because individual members are aware of the views of others and can more readily empathise with them (Truman,1971,p.510). Truman's American research on overlapping membership took a school P.T.A. as an illustrative example, where members had overlapping

interests in that they were Catholics and members of the local chamber of trade and of the local taxpayers' league. Transferring this across the Atlantic, English school governors can have party feelings, parental responsibilities, educational jobs and community links.

Richardson and Jordan (1979) do not agree that the effects of overlapping membership would be applicable to all pressure groups but that it might be a useful means of explaining the behaviour of some of them. It could be said to be applicable to governors since there is not only overlapping membership amongst the sections within the governing body, but also between the governing body and those whom it is supposed to control.

This overlapping of membership is unlikely to alter whatever are the other changes wrought by the implementation of the 1986 and '88 Acts. It is possible that the sectional behaviour being anticipated by some as a result of the changes in composition may not, therefore, occur (O'Connor, 1988).

Training has discouraged sectionalism. Usually, whatever the origins of their appointments, governors are trained together. 'Sectionalised' training is restricted to chairs of governors, separate publications of governors' training notes for industrialists and occasional sessions for parent governors. Sheffield considered the suggestion that there should be separate courses for parent or pupil governors

but concluded that:

"courses for particular classes of governors would tend to be divisive, and would justifiably be regarded as more threatening by teachers" (Mann,1975,p.27).

Sectionalism could have been encouraged by the attempt to extend the electoral base of the new governing bodies but, as 75% of governing bodies stayed the same after the 1988 reconstitutions, non-sectional attitudes also remained. The heads' attitudes were also crucial; no evidence has been found that heads negotiated with sections of governing bodies before meetings (with the exception of the chairperson) but no such evidence has been searched for either. Impressions, gained from governors on training courses, indicated that this was not the case nor did governors ever consider contacting their fellow governors before raising issues at governors' meetings. On the rare occasions they have reported doing this, other governors seem to have rebuffed the advances and governors continue to operate as individuals.

Research needs to be done on the operation of sectionalism on governing bodies. Governors' meetings need to be analysed, utilising perhaps, the suggestions of Gronn (1983) combined with the recordings of content which Macbeth pursued (1980a & b). This should then show the extent to which particular governors express the views of the sections to which they belong.

If sectionalism does develop amongst governing bodies, it might be one way to ensure that representative democracy is 'real' democracy. Hirst maintains that this development can only be through the operation of organised interests. Corporate involvement will create effective representation if groups state:

"what their members will...be able to do and
if the members are disciplined enough to do
what their interest organisations say"
(Hirst,1989,p.202).

It seems unlikely that governors will operate in this fashion.

CHAPTER 15

GOVERNORS' MODES OF OPERATION-RESOURCES

The direction of the changes in the powers of school governors in the 1980s, was towards giving governors a more active part in school decision making but the analysis of the previous chapters has indicated that governors had not developed a participatory role by 1990, either as a whole group or as sub-sets within governing bodies. This chapter, and the one following, discuss the extent to which this outcome was related to the resources possessed by governors.

If a group, within any organisation, wishes to become a viable part of the decision making process, it must control marketable resources, i.e. those resources which are critical to the organisation's survival. Those within the policy making process whom a group is trying to control, must have some degree of dependency upon that group's resources so it is worth their while to accede to the group's wishes. Policy making has been defined as embodying

*"relations of inequality, dependence
and compliance" (Ranson et al, 1980, p.7).*

Relations will vary according to the criticality of the resources which competing groups control. This control will not only decide outcomes, but will also help to reproduce existing power bases; having power creates more power (ibid, p.8).

This resource dependency theory has been used to explain political relationships in general and educational politics in particular (Archer,1979,1981), but it has not been, previously, utilised for governing bodies. A similar method of study was utilised by Zald (1969) in analysing the powers of business boards of directors and it is this which is used for the framework here (although the words, resource dependency, were not employed by Zald). Given the uncertainty of precisely where governing bodies fit on the government-pressure group continuum, it would seem helpful to be able to compare them with bodies, such as boards of directors, which have roughly comparable formal powers, rather than with major pressure groups, such as teachers' unions, with which resource dependency theory is more usually concerned. This comparability was expressly recognised in one Annual Governors' Report which stated that:

"the board of governors has been compared to
the board of directors of a limited company"
(City Of Leicester,1989,p.1).

The importance of resources to the power of company directors was acknowledged by Zald (1969). He stated that directors required detailed awareness of their companies in order to contribute to policy making. The more complex and technical an organisation, the less likely were directors to be able to contribute to its government. Twenty years later, it was said of commercial boards of directors that:

"The day of the gifted amateur in the board
room is definitely over" (Parker,1988,p.138).

The same comment would be applicable to school governing bodies, especially after the 1980s' legislation which increased their responsibilities.

This chapter concerns those resources which governors had but which they could little change, i.e. what they represented (financial and community power), who they were (their personal characteristics of sex and social class) and when, where and how they operated (the timing of governors' activities, the size of their schools and their administrative support). The following chapter discusses the resource which governors could change, and with which they have had help in trying to change, i.e. their knowledge.

RESOURCES GOVERNORS REPRESENT-FINANCE

A major resource which anyone trying to exert power would seem to need, would be control over money. In Zald terminology, this is an external resource which may be actual money or its representation through the control of "salient blocks" (1969,p.100) of shareholder votes. The money which directors represent can also arise from their access to major charitable givers, in the case of non-profit organisations such as schools.

Some governors could be deemed to represent blocks of votes but the numbers of voters would scarcely be classified as salient (to use Zald's terminology, *ibid*). School governors also lacked the major resource of being

representative of significant funding. The 1986 Act did extend governors' discretionary funds but the money which governors had to spend, was only a small amount and that was 'gifted' to them by the l.e.as. The Act directed that this money could only be spent on books, stationery and equipment. The governors' discretion was further limited by the requirement that the spending must accord with what the heads thought was appropriate for the curriculum.

The devolution to governors of power to manage all the finances of schools, which began in April, 1990, increased the possibility of extended governors' powers to influence policy making. Indications from the pilot LMS schemes were that financial devolution increased the power of heads, rather than of governors, because heads were being trained for LMS faster than were governors and because school-based financial directors were being appointed, and these would be available to advise heads on a daily basis. The establishment of finance sub-committees of governing bodies might offset these developments.

Governors' financial resources are, nonetheless, limited because none of the money coming into schools was, or will be, brought into schools by the actions or connections of the governors (as it could be from business directors) but will continue to come from central, via local, government. In addition, the amount available is deemed barely enough to enable governing bodies to meet their statutory and regulatory duties so there will be little opportunity for

governors to influence their schools' expenditure choices. In April, 1990, for example, three of Bradford's governing bodies resigned in protest at the lack of funds because they felt it was impossible for them to maintain suitable conditions for schooling.

In 1988/89, charitable endowment of schools recommenced through the C.T.Cs. The governors of these schools will, it appears, be powerful in relation to the amount of money they represent. C.T.C sponsors will have the majority of governorships and will select between 1 and 4 co-opted governors from amongst the parents, teachers, community and non-teaching groups. A minimum of 1, and a maximum of three, such co-optees may be parents. This effectively reversed the procedure, and the types of co-optees, of state maintained schools.

It is possible that governors of grant maintained schools and l.e.a. schools with delegated financial control, will find themselves in a similar position to governors of C.T.Cs because their access to the control of funds will increase. Grant maintained school governors will have slightly more income, which they can control directly, than will governors of maintained schools. Governors of both types of schools may, equally, remain as they were before 1990, i.e. in the position of being like Zald's directors of non-profit organisations where fund raising campaigns:

"are based more on a sharp image of need [than] on interpersonal relations of board members and fund raisers" (Zald,1969,p.102).

In such circumstances, governors are at their least powerful.

An analogy here could be with fund raising P.T.As. Although they have raised money for school funds, their power to determine the use of these funds has generally been slight. The amount they raised has, however, been very small and is drawn from many personal contributions rather than from the P.T.A. committee members themselves. For voluntary aided schools, the sponsoring faith has provided 25% of the capital costs (though none of the current costs). This financial power seems to have resulted in very variable degrees of influence for the representatives of the faith on the governing bodies (Sansome,1988).

Not only have governors lacked the control over financial resources which might make them powerful but governorship often constituted a financial loss for the governors themselves (Harrison,1989,p.18). There is no payment for the work and no reimbursement for personal expenses incurred. L.e.as were empowered by the 1986 Act to refund governors' travelling expenses but, as far as can be ascertained, none of them did so. An interesting comparison can be made with the emoluments of non-executive, business directors. Parker records that non-executive directors would be expected to average about 30 days work per year for their companies (which would be roughly the same as school governors would need to do); for this, company directors could expect between £400 and £800 per day (Parker,1989,p.138).

Central government presumably believed that governors would gain more power if they had local financial control, and central government reiterated this policy nationally by granting government finance to the governors' national pressure group, the N.A.G.M. in 1980. Indirectly, this would strengthen individual governing bodies. Directly, governors' control of finance at school level might increase their power, but the money is not their own, there are many constraints on its use which limit governors' choices and the amounts available barely cover statutory requirements.

RESOURCES GOVERNORS REPRESENT-COMMUNITY POWER

Of more significance as a potential resource for school governors, could be, what Zald terms, community legitimisation. Governors will be influential according to the degree to which they represent:

"diverse groups or interests which can be
mobilised to affect the organisation"
(Zald, 1969, p.103).

The closer are directors' links with their parent groups, the greater the degree of control they will exert over the managers.

Governors certainly represented diverse community interests. These interests, however, did not mobilise to affect schools (with the occasional exceptions of some groups representing ethnic minorities and those wishing to opt out of l.e.a. control) and, as Chapters 13 and 14 showed, governors' links with their electors or selectors are

tenuous and not easy to maintain. The interest groups which governors represented were not, apparently, very concerned about school life. These community groups seem to have little, if any, control over the governors who represent them. It is only where the parent groups can apply sanctions to their appointees that their representatives might try to ensure that their views would most closely correspond to the views of those who selected them (Bacharat and Lawler, 1980, p.134).

There would appear to be no sanctions which community groups might apply to their representative governors. The Acts of the 1980s delineated how governors should be appointed but not, how they might be dismissed. Some l.e.a. appointees were removed when their parent l.e.as changed their party political composition but this was being challenged in the courts by the governors concerned in 1990.

Interest groups which have mobilised in respect of individual schools in the past, became active when the nature of their school was under a threat of change. Hence, when comprehensive schooling was being introduced, parents' groups often mobilised for or against the change (Surrey, in the 1970s, for example, boasted a group named WATCH - Woking Anti The Comprehensive Hotchpotch group - opposed by STEP - Stop The Eleven Plus campaign). During the 1980s, activity centred around parents wishing to prevent their childrens' schools being closed and/or merged by l.e.as

trying to rationalise provision to cope with falling school rolls. In these circumstances, particular governors did become identified with particular groups whose views they sometimes tried to press at governors' meetings but more usually, governors became trapped between the opposing groups since the governors were unable to reach an agreed view themselves or became identified with l.e.a. attitudes.

