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ABSTRACT

A "regional order," let alone a "world order," will be very difficult to achieve. In fact, global disorder has persisted throughout the last century. This paper describes concerns about the existing world order and delineates some of the apparent alternatives. Problems involved in revitalizing civil society in order to counteract the market-dominated structures of global capitalism are outlined. Educational organizations and educational administration achieve their ends through the trafficking of culture and knowledge through three main message systems--curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Nation-states are obligated to: (1) exercise a proper care for their citizens; (2) guarantee the integrity of civil society; and (3) guarantee the integrity and operation of markets. The paper suggests that a more modest aim is needed--the negotiation of difference--rather than the construction of a new world order or even a new regional order. In this sense, educational administration is a social, political, and above all, a cultural act through which some of the operations and defenses of the nation-state are achieved. The role of the administrator is to provide circumstances under which the negotiation of difference can occur and to support the professional development of teachers upon which such negotiation depends. (Contains six references.) (LMI)

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The Culture of Administration and the Administration of Culture: Educational Administration in the New World Order.

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Paper presented at the First ASEAN Symposium on Educational
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I very much appreciate the invitation to attend and speak with colleagues at this, the first ASEAN Symposium on Educational Management and Leadership. It is indeed a great honour to be invited to take part in such an important conversation. I congratulate the Institute of Educational Administration and its Director Dr Ibrahim for having the foresight, initiative and energy required to establish a conversation of such great moment. And I thank them for inviting this ignorant Australian to take part.

My claim to ignorance is well founded. It is confirmed every time I travel in Asia. I am confused by the multiplicity of languages within as well as between countries. I am humbled by my lack of knowledge of the depth of cultural traditions that are everywhere visible in the physical structures of the various societies and in the religious and cultural diversity of the region. I am stunned by the pace of economic development and the attendant political, social and cultural challenges currently being faced. I am impressed by the imagination and determination - the entrepreneurship- of the people I meet in both public and private spheres.

I am also dimly aware of the variety of ethical perspectives that exist side by side - the importance of Islam, the vitality of Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and their varied contributions to the search for an 'Asian Way'. I am aware that there are many metaphors which illustrate thinking about so many issues- The Bamboo, The Rice, The River, The Mountains....

But although I am ignorant, I am not wholly unfamiliar. Yesterday I was in China. Today I am in Malaysia. My colleagues and I work with many fine colleagues from and in Indonesia, Thailand, The Philippines, Hong Kong, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam. Other colleagues are currently working in Burma and Laos. We are excited by these opportunities and by the generosity of our Asian friends - by their willingness to share their cultures with us- to teach us to be less centred in the assumptions of the existing First World Global Order.

Australians are, like many in Asia, somewhat concerned about the existing World Order as well as about some of the apparent alternatives. This is how I put our concerns to a conference of Australian Educational Administrators a little while ago:

In the white beginning Australia was the empty country: *terra nullius*. Since that beginning we whites have established a banana of population curving from Brisbane to Adelaide via Sydney and Melbourne and a couple of lemons in Darwin and Perth. To us, though not to its original owners, the rest is still empty country.

The intellectual landscape is not unlike the physical one. The fruits of our intellectual endeavour are grafted precariously on the edge of our social needs. The rootstock onto which our aspirations might be grafted is alien and inhospitable to our desires. The media which should celebrate our identity are owned exclusively by men who seem uninterested in anything except their own fortunes and the securing of those political and economic conditions that will ensure their increase. The million unemployed, the further millions of their dependants, the hundreds of thousands who live below the poverty line, and the tens of thousands of homeless old and young are an embarrassing by-product of 'what had to be done' in the pursuit of such ends: the deregulation of the financial sector, the 'opening up' of industry to the world economy, the toughening of our competitive capacities, the weeding out of those unable to survive: in short the enforcement of a social and industrial eugenics movement in which the right to life is determined somewhere other than Australia.

