Peripheralisation within a centralised state education system: small schools and the Auckland Education Board, 1877-1914

Robina Dean

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Abstract

Small schools are an icon of New Zealand's schooling system, but little attention has been focused on them outside the context of rural education. This historical study addresses the relationship between administrators and small schools in New Zealand to examine the part of small schools in the gradual centralisation of education. It examines how a centre-periphery framework contributes to an understanding of the relationship between the educational State and schools within the context of the relationship between the Auckland Education Board and small schools between 1877 and 1914. It suggests that systemic factors apart from peripheral geographical location contributed to tensions caused by the persistent numerical domination by small schools of the educational landscape. It proposes that small schools were gradually relegated to the periphery as part of the growth of central government within a nationalising discourse of uniformity and efficiency.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The history of New Zealand schooling is underpinned by a tradition of small schools.[1] Although not all small schools were rural schools, small schools have received little attention outside of the rural context, as 'providing for rural children has always been a major concern in New Zealand.'[2]

A collective nostalgia for things 'small and beautiful'[3] obscures tensions presented by small schools that contributed to the direction of schooling into the twentieth century. Schooling as it developed represented a relationship between people: the teacher, the pupils and the community at one level, and between the community and the educational State at another.[4] The aspirations of communities for their children and the personal circumstances of families shaped the schooling experience for both teacher and pupil.[5] In small schools this relationship may have been magnified by geographic isolation and presents the possibility of tensions where aspirations of communities and governments converged.

Part of gaining an understanding of the emergence of schooling in the nineteenth century is to consider the aspirations of governments and overlapping roles of location, authority and relations of power.[6] In New Zealand, schools in the first instance were based on English and Scottish models, influenced in turn by the

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[1] R. Shuker, *The one best system? A revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1987; I. A. McLaren, *Education in a small democracy: New Zealand*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.

[2] Shuker, *The one best system?* p. 264.

[3] W. J. Reese, *History, education, and the schools*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, p.62.

[4] P. Miller and I. Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal State', in M. R Theobald, and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1990.

[5] Miller and Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal State'.

[6] Hamilton. D., 'Notes from nowhere: (on the beginnings of modern schooling)', in T. S. Popkewitz, B. M. Franklin, and M. A. Pereyra (eds), *Cultural history and education: critical essays on knowledge and schooling*, New York, Routledge Falmer, 2001, pp. 187-206. Also see Lowe, 'A Scottish diaspora: influences on educational planning in twentieth-century England', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2003, pp. 319-330; Miller and Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal State'.

school system developed in the United States of America.[7] The model of schooling that emerged in the United States in the early nineteenth century was an eclectic set of practices based on the notion of the *common* school.[8] The goal of schooling was to be achieved by a standardised syllabus and identical provision of buildings and equipment based on a didactic model of instruction.[9] A uniform system was to be achieved through a fair distribution of funding based on an equal per-pupil payment, through the certification of teachers and through examination and supervision by school inspectors. In addition, extending schooling to reach across distance and geographical barriers to isolated communities posed a problem for generations of educators in New Zealand.[10] Problems related to these schools tended to be identified as issues of transportation, distance and improving communication.[11]

However, this view disguises systemic problems related to a per-pupil funding formula. Small schools received the lowest levels of funding and their teachers received the lowest salaries. When problems such as teacher shortages, cut backs in government spending, rudimentary school buildings, poverty and unemployment converged, the existence of small schools became increasingly problematic for school administrators.[12] By the beginning of the twentieth century professional educators and officials regarded these small schools as inferior within the growth of a swelling bureaucratic infrastructure and a public perception of cities and, by implication, their large schools as the 'vanguard of educational progress.'[13]

Aim

The aim of this historical study is to examine how the State responded to the large numbers of small schools in the burgeoning Auckland region from 1877 to 1914.

The core research questions that underpin this project are:

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[7] Reese, *History, education, and the schools.*

[8] Lowe, 'A Scottish diaspora'.

[9] Hamilton, 'Notes from nowhere'.

[10] Shuker, *The one best system?*

[11] Shuker, *The one best system?*

[12] R. Arnold, 'Women in the New Zealand teaching profession 1877-1920: a comparative perspective', in R. Openshaw and D. McKenzie (eds), *Reinterpreting the educational past: essays in the history of New Zealand education*, Wellington, NZCER, 1987.

[13] Reese, *History, education and the schools*, p. 62

1. What were the features of schooling in the Auckland region in terms of location, size and attainment?
2. How were small schools reported in official discourses?
3. How did the relationship between the Auckland Education Board and small schools demonstrate tension between administrators and schools?
4. How did the Auckland Education Board respond to of small schools?

The study that follows begins by setting the scene in Chapter Two with an overview of nineteenth century schooling. It plots the emergence of schooling as characterised by small-scale, localised and disorderly endeavours,[14] within a climate of increasing State intervention. It places small schools as one axis in a relationship with administrators that tended to be one of conflicting aspirations and priorities within the egression of increased centralisation of education.

Chapter Three presents a review of literature exploring both the History of Education and literature relating to centre and periphery. It identifies a gap in understanding a problem for administrators of small schools as being more than a matter of extending the benefits of education across geographical distance. It explores in depth the theoretical framework of centre-periphery relationships based on the bureaucratic manipulation of power. The chapter ends by identifying small schools as a site of tension within New Zealand's pursuit of a national identity and an agenda of uniformity and efficiency.

Chapter Four identifies and justifies a qualitative approach to documentary analysis as most appropriate for this historical study, addressing the importance of engagement with discourse as central to the use of official documents as the source of data.

Chapter Five addresses a period of 'bureaucratic complexity'[15] between 1877 and 1900, referred to as the 'heyday' of the Education Boards,[16] in the context of the Auckland Education Board. Chapter Six analyses the years between 1901 and 1914 during which increasing centralisation of education administration culminated in

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[14] Hamilton, 'Notes from nowhere.'

[15] Stephenson. M. S., *Education, state formation and nation building: explaining institutional differentiation in New Zealand education*, paper presented at NZARE conference, 6 – 9 Dec, 2001, p. 10.

[16] I. A. McLaren, *Education in a small democracy: New Zealand,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, p.37.

the passage of the *Education Act* (1914), when control of schooling transferred from regional Education Boards to the Department of Education in Wellington.

A centre-periphery approach identifies small schools as embedded in discourses of uniformity and efficiency in ways that demonstrate ambivalence towards them. On the one hand they came to symbolise that the State was meeting its 'strongest obligation under a national system,'[17] to provide schooling to children of New Zealand. On the other hand, their existence within a centralising agenda of government saw them increasingly as a site of tension.

Chapter Seven concludes this study by reflecting on the longevity of small schools in New Zealand's educational landscape in the light of the findings of this study, as a legacy of events that occurred in the first thirty-seven years of State funded education.

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[17] Report of the Minister of Education, *Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives*, E-1, 1880, p. 3.

Chapter Two

Schooling in nineteenth century New Zealand

Introduction

The history of schooling in New Zealand is predominantly a story of small schools.[18] A colonial society characterised by a small, dispersed population makes the one-teacher schools a taken-for-granted part of the educational past.[19]

This chapter examines the background to both the emergence of schooling and the ideas behind the establishment of schools beginning with occurrences in America and Britain that had repercussions for New Zealand. What follows is a perusal of schooling in New Zealand as it emerged, identifying the small school as the meeting point of conflicting aspirations within an increasingly centralised schooling system.

The emergence of schools

When the suggestion was made in 1849[20] that the New Zealand government should develop and fund a compulsory education system, it was greeted as 'a startling departure from ordinary practice.'**[21]** Education and schooling were not always synonymous concepts. As Reese points out, the family was the 'basic source of education and socialisation'[22] until the nineteenth century. Alternative means of procuring an education through schooling tended to depend on the availability of teachers and schools, the cost, initiatives of such organisations as the Church, and a demand from the

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[18] In 1900, 83 percent of schools in New Zealand were one- and –two- teacher schools. In R. Shuker, *The one best system? A revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1987.

[19] For example, see Shuker, *The one best system?*, and K. Weiler, 'Reflections on writing a history of women teachers', in K. Weiler and M. R. Theobald (eds), *Telling women's lives: narrative inquiries in the history of women's education*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 1999.

[20] Parliamentary debates cited in A. Jones, J. Marshall, K. Morris Mathews, H. G. Smith, and L. Tuhiwai Smith, *Myths and realities: schooling in New Zealand (2ⁿᵈ Ed.)*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1995.