Two post-1988 developments may enhance governors' resources from community legitimisation. Mobilisation of interests could be found necessary since the 1988 Act made opting out a possibility and parents have to be mobilised for or against Grant Maintained Status. Governors have to organise the decision taking and this gives them both a major area of power and parents who are mobilised to take an interest. Since the 1986 Act, interest groups have also begun to write to schools offering the services of their members as co-opted governors (e.g. Lloyd's Bank and the Sikh community in Leicester in 1988), and 'sponsored' governors came into existence (Chapter 14). Such groups may wish to keep contact with their members and use them as a channel of communication with schools.

GOVERNORS' PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC RESOURCES-SOCIAL CLASS

The social class background of directors was considered to be a valuable resource by Zald (1969) and Auerbach (1961). Any lack of power because of lack of access to money might be offset, according to Auerbach (1961), by the social class of the governors. Middle class boards of governors of

non-profit organisations were likely, he stated, to have more control over professional managers (although he did relate this to their prestige connections which might have arisen from their having access to funds). There might, be a possibility of a resource here for English school governors since they have middle class backgrounds.

The business and non-profit organisations which Zald studied, had predominantly upper middle class directorates. This made the professional managers more likely to defer to directors' opinions than they would have done had the directors had lower class origins. The higher the class status of a director, the more likely was that director to occupy the chair. The chair's relationship with the managing director was then dependent on the manager's comparable socio-economic status. Less than 10% of boards of directors came from so lowly a background as the middle-middle class. Those few directors who did have lowly origins, could overcome any handicaps caused by this background, Zald found, by becoming very active in the organisation and hence building up the knowledge resource in lieu of a social resource.

English school governors cannot claim quite such extensive origins amongst the upper middle classes as could Zald's directors and most would fit better into Zald's middle-middle class. Nonetheless, governors do manage a certain dominance though not, perhaps, in the sense that Zald intended. Middle class values could be said to have

dominated the whole education system though middle class governors did not chose to dominate individual schools. The equivalence of their status with heads remains to be explored. The increases in heads' salaries during 1987/88 may have lifted them above the general level of governors but this is a guesstimate; it would need some probing on income levels to ascertain whether it were true or not.

GOVERNORS' PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC RESOURCES-SEX

Sex is a personal characteristic resource, Zald suggested, which was of importance in determining the power of directors. He reported a study which found women were in the majority on boards of the smaller organisations of low prestige.

Women governors in Leicestershire, in 1986, were found to be slightly in the majority on boards of primary schools and slightly in the minority on secondary school boards. A national survey in 1988 (N.F.E.R., Streatfield) reported a decrease in the numbers of women governors overall and, in particular, on secondary school governing bodies.

Women were less powerful as directors, Zald surmised, because they were less likely than men to have connections with external organisations, were likely to be more quiescent in meetings, were less assertive than men and were taken less seriously than men. Here lies a little byway of the gender studies movement in which research might help shed light on the power of school governors.

One has the general impression that, despite the feminist movement which has occurred since Zald was writing, his general supposition remains true, but no proof is available. A micro-political analysis would help provide some evidence for this.

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT ON GOVERNORS' RESOURCES-TIME

Moving from the representational and personal resources of governors, to factors relating to the organisations of which they are directors, Zald suggested that governors' powers would increase when their organisations were facing major decision points which Zald termed, character crises.

In education, such crises might be the possibility of school closure, the choice of a new head, a major curriculum innovation, a structural change in school organisation or the possibility of opting out. There have also been various noteworthy disputes concerning particular schools since the mid-1970s, which have constituted character crises (William Tyndale School; the Honeyford case in Bradford; the graffiti dispute at Poundswick: the McGoldrick case in Brent). It could also be claimed that 1988-90 was a continuous character crisis in view of the number of changes with which schools had to cope.

During the time of these crises, governors meetings have increased in number and length. Governors have become a focus of interest for pressure groups and for the media and additional involvements in school life have been

necessitated (such as interviewing panels, sub-committees and informal consultations). Governors do, therefore, become more involved with their schools during character crises but research has not been conducted to assess the affects of this involvement on the power of governors in the short term nor after the crises when the governing bodies return to normal activity rates.

Outside of character crises, most governors found they had insufficient time to concern themselves with gaining power in their institutions and their reliance on heads for advice on the government's policies, appeared to decrease their powers further (Harrison,1989a,p.18). There were some governors who appeared able to cope with the heavy workload and to be able to participate extensively in their schools' decision making. Browning reports on these with some scepticism (1988a) and her views are supported by the author's personal experience as a governor and by reports from governors on Leicestershire's training courses. To carry out one's duties as a governor, fully and conscientiously, during 1988-90, would have required a governor to devote most of their spare time to the job and few were able, or willing, to do this. Some governors were reported as having resigned during the first year's operation of the new governing bodies (e.g. 60 resigned from Dudley's governing bodies) but it is not known why they had resigned nor how large were the numbers nationally.

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT ON GOVERNORS' RESOURCES-SUPPORT

Where there were governors who were able to devote adequate time to their governors' duties, their power was still restricted by the lack of resources for administrative support. One governor commented that the government had not realised that governors needed their own administrative structures:

"At the moment we have to grab a bit of the school secretary's time if and when she's got it"
(Harrison, 1989a).

In some Authorities, governing bodies are clerked by officers from the education departments who are not deemed to be employees of the governing bodies. If there were any conflicts of interests, to whom should the clerk be loyal? Where governing bodies clerk themselves, the governors lack the direct access to the local authority, and the specialist legal knowledge, which an l.e.a clerk can provide.

In Leicestershire, the termly meetings of governing bodies continued to be clerked by local government officers after 1988, but it was not possible for them to attend all the sub-committee meetings as well, so these meetings had to function without the benefit of professional administration and legal advice. In other areas, governors continued to clerk their own meetings (e.g. Norfolk) but with the increased numbers of meetings and duties of governors, it was found that governors personally, had to supplement their schools' budgets for letters and phone calls

consequent upon governors' duties, and were paying for the photocopying of documents for governors (Harrison, *ibid*). It was not clear, by 1990, whether or not schools would have to pay l.e.as for clerking once schools had control of their own budgets. If they do have to, one wonders what priority will be accorded to professional clerking when governors are only too aware of what little money is available for their school's educational needs.

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT ON GOVERNORS' RESOURCES-SCHOOL SIZE

The strength which governors might gain from the representational and personal resources discussed above, might vary according to the size of the schools they govern. Zald suggested (1969) that the more complex the company, the less would be the directors' control.

It would follow from this that the governors of primary schools should be more powerful than those of secondary schools and the larger the secondary school, the less would be the power of governors. One's general feeling is that the reverse is true and that Zald's point here will not apply to schools. There is no evidence, however, to support or disprove this feeling; it would need a comparative study of governing bodies of different types of schools to ascertain if such distinctions do exist. Secondary schools would meet Zald's criteria of being 'technical', both in the hardware they possess and in the nature of their curriculum, but their governing bodies contain more men than women and men are assumed to have knowledge of the

technicalities, and be in high status occupations likely to confer upon them a position from which they feel they could try to influence school managers.

Primary schools would be easier to control than secondary schools because governors, like the directors of small enterprises in Zald's study, could have:

"independent knowledge of the plants, contact with the staff at several levels and a detailed acquaintance with the market situation"
(Zald, 1969, p. 103)

Zald conceded, however, that the full time manager of any organisation could choose which matters the governors would discuss and a headteacher, like a managing director, is the gatekeeper of this choice. On the boards of educational enterprises, Zald expected governors to have a part to play in personnel matters but not in those of the curriculum. This seemed to be the situation relating to English school governors' powers after the 1988 Act.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to deduce, from the previous discussion, that governors do not possess resources which might create dependency on them. This has meant that governors lacked influence on policy. Even where they did have some resources, these were likely to be effectively resistable, because the other actors could reciprocate, could obtain resources elsewhere, could act without governors, (or were always able to persuade governors to take the actions wanted by the educationalists), and could manage without

the resources of governors. (These are the features listed by Archer although not applied to governing bodies;1981,p.40.) The latter two of these changed in some respects, after the 1988 Act but the evidence by 1990 was that the governors' roles had not changed in consequence.

The reasons why governors have chosen not to change may be found by considering resource-dependency theory from the governors' point of view. What resources have schools that governors wish to gain? Only if organisations have benefits, is it worth while for new contenders to push to obtain greater power than they have had previously.

The type of benefits which might arise from being involved in policy making have been suggested by Olsen in his delineation of the gains for pressure groups in attempting to obtain greater power. These include the chance to be influential, the chance to gain in efficiency by using public services, the chance for increased gain in technical knowledge and the chance for public status and esteem. (Olsen, quoted in Richardson and Jordan,1979,p.177). Only the latter benefit of these suggested for all pressure groups could be said to apply to school governors.

In summary, governors lack the resources for power, the will to take power and the ability to change the resources discussed in this chapter. It is, however, within the power of governors to increase one of their resources, that of knowledge, and this is considered in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 16

GOVERNORS' RESOURCES-KNOWLEDGE

The resource which governors, and governments, most feel is needed by governors, is that of knowledge. Central government recognised this by making the provision of free governor training a local Authority responsibility. Such a requirement would be applauded by Plamenatz. He insisted that knowledge was the basis of successful democracy and pointed out that there has never been:

"a really serious attempt to prepare the conditions of its success by the systematic and intelligent education of the majority of mankind" (Plamenatz,1968,p.153).

Governor training should offer organised and intelligent, provision to make school democratisation a success. This chapter describes the training offered and assesses its effects on the knowledge resource of governors.

Evaluations of Leicestershire's and Northamptonshire's training courses have provided the main sources for this chapter (Thody,1987b & 1987c; Northants. L.E.A.,1989). Information about courses organised by other Authorities was obtained from Bacon,1975; Brigley and Stoyale,1988; D.E.S.,1988a; D.E.S.,1989; Gent and Mahoney,1983; George,1984b; Herrick,1987; Mann,1975; N.A.G.M.,1978,1985; N.C.C.,1986; N.F.E.R., 1988; Packwood,1983; Whitacker,1987. (N.B. The D.E.S. 1988a report had no page numbers. Therefore, pagination references cannot be given.)

Criteria used in this chapter for assessing the effect of training on the knowledge resource of governors, are based on suggestions from Everard for the evaluation of management training (1984,pp.35-44). These have been chosen because it has been suggested that governor training should be redirected in view of the new, managerial role of governors, so it seemed appropriate to assess their training in a similar way to that employed for other managers (N.F.E.R.,1988,paras.41 and 42.3). These criteria have also been used to provide an evaluative framework for the published surveys of governor training which have offered little more than comparative description (N.F.E.R.,1988; N.C.C.,1986; D.E.S.,1988a,1989).

