Chapter 12
Organization and Leadership in Education: Changing Direction

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The purpose of this chapter is to raise some issues about the current direction of the field of study and training that is now commonly referred to as 'educational leadership and management' (ELM). It is intended as an agenda-setting chapter, opening up a number of more or less connected topics which the author considers worthy of debate by members of the field's academic community and their collaborators in the worlds of policy and practice. The discussion will lead to a number of proposals for refocusing and reorienting our work. The issues will be discussed under three broad headings, the first of which will receive most attention.

1. Does the field need a change of direction towards organization?
2. What are some key features of the current context?
3. How might we move forward?

Should there be a Change of Direction Towards Organization?

A Brief Backward Look

The present writer undertook postgraduate work in the mid-1960s under a remarkably knowledgeable and insightful political scientist, W. J. M. ('Bill') Mackenzie, author of, among other texts, *Politics and Social Science* (1967). He introduced his students at Manchester University to the then new writing on organizations, such as March and Simon's *Organizations* (1958), Amitai Etzioni's *Complex Organizations* (1961) and Blau and Scott's *Formal Organizations* (1963). Along with these works from the U.S.A. came landmark U.K. studies such as Burns and Stalker's (1961) work on mechanistic and organic forms of innovation and Joan Woodward's (1965) exploration of socio-technical systems.

The theory was generic and applications were to be made to specific fields such as education. At the same time in the same university Eric Hoyle (1969) was presenting this literature, together with other work on organizations that had a more explicitly educational focus, to teachers and other students of education who recognised its salience by their acclaim of his lectures. The appreciation of Hoyle's

D. Johnson, R. Maclean (eds.), *Teaching: Professionalization, Development and Leadership,*

large professional audiences was not just for his deep understanding of this new field but also for the clarity and wit of his presentations. As a young researcher I was privileged to attend these memorable occasions. It seems to me highly appropriate that the case being made in this chapter for a revival of interest in organization studies should appear in a volume dedicated to the scholar who has done more than anyone else in the U.K. to promote and develop this area of academic enquiry within education.

Later work of great significance included Charles Perrow's *Complex Organizations: a critical essay* (1972) from the U.S.A. on the dangers of reifying organizations and, from the U.K., David Silverman with his 'action' frame of reference in his *The Theory of Organizations* (1970). In view of my later discussion it is worth noting how prominent, even in book titles, the word 'complex' was as an adjective in relation to organizations already at that time. These works tended not to focus on leadership in a major way. There was significant work on leadership of course, for example, by Chester Barnard (1938), Philip Selznick (1957) and Fred Fiedler (1967), but it appeared almost as a sub-set of organization theory.

Restoring an Organizational Perspective

My intention here is not to present an analysis or review of this early work but to see it as a backdrop to more recent developments. I was forcibly reminded of it by an article by Johnson (2004) entitled 'Where have all the flowers gone? Reconnecting leadership preparation with the field of organization theory'. He argued that an organizational perspective had virtually disappeared from academic debate and preparation programmes in North America and that it was time to put it back again.

In this country within education the dominant concepts have been, first, 'management' and, later, 'leadership'. It is relevant to consider how leadership has in recent years come to dominate the field. In this context I am reminded of Bolman and Deal's outstanding work on reframing organizations in which they argue when discussing leadership that we have come to "focus too much on the actors and too little on the stage on which they play their parts" (1991: 408).

A key work, at least in the U.K., was Gerald Grace's 1995 book *School Leadership* with its challenging first sub-title *Beyond Education Management*. 'Management' had been the dominant concept almost since the origin of the field in the U.K. (unlike in North America where the more lofty 'educational administration' clung on (Brundrett, 2000)) and had spawned a seemingly ever-growing array of preparation programmes and research projects. Grace however considered the discourse of management to be inextricably associated with a narrow technicist orientation, hierarchical approaches and a market ideology. By contrast leadership was thought more capable of foregrounding the moral, professional and democratic dimensions of running educational institutions. By promoting the idea of leadership

rather than management he also hoped to secure a new emphasis on scholarly approaches based on critical sociology.