[21] Jones, Marshall, Morris Mathews, Smith, and Tuhiwai Smith, *Myths and realities: schooling in New Zealand*, p. 43.

[22] W. Reese, *History, education, and the schools*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, p. 96.

community for schooling.[23] Schools played a minimal role in the life and upbringing of children,[24] and in New Zealand this was the case well into the nineteenth century.

The shape of schooling was neither predetermined nor inevitable, and like the story of immigration to New Zealand, it began, by and large, as a haphazard and unpremeditated process.[25] Most settlers arrived unassisted[26] and there was little or no coordination or direction in the provision of schooling until the 1850s. Schools tended to be modelled on the variable Scottish or English experience of their teachers. What they may have had in common was a sense of racial and social superiority that transported and reproduced attitudes to race, class and gender to the periphery of the Empire.[27]

The transition of schooling to a system provided and funded by the State and the form it took in New Zealand followed a trajectory similar to the formation of secular schooling systems in America and across the English-speaking world.[28] Schooling as the education of children controlled and funded by governments was a phenomenon of the nineteenth century. It is described variously as *mass* or *universal* education, and is characterised as both compulsory and free.[29]

The rise of Protestantism brought to nineteenth century British politics the goal of mental and bodily discipline to the extent that the State would maintain power through a variety of formal institutions, of which the school

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[23] Shuker, *One best system?*

[24] Reese, *History, education, and the schools.*

[25] D. Hamilton, 'Notes from nowhere: (on the beginnings of modern schooling)', in T. S. Popkewitz, B. M. Franklin, and M. A. Pereyra (eds), *Cultural history and education: critical essays on knowledge and schooling*, New York, Routledge Falmer, 2001.

[26] K. Sinclair, with additional material by R. Dalziel, *A history of New Zealand,* Auckland, Penguin Books, 2000.

[27] I. Grosvenor, 'There's no place like home': education and the making of national identity,' *History of Education*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1999, p. 245.

[28] For example, teacher training mechanisms as well as surveillance by inspectors had parallels in the United States and Britain. See C. A. Ogren, *The American state normal school: "an instrument of great good"*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005; D. Tyack and L. Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: a century of public school reform,* Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1995.

[29] Hamilton, 'Notes from nowhere'.

was one. The nineteenth century was the 'great age of institution building' as the State increasingly used its power to 'cure the ill, punish the fallen, and educate the young.'[30] From this perspective the modern school as it emerged may be seen to represent the convergence of centralised authority, public discipline and personal duty.[31]

The shift to the State extending literacy through the medium of schools to those previously excluded from education, developed as a means to control the masses within the evolution of the modern capitalist economy. During the nineteenth century social tensions in Britain were exacerbated by increased urbanisation and the emergence of a commercial middle class.[32] The exercise of patriarchal traditions was disrupted. Upheavals in the influence of religion and class accompanied new patterns of employment and paved the way for mass education to emerge as a mechanism of a capitalist economy to train a docile, obedient workforce out of an increasingly volatile working class.[33]

However, the upheavals of social, political and economic change, particularly in the colonial setting, may be described as a 'crisis in obedience,'[34] as traditional class relationships were disrupted. The early State education system, 'of necessity emerged from an older family paradigm of schooling.'[35] Miller and Davey describe a crisis in patriarchy that reverberated in the rise of schooling and the involvement of the State 'in the complex search for new forms of institutional governance.'[36] In the case of the United States of America, Tyack describes the emergence of the common school as a vehicle to 'Americanise' diverse ethnic groups to adopt the values

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[30] Reese, *History, education, and the schools,* p.61.

[31] Hamilton, 'Notes from nowhere', p. 203.

[32] P. Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools: overcoming lingering obstacles', *Phi Delta Kappan*, Oct., 2005, pp. 116-122.

[33] P. Miller and I. Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal state', in M. R Theobald, and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1990.; Shuker, *One best system?*

[34] Miller and Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal state', p.18.

[35] M. R. Theobald, 'Women's teaching labour: the family and the state in nineteenth century Victoria', in M. R. Theobald and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1990, p. 28.

[36] Miller & Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal state', p. 21.

of 'native-born' (white, prosperous, English-speaking, Protestant) Americans.[37] The interest of the State in schooling involved the 'symbolic delegitimation of collective ethnic identity.'[38]

Much of New Zealand's emerging education system borrowed features from England. Lowe notes that England herself developed an eclectic system that took its cue from the American common school system, from the 'test-bed' of Ireland, and from the experiment of 'cultural imperialism' in Wales.[39] It was the Scottish system, according to Lowe, that promoted social mobility which had the strongest impact in England. New Zealand adopted many of the same structures such as linking teacher salaries to pupil attendance, funding schools on a per-pupil basis, and setting in place a didactic system supported by a rigid syllabus.[40] This may be accounted for by mass migration, the common origin of most of the people who took an active role in the development of schooling, the influence of British imperialism,[41] and by the improvement of communication and 'transnational' sharing of ideas[42] that accelerated into the twentieth century. It was logical that New Zealanders would look to 'mother' England and Scotland, to model their education system for European settlers.

The provision of schooling for Maori from the early nineteenth century, on the other hand, was driven by a civilising and 'Europeanising' agenda[43] of missionaries, initially.[44] The State continued this agenda in later years via the Native School system which operated for over a century in parallel to State

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[37] D. B. Tyack, 'Constructing difference: historical reflections on schooling and social diversity', *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 95, No. 1, 1993, pp. 8-34.

[38] Tyack, 'Constructing difference', p. 14.

[39] R. Lowe, 'A Scottish diaspora: influences on educational planning in twentieth century England', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 3, 2003, pp. 319-330.

[40] Lowe, 'A Scottish diaspora'.

[41] C. Whitehead, 'The historiography of British Imperial education policy, Part 1: India', *History of Education*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2005, pp. 315-329.

[42] K. Whitehead and J. Peppard, 'Transnational innovations, local, concerns, and disruptive teachers and students in interwar education', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 42, No.s 1 & 2, 2006, pp. 177-189.

[43] J. Simon and L. Tuhiwai Smith, *A civilising mission? Perceptions and representations of the native schools system*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2001.

[44] T. Fitzgerald, 'Cartographies of friendship: mapping missionary women's educational networks in Aotearoa/New Zealand', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 5, 2003, pp. 513-527.

primary schools from 1858.[45] The establishment of Native schools was aimed at creating a 'spirit of self-reliance,' but the State imperative that English language be the medium of instruction and that a rigidly 'British' syllabus be taught, represented a 'heavily paternalistic and highly selective version of European culture.'[46] This is not to deny the role of Maori in negotiating the shape of education that occurred in classrooms, and in the day to day relationships between teachers and their communities throughout the country.[47]

Schooling thus operated at a number of levels and achieved a number of goals, whether for the men, women and children who struggled to acquire access to education, or for the politicians who debated the shape of schooling as it increasingly became the domain of public interest.

Schooling for Europeans who sought to preserve their links and allegiance to 'home' can be seen in the establishment of the first secondary schools modelled on the British grammar school tradition. As Whyte points out, buildings constructed on a model found in Britain impressed on colonial New Zealand a link with class and status that had a rhetorical purpose, intended to 'control behaviour and shape ideas; to exert influence and express identity.'[48] They represent a commitment to the educational needs of the ambitious ruling middle class in New Zealand's provincial centres. Various legislations allowed for generous endowments that made (protestant) church-run secondary schools both viable and beyond the means of all but the wealthiest landowning and business classes.[49] They formed a

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[45] The formation of Native schools was based on notions of preservation of indigenous peoples, observable in other parts of the British Empire. See Whitehead, 'The historiography of British Imperial education policy'; M. Zoller Booth, 'Settler, missionary and the state: contradictions in the formulation of educational policy in colonial Swaziland', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2003, pp. 35-56.

[46] R. Openshaw, G. Lee and G. Lee, *Challenging the myths: rethinking New Zealand's educational history*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1993, p. 40.

[47] Simon and Tuhiwai Smith, A *civilising mission?*

[48] W. Whyte. 'Building a public school community, 1860-1910', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 6, 2003, p. 601.

[49] Christ's College in Christchurch established in 1850 was among the first secondary schools to be built. Otago Girls' High School started in Dunedin in 1871, eight years after Otago Boys High School opened its doors.

small but effective network, and 'taught gentility.'[50] It may be suggested that the aspirations of those holding political and economic power was to maintain traditional class structures and relationships by transferring them to the New Zealand context.