It was decided to group Everard's suggestions into input, process and outcome criteria. The inputs discussed are the need for training, the inhibitors to training effectiveness and the resources invested in training. The process criteria concern the content and methodology of training. The outcome criteria consider the extent to which governors' attitudes were changed by the courses.

INPUTS-THE NEED FOR TRAINING

This section begins by considering first, whether or not the amount of training offered could have been deemed adequate to meet governors' perceived needs for knowledge. Everard suggested that one should judge the need for management training cautiously:

"Do not assume that when managers express a particular need for training for themselves... the need exists. Some problems that present as training problems have their roots in organisational structure, reward systems, poor selection, etc.'.
(Everard,1984,p.37[1])

This section on inputs, therefore, also discusses the factors which Everard thought inhibited managers from applying the knowledge they gained on courses.

INPUTS-Amount of training available

The numbers of training courses, both locally and nationally, have increased greatly in the last two - three years, but there is still much unsatisfied demand for training. *Leicestershire* was one of the first Authorities to offer school governor training, beginning in 1982, and the evaluation of that training was one of the origins of this research. By 1986/7 about 50% of *Leicestershire's* governors had attended training sessions. From that date, *Leicestershire* received E.S.G. funding which enabled the Authority to extend its courses, and a governor training co-ordinator was appointed in 1989. *Leicestershire's* courses have been consistently oversubscribed, as have those of other Authorities (D.E.S.,1989, paras,2.7,5.26,8.44)

Prior to 1986, according to a survey conducted by the National Consumer Council (N.C.C.,1986), 54% of l.e.as, were providing some training. The stimulus of E.S.Gs, and of the requirement for all l.e.as to provide some training under the terms of the 1986 Education Act, led to an increase in provision. By 1988, 82% of l.e.as were

providing some training. A rather higher percentage of city Authorities than county Authorities ran courses (NFER, 1988,p.3) but Leicestershire was no longer one of the few l.e.as providing training as it had been when its training was introduced in 1982. 77% of shire counties were involved in training by 1988.

In 1989, H.M.I. conducted an inspection of the training in thirteen Authorities. They found provision to be very varied. L.e.as which had offered training before the 1986 Act, were able to run introductory sessions, introductory courses and numerous updating activities. Authorities new to governor training had concentrated on single session introductions. All l.e.as were finding difficulty meeting the demand for training (D.E.S.,1989,pp.4-5).

Part of this demand might have been met through distance learning. Governor training materials could almost have been described as a national growth industry between 1985 and 1990 (Chapter 2) and the D.E.S. provided free information manuals and videos. The N.F.E.R. report concluded that a Materials Clearing House was needed to provide teaching resources to fill any gaps and to vet, and advise on, existing sources.

Self directed learning needs confident and determined students and the evidence below indicates that even governors who might have been deemed already well qualified for their roles, nonetheless wanted to increase their

knowledge by attending training courses.

Those who came on Leicestershire's training courses in 1986/87 were proportionately representative of all categories of Leicestershire's governors. Commitment to learning was spread across all groups. Those who might have been expected to be under represented on training courses, i.e. those who were educational professionals and/or who had long service as governors, were only present in similar numbers to their proportions on governing bodies, as were those who might have been expected to be over-represented, i.e. those who were over 60, or who were not in active employment.

The Leicestershire and Northamptonshire surveys both found that there were no significant differences amongst the topics for training requested by those governors who were educational professionals and by those who were not. Northamptonshire found that, within three years of initiating training, 62.2% of governors with more than five years' experience had attended courses, compared with 45.7% of those with between 3 and 5 years' experience. Correlating experience with reactions to the courses in Leicestershire, showed that there was no significant relationship between years of experience and whether or not governors felt they had learnt anything new on the courses or whether or not they felt they had gained from the courses. Northamptonshire's survey found that the ranking of items chosen for training courses by governors, was very

similar whatever was the governor's length of service. It would not appear, therefore, that the longer serving governors had a greater sense of knowledge professionalism than newer governors despite the fact that approximately 70% of governors appointed after 1988 had held office before that date.

Only the teacher governors were under-represented on training courses in proportion to their numbers in the governor population as a whole. Of those attending Leicestershire's 1986/7 courses, 2% were elected teacher governors although these comprise 10% of governing bodies. In Northamptonshire in 1989, 72.2% of teacher governors said they had received no training whereas other *categories of governors* reported about 50% of their numbers with no training. The Northamptonshire report concluded that:

"a specific initiative is needed to assist and encourage teachers to obtain training" (Northants.,1989,p.23)

but the conclusion could also have been that teachers already felt adequately prepared for their roles. They could have been the 8.5% of Leicestershire's governors who stated that they had not attended training courses because they felt sufficiently knowledgeable already.

One can deduce from this evidence that all categories of governors, except elected teacher governors, felt that they needed more training than was available. Governors were aware that they needed more knowledge. If the quantity of

training were to be increased to match demand, however, governors might be unable to use the knowledge they had acquired because of inhibitors such as those suggested by Everard for all management training i.e. structural hindrances, lack of rewards for training, the selection of personnel attending courses and the lack of preparedness of firms to use the skills which their employees have acquired on training courses. The applicability of these inputs to the effectiveness of governor training is considered next.

INPUTS-Inhibitors to training effectiveness

Structural hindrances

The organisational structure within which governors operate has never been very clear about governors' roles in management. Recent legislation has clarified the roles of local and central government and the powers of governors, but the relationship between heads and governors within schools is not so obvious and must be worked out within each school. This relationship may not be susceptible to 'training' since the relationship will vary according to particular personalities and situations. It is unlikely that any course leader could state categorically exactly what the governors' relationships with their heads should be, yet this is an area in which governors sometimes seem to feel they would like such definition especially where the relationship may be a little strained. Generally, the structural relationship is an unequal one with heads dominant, and this can inhibit governors' participation.

Training courses have influenced the head/governor relationship because many of them used headteachers as trainers. This reinforced the primacy of heads and the educational protectionism of governors. Heads expressed concern that courses would produce 'revolutionaries' and, in order to allay heads' fears, courses on which heads and governors were jointly taught, began at the end of the 1980s. These could result in a greater feeling of equality between heads and governors but the courses are still' predominantly taught by heads or senior educational professionals.

One way to balance heads' dominance would be to use governors as trainers on courses for heads. Leicester University introduced such sessions into its management courses from 1986. The numbers involved have been small (about 50 heads and other staff per year on three sessions being taught by 10 governors) so the effectiveness is difficult to judge. Comments from the governors after the sessions showed a great gain in confidence because they were 'teaching' teachers; staff responses were more circumspect, describing such sessions as 'useful'.

Lack of rewards for governor training

Managers undertaking training for their companies might expect some reward, such as increased promotion opportunities. There are no rewards for governors who attend courses, other than personal satisfaction. Trained governors have no more status than untrained governors and

there is no evidence that schools make more use of their trained governors than of the untrained ones. There is no incentive to gain, nor to use, the knowledge acquired on courses.

Training has even operated as a disincentive, as remarks from governors on courses showed:

"I am astonished to find how much I'm expected to do for nothing - this is a very professional job and I'd have to pay professionals to do it in my own firm".

"As a surveyor, I suppose I could be used to check building work and devise the specifications for contracts but that could be seen as undermining my own professionalism - doing for nothing what one would normally expect to pay for - and it places a lot of responsibility on me".

"I didn't realise how much was involved - I hope I have the time to cope with it properly".

"I run my own business but I don't expect to run my own accounts as we're having to do for our schools - I have a professional to do that for me".

Such remarks may be the more revealing because they come from *governors committed* enough to attend training courses in their own time, pay their own travelling expenses and, in some cases, their fees as well. One must add that such remarks were in the minority and most governors seemed willing to give up considerable time to the job, even to the extent of taking holiday leave in order to fulfil their obligations for school visits during school time.

One reward which training can offer is the possibility of a certificate. The Open University offered these with its

first distance learning course, beginning in 1982 but the number of governors opting for certification was small. The College of Preceptors has a course which was studied by a group of Dudley's governors in 1988-90. The numbers involved on these courses was so small that it was not possible to judge whether or not they encouraged more governors to gain, or to use, their knowledge resource.

Selection of governors for training courses

Everard pointed out that training cannot be effective unless the people who are managers are already the right people for the jobs. No amount of training can improve personnel who are not suitable.

Governors are, largely, self selecting so that there is a wide range of ability, knowledge and experience amongst governors. There is no agreed job description for what constitutes the ideal governor and as governorship is supposed to bring into schools the whole of society, anyone can be considered suitable for the job. Governors individually decide whether or not to attend training courses.

Some l.e.as tried to affect the selection of governors. Of the 10 L.E.As who received E.S.G. funding between 1986 and 1988, Knowsley and Newham used part of this for courses specifically aimed at recruiting new governors while Somerset planned to include such provision (D.E.S., 1988a). Knowsley's scheme was based on three schools and

recommended, at its conclusion, that:

"Schools need to plan for parental and community involvement...Begin with a small core of interested parents who will encourage others...hold meetings in houses or clubs to begin the process of dismantling barriers...Potential governors...can be attached to existing governors for support".

Knowsley produced a governor recruitment video. Newham concentrated on encouraging ethnic minority groups to participate in school government. The talks they gave to these groups were poorly attended but a special conference gained 40 new governors from the ethnic minority communities.

Few l.e.as targeted their training at particular groups of governors. Targeting was recognised as important by, for example, Leicestershire's Director of Education who recommended to Schools' Committee that governing bodies should each send two untrained governors on training courses who would then cascade the training back to the rest (Leicestershire, 1988a). This recommendation was not put into practice. Targeting may be adopted once adequate data bases have been established and it becomes possible for l.e.as to know which of their governors have received no training or which ones need to specialise in particular areas. Such targeting may enable the knowledge resource to be offered to those who most need it, but attendance at courses will still be voluntary so the offer may not be accepted. Data bases sufficiently adequate to enable

targeting, to be organised were only begun in 1988 and then, not in all areas.

Lack of preparedness of schools to use trained governors

Off-the-job management training was criticised in the 1980s because its outcomes were not incorporated into schools. The national task force on school management reported in 1990 and recommended that management training should be in-house to correct the separation of theory and practice. Schools were also required to produce development plans so that institutional needs would be apparent and staff training could be directed towards meeting those needs. School governor training was not considered in either of these requirements. It was, and remains, disconnected from individual school needs.

Governors could chose whether or not they attended training sessions. There were no mechanisms through which governors could report back to their governing bodies on what they had learned. There were no schemes for ensuring that particular phases of training had been undertaken before governors were allowed to undertake particular aspects of their jobs (with the exception of equal opportunities training which, in Leicestershire at least, is required before a governor can take part in interviewing for staff).