(Bates 1992:2)

A rather pompous and incomplete analysis really. And not one that is universally shared in Australia. Many of my compatriots believe that Australia should throw open its borders to the new global economy and everything that goes with it, letting the winds of competition and change surge through the society: a transforming tempest after which The Market will have settled all of the economic, industrial, financial, cultural and social issues that currently confuse our politicians and bureaucracies. Government, they say, should withdraw from the field, farming out most of its services to competition, providing only a minimal safety-net for the most disadvantaged in health, education, social welfare etc.

Others of us are not so sure that the market is capable of solving pressing economic, let alone social problems. We remember Adam

Smith's comments regarding the virtues of the market in undermining repressive royal prerogatives but also the vices that emerge where a strong state does not protect the common wealth. The dismantling of the state in key social areas and the privatisation of health, education, even social welfare, is sending shivers down the back of many Australian social commentators who see a century of nation building being torn apart by commitment to questionable ideological principles and suspect economic, educational and social policies. Australia is feeling insecure and not very well clothed in the current high winds.

It is tempting for those of us who visit the countries of East Asia and see the vital evidence of their rapid development, to think that here lies the answer to Australia's problems. If only we look to the social structures, government policies and economic practices of the Asian Tigers, our current difficulties can be rapidly transformed. There may well be some truth in this. On the other hand it is also obvious that various Asian countries have taken quite different paths and are at quite different stages of development with economies, political systems, social structures and cultural understandings which are themselves quite diverse. Quite what 'The Asian Way' or even the 'ASEAN Way' might be is not at all clear - hence the vital importance of conferences such as this.

Nor is it at all clear just what the characteristics of the sought for (or feared) "New World Order" might be. As Professor Wang Gungwu suggested last year in his Ruth Wong Lecture to the joint meeting of the Australian and Singaporean Educational Research Associations:

Since the end of the Cold War, there have been many efforts to define a new world order or new ways of explaining the world. For many there is the 'end of history' school of thought which trumpets the ultimate triumph of capitalism and liberal democracy. This view would expect the West to dominate. If the world were to be described as a pyramid, it would be the top third of the pyramid, with the United States seen by some as the top third of that. If so, an Asia-Pacific that includes the United States, and other 'Western' extensions like Japan, Canada and Australasia, could look forward to being near the top because of the powerful pull of the Americans. That could also mean, however, the top third will dictate the standards of excellence to the rest.

(Gungwu, 1997:50)

Let me hasten to distance myself from this view and its echoes of economic and cultural colonialism. While there are Australians who wish to evoke a racist nostalgia for a mythical cultural purity in which whites are regarded as the chosen people, the majority of us recognise the cultural heterogeneity of our past, our present and our future and the enormous dynamic for change and development that such heterogeneity offers a multi-cultural Australian society in a multi-cultural Asia- Pacific and indeed a multi-cultural world.

There is, of course, an alternative view which, as Professor Gungwu suggests:

...focuses on the 'clash of civilisations' and offers quite a different perspective. The West is depicted as being on the defensive. The universalism that it claims to represent is no longer valid. Its civilisation...has been challenged by at least two rivals, representing the Islamic and the East Asian 'Confucian' civilisations, which may combine to end the past two centuries of Western dominance. If this is true, both the West and the potential enemies of Western dominance are to be found in the emerging Asia-Pacific region. Is the region, therefore, destined to be an arena for future conflict between the countries that are expected to represent the two opposing sides? National ideals of education under such circumstances, are likely to be submerged to cope with the ensuing tensions.

(Gungwu, 1997:50)

This is a view which is articulated more often these days and is leading, in part, to calls for the redefinition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to include emphases on economic and social, as well as individual, rights.

My view of this position is that it faces two difficulties. Firstly, neither Islamic nor Confucian perspectives are anywhere near as monolithic as this argument suggests. Nor are they necessarily compatible. (Nor, of course is the Western tradition of 'individualism' without challenge in the West). Secondly, and more importantly, the complexity of economic, social and cultural relations on both regional and global scales is too great to be encapsulated within simple formulae which assume easy coincidences between the various dimensions of the issues and the particular interests of individual nation-states.