What Grace may not have foreseen, and certainly I did not anticipate it, was that the government would adopt 'leadership' so quickly and so strongly. Leadership soon became a regular feature of ministerial speeches and in 1998 Prime Minister Tony Blair announced that a National College for School Leadership (NCSL) would be established. The College opened its doors at Nottingham in 2000 and was followed by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL), focusing on the so-called 'learning and skills' sector, in 2003. So Grace's incursion into the field of educational management had an ironic and paradoxical aftermath (Hoyle and Wallace, 2005). A significant factor here may have been Blair's almost mystical belief in the power of leadership, encapsulated in a speech on 'Leadership in the Modern World' to News Corporation employees in California in 2006 which concluded with these exhortations to leaders: "Don't let your ego be carried away by the praise or your spirit diminished by the criticism… But for heaven's sake, above all else, lead" (Blair, 2006: 3).

The role of government in promoting leadership is highly ambiguous, as Wallace and Hoyle (2005) note. On the one hand there is a rhetorical emphasis on pro-activity and transformation while on the other the structural conditions established, for example, through tight accountability regimes and curriculum specifications, often inhibit leadership that is other than transmissional – any vision you like so long as it fits with ours.

I want to suggest in this chapter that leadership and management may be too restricting as labels for defining the scope of our field and that we should seriously consider adopting (or re-adopting) organization as our core concept. Perhaps 'leadership', like 'choice' (another term beloved by politicians for its rhetorical value), has been oversold. The difficulty of establishing a direct empirical connection between leadership and student effects may be indicative in this regard (Leithwood and Levin, 2005). Indeed according to Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) studies in a range of types of organization indicate an ambiguous connection between leadership and performance – the effects are "modest under most conditions, strong under a few conditions and absent in others" (p. 192). The data indicate that organizational performance is determined largely by factors outside the control of individuals and the authors consider that "leadership effects are overstated" (*ibid*.: 257, note 22). I am not of course arguing that leadership and management do not matter or that they should be displaced, simply that it may be time for a re-orientation or re-focusing towards ideas associated with organization more broadly.

Organization remains a central concept in the wider field of management studies (for example, Clegg et al., 2006; Grey, 2005) so its near-disappearance from studies within education should raise concerns of a theoretical nature.[1] Academic posts

[1] It is noteworthy that only one of the 30 chapters in the new edition of Clegg et al.'s well-known collection *Handbook of Organization Studies* (2006) has 'leadership' in the title.

outside education regularly have titles such as 'Senior Lecturer in Organizational Behaviour' and 'Lecturer in Public Sector Organization'.[2] Such posts in education almost invariably have 'leadership' but not 'organization' in the title.

In addition however the devaluing of organization has major *practical* implications which I will illustrate in a somewhat unconventional way. The distinguished journalist Peter Preston successfully edited *The Guardian* for some 20 years, and therefore has a good understanding of leadership from a practitioner perspective. Writing a few days after the Asian tsunami disaster of late 2004, he commented that pouring in doctors, nurses and medicines without proper planning "is merely to leave hope piled in open boxes at some bemused local airport… It makes effective bureaucracy the greatest friend of those in need" (Preston, 2005). He went on to look at other examples closer to home, including from the health and education services, and concluded that "organization matters". Reading that made me recall that I came into the field because of a similar perception and a belief that nothing worthwhile on any scale can be achieved without organization, whether in the sense of an activity (as Preston was using the term) or an entity.

The mention of bureaucracy may remind us that the term 'organization' has what might be described as an image problem. To many people it has a strongly mechanistic flavour and carries a sense of impersonality. This is somewhat strange as the word's etymological link is to organism rather than mechanism, and of course much writing about organization presents a sharply contrasting picture. A good example is a chapter called 'Life and Leadership in Organizations' in a book by the physicist, ecologist and systems theorist Fritjof Capra (2003). He talks about an organization's 'aliveness' being under threat from the mechanistic approach which he sees as one of the main obstacles to organizational change. This approach also promotes the illusion of control. He argues that machines can be controlled but living systems can only be influenced through impulses. Survival depends on creating "a boundary of meaning and hence of an identity among the members of a social network, based on a sense of belonging, which is the defining characteristic of community" (*ibid*.: 95). His conclusion is not optimistic. He sees today's organizational environments as increasingly life-destroying rather than life-enhancing.