There have been some attempts to fit training to the precise needs of individual governing bodies using the headteachers of the schools concerned or using

member governors as cascade trainers (George,1984b,pp.135-148;D.E.S.,1989,p.12). One l.e.a., for example, encouraged the idea that each governing body should send two of its governors to the same courses to strengthen the likelihood of the training being incorporated into whole governing bodies. It was reported that this proved a failure because few governing bodies had agreed collectively on the need for training or on who should attend (D.E.S.,1989,p.7-8).

Research on the Scottish pilot school councils endorsed the suggestion that governor training should be in-house and should be led by principals because:

"One of the clearest points to emerge from the data was that board members would have diverse training needs and that these needs would be specific to individual school boards. The best training, therefore, was in learning through experience of board membership. Learning about school budgets, for example, would be best done by the head producing information on the previous year's per capita allocation and explaining...this. Training would therefore be on the basis of real examples derived from members' own schools"
(Munn and Brown,1989,p.16).

English evidence revealed that effective training was felt to result from setting it within the real issues of real governing bodies but there were practical difficulties to successful implementation. George (op cit) reported that governors found, for example, that it was very tiring to cope with training at the same time as they were fulfilling their governors' duties. Where the same method was tried by another governing body, it was likewise reported that the governors were too tired to discuss the issues raised

(D.E.S.,1989,p.12,para.67). George concluded that the calibre of the head was very important in ensuring the success of in-house governor training but he suggested that the process:

"really required the attention of an experienced tutor" (George,1984b,p.146),

rather than that of the headteacher concerned.

INPUTS-Resources

In addition to removing the inhibitors outlined above, training also needs adequate resources of time, money and staff if it is to be effective in increasing governors' knowledge. In 1984, Everard pointed out that:

"Management is a complex activity: there are limits to what can be learned in a few days' training" (Everard,1984,p.37).

He contrasted managers unfavourably with doctors and lawyers whose training took many years. Since then, substantial government funds have been provided for management training for school staff. Many of the senior staff in schools with whom governors will have contact, will have received some management training (although this was still regarded as inadequate by the national task force on education management which reported in 1990).

In contrast, governors, and governments, have invested much less in governor training than has been invested in the training of school managers. The survey of Scottish school councils, in 1989, reported that:

"there are tight limits to the amount of time voluntary workers want or are able to spend on training...an overemphasis on training can put people off voluntary work"

(Munn and Brown,1989,p.16).

This conclusion would apply to England also. Courses have been short and rarely required homework from governors. Weekend courses were very popular in Leicestershire because it proved difficult for governors to maintain a regular, weekly commitment. Nonetheless, few courses had to be cancelled because of insufficient enrolments, although there were signs of a decrease in demand by 1990. Many governors displayed great determination to learn.

The amount invested by national and local governments in the provision of training was very small. The first E.S.Gs *totalled about £100,000 (the smallest of the E.S.Gs for 1986-88), and this was shared amongst ten L.E.As (D.E.S.,1988a).* In 1986-88, Leicestershire's budget for training was about £11,000 but approximately £8,000 of that came from central government in the form of Education Support Grant. At that time, Leicestershire was one of the few Authorities which was investing anything at all in governor training. After then, most Authorities began to offer training but most were funded through the E.S.Gs which became more widely available after 1988. In 1989-90, Leicestershire's budget had grown to £50,000 of which about £30,000 was for the co-ordinator and administrative support.

The courses offered in Leicestershire were all short, averaging about 16 hours for initial training, and this was similar to courses provided elsewhere (N.F.E.R.,1988; D.E.S.,1988a). The Director's report on Leicestershire's training courses (Leicestershire,1988a) stated that the courses had to be "basic familiarisation". This attitude arose from the limited resources which were available and other Authorities found themselves similarly restricted. H.M.I. reported, in 1989, that l.e.as found that provision for governors was:

"more demanding of time, expertise and
resources than most l.e.as had anticipated"
(D.E.S.,1989,p.2,para.3)

and that they did not have enough money to fund adequate training.

In order to restrict training costs to an affordable level, those most often used as governor trainers were unpaid l.e.a. officers, heads and teachers (N.F.E.R.,1988,p.11, para.16). Few of these tutors were trained in adult education teaching and few were school governors (according to N.F.E.R. figures, 12% of the trainers were experienced governors). Of those who were adult educators (which was largely the group from which Leicestershire's trainers were selected), few had taught recently in schools (D.E.S.,1989, p.12,para.69).

Several Authorities experimented with some variation of the cascade system. Governors within each governing body were given some training and then asked to 'cascade' the

training back to their governing bodies. The topics to be taught were selected by the l.e.as and teaching materials were centrally prepared. This method was:

"deliberately adopted to encourage the development of a stronger, more cohesive and effective governing body: this objective seemed to be successfully achieved in the pilot schools" (D.E.S.,1988a,East Sussex).

Cascading was also cheaper than paying trainers and could reach more governors more quickly than could training courses. Using governors as tutors within their own governing bodies, or on courses, had the advantage that they were facing the same challenges as were their colleagues.

Despite these reports on successful cascading, N.F.E.R. (1988) concluded that there should be more training for the trainers. This view was echoed in the report on Knowsley's cascade system which emphasised the need to chose the right governors to lead the cascade. Their interpretation of what was meant by the 'right' governors seemed to be a description of a good teacher:

"a person who can act as a catalyst and who has appropriate experience to develop active-learning programmes and to build confidence and involve participants in their own learning process" (D.E.S.,1988a).

Finding this conclusion proved something of a relief. If anyone can train school governors whether or not they are qualified teachers, and whether or not they have experience of adult education, then it might lead one to question the need for professional teachers at all.

Little training was given to the trainers and what was available:

"concentrated on the requirements of the 1988 Act rather than exploring how adults learn and what training approaches might be most appropriate" (D.E.S.,1989,p.12,para 70).

The D.E.S. report concluded that, although tutors were enthusiastic and conscientious, most of them needed further training (ibid,p.3,para 14) in suitable teaching skills.

INPUTS-CONCLUSIONS

Governors, and governments, perceive governors to be in need of much more training than that which is currently available. The effectiveness of training in increasing the knowledge resources of governors, has been limited by the structures within which governors operate, by the lack of rewards for governors if they acquire knowledge and by the difficulty for schools and governors of interweaving training into governors' activities. Governors who attend training courses are very committed to acquiring knowledge but courses are rarely targeted at specific groups' needs. Governing bodies have not adopted governor training policies which might ensure that the results of training are utilised in, and appropriate for, the needs of the schools concerned. The following sections consider if these conclusions are altered by the processes and outcomes of training.

PROCESS CRITERIA-CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY OF TRAINING

Conflicting views have been expressed about the value of training governors. In the late 1980s, three reports concluded that governor training courses were unsatisfactory. N.F.E.R. stated that governor training had become ossified in the format developed for the period prior to 1988 so:

"the need for more and better training...
is obvious" (N.F.E.R.1988,p.33).

This conclusion reiterated the view of an earlier report that:

"the training seems to be inadequate to meet
the demands and requirements of the future"
(N.C.C.,1986,p.3)

Evaluators of governor training in Devon recorded that
governors:

"expressed major dissatisfaction with what
had been experienced. 'Dreadful', 'Abysmal'
and 'Irrelevant' were a few of their
severe verdicts"
(Brigley and Stoye,1988,p.30).

These opinions contrast with those from other training evaluations which have indicated high levels of governor satisfaction with training. Writing of Newcastle's training, for example, the D.E.S. report stated:

"The course was in general appreciated
by participants. The attendance rate
was high (88%) and the length and timing
of the course were thought to be
satisfactory. Overall, the content was
found to be relevant and useful" (D.E.S.,1988a).

The evaluator of Northampton's courses reported that:

"Overall, governors felt they would be more
confident at governors' meetings and were
aware of the changes likely in education
over the next few years. An appreciation of

the contribution of those governors who were not connected to education in a full time capacity was expressed. It was also felt that the course was good and would be appropriate for someone very new to education"
(Northants.L.E.A.,1987,p.2).

The Leicestershire 1986/7 evaluations produced similar satisfaction. 100% of the course members awarded the courses A or B for enjoyment and satisfaction with content. Governors' comments included:

"I have a more positive attitude to the wide range of issues that a governing body should be addressing, and a strong feeling of the importance of thinking more carefully about doing something about these issues"
(Thody,1987b)

Northumberland's courses achieved similar results:

"It was clear from the vast majority of responses that participants found the courses both interesting and helpful."
(D.E.S.,1988a).

Scotland began training its governing councils in 1988. Governors were united in praising the quality of the information with which they had been provided and of the courses they had attended (Munn and Holroyd,1989,p.18)

Comments like these appeared regularly in evaluations but the N.F.E.R. did not seem to be aware of these since one of their recommendations was that:

"Some evaluation of existing induction and more advanced courses for governors should be undertaken to guide the improvement of provision"
(N.F.E.R.,1988,para.42.4).

PROCESS-Content of courses

In devising courses for governors, trainers had to decide what should be the balance between providing information, and providing guidance on how to use that information. They had also to decide at what level the courses should be aimed. Courses everywhere, mainly concentrated on giving information concerning the overt, formal roles of governors.

Most Authorities, including Leicestershire, chose to concentrate on short, initial familiarisation courses, occasionally followed by more advanced courses which were usually supplemented with major, single session presentations to large groups of governors. Most of these training events were, at first, heavily content orientated. This arose because, when courses were first begun, there were few publications to which governors could be referred, there was no experience of how governors should be trained and tutors were often drawn from amongst l.e.a officers or school teachers. In a few cases, the over-emphasis on content arose because tutors underestimated governors' knowledge (D.E.S.,1989,p.11,para.61). By 1990, however, there was ample published advice, and considerable training experience, but courses continued to be fairly information dominated. Much less attention was paid to skills of utilising information but it was the skills training which might most affect the covert roles of governors.

Leicestershire's initial training courses, like those elsewhere, included the roles and duties of governors, school visits, discipline, interviewing, community issues, special needs and multicultural policies of the L.E.A., together with curriculum developments, examinations and new ways of structuring school subjects, such as T.V.E.I. Leicestershire's advanced courses, which began two years after the 1982 inauguration of initial training, centred around the national and local structures of education government, the history of education and the definition of curricular aims. These sessions were followed by whichever particular subject areas the groups requested. Cross-curricular issues concerning special needs, multicultural education, equal opportunities and education and industry were usually included. The possible division of management responsibilities between heads and governors was explored. The aim of these advanced courses was to provide an acquaintance with educational issues rather than to consider specifically, the roles of governors since these had been discussed during initial training.

After 1986, the rationale of Leicestershire's advanced courses changed. The legislation of the late 1980s brought the need for all governors to learn of their new roles. The advanced courses were renamed "updating" courses and began with a reconsideration of the roles of governors. Financial management, structuring of governing bodies and the new roles of l.e.as, formed the remaining subject matter. The

courses were shortened in order to train more governors, more quickly and the idea of providing an introduction to educational issues was abandoned. It was later revived through the provision of single sessions, each devoted to a particular theme, such as equal opportunities or the primary curriculum.