Small schools emerged throughout the sparsely populated colony, on the other hand, to meet the basic literacy needs of children[51] and as the first rung in the education ladder for those able to afford secondary education.[52] Even rudimentary schooling offered a window of opportunity as a means of social mobility.[53] The image of the colonial immigrant was of rugged individualism and determination, sustained by hope for material prosperity and independence.[54] Sinclair suggests that settlers in New Zealand did not want to eliminate class, they wanted to 'equalise upwards.'[55] From this perspective, access to schooling was one avenue of upward social mobility sought by those traditionally excluded from educational opportunity.

This enthusiasm may be reflected in the Provincial Boards of Education between 1852 and 1876 as they took on the administration of schooling and represent the first steps towards formal State control of education. The Nelson Province developed a secular system of schooling that was recognised as a model not only for its organisation, but for the economic efficiency with which it functioned.[56] All provinces gradually took on to varying degrees, the funding, building, staffing and inspection of schools. An

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[50] J. Belich, *Paradise reforged: a history of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000,* Auckland, The Penguin Press, 2001, p. 130.

[51] Records of immigration in the 1840s and 1850s indicate that a significant proportion of settlers to New Zealand were literate. E. Olssen and M. Stenson, *A century of change: New Zealand 1800-1900,* Auckland, Longman Paul, 1989.

[52] Whitehead, 'The historiography of British Imperial education policy'.

[53] Jones, Marshall, Morris Mathews, Smith, and Tuhiwai Smith, *Myths and realities;* Shuker, *One best system?*

[54] Jones, Marshall, Morris Mathews, Smith, and Tuhiwai Smith, *Myths and realities.*

[55] Sinclair, *A history of New Zealand,* p. 105.

[56] J. Simon, 'Education policy change: historical perspectives', in J. Marshall, E. Coxon, K. Jenkins, & A. Jones (eds), *Politics, policy, pedagogy: education in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 2000.

uneven range of schooling options resulted, although many children received no schooling at all.[57]

During the two decades leading up to 1875 and the abolition of provincial governments, schools received financial aid, and provinces undertook increasing control of staffing and curriculum. Schools remained for the most part, however, dependent on local support and parental involvement. Schooling was not compulsory, and private schools such as small ladies' academies, continued to operate. In addition over these decades, several ordinances were passed to deal with neglected and criminal children, allowing for the establishment of various institutions. These included industrial schools, orphanages and a naval training school, and marked the beginning of State educational apparatus designed to socialise children in a systematic and accountable way within 'escalating community demands for justice, security and social welfare.'[58] This was particularly so in settled areas where problems associated with vagrancy, poverty and neglect were more susceptible to the surveillance by authorities.[59] The growing differentiation of schooling points to the contradictory role of schooling as a door to opportunity for some, and a mechanism of discipline for others.

Conflicts of interest

Cuban plots the reform of the American common school from the 1880s that altered school governance, organisation and curriculum and made schools a 'virtual arm of the economy.'[60] The 'orthodoxy of a one-best-school'[61] that resulted had a pervading influence on the shape of schooling across the English-speaking world.[62] The common school or one-best-school was based on the assumption that a common educational experience would prepare all students for work and citizenship. Such a system that called 'for colour-blind,

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57 Sinclair, *A history of New Zealand.*
58 Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building,* p. 4.
59 Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools'.
60 L. Cuban, *Why is it so hard to get good schools?* New York, Teachers College Press, 2003.
61 Cuban, *Why is it so hard to get good schools?* ; Tyack, 'Constructing difference'; Shuker, *One best system?*
62 Shuker, *One best system?*

class-blind equal treatment' placed 'the entire burden for achieving success on the individual student and the school while ignoring structural inequalities (e.g. poverty, segregated housing) that seriously affect families, children, and inexorably, schools.[63] The school consequently emerged as one cross-road where 'individually and collectively men, women and children struggled to chart pathways through changing familial, economic and institutional landscapes.'[64] Access to schooling at the individual level, was an active process of choice, struggle and personal ambition that is part of the story of social change represented by the entry of the State into education.

Small schools appear to become linked with one side in dichotomies linked to location of residence and to class. An American urban hierarchy 'steadfastly embraced'[65] the concept of the common school in response to heavy foreign immigration, the growth of popular religion and growing levels of urbanisation that created a perception of a crisis of roaming misdirected youths.[66] Shuker described the anxieties engendered and fanned in the New Zealand urban context as *moral panics* that developed as justifications for increasing State intrusion and surveillance through free schooling.[67] Theobald suggests that people in rural locations were less affected by, and were consequently less aware of such concerns and therefore were not inclined to embrace a system of free common schools. Conversely, Reese points to the growing faith of the era in 'the power of institutions to shape the generation to follow:' an urban phenomenon that sought to extend control over the hinterland and beyond. The school emerged as a point of tension as the State, representing urban interests, increasingly sought to

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[63] Cuban, *Why is it so hard to get good schools?* , p. 54-55.
[64] Miller and Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal state', p. 21.
[65] Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools', p. 117.
[66] Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools'; Reese, *History, education and the schools*.
[67] Shuker. R., 'Moral panics and social control: juvenile delinquency in late 19th century New Zealand', in R. Openshaw and D. McKenzie (eds), *Reinterpreting the educational past: essays in the history of New Zealand education,* Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1987.

regulate schooling in ways incompatible with community and rural aspirations.[68]

The political and social climate in New Zealand by 1875, with the formation of one central government, coincided with growing concerns for the future of the colony as a whole. In the lead up to the abolition of provincial governments, New Zealand society moved from what Belich describes as localised 'settled cores of people'[69] towards a national identity. Through development of rail, telegraph and steamships, New Zealand shrank to a size in which 'countrywide communities of interest could be imagined,'[70] paving the way for increased regulation of society.

Tensions that point to a class dichotomy were embedded in the way schools were gradually brought under the direct control of government following the passage of the *Education Act* (1877). These tensions between political and economic elite of businessmen and landowners, and the aspirations of the lower middle and working classes provide the context for conflicting perspectives and attitudes towards schooling to be found in the debates surrounding the *Education Act* (1877). Its passage was the result of contradictory aspirations and claims.[71]

On the one hand, education was a vehicle of upward social mobility for the ambitious and geographically dispersed 'anxious' classes.[72] Demand for education paved the way to the better life they or their parents travelled half way around the world to achieve. On the other hand, control over the nature of schooling and restrictions on access to higher education became means by which those in positions of political and economic influence maintained their advantage. The school then may be seen as 'a site of struggle between, on the

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[68] D. McKenzie, H. Lee and G. Lee, *Scholars or dollars? Selected historical case studies of opportunity costs in New Zealand education*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1996.

[69] Belich, *Paradise reforged*, p. 19.

[70] Belich, *Paradise reforged*, p. 20.

[71] Four major arguments supported universal education – rights to education, and the needs of government for social control, a 'discerning electorate' and economic productivity R. Harker, 'Schooling and cultural reproduction', in J. Codd, R. Harker & R. Nash (eds), *Political issues in New Zealand education (2nd Ed.)*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1990, p. 29.

[72] A term credited to E G Wakefield referring to upper working class and lower middle class immigrants. See Sinclair, *A history of New Zealand*; Simon, 'Education policy change'.

one hand those demanding social equality and on the other, those demanding social selectivity.'[73] The schooling system that resulted has been described as a compromise between a remnant of the previous provincial era and a yet-to-emerge nationalistic focus that was to develop under a party system by the end of the nineteenth century.[74]

What changed by 1880 was a new imperative introduced by the *Education Act* (1877). This was articulated by the Minister of Education, William Rolleston, who stated in his 1880 report:

> There is the strongest obligation under a national system to place the means of a good school system within the reach of the largest possible number of youth of the colony.[75]

Rolleston's words need to be seen as optimistic in the light of wide regional variations in schooling options available at the time, and in light of persistent geographical barriers and severe fiscal constraints. Conversely, within this seemingly innocuous optimism that providing schooling to the youth of the country would also extend a *good* education was a paternalism that foreshadowed later regulation and control of schooling by a strong and articulate middle class.

Despite the establishment of central government in Wellington, settlements were still isolated, and cores of people continued to struggle 'to generate local community against the de-socialising tides of immigration, emigration and geographic mobility within New Zealand.'[76] The majority of schools provided throughout New Zealand's scattered settlements, were small one-teacher schools, making them pivotal to the shape of the education system that evolved. The vulnerability of scattered communities and their schools was arguably exacerbated by fiscal restraint and limited resources that formed the context in which New Zealand's national education system emerged.