The truth is that a Regional Order, let alone a World Order, is going to be very difficult to achieve. We may, indeed, have to settle for something much less ambitious.

A Global Disorder?

In fact one of the persisting features of the past century has been the continuing existence of global disorder in the face of various energetic attempts to create order. As Doug Porter puts it:

A puzzling and egocentric global fantasy has persisted since late in World War II. This fantasy has it that the world is a theatrical stage upon which historic events can be scripted and played out in a rational and controlled manner.

(1996:18)

The truth of the matter is that despite continuous summitry and the establishment and operations of global political as well as industrial organisations, considerable disorder persists and is, in some areas, getting worse. The key question is why, in the face of such activity, there have been few lasting benefits for a growing proportion of the world's population living in unspeakable conditions of poverty and environmental degradation?

Porter, among other commentators, has observed that part of the answer may well be that the political structures - which are largely confined to nation states and alliances of nation states- have a quite different structure and organisation to the emerging economic and industrial structures which are transnational in character. During the 1970's and 1980's economic and political theory emanating in the economic 'think tanks' of the West and adopted with enthusiasm by the Thatcher and Reagan governments in particular, saw the solution to the problem as austerity, de-regulation and the minimisation of the state. The result was not universal prosperity but rather:

Unemployment and underemployment had risen dramatically in expanding urban areas, while skills and wealth were concentrated among a small urban elite. Transnational control of local industry had not diversified the export bases of most developing countries, but was manufacturing items of "conspicuous consumption". In the rural areas the Green Revolution had increased yields and labour productivity but benefits largely accrued to landowners and suppliers, while

disrupting rural communities and reinforcing the flight to urban areas.

(Porter, 1996:23)

While these policies were adopted at home in the West they were also imposed on developing countries through agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The principal provisions of structural adjustment programs, applied to heavily indebted countries, and economic liberalisation and reform, in the case of socialist inspired command economies like Vietnam, were common the world over: deregulation, privatisation of state functions, removal of trade barriers, currency devaluation, and other actions aimed at "getting prices right" by removing fetters on the free play of market forces.

(Porter, 1996:26)

Moreover, those who had the power to impose such measures justified them not only in economic terms but also in moral terms- proclaiming that the freedom of the market would produce the freedom of individuals - a complete inversion of the insights of Adam Smith to whom they so often appealed for justification. Adam Smith was in no doubt of the need for a strong representative state in restraining the worst excesses of untrammelled commerce. The effect was entirely predictable to those who had read his major work 'The Theory of Moral Sentiments' or even those who had actually read 'The Wealth of Nations'.

As Porter puts it

Despite the aura of infallibility surrounding this new orthodoxy, by the early 1990's the results were stunningly unimpressive. And although applied in a range of different ways, the comfortable, mutually supporting relation presumed to exist between democratic politics and economic liberalism were found in practice not to be tied together in any straightforward, functional way...Indeed, the global sense of stability briefly fostered by this orthodoxy was soon passed over for a new sense of global uncertainty.

(1996:26-7)

My own sense of the period is that the 'global sense of stability' supposedly fostered by such doctrines was experienced fleetingly only by those who devised the strategy and by nobody else. The economic and moral imperialism of this view was blatant and obvious to all but its messengers. It was especially obvious to the leaders of rapidly developing countries such as Dr Mahathir who determined to maintain a strong commitment to the social and cultural - as well as the economic- responsibilities of the nation state and to celebrate a particular cultural and economic identity in the face of global uncertainty.

In other countries, and I include Australia in this group, the hard fought tradition of state responsibility towards civil society was being eroded- the gains of a century of struggle were being dismantled as the nation state was undermined by international capital and subordinated to the global mechanisms of market regulation. The notion that the state should abandon civil society to its fate in the face of the imperative of global economic competition gained ascendancy.