The evaluations of the content of Leicestershire's courses always showed that governors were very satisfied with them. Tutors recorded less satisfaction because of the enormous amount of material to be incorporated into each session. Quantities of duplicated materials were issued to obviate the necessity for teaching facts, but governors were often too busy to read them. By 1990, the need for such factual information transfer had declined because the D.E.S., and the l.e.as, had issued copious documentation to all governors. The greater likelihood of governors being aware of their legal rights and duties, and of some of the major educational issues, has decreased the necessity for governor training to be so content orientated.

PROCESS CRITERIA-Methodology of training

The content domination of courses led to some didactic approaches to teaching. The 1988 N.F.E.R. report criticised these teaching methods and the amount of material which l.e.as tried to include in the sessions. It was reported, however, that most training courses incorporated a variety of methods with the majority of l.e.as using a combination of lectures, workshops and simulations. 24% used only

simulations and other participative methods and 15% were restricted to lectures or home study (N.F.E.R.,1988,p.8,[10]).

Participative methods seemed to be most preferred as comments from the D.E.S. evaluations emphasised when discussing the lecture method. This was described as:

"unattractive to [governors] and therefore ineffective. Training which involves participation by course members is preferred by governors and likely to be a more effective approach" (D.E.S.,1988a,North Yorkshire).

Newcastle's and Knowsley's experiences replicated these findings (ibid). The objective of these training methods was to concentrate on what governors have to do, rather than what they had to know. This would be in line with Everard's views on management training. He suggested that there was:

"no substitute for...self discovery and feedback from others...training...consists mainly of adding to one's repertoire of behaviour" (Everard,1984,pp38/40[6],[19]).

The D.E.S. report of 1989 summarised the value of active learning and noted how willing governors were to participate even when the training methodologies (such as brainstorming and role playing), were unfamiliar (D.E.S., p.11,paras.62-65).

Course methods needed to be participative but experience from tutoring some of Leicestershire's courses, showed that even the most confident governors were unused to active learning. Preparation prior to full group discussions was, therefore, necessary, through, for

example, paired debates or the provision of stimulus materials. Discussion was greatly stimulated when a whole course was made a showcase for different teaching methods with each session using a different approach, hence the process as well as the content could be debated.

Leicestershire's courses used various speakers for curriculum up-dating sessions. Using these specialists brought the unexpected result of increasing governors' awareness of the importance attached to their role. One governor, for example, reflected:

"Who would have thought that the Chief Psychologist, the Deputy Director, three advisers and two professors should bother with the likes of us? It makes me think my job might be more valuable than I had realised".

Other sessions involved governors and local teachers working together discussing how each group interpreted videos of classroom activities. The only difficulty encountered during these sessions was that governors were generally deferential to outside experts and governors' new confidence in their abilities to participate in matters educational, might have declined a little.

The nature of governors' roles lent itself to experiential learning. Meetings' procedure, for example, was easy to teach actively using simulations. Experiential learning for visiting involved touring the schools in which courses were being held, or watching a video of a school's day, and then reporting on this in a simulated meeting or discussion with a role playing head teacher.

Several Authorities, and other organisations, developed methods of training other than face-to-face tuition. Everard felt that, in management training, these should be considered before opting for class teaching (1984,p.38,[4]) if only because they were cheaper and could be more directly related to individual needs. The same reasoning has been applied to some governor training.

The Open University's training course (P970), for example, utilised distance learning materials, video and audio cassettes and texts containing learning activities for students to work through on their own. In the first three years of its operation (1980-1983) almost 6,000 students *enrolled at their own expense* (George,1984b,p.15). (In comparison, face-to-face tuition in Leicestershire provided places for about 2,000 governors over seven years.) The use of Open University materials was more extensive than the number of individual enrollees indicated since a large number of other bodies, who became involved in governor training, purchased the materials for their face-to-face courses (1,286 sets were purchased between 1980 and 1983, George,1984b,p.21). George's evaluation concluded that:

"the most pervasive outcome of individual enrolment for the course will be felt as a result of the setting up of group training activities around the country"

(George,1984b,p.63).

This would seem to be an interesting reflection on the effectiveness of materials designed for individual self study.

The D.E.S. adopted the Open University approach in 1988 when it became necessary to provide materials for large numbers of governors very quickly, following the reconstitution of governing bodies and their acquisition of new powers from the 1986 and 1988 Acts. All governors were issued with manuals containing details of their powers and duties, and regular supplements are issued. These manuals are, however, for reference rather than for programmed learning but they have been supplemented with videos. The N.F.E.R. report did not strongly support the idea of national video training materials which, it was felt, could not be more than:

"awareness raising programmes"
(N.F.E.R., p.26, para, 31.1).

The D.E.S. videos were variously used by l.e.as. Some made them available for individual loan, some suggested they should be used as the basis of cascade training and some incorporated them into face-to-face sessions.

Amongst the L.E.As who received E.S.G. funding for pilot schemes in 1986-88, were several who tried methods additional to training courses. Knowsley, Newcastle, Newham and Somerset produced their own videos but, like other audio-visual materials, (Open University, 1989; B.B.C., 1989; Devon County Council, 1988; Focus in Education, 1988; Forum Television, 1989), all were most readily used by groups rather than individuals and were considered more valuable when accompanied by professional teaching (N.F.E.R., 1988, p.26, para.31.1). Interactive video

materials, which will not need additional group work or professional tutor accompaniment, are currently (1990) being evaluated in Northamptonshire but the cost of such materials and their attendant hardware is, as yet, prohibitive.

Local radio provided a medium for North Yorkshire's training. Each programme contained documentary material and was then followed by a studio discussion and a phone-in. The course was "generally well received" (D.E.S. 1988) and North Yorkshire concluded that an Authority of its size would need to use radio or tapes if:

"effective training [is to be] available to all governors in a reasonably short time" (ibid).

The programmes were, however, partly aimed at encouraging face-to-face study since governing bodies were encouraged to listen together. N.Yorkshire's evaluation concluded that:

"participation by course members is preferred and likely to be a more effective approach".
(D.E.S., 1988)

A very individualised service was made available in Newham. A helpline was set up which was staffed all day and had an answerphone service for evenings and weekends:

"This proved to be highly successful and...in constant use"
(D.E.S., 1988).

This could be rather costly in terms of officer time but clearly its usage was considered to justify it. Newham also set up surgeries in various parts of the borough.

Most Authorities provided governors with induction packs after the 1988 reconstitution of governing bodies. Governors reported that they felt daunted by these materials (D.E.S.,1989,p.13,para.78) and preferred those produced by N.A.G.M. or A.C.E. which were more comprehensible. Some l.e.as organised loan collections of assorted materials but it is not known how popular these have been.

PROCESS CRITERIA-Conclusions

Governors have generally reported satisfaction with the content and methodology of training courses but evaluating agencies have been less happy. Course methods have been criticised for having been insufficiently active and participative to enable governors to develop the skills needed to use their knowledge. Courses were dominated by *the need to convey a large amount of information* and some didactic teaching resulted although there was much evidence of active learning techniques being used. Distance learning precluded the group activities which were generally considered to be the prerequisite for skills training.

OUTCOME CRITERIA-COURSE RESULTS

An important measure of the success of courses must be the extent to which the knowledge which they offer, meets governors' needs. In order to assess this, Everard suggested that, for management training, one needed to clarify the purposes of training so that course gains

could be related to job descriptions. The N.F.E.R. report (1988,p.21,para.27) came to the same conclusion in relation to governor training.

There is, however, no, generally accepted, description of governors' roles with which one might compare the effects of training. There are various lists of governors' functions (Chapter 2), although none of these include the covert functions discussed in Chapters 6-11. There are no national evaluation criteria and few l.e.as have established regular review procedures for their training (D.E.S.,1989,p.14,para.81) so there is no national system which could be used. Leicestershire has always evaluated governors' reactions to the training offered, and has amended the content of courses in response to evaluations, but these regular evaluations do not include outcomes in relation to job descriptions. In order, therefore, to assess the outcomes of training for this research, it was decided to use Leicestershire's governors' own interpretations of their roles and their own statements of what they hoped to gain from courses, and then to measure what happened in relation to these objectives in Leicestershire.

PROCESS CRITERIA-Governors' perceptions of outcomes

The 108 Governors who attended six, Leicestershire, initial training courses in 1986, were asked to define their roles as governors and to state what they hoped to gain from the courses. They were not given pre-selected lists of options

nor was there any restriction on the number of statements they could make. The 108 governors produced 207 role descriptions and 137 anticipated gains. The commonalities which emerged from these are listed in Tables 1 and 2.

At the end of each course, governors were again asked to define their roles and to state what they felt they had gained from the courses. They were not shown their original statements, nor were they given a pre-selected list. 98 governors completed the final questionnaires; 166 role descriptions were given and 152 gains were suggested. The questionnaires were anonymous so it was not possible to discover the extent to which individual governors had changed and/or gained, but observations could be made for the group as a whole.

A comparison was made between the views of this group of trained governors and the views of Leicestershire's governors as a whole in order to see whether or not there was any evidence that training resulted in attitude changes. 1,436 of Leicestershire's governors gave 2,747 responses to the question asking them to define their views of governorship and from this, 23 role definitions emerged. This larger group contained some governors who had attended previous training courses but they were predominantly, untrained.

TABLE 1 - GOVERNORS' VIEWS OF THEIR ROLES

ROLES	BEFORE	AFTER	ALL
1. Advise on curriculum, buildings, staffing, discipline	13%	14%	21%
2. Make policy, manage the school	12%	4%	3%
3. Not sure of role	11%	1.5%	4%
4. Liaise with those outside school. Bring in outside ideas	11%	17%	8%
5. Support/encourage head & staff	9%	15%	12%
6. To put childrens' view	9%	11%	10%
7. To represent parents	9%	6%	8%
8. To represent teachers	4%	2%	7%
9. To see resources are used efficiently	3%	0%	1%
10. To take an interest in the school/take part in school activities	5%	8%	8%
11. To check that school meets legal obligations and govt. policies	2%	0%	1.5%
12. To see that educ. stds. maintained	2%	4%	0%
13. To see that school is happy; maintain morale	2%	3%	2%
14. Obtain resources from the l.e.a.	2%	5%	3%
15. Advise the head on problems	2%	1%	0%
16. To represent the Church	1%	0%	2%
17. Public relations	1%	2%	0.75%
18. To represent the community	1%	2%	3.5%
19. To prevent party politics on governing bodies	0%	4%	3%
20. To help with problems	1%	1%	0%
21. To represent headteachers	0%	0%	0.25%
22. To represent non-teaching staff	0%	0%	1%

TABLE 2 ANTICIPATED AND ACHIEVED GAINS FROM COURSES

GAINS	ANTIC.	ACHIEV.
1. Clarification of roles, duties, powers, responsibilities	53%	43%
2. Knowledge of education system, of how children learn, of educ. jargon	14%	9%
3. Assurance/confidence; to be more effective in meetings; not to be intimidated	14%	25%
4. Sharing experiences with other governors	6%	11%
5. Not sure	4%	0%
6. Guidance on how to perform duties	3%	5%
7. Motivation to ensure policies carried thru	1%	1%
8. Knowledge of school management	2%	0.5%
9. Awareness of school problems	1%	1.5%
10. Knowledge of educational admin.	1%	1.5%
11. Awareness of importance of role	0%	2%
12. Ideas for school improvement	1%	0.5%

There were some interesting, and unexpected, changes recorded. It would be reasonable to claim that some of these had resulted from the training but governors were, also obviously, subject to other experiences during the period when they were attending courses and these might also have influenced the results.