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[73] Simon, 'Education policy change', p. 27.
[74] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building.*
[75] *Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives (AHJR)*, E-1, 1880, p. 3.
[76] Belich, *Paradise reforged*, p. 19.

Party politics and increased centralisation

Party politics saw provincial interests give way to a national focus and centralising agenda, in the form of the Liberal party. The Liberals swept to power in the 1890s on the premise that 'only state intervention could cure the country's ills.'[77] The Liberal brand of socialism was aimed at reconciliation between capital and labour, so that the nation would nurture, educate and 'maintain every citizen from the cradle to the grave.'[78]

Liberal ideology had wide-ranging and long-lasting implications. Equality was their espoused aim, but Liberal ideology saw excessive individuality as inconsistent with 'the public spirit.'[79] The Liberals sought a community 'civilised throughout and trained to consist of educated, vigorous men and women; efficient workers, yet not lacking in the essentials of refinement.'[80] In reality, according to Belich, the State became a centralised de facto 'executive' committee of the ruling class.[81]

The beginning of the twentieth century was characterised by Liberal discourses justifying increasing intrusion into the private lives of the people by the State accomplished in part through centrally-controlled compulsory schooling.[82] This occurred in the context of an emerging national identity, a growth in the importance of competitive tests and credentials such as the Junior Civil Service Examination,[83] and the introduction of free places to secondary schools. There was a preoccupation with moral, physical and social order, efficient administration and regulation of society, supported by

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[77] Belich, *Paradise reforged*, p. 179.
[78] Belich, *Paradise reforged*, p. 183.
[79] Belich, *Paradise reforged*, p. 183.
[80] Belich, *Paradise reforged*, p. 183.
[81] Belich, *Paradise reforged*, p. 183.
[82] Shuker, *One best system?*
[83] See for example, McKenzie. D. (1987). The growth of school credentialing in New Zealand. In R. Openshaw, & D. McKenzie (eds). *Reinterpreting the educational past: essays in the history of New Zealand education*. Wellington: NZCER.

the myth of a fluid social system 'in which talent was recognised and rewarded at school and in life generally.'[84]

Economies of scale and the dilemma of small schools

At the end of the nineteenth century, not all children enrolled at schools attended all of the time.[85] Improved attendance and enrolment of students were touted as evidence of the success of schooling as an 'unequivocal good' provided by a benevolent government.[86] Educational leaders tended to evaluate the success of the system by it growth.[87] On the other hand, government was bound to provide schooling, as William Rolleston pledged, to reach the largest possible number of youth in the colony, which necessitated the establishment of a multitude of small schools throughout the sparsely populated colony. Shuker notes that in 1900, 83 percent of schools in the country were small, one- or two-teacher schools.[88]

The problem was that the per-pupil funding in the case of small schools was never enough to cover the cost to the State of maintaining them and paying their teachers. Arnold refers to the financial burden of small schools condemning Education Boards to 'chronic impoverishment.'[89] However, the appropriateness of a per-pupil funding system for New Zealand may have been questioned,[90] but no alternative was forthcoming.

By definition schools were not viable if they failed to build attendance to an *efficient* level to cover the cost of their maintenance, thus challenging the credibility of the educational State. It was stated in parliament in 1877 that a 'truly efficient school system' required a large outlay of government money

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[84] Reese, *History, education and the schools*, p. 81.

[85] D. McKenzie, H. Lee, and G. Lee, *Scholars or dollars? Selected historical case studies of opportunity costs in New Zealand education*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, (1996

[86] McKenzie, Lee and Lee, *Scholars or dollars?*, p. 11.

[87] Reese, *History, education and the schools.*

[88] Shuker, *One best system?*, p. 266.

[89] R. Arnold, 'Women in the New Zealand teaching profession 1877-1920: a comparative perspective', in R. Openshaw and D. McKenzie (eds), *Reinterpreting the educational past: essays in the history of New Zealand education,* Wellington, NZCER, 1987, p. 47.

[90] A 'New Zealand Herald' editorial was outspoken in questioning the capitation grant as unfair on a district like Auckland where "numerous small schools were a necessity," reflecting some public interest. Cumming, *Glorious enterprise*, p. 129.

which, justifiably, should be given to 'large efficient schools' and not 'small inferior schools.'[91] The dilemma embodied by 'uneconomic small country schools'"[92] presented the State with challenges that inevitably made small schools central to government policy. What is possibly overlooked is that the fiscal constraints that destined small schools to penury were created by the State. Reese notes that 'like many public institutions, schools often promised more than they could deliver.'[93] The tension between what was supposed to happen and what actually happened presented ongoing challenges to administrators.

The consequence of the large number of small schools throughout New Zealand was an 'impressive list of mechanisms' developed to support them over the years.[94] These included a conveyance allowance that assisted the transportation of children who lived at distance from their nearest school. Itinerant or visiting teachers reached those children beyond the reach of any school. Half-time schools allowed for one teacher to be allocated to two schools, and aided schools were those whose buildings were provided by local communities.

This study suggests that these mechanisms mask problems that were more than a matter of extending access to schooling to remote areas. A closer look at what occurred in communities from 1877 indicates that small schools were a site of tension as people and communities negotiated their positions in relation to growing surveillance by the educational State.[95] Evidence of less than ideal circumstances are to be found in isolated anecdotes of individual cases that came to the attention of the courts, or found their way into parliamentary debates, school inspectors' reports or as memories recorded in

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[91] Quoted from New Zealand Parliamentary debates in R. Openshaw, G. Lee and G. Lee, *Challenging the myths: rethinking New Zealand's educational history*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1993, p. 36.

[92] Arnold, 'Women in the New Zealand teaching profession 1877-1920', p. 47.

[93] Reese, *History, education and the schools*, p. 63.

[94] Shuker, *One best system?* p. 266.

[95] See for an example of resistance in the face of regulation on the shape of schooling in an Australian context: R. J. W. Selleck, 'A goldfields Family', in M. R. Theobald and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1990, pp. 45-65.

personal memoirs.[96] They range from children consistently missing school to work as integral contributors to family economies,[97] to schools operated voluntarily as local parents provided a school room and taught their own children in the absence of a teacher.[98] There is evidence of parents strategically withdrawing their children from school to force the resignation of a teacher or to challenge the attendance regulations.[99] These examples suggest the existence of active parental agency in the way schools operated.

The array of innovative and pragmatic supports developed for rural education appear less than benign when questions are asked about the nature of the relationship between the State and the burgeoning number of small schools it spawned when it promised to provide schooling for the greatest number of youth in the country. It may be suggested that small schools were a site of tension as communities throughout the sparsely populated country embraced the possibilities open to their children through the local primary school and a wealthy middle class elite that increasingly sought to preserve its position of power in the face of a disobedient, energetic and vocal working class proclaiming with confidence that they were 'as good as the best.'[100] These small schools became the meeting point of tensions between the aspirations of individuals and those of the State.

Conclusion

This chapter plotted how schooling in New Zealand developed in similar fashion to school systems in other nineteenth century countries. Prior to any

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[96] For example, Arnold, 'Women in the New Zealand teaching profession 1877-1920'; J. Simon and L. Tuhiwai Smith, *A civilising mission? Perceptions and representations of the native schools system*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2001; J. Wordsworth, *Unwillingly to school: a nostalgic look at New Zealand schools and school children, liberally illustrated with photographs of the times*, Wellington, A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1976 ; J. Rolfe (ed.), *From slates to computers: classroom teachers, pupils and others recall school experiences through a century of staggering change*, New Zealand, Castle Publishing Services, 2005.

[97] K. Matthews, 'White pinafores, slates, mud and manuka: pakeha women's experiences of primary schools in Hawkes Bay, 1880-1918', in S. Middleton (ed.), *Women and education in Aotearoa,* Wellington, Allen & Unwin Port Nicholson Press, 1988.

[98] Wordsworth, *Unwillingly to school.*

[99] For example in McKenzie, Lee & Lee, *Scholars or dollars?*

[100] Sinclair, *A history of New Zealand*, p. 237.