The State and Civil Society.

For many in the west the revitalisation of civil society has been seen as a necessary correction to the competitive, market dominated structures of global capitalism. The problem with this is that state has frequently been seen as implicated in the construction of an alienating New World Economic Order and is therefore rejected in the attempt to construct a new civil society in which the rights, culture and privileges of 'ordinary people' are wrested back from government.

However, in the West the notion of civil society has somewhat romantic connotations associated with a nostalgic mis-remembering of local communities which were always harmonious, consensual, integrated and managed through face to face negotiations. There is a tendency for such romantics to see civil society as something separate from the state which plays little or no part in its activities. The state- in extreme versions of this vision- is the enemy of civil society because its organisations, bureaucracies, regulations and policing authorities unwarrantedly intervene in the life of local communities.

More recent commentators (Bader, 1995; Kaplan, 1994) have pointed out that contemporary civil societies include a great variety of people, ideals and normative frames which are not necessarily committed to a consensual politics and economics. Quasi legitimate

organisations of criminals, illicit traders in illegal materials and activities, those seeking the resources and power of the rich through coercion, those seeking vengeance for humiliation and repression are all part of civil society. The only effective defence against such elements in civil society is indeed a strong and effective state. A confident and moral civil society therefore depends upon the state for its survival.

Similarly, as Adam Smith recognised, markets depend upon more than simple exchange mechanisms in order to operate. They depend upon trust, contract, obligation and accountability- indeed upon a moral foundation which can only be articulated and moderated on a large and organised scale by the state. The difficulty here is that those very foundations of ethical behaviour guaranteed by the state are themselves in jeopardy if the global, supranational markets of the New World Disorder undermine the effectiveness of the nation state without replacing its local guarantees with global guarantees.

The state, then, has dual responsibilities. Firstly to guarantee the integrity of civil society and secondly, to guarantee the integrity of markets.

But there is a third responsibility that the state must accept. That is a responsibility that is rooted in the very legitimacy of the state - the care of its people. Now it is clear that some of the people in every society are very well able to take care of themselves. Elites everywhere need little in the way of government support for basic social rights in health, education, opportunity. (Though this is not to say that they will not demand that governments support and guarantee the exclusivity of their established privileges). The State has a main responsibility, therefore to provide an equitable and accessible range of institutional provision which will guarantee some quality of life for those who are not so privileged. In doing so it will underpin the guarantees it provides for the market and for civil society. There is a great deal of evidence that by doing so it will also contribute to the economic health and well being of the nation.

The nation state can only provide these services and guarantees, however, within the context of the cultural norms which constitute and guide the everyday lives of its citizens. I have referred earlier to the various traditions of Asian (and Western) societies and to the metaphors through which individuals and groups construct the meaning and significance of their lives.

Indeed, culture is fundamental to meaning and therefore to action. As I have insisted on a previous occasion:

Culture is what gives meaning to life. Culture is the intellectual framework that connects beliefs, values and knowledge with action. Through the routinisation of action culture is sedimented deeply into the unconsciousness of individuals. Administration is part of the process that facilitates or inhibits collective action through the mobilisation of resources and the routinisation of action. Administration inevitably, therefore, not only produces and reproduces, but is also saturated with cultural concerns.

(Bates, 1992:3)

This does not mean, however, that there can be a simple reading off of administrative routines in a direct correspondence with particular cultural concerns. Firstly, this is because cultures are always dynamic - they are continually changing in response to internal dialogue. Islam is not a monolithic structure in values or organisation. Neither is Confucianism or Christianity or Hinduism or Taoism or Buddhism. There are always internal debates concerning the 'true' meaning of the culture. Fundamentalism and progressivism are part of all cultural traditions.

Moreover, the condition of the contemporary world is one of communication - the transport of people, ideas, processes, money, technology and cultures across boundaries. These boundaries are not necessarily those of the nation state. Such boundaries may exist within particular nation states. Various nation states may exist within certain cultural boundaries. The boundaries of economics, culture, religion and politics may not coincide with each other or with nation states. Such is clearly the case within Asia.