It was reassuring to note that many fewer governors felt unsure of their role at the end of the course than had done so at the beginning. The trained group, however, had more members unsure of their roles than did Leicestershire's governors as a whole but the courses succeeded in increasing the confidence of trained governors to participate actively in their governing bodies. There was also an increase in the number of trained governors who felt it was their job to support the head and staff and a corresponding decrease in the number who considered they should make policy and manage the school.

By the end of the courses, more governors decided that they had roles to bring in outside ideas, to obtain resources from the l.e.a. and to see that standards were maintained. There were slight changes in feelings about the governors' representative roles with more governors seeing themselves as generalists, working for the children, and fewer perceiving sectional representation of parents as their prime aim. The decline in the numbers who thought they should represent teachers was probably because the teacher governors were absent when the final questionnaires were

completed. The percentage of governors who saw their role as preventing party politics on governing bodies, had risen by the end of the course but that equalised with the numbers amongst Leicestershire's governors as a whole, who thought they were there to exclude partisanship.

In their expectations of an advisory role, the whole sample were much more specific in delineating the areas of their responsibilities than were the trained group. Those who attended the courses gave greater weighting to general supportive and liaison roles. The trained group changed their expectations of being able to make policy, following the courses, and the new percentage was much closer to that amongst Leicestershire's governors as a whole. It is possible that governors who attended courses came with high expectations of becoming directive in their roles since their willingness to participate in courses might indicate that they were activists.

The course gains table provided an interesting contrast with the changes in roles. The numbers expecting to gain clarification of their roles were not as many as seemed to feel they had achieved clarification, although the numbers unsure of their roles, had declined. It may be, however, that governors felt they had gained something more important, i.e. confidence to participate, and hence made this their prime answer. Governors' lack of clarity about their roles may have been because the training made them realise the complications, and ambiguities, of their

roles. It is also possible that the training was not as good as it should have been.

Table 2 showed that fewer governors achieved a gain in their knowledge of the education system than had expected to do so. This rather disappointing outcome was offset by the increase in the numbers who had gained confidence from the courses. Confidence growth could have happened because of increased knowledge. It must also be remembered that these were initial training courses which were being evaluated; these courses aimed to increase knowledge of the governors' roles rather than to provide background information on the education system. It is also possible that the courses made governors realise how little they knew about education, as one of them remarked:

"The more one learns about education, the more one realises one has to learn"

The difference between the anticipated gain in knowledge and the achieved gain must be seen in the context of governors' wishes, expressed during courses, that there should be ample time for discussion. To allow for this, less time was given to providing information.

The changed attitudes, and course gains, which governors perceived themselves to have, could not be verified in practice. One could only hope that altered perceptions resulted in altered activities, as Everard wrote of management training:

"most firms take training on trust" (1984,p.38 [11]).
Schools, perforce, must do likewise.

To determine outcomes more precisely, Everard suggested that it was worth while for a firm to invest in a week's training, if it improved job performance by about 0.25%-0.50% (ibid). It is not easy to imagine how this might be applied to school governor training but, perhaps, one might be able to measure whether or not trained governors attended more meetings, more sub-committees or more parents' evenings than untrained governors. It might be possible to ascertain whether the trained governors spoke more frequently in meetings than did the untrained governors or whether their school visits were more frequent or more prolonged. In the 1990s, it will be interesting to see if the schools with the best test results and the strongest financial position, also have the greatest governor involvement and/or the greatest numbers of trained governors. In making any such measurements, there will be the problem of defining what is a trained governor. Those who have been on courses comprise an obvious group but how does one measure the training that has been achieved by distance learning?

There is scope here for further research but for the moment, one can only judge the outcomes of training courses from governors' perceptions, like those above. While research results are awaited, the occasional, chance comment has indicated a practical outcome. In evaluations

of a 1989 governors' updating course in Leicester, for example, governors stated:

"I've stood as chairperson now this course has given me confidence. I didn't get elected, but I'll try again"

"The vice-chairmanship came vacant during the course. I'd not have dared stand before but I did and now I'm vice chair and enjoying it"

CONCLUSIONS

Before 1990, most governors did not seem to perceive themselves as being sufficiently knowledgeable to feel that they could make a contribution to their schools which was of equal value to that of the professionals. Despite having knowledge from their own professional backgrounds and from their experience, governors felt inhibited from using it. This was because of the structures within which they operated, the lack of rewards for governorship, the failure of schools and governing bodies to adopt training policies and the lack of investment in training.

This lack of investment resulted in training that was considered to be inadequate in quantity and, in some cases, unsuitable in content and methodology and taught by tutors with inappropriate training and experience. Despite such criticisms, the majority of trained governors recorded much satisfaction with courses. An attempt to measure the outcomes of Leicestershire's courses, provided mixed evidence of training effects but governors on courses, in Leicestershire and elsewhere, recorded increases in

confidence which would help to ensure that they used the knowledge acquired on courses.

One might conclude from the evidence concerning training courses, as did the N.F.E.R. (1988,p.21), that increasing the amount of training, and altering its content, is vital if governors' knowledge is to be increased so that governors feel more able to contribute to school management. It is salutary to record, therefore, that at least one L.E.A., felt that:

"training in the formal sense is not
necessarily required to be an
effective governor" (ibid)

CHAPTER 17

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has suggested that, during the 1980s, governors' roles have not changed significantly, although their powers and duties have done so. In discharging their legal responsibilities, it appears that governors have operated in accordance with, largely, hidden imperatives, for which the terminology of covert functioning has been developed. Covert functioning has inclined governing bodies to be supportive of education professionals. Governors have subverted their own powers of direction and control of school staff, powers which legislation appears to expect of them.

These conclusions summarise, first, the main argument concerning this covert functioning and, secondly, speculate upon whether or not it will continue into the next decade.

COVERT FUNCTIONING

Previous studies of school governors recorded that governors' principal roles were those of advising headteachers, liaising with outside communities, inspecting, representing parents, children and teachers and expressing accountability to them. Three studies classified governors' activities into general patterns of behaviour towards which governing bodies might tend (McCarty and Ramsey, 1971; Macbeth, 1980; Kogan, 1984). These general tendency models recognised that governors had potential

power, but found that they were frustrated in the exercise of it. The covert functions suggested in this thesis, offer an explanation for governors' inability, and apparent unwillingness, to use their powers

The belief that governors should become more powerfully involved in the management of their schools, arises from recent developments concerning the importance of accountability. From the late 1960s onwards, the Victorian doctrine that state schools should be tightly accountable to the society which they serve, has been revived. The 1970s' decline in public confidence in the education system meant that it became unacceptable that this accountability should be achieved through professional self-regulation. There had to be external validation of school performance and this could be organised through extending the powers of school governors, who were already available at the schools' boundaries. Towards the end of the 1980s, political interest was directed towards trying to ensure that the rhetoric of accountability became a reality. This was to be achieved through centrally directed performance indicators (such as National Curriculum testing) and through institutional monitoring. By 1990, governors had been given some powers of reward and sanction to direct at teachers, such as powers over appointment and dismissal of staff and over offering differential salaries and accelerated increments.

Nonetheless, the 1980s did not see the development of governors as agents of accountability for central government. Their covert functions directed their activities in another direction.

This direction was affected by governors' positions within different political frameworks. In the macro-system of national, education government, governors are its basic cell, dependent on local and central governments for their existence and their resources. In some interpretations, they are independent agents within this frame, able to bargain and negotiate; in other interpretations, they are manipulated by the state. In the micro-systems of school politics, governors have the superior legal position but have not used this to dominate school decision making. This may be because they lack the resources they need in order to bargain effectively with the other contenders for power. They also lack awareness of the sub-conscious processes of micro-politics which predispose them towards covert functioning. Governors' lack of resources can be illustrated by a comparison between them and commercial companies' boards of directors, since they, like governors, exist in a third framework i.e. at the inter-face between the macro- and micro-systems.

Having set governors within political frameworks, it becomes possible to try to apply the political theories of consent to them, and the first of the covert functions suggested in this thesis, is defined as that of consent.

This has been interpreted to mean that principals' rights to leadership could be said to arise from the consent of the governors. This consenting does not, nor should it, preclude governors from questioning heads, but, in so doing, their attitudes have been supportive more than critical. Consent is a function performed by all governors. Its operation is not confined to the passive, non-involved governors.

The function of consent supports headteachers in the loneliness of their positions and can reduce their stress through collective decision taking. Consent legitimates headteachers' rights to play the central role in policy determination for their schools and can also confirm the rightness of the policies selected.

The reasons why governors consent are, first, because they feel it is in the interests of the whole school community that they should do so. They consent also, because obedience is natural and is reinforced by political socialisation and by governors' personal relationships with their headteachers. Thirdly, governors consent because they perceive themselves to have free choice whether to do so or not and this conditions them to consent more readily. Wise heads have encouraged these feelings by fully involving governors in school management.

The second covert function is that of protection. Governors protect headteachers, first, by providing a

forum to which heads can refer decisions. Headteachers are the gatekeepers to this forum and can, by and large, choose those matters which they will filter to the governors or, at least, the wording and format of what is submitted for decision. This referring of policies can result in deferment, or amendment, of issues about which principals themselves feel uncertain. If decisions which have been taken, prove unpopular with staff, parents or pupils, principals can use the protection of the governors by deflecting any criticism to them.

Secondly, governors' protection deflects criticism away from headteachers, towards local and central governments. This is because governors' feelings of protectiveness, and their determination to blame other actors in the political system for any failings at school level, increases as they gain intimate knowledge of the difficulties with which schools have to grapple.

Governors have proved to be particularly protective of schools' policies concerning the curriculum and this third, covert function has been termed, educational protectionism. This function has been interpreted as governors' acceptance of the views of teachers about the content of the education which schools should purvey. Governors accept professional leadership because governors feel that they lack the professionals' knowledge of education. Parent governors are reluctant to argue with the professionals because they fear adverse effects on their

own children. Governors who are professionals in other spheres, do not wish to intrude upon the professionalism of teachers. Headteachers use tactics which encourage governors' feelings of educational inadequacy and governor training, in some respects, reinforces these feelings.