State incursion into the arena of education, schooling was small scale, unregulated, and haphazard in distribution, quality, availability and cost and often continued the tradition of parental responsibility for educational and socialisation of former times.[101] The introduction of a State funded education system led to small schools becoming a site of tension, between those aspiring for equal access to education and those in power seeking control in accordance with the demand of capitalism, through the intervention of the State in education.[102]

Small schools remain a powerful icon of a colonial and pioneering educational past. The isolated 'bush' school of the Australian outback[103], the little wooden school room presided over by the erect and prim 'lady-teacher' of the American West,[104] or New Zealand's own ''gem' in our education system'[105] all recall to the collective memory a sense of admiration, even pride for past achievement in the face of hardship. The idea of the lone teacher battling against the odds, who brought order and opportunity to future citizens of a budding nation, has enduring appeal. However as Weiler points out, there is an incompatibility and unease between the iconic autonomy of the lone teacher of the nineteenth century and 'increasing State control and community surveillance.'[106]

Chapter Three explores literature in the history of education in search of small schools and their relationship with the State. Presented also is a theoretical framework to clarify and examine this relationship.

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[101] Reese, *History, education and the schools*; Miller and Davey, *Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal state.*

[102] Shuker, *One best system?*; Whitehead, 'The historiography of British Imperial education policy'.

[103] J. Trotman, 'Women teachers in Western Australian "bush" schools, 1900-1939: passive victims of oppressive structures?' *History of Education Quarterly,* Vol. 46, No. 2, 2006, pp. 248-273.

[104] Weiler, 'Reflections on writing a history of women teachers.'

[105] McLaren, *Education in a small democracy,* p. 66.

[106] Weiler, 'Reflections on writing a history of women teachers', p. 43.

Chapter Three

Centre and periphery

Introduction

Little has been written about a relationship between the centre and 'not-centre'[107] to explore the history of schooling in New Zealand. The educational State overcame difficulties presented by a geographically dispersed system of schools through gradual centralisation of supervision and administration. The role of small schools in this process remains obscured by a focus on 'structural inequality' based on a rural–urban divide,[108] or through an emphasis on centralisation rather than regional differences.[109] In order to seek out a relationship between small schools and the State, this chapter explores the concepts of centre and periphery as they have been developed by writers within a number of fields including political science, sociology, economics and anthropology.[110] There is also discussion that acknowledges increasing interest in exploring these concepts within the history of education.[111]

An eclectic model of the common school – free, state funded, primary education – emerged in the nineteenth century within the overlapping roles of location, authority and relations of power. Miller and Davey make the point that:

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[107] J. McAuley, S. Tietze, L. Cohen and J. Duberley, *Developing the interface between centre and periphery as an agent for organisational learning: issues of strategy and local knowledge*, paper presented to the *3rd International Conference on Organisational Learning*, Lancaster, 1999.

[108] Shuker, *One best system?* p. 28.

[109] An important and necessary focus of historiography, for example, has been on forces of centralisation rather than analysis of regional diversity. C. Campbell, 'State policy and regional diversity in the provision of secondary education for the youth of Sydney, 1960-2001', *History of Education*, Vol.32, No. 5, 2003, pp. 577-594.

[110] For theoretical consideration of periphery and centre see S. Rokkan and D. W. Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity: politics of West European peripheries*, London, Sage, 1983; Also J. Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, London, Verso, 1993; E. Ewert, 'Lines and circles: images of time in a Panara village,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* Vol. 9, 2003, pp. 261-279.

[111] M. R. Theobald and R. J. W. Selleck, *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen and Urwin, 1990; D. Tyack. and L. Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: a century of public school reform*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995; Reese. W. J., *History, education, and the schools,* New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

The state-building force of education assumes more significance if we remember that the mid nineteenth century was the period when most modern nation states were made; parcelled up, warred over and glued together out of hundreds of ethnic groups and contested pieces of territory. In such conditions, a common system of schooling would help create (not always successfully) a nation out of the collection of peoples inside the state boundaries.[112]

Histories of schooling in New Zealand have addressed the haphazard and unregulated array of privately operated small-scale, entrepreneurial, charitable and religious schooling options that gave way increasingly to a differentiated education system that reflected the gradual involvement of the State in regulation and administration of a universal education system by the end of the nineteenth century.[113]

It is the theoretical assumption underpinning this study that small schools were part of a relationship with the State essentially characterised by incompatible goals and aspirations: those of the State (centre) and those of local communities (the periphery). Two models[114] are presented to explain the existence and dynamics of a relationship between centre and periphery, as a way to understand the relationship between the State and small schools.

Centre and periphery as a conceptual framework

Political sociologists, Rokkan and Urwin developed a centre-periphery construct to plot specific political and economic developments over time in Europe.[115] Their work is useful to this discussion because they establish distinct characteristics of a centre-periphery relationship as one fraught with the potential for both tension and the possibility of variable outcomes. They encapsulated a relationship of opposition between the 'peculiar political demands' of peripheries and the 'nature of the state's

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[112] P. Miller and I. Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal state', in M. R. Theobald, and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen and Urwin, 1990, p. 19.

[113] J. Simon, 'Education policy change: historical perspectives', In J. Marshall, E. Coxon, K. Jenkins, and A. Jones (eds), *Politics, policy, pedagogy: education in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 2000; D. Hamilton, 'Notes from nowhere: (on the beginnings of modern schooling)', in T. S. Popkewitz, B. M. Franklin, and M. A. Pereyra (eds), *Cultural history and education: critical essays on knowledge and schooling*, New York, Routledge Falmer, 2001, pp. 187-206.

[114] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*; J. Fiske, *Power plays, power works,* London, Verso, 1993.

[115] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*.

imperatives.'[116] As a feature of modernity this relationship suggests tensions between globalising influences on the one hand and personal dispositions on the other.[117] This concept was further developed by Ewert who demonstrated that peripheral geographic or spatial location does not pre-empt the exercise of power.[118] The implication is that people in the centre and at the periphery act 'within negotiated arenas.'[119]

A similar theory developed by Fiske, explains the exercise of 'localising power' in defence of difference in the face of the 'consensus model' of American society.[120] He builds the concept of *bloc* as the welding together of different interest groups to develop what he calls the *power-bloc*. A power-bloc is the:

> exercise of power to which certain social formations, defined primarily by class, race, gender and ethnicity, have privileged access and which they can readily turn to for their own economic and political interests.[121]

For Fiske *the people* consist of:

> varied and changing social allegiances whose one constant is their comparative lack of privilege, their comparative deprivation of economic and political resources. The people do not have easy access to the system of power and cannot, in general, turn it to their own advantage.[122]

As models for understanding social relationships, therefore, centre and periphery move beyond being labels for geographical sites or territories[123] or markers for population groups.[124] As twin concepts, centre and periphery need each other to generate meaning and form a frame by which social differences may be made to make sense,[125] within the assumption that in some way 'the periphery is subordinate to the authority of the centre.'[126] The common theme of these constructs developed

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[116] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 191.

[117] A. Nóvoa, 'Texts, images, and memories: writing "new" histories of education', in T. S. Popkewitz, B. M. Franklin, and M. A. Pereyra (eds), *Cultural history and education: critical essays on knowledge and schooling*, New York, Routledge Falmer, 2001.

[118] Ewert, 'Lines and circles'.

[119] McAuley, Tietze, Cohen and Duberley, *Developing the interface between centre and periphery.*

[120] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p. 11

[121] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p. 10.

[122] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p. 11.

[123] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity.*

[124] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity.*

[125] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, critiques more traditional social dichotomies such as left/right from a post-modern stance as a relationship between a *power-bloc* and *the people*.

[126] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 2.

by Fiske, and Rokkan and Urwin, is their usefulness in plotting social relationships that transcend the use of centre and periphery as a spatial relationship. Implicit within an understanding of a relationship between, and not just existence of centre and periphery, is that of exchange and subordination.