Rizvi, following Hall (1992), Bhabha(1994), Clifford (1998) and Pieterse(1995) suggests that as a result, the common condition brought about by globalisation is that of hybridity.

Moreover,

If hybridity is becoming a basic characteristic of globalisation....then we cannot know cultures in their pristine and authentic form. Instead, our focus must shift to the ways in which cultural forms become separated from existing practices

and recombine with new forms in new practices in their local contexts. In a world where flows of information, media symbols and images, and political and cultural ideas are constant and relentless, new cultural formations cannot be anything but deeply affected. In a world increasingly constituted by flows of finance, technology and people, through tourism, education and migration, hybridisation has become a condition of social existence, and not something that can be regarded as exceptional.

(Rizvi, 1997:23)

Now, it does seem to be the case, doesn't it, that so much hybridisation is driven by Western, largely American, products - from Coca-Cola and MacDonalDs to Bill Gates and Microsoft. This is a constant source of adaptation as well as irritation to us all - no less in Australia than East Asia I assure you.

However, the traffic is not all one way and indeed the cultural xenophobia of the United States population as a whole gives the rest of us a chance to explore and exchange ideas, as it were, behind their backs. And so it will happen. Meetings such as this will traffic in a different currency. That is already evident from the program and the discussion. The concern here is not simply with the technology of administration - a preoccupation of Western (particularly American) texts for half a century- but also with the meaning of administration as a cultural activity. And it is this issue to which I now want to direct our attention.

The Culture and Administration and the Administration of Culture.

Administration is both a technical and a cultural activity. It is technical in that is directed towards the establishment, maintenance, policing and evaluation of an activity or collection of activities. But administration is always part of a broader organisational structure. And organisation, as Schattschneider reminds us, is the mobilisation of bias. That is, organisation is directed towards the pursuit of certain goals in preference to others. The choice between goals is a normative choice and therefore always rooted in cultural norms of one kind or another.

Educational organisations and, therefore, educational administration are perfect exemplars of these assertions. Educational organisations

achieve their ends through the trafficking of culture and knowledge. They do this through three main message systems: curriculum, or the determination of what is to count as valid knowledge; pedagogy, or what is to count as valid transmission of knowledge; and assessment; or what is to count as valid realisation of knowledge by the learner. Administration is the process by which these message systems are controlled. Organisation is the political structure within which these message systems are determined.

Now, setting aside for a moment the administration of elite educational systems which are largely driven by the desire to retain positional advantage - that is, to perpetuate the elite status of elites across generations, I want to focus on the responsibilities and activities of nation-states in their obligations to:

- a) exercise a proper care for their citizens
- b) guarantee the integrity of civil society and
- c) guarantee the integrity and operations of markets.

As I have argued, nation states can only succeed in these responsibilities within a framework of cultural concerns. Moreover, these cultural concerns are almost inevitably within the contemporary world, multiple and contested. This contestation occurs both within particular traditions (conservatism versus progressivism for instance) and between competing traditions on an increasingly global scale - the process of hybridisation.

These cultural concerns are part of the warp and woof of education in terms of discussion over what is to count as knowledge, how knowledge is to be transmitted, how knowledge is to be evaluated and what administrative processes are to encourage agreed outcomes. We are all familiar with this on a daily basis.

We are also familiar with the administrative mechanisms through which control over curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are sought. For example, syllabus, textbook, teachers guides, external testing and examination. Such mechanisms are appropriate for certain purposes in certain circumstances. But the point I want to make is a rather obvious though neglected one: circumstances vary. No matter how much we might wish that they did not: circumstances vary. It follows that, in terms of conventional mechanisms of administrative control circumstances are the enemy of administration. Every teacher

knows this. Every teacher experiences and feels this every day in every classroom. At its simplest it is called the problem of control.