Illustrations of these three covert functions, have come from the Annual Reports to, and Annual Meetings for, parents. The period 1986-88, from which the examples were drawn, might have been expected to offer some indications that governors were beginning to emerge as more equal partners with the education professionals since the Annual Reports and Meetings provided new routes along which governors' powers might develop. The Meetings and Reports proved to be more of an opportunity to reaffirm support for professionals' views than to serve as a means for responsiveness to consumers.

The need for this responsiveness was heralded by all the national political parties from the mid-1970s. The basic, democratic imperatives of our system of government, were given impetus from the growing pressures for accountability, the development of the ideas of the corporate state and some evidence of grass roots demands for greater involvement in decision taking. School governing bodies were, therefore, made legally more representative, during the 1980s, and political encouragement was given to make this a reality.

It is argued in this thesis, that the fourth covert function of governors has been to create the illusion of democracy, more than the reality. The extension of representation has resulted in potential new contenders for power being co-optated, into both the macro- and micro-political systems of education government. This co-optation secures the co-operation of new groups in supporting the existing elites.

There is dispute about the extent to which this co-optation has been deliberate or unintentional (Bacon,1978; Grant, in Spence and Borthwick,1984; Whitehead and Aggleton,1986; Angus,1989) but there is certainly evidence that it has occurred. The types of people who become governors are analogous to those who are senior managers in schools. The middle and upper class representation amongst governors is greater than their numbers amongst the population as a whole. About one third of school governors are professional educators themselves and the professional classes are in the majority. The composition of governing bodies is similar to governing elites elsewhere in the system. Ethnic minorities are very poorly represented, as are the working classes. Business people comprise about one third of governors. There are, however, proportionately, more women governors than there are female Councillors or M.Ps, although male governors outnumber women. There are 'worker directors' in the form of elected teacher governors, but non-teaching staff and pupils do not have voting rights.

The process of co-optation of governors by existing elites is facilitated by the difficulties governors have in making contacts with their electorates and of finding out the views which they are supposed to represent. There has not, for example, been great interest in elections for school governorships, despite a major advertising campaign by central government prior to the 1988 elections. The numbers of parents attending the Annual Meetings, through which contact with governors might be made, has greatly declined since the first meetings in 1987 and these were not generally well supported. The Reports have often been couched in language which many parents might find difficult to understand. There have been some examples of more successful methods of contact between governors and constituents, such as newsletters and questionnaires, but these are not used everywhere.

The covert functioning which produces an illusion of democracy, could be seen as a failure for school government but perhaps it is as much as any of our organs of representative democracy can hope to achieve. One might compare them with national parliaments, about which Hirst wrote that they served to:

"legitimate modern...government and to restrain
it hardly at all" (Hirst,1988,p.190)

Providing the illusion of democracy is an important function. It could be defined as the 'outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace' which political systems must have in order to survive. Representative

institutions can defuse extra-system political activity. They also provide some elements of real democracy.

These four covert functions can be interpreted within frameworks which see governors as competing for power with other political actors. This thesis discusses the extent to which their success in gaining power is related to their legal power, their informal resources and their political will. Their legal status makes them a powerful part of school government but their limited participation in that government, gives them more of the appearance of pressure groups. They have to try to obtain what they want by pushing for influence in the same ways that pressure groups do.

To achieve influence, school governors need to have interests for which they have the political will to bargain. Governing bodies represent various interests but they have no collective interest, nor do they seem to pressurise school managers on behalf of the sectional interests which they could be deemed to represent.

It is suggested that this is because the sectional interests, which governors might represent, are not strongly developed. Parent governors, for example, are, potentially, a cohesive group with vested interests in their schools, but there are many factors which inhibit their acting collectively. Educationalists amongst governors, are strongly placed to develop group action but

there is no evidence that they have done so. The evidence for party political groups exerting united influence on governing bodies is not strong either, at least in the two Authorities in which this research took place. Delegates from the business community did not display inter-group cohesion during the 1980s.

The strength of sectionalism is decreased by the overlapping of membership amongst the sectional groups. it is also diminished by governor training which, generally, has not recognised separate interests amongst governors.

Whether governing bodies operate as whole groups or in sections, the functions which they are able to perform are related to the resources they hold. To extend their actions beyond covert functioning, governors must hold resources which are critical to their organisations' survival. During the 1980s, governors did not have, or did not choose to use, critical resources, i.e. those which could have made the other political actors dependent upon them. These included the resources of finance, community power, and personal characteristics.

To make more use of these resources, governors needed knowledge but it was only towards the end of the 1980s that training to acquire knowledge, began to be offered to all governors in all Authorities. By 1990, the training available was still not extensive but all governors did have, at least, a summary of their powers and duties from

the D.E.S. and there were many sources of self-help training to supplement the courses that were available.

Despite this training, and governors' knowledge from their own professionalisms and experience, governors appear to have been inhibited from using their knowledge because of the structures within which they operate and the lack of rewards for acquiring knowledge. In addition, schools and governing bodies have not adopted any governor training policies which might ensure that the results of training are utilised in, and appropriate for, the needs of their schools. The training itself has been generally well received by governors but has been regarded as being inadequate in quantity and, in some cases, unsuitable in content and methodology, having been taught by tutors with inappropriate training and experience.

All these factors have combined to encourage covert functioning by governors and this has supported the existing elites who make school policies. If governors' resources change, and their will to take power grows, what will be the likely effect on the operation of governing bodies?

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

There have been major, legislative changes in governors' powers, and in the composition of governing bodies, in the last ten years. Despite these developments, it has been surmised above that their roles have not greatly altered.

It is arguable, however, that governors have not, yet, internalised the changes. In the early years of the 1990s, they are likely to realise fully, the implications of their new powers and may begin to act differently. At the same time, the other actors in the system are reassessing their own roles and this will impact upon what governors are able to do. The final section of this thesis provides the luxury of a little speculation.

In assessing the likelihood of development in the way in which governing bodies function, Ranson's, Hinings' and Greenwood's framework of factors predisposing institutions to modification has been found useful (1980, pp.12-13). They suggest five areas which need to be affected if organisational transformation is to occur. These are:

1. "organisational members revise [their] provinces of meaning, the interpretive schemes"
2. "inconsistencies and contradictions between...purposive values and interests"
3. "significant changes in resource availability" which will create new power dependencies
4. major changes in size, technology or environment
5. "contradictory imperatives" creating a disturbed environment

The first three were stated to be of most importance in creating change in the short term and, in that time scale, "actors and transactional patterns" are major influences (ibid, p.14). In the medium term, the fourth factor will be the main determinor. The fifth factor, which relates to the

total culture of an organisation, affects long term change. Some of the implications of each of these factors, are discussed below.

1. Revision of members' interpretive schemes

There would seem to be many reasons for all the members of the systems of education government, to reinterpret their roles in the next decade. During the 1980s, governors, central and local governments, school staff and parents could be said to have been learning what their new powers were to be as the participants in education government. During the 1990s, they could be deciding how to interpret those powers. There are political intimations that further central initiatives in education are unlikely and that time will now be available to consolidate the developments of the 1980s concerning, for example, the National Curriculum, G.C.S.Es, LMS and teachers' pay and conditions of service. This will give chance for new roles to emerge.

Governors could begin to conceive of themselves as managers, responsible for forward planning and for the realisation of their plans for their schools. This role will be facilitated by their powers over, for example, staffing and finance, which become fully operational in the early 1990s. Governors will also have to select which performance indicators will be used in order to monitor their school's results. The following stage must then, presumably, be to link results to rewards which it will be within the power of governors to award.

Headteachers and senior staff are, like governors, beginning to be regarded as 'senior management' and there is use of the terminology of managerialism. There are suggestions that terms such as 'chief executive' or 'managing director', are more appropriate than that of headteacher. Principals are enjoined to display skills of leadership, undertake management training and become the personification of the goals of their schools. Forward planning is required of senior staff. Skills of financial and personnel management are appearing as requisites in job descriptions for senior posts in schools.

The local education authorities are seeking a new role. The education, and local government, legislation of the 1980s, offers the opportunity for them to undertake a more inspectorial function and/or an extended advisory role, more akin to that of consultants. They will retain their clerical and administrative roles but much more of this may be performed by officers placed in the schools. They will act as bankers for school finances. Their role as monopoly providers of direct services is being replaced by competitive, commercial contracting. Their roles in directing forward planning are confused by schools' rights to opt out of l.e.a control. L.e.as may become staffing agencies and training organisers.

Central government could absorb the roles previously held by Directors of Education. Central government has responsibility for the direction and monitoring of the

education system which is to be achieved through the apparently contradictory processes of extreme centralisation and extreme localisation. If one accepts Krause's view that no government finances its own opposition (1968,p.140), then it would seem that centralisation will be the dominant mode.

There are changes too, amongst the schools' external communities. Businesses are beginning to sponsor schools. Sponsorship is rarely totally altruistic and companies which donate funds may have expectations of returns. In the U.S.A., it has been predicted that:

"the business community...has organisational resources and a vital interest in reform, facts which suggest that it will be perhaps the key actor in [the] new pluralism"
(Cibulka,1989,p.24)

Parents may become more articulate and more demanding of schools now that there is more emphasis on their rights of choice. These external groups may help to activate sectionalism amongst governors and may begin to see elections as a way of mandating their school representatives.

2.Inconsistencies and contradictions amongst interpretations

The outline above, of some of the possible reassessments of the roles of the various participants, shows that they could be competing for the same roles. The early years of the 1990s could see conflict, as the contenders for power work to acquire a new place in the system.

The evidence for governors being one of the groups who will engage in active competition is conflicting. Written towards the end of the 1980s, Pascal's study, of governors in Birmingham, found that:

"there is evidence that governors are reluctant to take on any role which might engender suspicion or hostility at school level and are working hard to be seen as part of the school. Also, governors have widely indicated that they prefer a supportive, mediatory role above any other"

(Pascal,1987,p.199)

The analysis of governors' covert functions in this thesis may seem predicated upon a view of governing bodies as being reasonably contented. This is not to ignore the fact that there are some governing bodies where disputes have arisen, as illustrated by the examples of William Tyndale school (Auld,1976), Poundswick and Honeyford (Nunn,1987) and Carhill (Galton and Patrick,1989).

Such major dissensions are rare but smaller problems are more common. Amongst the twenty governors attending each training course, for example, a tutor can usually anticipate that one member will raise an issue of dispute currently of concern to a governing body. A T.E.S. article in 1988 highlighted such cases:

"So concerned is the governors' own National Association of Governors and Managers...about the rash of contentious cases where heads have been suspended from duty that it has issued a warning about the damage that such in-fighting can cause to children's education".

(Baker,1988,p.25)

(The wording of this statement provides a good example of educational protectionism.)

Such disputes might not, however, have been such a rash as was claimed since, in the same article, it was stated that:

"Neither of the headteacher associations have any evidence that falling out with their governors is a major problem for heads"
(ibid).