Of course 'leadership' and 'organization' are connected. Ogawa and Bossert (1997) argue that leadership is a quality of organizations. They criticise views of leadership "that treat it as a quality that individuals possess apart from a social context" (*ibid*.: 16) and say that studies of leadership should have the organization as their unit of analysis. In my view that offers much potential. It would enable us to 'go up a level' in order to see the interconnections more clearly. Bottery (2004: 116) has recently offered us a very helpful multi-level model of trust. In this, if you look out from the meso level of the organization rather than from the micro level of the individual you get a clearer picture of the forces at work, for example, of how what Bottery calls the paradox of simultaneous control and fragmentation (control

[2] These examples are taken from actual advertisements, the first from Warwick Business School and the second from King's College London, which appeared adjacent to each other in *Education Guardian* on 31 January 2006.

from the state, and fragmentation from the market) is playing itself out. What is particularly noticeable about that type of paradox is its great complexity, and therefore the challenge for leaders in dealing with it. This type of analysis is very close to Wallace and Pocklington's (2002) notion of "orchestration" in their study of complex organizational change in education. It is significant in the context of this discussion that when Ogawa and Bossert say that leadership is an organizational quality they are treating leadership as "a systemic characteristic" (1997: 9).

Complex Adaptive Systems

Indeed it is arguable that the concentration on leadership has resulted in the applicability of systems thinking, of viewing organizations (for example) as complex adaptive systems, and the related ideas of complexity theory being seriously neglected in our field. Concepts such as non-linearity, self-organization, design, emergence, requisite variety, attractors and paradox have considerable and largely untapped potential (Chapman, 2002; Glatter et al., 2005; Raynor, 2004). More widely, systems approaches feature strongly in more politically-oriented forms of analysis which themselves have had little currency in our field (see, for example, Newman, 2001). At least one of these, new institutionalist theory (Scott, 2001), could be very fruitful in such a 'political' area as education and has indeed been applied to the study of local government (Lowndes and Wilson, 2003) and, in North America, to education (Crowson et al., 1996). This theoretical approach is concerned among other things with developing "an understanding of the complex, diverse and multi-level nature of institutional environments" (Lowndes and Wilson, 2003: 280).

Whereas leadership tends to emphasise the individual, complexity theory and institutional theory focus more on the context. Attempts have been made to mute the emphasis on the individual in leadership studies through concepts such as distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Harris, 2005) and democratic leadership (Woods, 2004, 2005). These ideas undoubtedly raise extremely important issues about the theory and practice of leadership, including moral and ethical dimensions. Crucial though these are, it is important that the connection between leadership and organization is firmly established analytically (Ogawa and Bossert, 1997; Robinson, 2001) otherwise we are in danger of continuing to be trapped within the ideology of the 'can-do' culture (Glatter, 1996) whereby agency is always considered capable of overcoming structure.

Gunter (2004) has explained that, despite having found the ideas of complexity theory valuable in her early thinking, she had moved on from them because they did not focus on power explicitly enough. In a detailed review, Wallace and Fertig (2006) are not as dismissive as Gunter but make broadly the same criticism. It seems a valid one, though as I have illustrated above power is by no means neglected by systems theorists. For example, Capra (2003: 79) says that "Social organizations such as businesses or political institutions are designed specifically to distribute power". The criticism raises the question however whether complexity theory and

theories of power must necessarily be regarded as mutually exclusive alternatives. Could we, for example, attempt an integration between them, along the lines advocated by Heck and Hallinger (2005) in their critique of the field today (to which this chapter returns later)?