Let me illustrate this. Some schools in inner Melbourne - the city I work in- enrol students from some 30 different nationalities. Nearly all such students are children of recently arrived migrants from Europe, the middle East, South America, Africa, China, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, India, Mauritius, Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Papua and New Guinea to name but a few origins. There is no common culture. There is no common language - at least not initially. Even when a reasonable amount of English is used and understood, the cultural meanings which are carried by particular words and phrases may be quite different. Language carries culture and is structured by culture. Therefore the translation of words and phrases into the variety of first languages is a translation into different cultural forms. Meaning is changed in the process. This is a fundamental process of hybridisation, for those cultural meanings are infused back into the English of the classroom. Misunderstandings - sometimes hilarious and sometimes tragic- are the common currency of the classroom.

Now under such circumstances, what is the teacher to make of the formal curriculum, specified so carefully by the Ministry of Education? How is the pedagogy of the classroom to be controlled in ways which limit learning to the formal curriculum? How are the formal assessment practices to be applied in an equitable manner and how is one to interpret the multiple cultural meanings which lie behind both questions and answers? How are these people to become properly 'Australian'? And how is the idea of what is 'Australian' modified in the process of cultural adaptation?

There is an immediate temptation in such circumstances to conclude that circumstances beyond the teachers control prevent the proper administration of curriculum, pedagogy or assessment. But I want to suggest to you that this temptation is misplaced, for here, in a most fundamental way, the teacher is undertaking the most fundamental responsibilities of the state by ensuring

- a) a proper care for its citizens
- b) the guarantee of the integrity of civil society and
- c) the guarantee of the integrity of markets.

I make this claim on the basis that the teacher in this classroom is performing a cultural transaction of great complexity in ensuring that each student from whatever cultural background can take part in the transactions of the classroom; that the order of the classroom is maintained in ways which are equitable and fair; that the mechanisms of trust, reciprocity and contract are exhibited in the successful negotiation of understanding in the classroom, and that the very outcomes of the process of hybridisation enrich the resultant curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices of the classroom.

These are claims that need articulating more fully and I will do so elsewhere. All I want to suggest here is that the true function of administration is the provision and support of the conditions which allow teachers to perform such work. Or, to put it in another fashion, the primary function of educational administration is not the technical control of educational processes, but the professional development and support of teachers as they negotiate the three fundamental responsibilities of the state through the message systems of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

The Negotiation of Difference

I suggested earlier that we needed a more modest aim than the construction of a New World Order or even a New Regional Order. The aim that is implicit in my above account is that which is always implicit in the act of teaching - the negotiation of difference. It is clear from our increasing contact with each other that the variety of cultural perspectives among us is very great. The values, traditions, routinised actions which are an unconscious part of our daily lives and activities assure us of difference. Our identities are, for a large part, caught up in those differences. However, the process of education is the continual negotiation of difference - that is what we are doing right now- in this place, at this moment. The administration of this conference is such as to allow that process to take place - it facilitates and supports our engagement just as the process of administration in educational institutions should facilitate and support the work of teachers and pupils as they negotiate difference every minute of every day.

Seen in this sense educational administration is a social, political and above all cultural act through which some of the operations and defences of the nation state are achieved. Certainly there are technical matters which must be addressed within the school- the

achievement of a productive capacity within the individual and the nation is essential, but what is of even more profound significance is the achievement of a cultural understanding within which that productive capacity has meaning and purpose. This too is the role of the teacher. This too, by implication, is the role of the administrator - to provide the circumstances under which the negotiation of difference can take place and to support the professional development of teachers upon which such negotiation depends.

In doing so, the teacher and the administrator have a fundamental need for the kind of negotiation of difference that a conference such as this can provide.

Thank you for your invitation to join the conference. We may not be about to achieve a New World Order in these three short days, but we are certainly in the process of understanding each other a little better, and, who knows, our negotiation of differences in a context of mutual respect might make some small contribution to a better world. This indeed the culture of administration and the administration of culture in practice.

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