Queries to N.A.G.M., requesting details of the rash of cases, produced the response that they could not find records and could only offer a press release they had issued to discuss what governors might do if such a case arose (personal correspondence with the author).

Covert functioning has served to encourage contentment and even when major disputes have occurred, they have not usually involved all the members of the governing bodies. Those who have chosen not to be concerned, have continued to perform their functions of consent, protection and educational protectionism.

This may not continue into the next decade. Writing in the context of Australian governing bodies, Angus suggests that:

"current theories underplay both instability and disorder"
(Angus, 1989, p.21).

Some of the writers concerned with teacher governors, would appear to support this view. They seemed to be expecting teachers to criticise/ question heads and were surprised when this did not happen. They considered features which predisposed this agreement to occur and concluded, for example:

"Teachers were less willing to criticise heads
than might have been expected"
(Marriott,1981,p.270, my underlinings).

Bacon endorsed this in his statement that the:

"ideals [of teacher participation and control]
remain largely aborted in terms of social
action" (1978,p.115).

These writers seem to share the underlying assumption that conflict and disagreement should be the norm and that engendering this, should be seen as a necessary part of the governors' role. Heads are viewed as being deserving of criticism which teacher governors are too afraid to make.

Perhaps there will be more willingness to criticise in the next decade as indicated by Halstead's findings in 1989. He reported that governors considered support for the head to be one of their key functions,

"in the past" (p.435),

but that they are now moving into new areas of decision taking in which they could demand a major role. Halstead warned, however, that such demands:

"would clearly be unwise and impractical" (ibid).

This would seem to suggest to governors that they should continue their covert functioning. This could be encouraged by heads. They will remain as gatekeepers who will determine what access governors will have to knowledge about their schools. Headteachers will, therefore, be in a stronger position to manage role conflicts than will governors. The redistribution of powers from l.e.as to governors, could make heads more dependent on governors,

but the dependency will be mutual. It could reinforce the superimposition of elites which has encouraged covert functioning in the past. If, at the same time, central government is hoping that devolution will distract attention from their lack of investment in education (as Codd has suggested in the similar circumstances of New Zealand, [1989,p.8]), then governors sense of solidarity with their heads will be further increased and protection of them will continue.

3. Significant changes in resource availability

A major resource which governors will need in order to compete with the other contenders for power, is that of knowledge. Although there have been some criticisms of governor training courses, it is possible that the effects of training have yet to be seen as governing bodies mature in the 1990s. Management training (like most education) does not have immediate effects; learners need to internalise what has been taught and need to have opportunities to practice it. Confidence then grows as practice confirms, and extends, theories. Governors began to have more opportunities for practice as their responsibilities increased and their meetings became more frequent after 1988. The numbers of trained governors has gradually increased and the few, trained governors may no longer feel so isolated and may be more ready to practise their new skills.

Governor training itself may change. Eiles, for example, is convinced that the objectives of past training are no longer relevant for the new governing bodies (1989,p.155) and new training courses should not be based on the old. One possible development would be for governing bodies to take responsibility for their own training. A Leicestershire governing body, for example, is aiming to write a code of practice for itself and intends to devise this by working with the school's senior management team and an outside training consultant. While jointly devising the code, the governors will practice meeting techniques which have been taught by the consultant. The initiative for the course came from the governing body, it will involve the whole governing body and it will be held when the governing body need it for a specific project.

An alternative approach to training could be through the D.E.S. moving to a national system of governor training. There could be a national curriculum, standardised distance learning materials and training of governing bodies in situ by their own members, to ensure rapid dissemination of knowledge. The projected establishment of a national database containing advice on governor training materials would assist in this centralisation of training (D.E.S., S129/131/081,July,1989). A national, compulsory, training scheme has been suggested (George,1984).

The role of the l.e.as in these developments is not clear. Most l.e.as have now appointed governor training co-

ordinators whose roles range from training the trainers, through the issuing of newsletters, to the distribution of funding. These co-ordinators are now gaining confidence (the West Midlands co-ordinators formed their own association in 1989) and their leadership role is becoming established. Perhaps they will ensure what Everard stated was so vital, that:

"management training has to be managed:
a haphazard, capricious approach is likely to
be ineffectual...managers [should be] seen as
assets to be developed for the good of the
business" (Everard,1984,p.40).

On the other hand, neither local nor central governments seem willing to increase the resources devoted to governor training so it may still not be possible for all governors to have access to training. Training can also reveal to governors how much they do not yet know and make them feel even more dependent on headteachers. An analysis of organisational power has revealed that an increase in the information available to participants in the policy making process, will reduce the toughness of bargaining amongst conflicting interests (Bacharat and Lawler,1980,p.128).

In addition, teachers' professional knowledge should also be increasing faster than that of governors. Teachers have had to grapple with the requirements of the National Curriculum, G.C.S.E. developments, T.V.E.I. and the 16-19 entitlement curriculum for example. Will governors have the time necessary in order to gain knowledge equal to that of the teachers, or, at least, enough knowledge on which they can base informed questions?

The acquisition of such knowledge should be helped by the development of specialisms amongst governors. Many governing bodies now have sub-committees and the governors on these will be able to become more expert in particular areas of their schools' work. There may, however, be teachers co-opted onto these sub-committees and this will increase the number of education professionals able to put their views to the governors. The sub-committees may also distract from the power of the governing body as a whole, especially if governing bodies chose to have a sub-committee charged with developing the corporate plan for the school. Such committees could acquire dominance similar to that held by Policy and Resource committees in local authorities after local government reorganisation in the mid 1970s.

Governors may feel more equal with the professionals whom they are supposed to control, if governors have support from their own pressure groups which are able to put forward a collective view of what governors want. N.A.G.M., for example, received a grant from central government in 1989, to enable it to become better established, but it has very few members. Locally, there have been several attempts to form a branch in Leicestershire, for example, but these have been unsuccessful. Leicestershire L.E.A. also tried to encourage the formation of a local governors' association, and a small group of chairs of governors of special schools also tried

to form an interest group. Both of these moves failed although neighbouring Northampton has launched a governors' association (Chapter 12). It may be that the amount of work involved in governing schools in the late 1980s deterred governors from seeking further commitments to a pressure group. A future decrease in governors' work load may leave them some time for interest group activities.

Time is the second resource needed by governors. The number of activities they are required to undertake has increased but their available time has not.

"Most of them have another job. Many parent governors are women who not only work but have a family to look after as well"

(Fletcher,1989a,p.140).

The survey conducted by the N.F.E.R.(1989) for the D.E.S. at the end of the 1980s, revealed that governors felt there were unrealistic time demands placed on them, that the work loads were excessive and that there was too much reading to do. They felt they were being expected to undertake the l.e.as' work unpaid. Browning reported the case of a chairman of governors who had resigned through overwork because he felt that it was impossible to do the job properly (Browning,1969,p.29). There have been growing numbers of resignations (approximately 12% of Leicestershire's and Dudley's governors for example) and some difficulties have been reported in filling all the vacant governorships.

Access to money is the third resource which is needed if governors are to increase their power. From the early 1990s, governors will be able to decide how their schools' budgets should be apportioned. They will have freedom to vire money amongst budget heads, will have limited powers to carry over underspends and will have some flexibility about the salaries which staff are to be paid. Evidence from schools in the pilot LMS schemes of the 1980s showed that the freedom was limited by statutory requirements and by the low level of funding available. Savings were mainly made by reductions in energy costs and by leaving posts vacant during the summer terms, but this did not amount to large quantities of money to vire. The formulae under which funds will be devolved to schools from 1990, allow for average staff costing, not actual costing. This will leave some school governing bodies with hardly the freedom to continue to employ existing staff but with employment protection legislation precluding the making of staff redundant. Governors are more likely to gain financial power where they are linked to firms which are sponsoring their schools.

4. Major changes in size, technology or environment

The size of some schools is already changing under the influence of falling school rolls. This trend is predicted to continue as the numbers of under 19s in the population falls. Allowing parents greater freedom of choice in the schools to which they send their children will exacerbate

this trend for some establishments. Some schools will, therefore, be likely to close.

In the past, when l.e.as have tried to close schools which had become unviable, there has been public outcry directed at the local authorities. Governors could now move to the fore in meeting public dissatisfaction when schools have to be closed and/or in organising the process of opting out to avoid closure. Governors may also become much more important as public relations officers for their schools, helping to attract students who have gained new importance as units of account. The inception of grant maintained schools and city technology colleges, will affect the environment of some schools and may also impact upon governors' public relations' roles.

More extensive availability of information technology should make the governors' jobs easier if it gives them better access to the knowledge that they need in order to make management decisions. The pressures of implementing LMS have encouraged these developments but governors are rarely in a position to obtain information without it first being filtered to them through the schools' on-site managers. A new professionalism is developing - that of financial management - and governors may be as much excluded from that as they were from educational professionalism.

5. Contradictory imperatives/disturbed environment

Both of these descriptions could well have been applied to the 1980s. There were the contradictory imperatives of centralisation and localisation. The environment was disturbed by initiatives, such as the National Curriculum, G.C.S.E., T.V.E.I., mainstreaming of special needs children, multi-cultural and anti-sexist policies, the teachers' strike and the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act.

There are now signs that central government is responding to views that the education system must have time to consolidate after all these developments. Delays have, therefore, been announced on some of them, such as teacher appraisal and records of achievement. Nonetheless, there would appear to be considerable disturbance still to come as the changes initiated in the 1980s become fully operational.

These changes will include the establishment of the programmes of study, and the testing, for the National Curriculum. These will provide more results by which school effects can be judged which, combined with performance indicators being selected by schools, will provide a basis on which governors can award, or penalise, teachers. Governors' freedom to direct school spending may be restricted by ever declining funds. Protests over the levels set for the community charge may discourage public spending. It is possible that, as a result, education may become a centrally funded service. Governors might then be

described as central government agents. Developments in 16-19 provision are bringing links amongst sixth form colleges, upper schools and colleges of f.e. The governors of the latter have different powers, and are differently composed, to those of the former. How will the new, tertiary arrangements be governed?

The five factors discussed above indicate the possibilities for governors of developing their activities. In the first three of these factors, Ranson, Hinings and Greenwood made clear that the behaviour of the political actors was the determinant of change. It remains to be asked whether or not governors, as political actors, will behave in a way that indicates they wish to move from covert functioning to the development of other activities. To do this, governors' will have to sacrifice more personal time and will have to accept that some of their individualism must be subsumed into sectional actions and sectional ideas. Beyond these two losses, there is the cost of responsibility. Those who become participants in government share, not just the praise, but also the blame if things go wrong.

The quotation with which this thesis began, compared a governor to a sun whose beams might cast a pleasant and terrible reverence upon its beholders. The covert functioning of the 1980s has meant that school governors might have been better described as moons reflecting the

light of the teachers' suns. In the 1990s, they may become suns themselves. They may also continue to be moons, but the light they reflect may be from central government, or the consumers, rather than from teachers.

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