Hoyle hints at the possibility of such integration in his thought-provoking review of Morrison's (2002) book on complexity theory and school leadership. He suggests that "there are aspects of organization theory which are *cognate* to complexity theory" (Hoyle, 2003: 214; my emphasis) and refers to work on unintended consequences, ambiguity, sense-making, coupling theory and endemic dilemmas in educational organizations. These ideas seem very compatible with a complexity perspective. However as Hoyle implies, language other than that directly associated with complexity theory can be, and has been, used to express similar ideas: its language is not to everyone's taste. For example, Crow (2004) talks more conventionally of the dilemmas for school leaders in balancing complexity and rationality without using the concepts of complexity theory directly. Only limited use of them is made by Wallace and Pocklington (2002) in their work on managing complex educational change. Grey, in a book which argues that ethical and political issues should be central to studying organizations, also puts similar ideas in alternative language:

> In the natural sciences… predictability is possible because we can design out unintended consequences and we are dealing with objects which don't have agency. In social things, including obviously organizations, this is not true because people do have some degree of agency, the variables surrounding their behaviour are too many and too varied to be designed out and so predictions will not be reliable.
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> (Grey, 2005: 129)

Thus the important point is not the precise language used but that such systemic issues of power, context and complexity are more likely to be addressed if the focus is on organization than if it is on leadership.

Hoyle (*ibid*.: 216) also argues "that it is unrealistic to assume that the 'natural' unrolling of complexity will somehow trump the state's power to pursue its policies". That seems correct but it is unlikely that things will go according to plan because of the limits to the control of human systems to which complexity theory draws attention. Again using somewhat different language Grey addresses this paradox: "When I say that organizations will always defy management control, I do not mean that they will totally do so". Even in the Nazi death camps there were recorded instances of subversion and survival. So an emphasis on control and efficiency "leads at one extreme to horror and at the other extreme to failure" (Grey, 2005: 131). More empirical work is needed in this area, to examine exactly how the limits to control operate in real contexts of educational policy and practice. Even at this stage however a complexity approach provides indications about appropriate leadership and management strategies (Raynor, 2004). It suggests that "temperate" leadership and management, moderate and incrementalist rather than 'transformational' in character, is frequently likely to be most effective (Wallace and Hoyle, 2005). Innovation should be seen in terms of a 'discovery' rather than a 'machine' model, in other words as essentially evolutionary rather than revolutionary (Glatter et al., 2005; Hargreaves, 2003).

In terms of power such a gradualist approach should not be identified with *compliance* (as distinct, for example, from non-compliance or mediation: see Wallace and Hoyle, 2005: 12–13). A striking comment on the linkage between power, purpose and complexity was made by the late U.S. political journalist I. F. Stone in reflecting on a long and distinguished career spent observing powerful people and great events:

> You cannot understand events without understanding that power is a prison… [T]here are very severe limits: if you have no power, you're free. But in every prison there is some leeway – someone with courage and ingenuity can do more than one who's lazy or a coward. Find out what can be done and judge on that: you must always have a sense of the possible.
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> (quoted by Lloyd, 1986: 19)

In Praise of Problem-Solving

A re-orientation towards systems thinking and organization (as well as 'temperate' leadership) would put a strong focus on problem-solving. Some writers (for example, Thrupp and Willmott, 2003) denigrate the idea of problem-solving because they see it as a purely technical 'maintenance' activity rather than as a core task that must take full account of context and values. In this connection Robinson's (2001) sophisticated yet practical analysis of leadership as embedded in task performance and problem-solving seems particularly insightful. She regards leadership as occurring "when ideas expressed in talk or action are recognised by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them" (*ibid*.: 93). Her perspective is centred on context, relationships and personal values and preferences – very far removed from a narrow technicist viewpoint.

Another helpful approach to problem-solving is provided by Raynor (2004). He draws on Schon's (1983) classification of organizational situations as either 'high ground' – fairly straightforward ones requiring mainly technical solutions – or 'swamp' – messy, 'wicked', highly confusing ones. Raynor sees problem-solving in schools as addressing 'swamp' situations and requiring skills of perception, cognitive complexity and reflection. He suggests that the complex information processing needed for problem-solving requires what Claxton (1997) calls 'slow thinking, "where a large database of experience gradually 'settles into' a solution" (Raynor, 2004: 182). An organizational perspective would give full recognition to the significance of problem-solving processes.