When the centre is perceived as being in the middle, between two parties, the implication is of neutrality inherited from the 'deeply structured binary opposition of the twentieth century.'[127] However, for the purposes of this discussion, the word *centre* is the dominant 'element in a spatial system of authority and subordination.'[128] Hence, from a post-structural approach a centre-periphery relationship is conceived of as operating in conditions both contradictory and fluid.[129] The centre exists and is defined by its relationship with the people[130] on its periphery. It is a relationship based on control by the centre exerted through 'the social system itself, through its institutions, to its individual members and their thoughts and behaviours.'[131]

Within a centre-periphery construct, placing the centre in urban settings and the periphery in the rural hinterland is only one dimension to be considered. A rural-urban divide is characterised first as a geographic differential. From a post-structural approach such a divide is not discrete, although the terms have been generalised around differences of location, lifestyle, occupation, thus creating stereotypes. The use of the term *rural* in New Zealand conventionally refers to 'anywhere outside towns of 1000 people or less.'[132] However, rurality, rather than being such a discrete set of geographically located *places*, exists more on a continuum. It includes individual family units living in isolation as well as the settlements that grew up to serve predominantly agricultural and extractive industries. These small *cores* are people who 'struggled to generate local

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[127] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p. 7.
[128] Rokkan and Urwin , *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 7.
[129] Fiske, *Power plays, power works.*
[130] Fiske, *Power plays, power works.*
[131] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p.20.
[132] J. Watson, 'Rural life', in C. Davis and P. Lineham (eds), *The future of the past: themes in New Zealand history*, Palmerston North, Massey University, 1991, p. 49.

community,'[133] which perhaps included a general store, a post office and a school, that were important locales in the lives of people.[134]

Conversely an understanding of what is included in the term *urban* in relation to the control of education also needs clarification. While the city stands symbolically, culturally and politically opposite to traditional rural values, this oppositional relationship is viewed as more fluid in this study. It can neither be assumed that all small schools were located in rural areas, nor that working class people were all urban dwellers. Conversely questions can be asked about how urban moral panics[135] that were conveyed as universal were in fact transferable to rural settings.

Urban areas are usually the location of buildings and symbols of power, the meeting places of politicians, the hub of business and the location of educational bureaucracy.[136] However, the operation of power is not only territorially based, but also economic, political and social, often transcending location. Urban and rural areas have been shown to share many of the same problems.[137] This demonstrates *cross-cutting factors* such as race, gender and class, are problematic sources of inequality that may be important explanatory variables clouding a distinct urban-rural dichotomy.[138]

The centre may be viewed not as a purely urban phenomenon, but rather as a 'seat of authority'[139] and the periphery as an 'opportunity structure'[140] and a space heavily influenced by external forces. Campbell points out that the way different families used schools differently demonstrates reflexivity in the relationship 'between central policy making and diverse regional outcomes:'[141] outcomes specific neither to urban nor rural locales. The unrelenting proliferation of small schools

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[133] J. Belich, *Paradise reforged: a history of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland, The Penguin Press, 2001, p. 19.

[134] J. Meade Rose, *The role of the school in rural communities in New Zealand*, Wellington, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1994; K. Matthews, 'White pinafores, slates, mud and manuka: pakeha women's experiences of primary schools in Hawkes Bay, 1880-1918', in S. Middleton (ed.), *Women and education in Aotearoa*, Wellington, Allen and Urwin Port Nicholson Press, 1988.

[135] Shuker, *One best system?*

[136] P. Burke, *A social history of knowledge: from Gutenberg to Diderot*, Cambridge, Polity, 2000.

[137] K. Fischer and S. Hebel, 'The geographic have-nots: urban centres and rural regions', *Chronicle of Higher Education,* Vol. 53, No. 11, 2006.

[138] Shuker, *One best system?*, p. 25.

[139] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 2.

[140] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 2.

[141] Campbell, 'State policy and regional diversity'.

located in settlements and in rural locations throughout the first decades of State funded schooling presented a challenge to governments of the day, making them politically at the centre of educational planning and decision-making,[142]. From the theoretical framework presented here, the relationship between small schools and the State was one of the periphery subordinated to the centre. The State, rather than assisting and delivering education as a benevolent and impartial benefactor, in fact dealt with small schools in an increasingly regulatory way as part of a drive for control, creating tensions between individual choice and differences among families and communities, and State imperatives.

The place of power

Post-modernism builds a critique of structural explanations of social differences and tensions by acknowledging the 'multiplicity of axes of social difference (of which class, gender, race and age may be the most frequently prominent).'[143] New Zealand's colonial society promoted equality in terms of *access* to schooling, but nonetheless perpetrated inequalities through the way schooling was administered.[144]

Historically, the *influence* of the rural population was not peripheral.[145] The strong economic and political weight of rural interests in nineteenth century New Zealand actually made rural aspirations and concerns central to political decision-making, particularly during the provincial era between 1852 and 1875, and arguably under the administration of the twelve Education Boards following 1877. In the context of this study, the possibility of political influence existing in a peripheral *geographic* location is not incompatible when centrality and peripherality are viewed as power relations and not just a matter of geographical location.[146] It was the

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[142] New Zealand's education system has been described as developing specifically to meet the needs of a rural society. See G. McCulloch, *Education in the forming of New Zealand society: needs and opportunities for study*, NZARE, Monograph No. 1, 1986.

[143] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p. 7. See also Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 124, who write 'the writings of conventional literature on political sociology and mobility can be extended beyond classes to embrace other types of groups.' Postmodernism, instead, embraces fluid, and multiple axes, typically refusing to privilege any one 'truth claim' over another.

[144] J. Marshall, E. Coxon, K. Jenkins, and A. Jones, *Politics, policy, pedagogy: education in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 2000. See also M. S. Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building: explaining institutional differentiation in New Zealand education*, paper presented at NZARE conference, 6 – 9 Dec, 2001.

[145] In the larger scope of history, an urban locus of power is a relatively recent phenomenon– the traditional power in England was held by the rural aristocracy. Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools'.

[146] Ewert, 'Lines and circles'.

growth of party politics and national concerns that increasingly undermined provincial and rural influence and led to increasing centralisation of education administration.[147]

Centralisation of education was seen as 'moving forward,'[148] but this disguised tensions within society. Those settlers who sought material advancement without the impediment of traditional class barriers[149] came up against increased supervision as strident middle-class and commercial interests increasingly strove to centralise organisation and control.

As New Zealand developed its education system, it also instituted bureaucratic structures and empowered them to administer schools from particular urban centres. In 1877 a three-tiered structure touted as the most decentralised of any 'English' country of the time[150] incorporated a high level of regional control in the form of twelve Education Boards. The centrally located Department of Education in Wellington dictated terms of reference in the form of circulars and regulations. The Department further dispensed funding on a per-pupil basis, while tolerating variable application throughout the country, as Education Boards controlled provision of schools, appointed the teachers and employed their own school inspectors. This demonstrates a high degree of negotiation in the lead up to 1877 between a weak centre and a still influential rural sector.[151]

However, as New Zealand moved towards a national focus under Liberal government by the turn of the twentieth century, the influence of regional Education Boards, and the individual school committees who elected them, waned.

The theoretical position of this study is that the centre in a society, organisation or territory, is the locus of power that consolidates its position and

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[147] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building*.

[148] Shuker, *One best system?*, p. 57.

[149] The 'anxious classes' were the upper-working and lower-middle classes made up the majority of immigrants to New Zealand in the mid-nineteenth century. Sinclair, *A history of New Zealand*.

[150] I. A. McLaren, *Education in a small democracy: New Zealand*, London, World Education series, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

[151] Provincial interests were powerful within the newly formed central government. See Sinclair, *A history of New Zealand*; R. Harker, 'Schooling and cultural reproduction', in J. Codd, R. Harker, and R. Nash (eds), *Political issues in New Zealand Education (2nd ed.)*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1990.

manifests control through regulations and bureaucracy[152] to achieve standardisation,[153] impartiality and conformity. The centre may need to tolerate activities on the periphery to facilitate its organisational survival.[154] From this perspective, the years of Education Board administration of schooling reflected a lack of direct central control from Wellington. This is supported by the idea that where the centre lacks 'local practical knowledge,'[155] or effective control, it will be obliged to enlist the cooperation of the periphery. This would be achieved by making promises that there will be 'a great deal of local control regardless of the centralised appearance of the system.'[156] Central government controlled funding, but its leniency in how the funding was dispensed by the Education Boards was a pragmatic and necessary compromise.

The educational State set and patrolled its boundaries[157] through regulations that dictated the syllabus and standards children had to pass to progress, thus setting up barriers to all except those who, through their own efforts would be successful.[158] The State also sought to capture children within its system of primary schools through attendance regulations. The centre ensured its legitimacy within those boundaries through strategies and discourses that sought 'popular support and acquiescence to its political authority.'[159] In nineteenth century New Zealand the State did not have the resources – either in the form of an established bureaucracy or financial means - to achieve direct control over schooling. Its dependence on Education Boards and their dependence, in turn, on local cooperation in terms of attendance, meant not only local input, but also a level of lenience and tension between local concerns and central government. Geographical isolation exacerbated peripherality beyond the reach of the central Department of Education in Wellington. In this way the State was obliged to enlist cooperation and grant

[152] J. McAuley, S.Tietze, L.Cohen, and J. Duberley, *Developing the interface between centre and periphery as an agent for organisational learning: issues of strategy and local knowledge*, paper presented to the 3rd International Conference on Organisational Learning, Lancaster, 1999.