A related area is that of the management of paradox and contradiction (Glatter, 1996; Lewis, 2000; Morgan, 1997). This is a prominent feature of modern organizations, including educational ones, but is scarcely mentioned in official documents such as school leadership standards, perhaps because they seek to sustain a myth that solutions to organizational problems are always clear and self-evident. For instance, in a context of complexity schools are expected both to be creative and innovative and also to 'deliver' dependable performance and guaranteed effectiveness – to be 'high reliability organizations' (Leithwood et al., 1999). They must also seek to reconcile the ever-growing political emphasis on autonomy and independence with the

prescription to collaborate for the benefit of all the pupils in a geographical area (Woods et al., 2005b). These examples indicate again that a systems approach requires a multi-level perspective. As Ed Balls, a key U.K. Treasury adviser before he became a Member of Parliament and Secretary of State responsible for schools in England, is reported to have said in connection with public sector reform: "One of the things we've learnt is that we need to get systems, rather than individuals, right" (quoted in Caulkin, 2004). It is unfortunate that, despite this important insight, there is still so much system dysfunction, mostly arising from inappropriate command-and-control and quasi-market models and that, when problems inevitably arise with these, blame is often incorrectly placed on individuals and groups.

Thus, if we are to overcome the tendency to over-attribute success and failure to individuals, we need, as Pfeffer and Sutton argue (2006: 99), to focus on "locating and dealing with systemic causes of performance issues". A good example of this in education is provided by Lupton (2005) who examines empirically the problem of how to improve the quality of schooling in the poorest neighbourhoods. She draws attention to the need for contextual changes, for example, in national policies relating to accountability and school admissions, and also for different organizational designs that would significantly enhance organizational capacity in these highly fragile settings in which individuals are constantly under pressure and trading competing objectives. It is not enough just to motivate and develop staff because "…there is a limit to which better management, monitoring and training can secure good practice in the face of systemic constraints" (*ibid*.: 602).

Three Key Features of the Current Context

A major challenge currently facing the field in the U.K., the first of three such challenges that I want to identify, is the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), in my view a prime example of the kind of dysfunctional arrangement referred to above. The eminent political scientist David Marquand recently castigated social scientists and humanities academics for copying those in the natural sciences so that

> the academic profession became a secular priesthood, preoccupied by its own, increasingly arcane, internal arguments, all too often expressed in a rebarbative and inaccessible jargon and developed in obscure journals whose editorial practices aped those of the natural sciences. The public culture was impoverished, and the academy cut itself off from the living forces of the outside world.
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> (Marquand, 2004: 76)

To the extent that this is an accurate picture – and it appears at least recognisable – it could be argued to follow directly from the pressures of misguided incentive structures like the RAE which impact negatively on more practical and policy-oriented fields like our own and Marquand's (Levačić and Glatter, 2003). As Anthony Hopwood, director of Oxford's Said Business School has written: "At times it is as if the very act of publishing in journals has become more significant than the additions to knowledge that result from this" (quoted in MacLeod,

2005). From a background in the humanities MacCabe (2005) has argued that "Future ages will look back on the amount of wasted labour involved in the production of unread academic work with astonishment and contempt". Our own field has undoubtedly suffered in a similar way. Fortunately there seems at the time of writing to be an impetus, including even from those who have seen some merit in the RAE, to make 2008 the last one and replace it with a much lighter touch and more continuous system (see, for example, MacLeod, 2005; Wiggans, 2005). However the initial government proposals appear to have had a cool reception (see, for example, Corbyn, 2006).

The RAE is an example of the ever-growing power of the central state in England, the second key feature of the current context to which I want to refer (Foster, 2005). This power was already strongly evident by the conclusion of the last Conservative government (Glatter, 1997) and it has grown apace under New Labour. Local democracy has been a particular victim. We have far fewer and very much larger units of local government than other comparable countries. We also have far fewer elected officials and very many more appointed members of 'quangos' than do other major European countries (Jenkins, 2004). We are perhaps becoming what Kogan (2002) called "the compliant society" in which values are imposed rather than negotiated and in which evidence and analysis hold little sway when they conflict with particular pre-ordained 'directions of travel'.

The last feature of the context I want to mention is one where, by contrast, diversity reigns: the much more pluralistic supply side in research that now exists. Here are a few examples. Some 25 years ago a major research project on the selection of headteachers for secondary schools – the 'POST' project – was begun at The Open University for the then Department of Education and Science (Morgan et al., 1983). The first large-scale study since then, 'Recruitment and appointment of headteachers', is being undertaken at the time of writing for the NCSL by the management consultancy the Hay Group in a consortium which includes one university (Cambridge) along with the Eastern Leadership Centre and the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT). The evaluation of the controversial academies programme is being undertaken for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) by the management accountancy firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC). The first annual report, which was unpublished until journalists requested it under the new Freedom of Information Act, indicated that the DfES had commissioned PwC "in association with the University of York" to undertake the evaluation (PriceWaterhouseCoopers/DfES, 2003: 1). The second annual report (PriceWaterhouseCoopers/DfES, 2005) made no mention of York University and indicated that PwC alone was commissioned to do the work. Another DfES project, a *Follow-up Research into the State of School Leadership in England* (Stevens et al., 2005), was commissioned from the MORI Social Research Institute. The initial study had been conducted by the Institute of Education, University of London (Earley et al., 2002). A report on extended schools was done by the think tank Demos working with the Hay Group (Craig et al., 2004).

There appears therefore to be a growing involvement of non-academic bodies such as management accountants, consultancies, think tanks and polling organizations in research on educational policy and organization. This seems a significant

development. SCRELM (the Standing Conference on Research into Educational Leadership and Management) and other relevant bodies should urgently consider its implications and appropriate strategic responses.

Some Possible Ways Forward

In thinking about ways forward we might consider first the fairly radical critique of where we are as a field recently offered by Heck and Hallinger (2005). Although I suspect that their analysis will not be universally shared, it is arguably powerful enough to merit a serious response, even if it is rejected in which case it must be replaced by defensible alternatives. Essentially they accuse the field of self-indulgence, specifically of:

- Fostering an excessive diversity of perspectives without sufficient integration
- Over-emphasising normative issues
- Paying inadequate attention to studying how educational problems may be alleviated

For example, they argue that:

> In recent years, the field has been long on intellectual critique, but short on sustained action (and demonstrated results) about alternatives that will enhance schooling for children. This has created a crisis of credibility.
>
> (*ibid*.: 239)

Many of us would assert that the field has a wider scope than is indicated by the phrase "schooling for children", but leaving that aside there is a case for SCRELM and other bodies to debate whether such a crisis of credibility exists, and if it does whether the causes are those claimed by Heck and Hallinger or whether there are others, and what might be done to overcome it.

A second suggestion derives from considering the purpose of organization and leadership in education. It has become commonplace to assert that we need to bear in mind constantly that they are not ends in themselves but that their ultimate purpose is to promote learning. A prominent conclusion from the ESRC seminar series on "Redefining Educational Management and Leadership" (Bush et al., 1999) was that the field needed to give more explicit attention to the connection between leadership and learning. So, for example, the concept of 'learning-centred leadership' has been promoted by the NCSL. However, there is a question about whether this takes us far enough. As Lumby et al. (2003) have put it: "The recent shift towards conceptualising leadership as primarily concerned with learning may have lost sight of the fact that learning is not solely an end in itself, but may serve other purposes also…" (*ibid*.: 9). In other words: if leadership is for learning, what is learning for? Is that issue a proper concern of our field? Should we deal explicitly with the core issues about learning, which we have tended not to do, or is that outside our remit, and if it is, on what or whose judgement? This issue has recently been considered by Bottery (2004) in his discussion of the different paradigms that can drive

learning purposes, such as cultural transmission, social reconstruction, economic productivity and so on. Surely debate about these cannot be separated from issues of leadership and organization.