[153] H. Mintzberg, *Structures in fives: designing effective organisations*. London: Prentice-Hall, 1993.

[154] A. de Geus, *The living company,* Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 1997.

[155] S. Clegg, 'Learning and teaching policies in higher education: mediations and contradictions in practice', *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 6, 2002, p. 810.

[156] Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools'.

[157] 'Power works strategically to secure its boundaries and thus to exclude that which lies beyond its control from the universe of "what matters". Sharply drawn lines, in the sand, in the curriculum, in people's heads, are the product of power.' Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p. 65.

[158] Cuban, *Why is it so hard to get good schools?*

[159] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 166.

concessions to local input, while simultaneously pursuing its goal of efficiency and uniformity.

The periphery, on the other hand, seeks autonomy and may practice strategies of resistance.[160] Because a periphery may be viewed under the dominion of the centre, it may struggle to retain its own identity and distinctiveness, whether this is in the form of cultural practices, language or ambitions for self-determination.[161] Its level of autonomy will be reflected in various social, political or economic domains. If the centre exerts strong *colonial* control, the domination of the periphery takes effect as Rouse suggests, in denial of its history, in the disguising its input and importance, or in justification of its lower status and lack of opportunity for advancement.[162]

The small school within the context of Liberal rhetoric

Schooling is a relatively recent invention of modernity that functions to 'regulate and discipline the individual.'[163] Universal schooling in New Zealand shared many goals with other Western countries[164] such that by the end of the nineteenth century education was promoted as the right of all children as part of developing a discerning citizenry. It was the key to progress not only for the individual, but also for society as a whole.

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[160] Clegg, 'Learning and teaching policies in higher education.'

[161] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity.*

[162] P. Rouse, 'Cultural models of womanhood and female education: practices of colonisation and resistance', in C. Hobbs (ed.), *Nineteenth century women learn to write,* Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia, 1995.

[163] T. S. Popkewitz, 'The production of reason and power: curriculum history and intellectual traditions', in T. S. Popkewitz, B. M. Franklin, and M. A. Pereyra (eds), *Cultural history and education: critical essays on knowledge and schooling*, New York, Routledge Falmer, 2001, p.159.

[164] K. Whitehead and J. Peppard, 'Transnational innovations, local, concerns, and disruptive teachers and students in interwar education', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 42, No.s 1 and 2, 2006, pp. 177-189.

Small schools were a ubiquitous feature of schooling in colonial settings.[165] As places for children to receive instruction from an appropriately 'certified' teacher, they were gradually formalised within State funded, free education.[166] The growth in what is alternatively called mass schooling or the provision of universal education, has been described as 'a virtual arm of the economy' that has been 'sufficiently pervasive to create an educational orthodoxy of a one-best-school.'[167] However, Shuker explains that 'schools, instead of promoting equality, have essentially served to reproduce existing social and economic divisions within society… as a contested process.'[168]

Liberal belief in the power of education to solve social problems rested on the axiom that improvements in public education and schooling would guarantee a better society.[169] It followed that schooling was to be both more differentiated and more standardised[170] if it was to achieve its aims.

Differentiation of school provision was to suit the backgrounds of pupils and meet their future destinies.[171] Stephenson describes how State capacity to regulate society meant that education initiatives were fused with labour and health issues, allowing *problem* children to be categorised resulting in the 'proliferation of more oppressive and personally invasive custodial institutions.'[172] She suggests that 'the 'normal' was defined by identifying the 'abnormal', and that this occurred by defining parameters of exclusion not inclusion.'[173] In this way the State sought to strengthen the political integration of a heterogeneous population through education.

Shuker describes how the growing moral panic reflected concerns about morality within society in the face of apparently high levels of homelessness, desertion,

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[165] With reference to the United States, see: Reese, *History, education and the schools*, Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*; Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools'. In relation to Australia see Theobald and Selleck, *Family, school and state in Australian History*.

[166] Universal education was seen to emerge from three debates: as 'genuinely liberating', as preparation for the world of work and the 'future wellbeing of the state,' and as a prerequisite to social mobility: A. Jones, J. Marshall, K. Morris Mathews, H. G. Smith, and L. Tuhiwai Smith, *Myths and realities: schooling in New Zealand (2nd ed.)*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1995, p. 17.

[167] L. Cuban, *Why is it so hard to get good schools?* New York, Teachers College Press, 2003, p.53-54.

[168] Shuker, *One best system?* p. 7.

[169] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*.

[170] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*.

[171] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building*.

[172] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building*, p. 16.

[173] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building*, p. 16.

drunkenness, and larrikinism as a justification for increased surveillance and monitoring of children for the good of society.[174] The discovery of the nervous child,[175] and the detection of the orphan, neglected and criminal child were increasingly part of powerful discourses. In schools physical and moral fitness were promoted through physical education and school hygiene; designed to correct deformities of the body, prevent the onset of illness and 'maintain a healthy physiology and moral outlook.'[176]

The city became the 'vanguard of educational progress' within a 'swelling bureaucratic infrastructure.'[177] State-funded compulsory schooling for urban areas was promoted by those in power to quell a criminal element[178] and the disturbing nomadic habit of colonial society.[179] Such developments were not without practical difficulties associated with lack of school buildings and monotonous, uninspiring teaching methods.[180] Nonetheless they were justified and supported by a number scientific and medical theories embraced by influential professionals[181] whose advocacy of careful identification and treatment of abnormalities in children, and explication of strong links between physical fitness and morality met enthusiastic support.[182] As Shuker points out, such ideas appealed to the professional sector of the emerging middle class who sought to:

> stake out areas of expertise and authority so that, while dealing with perceived social problems, they were also engaged in enhancing their own status, power and security.[183]

The goal was to shape a nation, and define the duties and obligations of citizenship through education ensuring compliance with rules and regulations as laid down by

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[174] Shuker, *One best system?*
[175] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building*.
[176] Shuker, *One best system?* p. 513.
[177] Reese, *History, education and the schools*.
[178] Harker, 'Schooling and cultural reproduction'.
[179] I. Cumming, *Glorious enterprise: the history of the Auckland Education Board 1857 – 1957*, Christchurch, Whitcomb and Tombs, 1959.
[180] Reese, *History, education and the schools*.
[181] For example, Dr. W Chapple was a politician as well as doctor, and his 'scientific' publications had wide-ranging implications for schooling, immigration, and medicine, being strongly influenced by social Darwinism and Eugenics. Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building*.
[182] Shuker, *One best system?:* Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building*; S. Petrina, 'The medicalisation of education: a historiographic synthesis', *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2006, pp. 503-531.
[183] Shuker, *One best system?* p. 52.

the State. This included people accepting and accommodating 'the norms and values which would be hegemonically secured.'[184]

Standardisation occurred in the establishment of the common school or *one-best-school*:[185] through uniformity of buildings and equipment, in the creation of efficient administration and through the provision of health and other services. It was extended to include the simultaneous progression of whole classes of children through clearly defined *standards* and through the standardisation of teacher qualifications.[186] The teacher and the syllabus were both to become instruments of the State apparatus.

The traditions of schooling that evolved in the nineteenth century are encapsulated in the *grammar* of schooling[187] which described what was, and what should be. Schools across Western countries came to resemble one another in external appearance, classroom layout, furniture and teaching apparatus. But more than that, they shared common procedures and expectations of both pupils and teachers. It was assumed that children would attend regularly, progress at a similar pace, and adhere to a sequential curriculum. Certified teachers would use similar teaching methods that saw the transmission of subjects to whole classes of children. Inspection by agents of central administrations ensured that teachers and pupils achieved the educational goals of the State. Tyack and Cuban note that

> administrators, teachers, and students learned how to work in this system; indeed, the grammar of schooling became simply the way schools worked. Over time, the public, schooled in the system, came to assume that the grammar embodied the necessary features of a 'real school.'[188]

Weiler notes the uneasy co-existence of the one-room school and 'increasing state control and community surveillance' that characterised the late nineteenth century.[189] This tension is part of the story of small schools.

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[184] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building*.

[185] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia.*

[186] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations'.