This suggests that we might make connections, for example, with the continuing debate between the 'traditionalists' and the 'progressives' over structure and curriculum following the Tomlinson report (DfES, 2004) and, associated with this, the more general characteristic of the English school system that has been referred to as "privileging of the academic" (Woods et al., 1998: 175). A related topic is the debate over so-called Mode 1 and Mode 2 knowledge production, as defined by Gibbons et al. (2000) – Mode 1 being discipline-centred and largely scholarly and Mode 2 transdisciplinary and concerned with application. This debate is clearly relevant to the specific domain of leadership development, even at doctoral level (Andrews and Grogan, 2005), but it extends well beyond that to encompass a broad spectrum of educational activity.

A conclusion for research in the field is that it might focus more than at present on how educational aims and purposes connect with leadership and organization. We appear often to imply that they are connected but it is not evident that we have sought to establish how. In turn such a focus might take us to quite topical issues that teachers, students and parents are much concerned about today, such as classroom behaviour, school buildings – or more generally environments for learning (Glancey, 2006) – and even school meals. Following the enormous impact of the television chef Jamie Oliver's Channel 4 series *Jamie's School Dinners* on policy (Shaw and Luck, 2005) and practice, it can fairly be suggested that food is an educational leadership issue. In fact the series was as much a demonstration of leadership as a polemic about food.

Clearly work in this vein already exists. Woods et al.'s (2005a) study of Steiner schools in England provides an example of how an inquiry into a particular form of schooling can lead to wider and quite fundamental questions about the curriculum and the purposes of education. It gives an indication of the kind of directions in which thinking more deeply about the question "If leadership is for learning, what is learning for?" might take us.

This is not an appeal for a parochial, introspective approach focused on education alone. Such an approach would be entirely inappropriate, not least following the publication of *Every Child Matters* (2003) and its implications for education including extended services based on schools. We should consciously seek to contribute to the wider literature of organization and leadership, in at least two directions:

1. In relation to the public and not-for-profit sectors, whose academics still tend to be separated from those undertaking studies in educational organization and leadership, to our disadvantage and theirs.
2. In the broader field of organization and management studies, in which, as Johnson's (2004) article to which I referred earlier pointed out, schools and universities can be viewed – along, for example, with churches, counselling agencies, hospitals and prisons – as *human service organizations* whose core task is transforming humans. That is not the core task of (for example) either

H.M. Revenue and Customs in the public sector nor of Tesco in the private sector. Only very rarely have we contributed to this broader literature (for example, Glatter, 2004). The recent translation of Mike Wallace from a Professor of Education at Bath University to a Professor of Public Sector Management at Cardiff University appears significant in this regard, not least in the context of this volume as he entered academic life from school-teaching, joining the School of Education at Bristol University at a time when Eric Hoyle was its leader.

Conclusion

I have argued that, after a period of intense concentration on ideas connected with leadership and management, we should consider changing the direction of the field in order to renew its concern with ideas associated with organization, which include viewing organizations as complex adaptive systems and taking an institutional perspective. The suggestion is to effect a re-orientation, not to replace leadership and management by organization. However it carries the implication that ELM – educational leadership and management – may be too restrictive a label to capture adequately the dynamics of the complex human and adaptive systems which we know as educational organizations.

Some key features of the current context for research in the field were briefly considered, specifically the RAE, the growing power of the central state in England and the much more pluralistic supply side in research, and it was argued that the latter in particular merited discussion and consideration of strategic responses. Finally some possible ways forward were proposed: addressing the charge of a 'crisis of credibility'; becoming more involved with issues of educational strategy and purpose and of the day-to-day learning environment; and contributing more frequently to the wider field of organization and leadership.

The suggested re-orientation towards organization might raise a concern that there would be less focus on the *practice* of leadership and management. This should not arise since the shift would provide a more holistic and systemic perspective, which would give better insights for practice. We should be aware however that the term 'practice' may hold dangers. Does it, for example, encourage us to become excessively centred on educational professionals, so that we may fail to give proper attention to the perspectives of students, parents, employers and 'society'? Is there a risk of becoming caught in a version of 'producer capture'?[3] Should we ask not just *what* the field is for, but also *whom* it is for?

[3] Ranson et al., 2005, provide one example of a study that avoids this, by focusing on governance.

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