[187] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations'; Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*; D. Tyack and W. Tobin, 'The 'grammar' of schooling: why has it been so hard to change?' *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1994, pp. 453-479.

[188] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*, p. 107.

[189] K. Weiler, 'Reflections on writing a history of women teachers', in K. Weiler and M. R. Theobald (eds), *Telling women's lives: narrative inquiries in the history of women's education*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 1999.

The adoption of compulsory school laws and legislative provisions, and the formation of national educational ministries and bureaucracies[190] affirmed State interest in mass schooling. Tyack and Cuban identify the 'arbiters' of educational progress as 'administrative progressives:' men who carved out lifelong careers in education and occupied key positions.[191] They shared a common faith in 'educational science'[192] that shaped the agenda of the development of mass schooling. By the beginning of the twentieth century education was widely seen as 'the prime means of directing the course of social evolution.'[193] Therefore, schools were seen as 'the means of rationally distributing individuals in what is conceived as a basically just society.'[194] Schools were expected to perform their 'unstated but assumed function of reproducing and maintaining an idealised vision' of society.[195] In this idealised place, the inadequate failed and the deserving and talented rose on their merit.[196]

In England, the development of *progressive* education towards the end of the nineteenth century aimed to extend the provision of schooling to all children and 'was committed to ameliorating the effects of poverty and ill-health on those children, and was an innovation in school curricula, architecture and administration.[197] The idea of compulsion was linked to surveillance 'as a means of monitoring and disciplining urban populations.'[198] Mass schooling was integral to 'the development of a unified national polity and the shoring up of both capitalism and patriarchy.'[199] In the colonial context dispersed populations presented challenges to such a policy of surveillance. Compulsory attendance laws were seen as 'a solution to students' irregular attendance, disorderly progress and early school-leaving.'[200] Such regulations were passed despite the overriding important of

[190] Weiler, 'Reflections on writing a history of women teachers'.
[191] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering towards utopia*, p. 17.
[192] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering towards utopia*, p. 17.
[193] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering towards utopia,* p. 17*.*
[194] K. Weiler, *Women teaching for change: gender, class and power*, New York, Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1988, p. 5.
[195] Weiler, *Women teaching for change*.
[196] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering towards utopia*.
[197] I.. Grosvenor and K. Myers, 'Progressivism, control and correction: local education authorities and educational policies in twentieth century England', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 42, No.s 1 and 2, 2006, pp. 225-247.
[198] Grosvenor and Myers, 'Progressivism, control and correction'.
[199] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations'.
[200] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations'.

economic value of children to colonial families and the lack of infrastructure to enforce such legislation.[201] The role of hegemony occurs here as instrumental in achieving goals of uniformity and homogeneity.

What became apparent in Tyack and Cuban's perspective is the tension between administrators and small communities, with the small school appearing to embody certain characteristics antithetical to the State goals of uniformity and efficiency. Apart from small schools being viewed as a problem of distance and geography, they were regarded as inefficient, unprofessional, unable to cover the curriculum, and 'subordinated to lay control: the teacher being too much under the eye and thumb of the community.'[202] In the United States of America, well into the twentieth century, 'one-room schools … existed in towns as well as in rural areas.'[203]

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[201] This was the case in Canada, Australia, the United States and New Zealand. See Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations'; D. McKenzie, H. Lee and G. Lee, *Scholars or dollars? Selected historical case studies of opportunity costs in New Zealand education*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1996; Theobald and Selleck, *Family, school and state.*.
[202] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*, p. 89.
[203] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*, p. 89.

In their study of early twentieth century schooling in Newfoundland, Whitehead and Peppard noted a number of small school features that challenged administrators.[204] These included irregular attendance due to dictates of family economy, and the transience of teachers as well as students.[205] There was a dependence on individualised teaching and children learning at their own pace with very little continuity so that few students completed the higher 'grades.'[206] The challenge these circumstances presented to the educational State was how they 'continued to stymie institutionalisation of progressive ideas.'[207] Theobald notes how poor attendance at school was interpreted by supervisors as tardiness,[208] with judgments impugning parents of these children and failing to acknowledge the difficult exigencies of geography and economy. It is necessary, therefore, to address the issue of hegemony embedded in discourses of the educational State, particularly in relation to small schools.

Hegemony and discourses of the State

Hegemony is a process of domination, whereby those in power promote their version of what is common sense; by getting those they govern to accept the same perspective.[209] The mechanism of the State promoted schooling as 'good and getting better'[210] and individual progress was increasingly dependent on progress at school. Much of what has been written in the history of education focuses on the impact of hegemony in reinforcing middle class aspirations and control of education. Political leaders were convinced of the appropriateness of their values and were unconscious of any bias.[211]

Universal schooling was designed to achieve the State's economic goals and preserve the power of ruling elites, and for this to occur it needed cooperation and support. Hegemony as the building of agreed ways of viewing the world was exercised through bureaucratic systems and disciplinary power, operating to control

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[204] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations'.
[205] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations'.
[206] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations'.
[207] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations', p. 187.
[208] Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools'.
[209] J. Codd, 'Policy document and the official discourse of the state', in J. Codd, R. Harker and R. Nash (eds), *Political issues in New Zealand education (2nd ed.)*, Palmerston North, the Dunmore Press, 1990.
[210] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations', p. 13.
[211] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*.

and extend its reach over physical reality and mundane thoughts and behaviours.[212] In this way education became an essential means of control as New Zealand's strident middle class strove to establish and maintain its own power, status and security.[213] Late nineteenth century official Liberal discourses promoted the State as neutral and rational in dealing with plurality of interests,[214] and were a justification for increasing State involvement in schooling. The State acted in the best interests of the people to achieve its own ends.[215]

Small schools tend to be taken as an unproblematic yet unique feature of the New Zealand educational landscape to the extent that they have been described a 'gem'[216] and an icon.[217] The perspective was that rural education posed a problem of distance and accessibility solved by pragmatic approaches with little critique of systemic factors that may have exacerbated rather than ameliorated difficulties faced by administrators in relation to small schools.

A discourse of efficiency became a vital tool of the State in the absence of actual direct control of dispersed communities in the colonial society.[218] The State's gradual intrusion and assumption of what had previously been parental responsibilities through schooling and regulation of mundane aspects of children's lives impacted on the family and demonstrates the pervasive and subtle effectiveness of hegemonic processes.[219] In this light, a proliferation of small schools throughout New Zealand may be viewed as problematic,[220] being pivotal to tensions played out between those holding power in pursuit of control and

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[212] Fiske, *Power plays, power works.*

[213] A. Jones, J. Marshall, K. Morris Mathews, H. G. Smith, and L. Tuhiwai Smith, *Myths and realities: schooling in New Zealand (2nd ed.)*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1995.

[214] J. Codd, 'Policy document and the official discourse of the state', p. 135.

[215] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia.*

[216] McLaren, *Education in a small democracy*, p. 66.

[217] Harker, 'Schooling and cultural reproduction'.

[218] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building;* P. Miller, 'Useful housechildren, birth rates and historians', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No, 5, 2003, pp. 495-511; P. Miller and I. Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal State', in M. R Theobald, and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen and Urwin, 1990.

[219] Miller, 'Useful housechildren, birth rates and historians'; Miller and Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal State'.

[220] Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools', discusses in depth the suspicion of central authority in rural America to imposition of compulsory schooling. For New Zealand communities' strategies of resistance, also see McKenzie, Lee and Lee, *Dollars or scholars?*

geographically, politically or socially remote families and communities with their own peculiar demands.[221]

The goal of top-down reforms was to reach into the classroom and the exchange that occurred between teachers and their pupils. Tyack and Cuban note how new mandates from distant legislators resulted in adaptations to local circumstance, or minimal compliance, or 'sabotage of unwanted reforms.'[222] They go on to point out that teachers had their own wisdom of practice and reforms were often 'hybridised to fit local circumstances,' and educators adapted innovations to the ongoing lives of their schools to create coherence where it counted – 'in classroom instruction.'[223] The principal task of teachers by 1900 was 'to manage a classroom efficiently,'[224] with no option of adaptation or innovation. If small schools are viewed as escaping the surveillance of the State either by their location or by the way they operated independently of mandates, they emerge as a site of tension pointing to the usefulness of a centre-periphery construct to provide explanatory power to events in schooling nineteenth century New Zealand.

Conclusion

The definitions of centre and periphery summarised in this chapter have theoretical application as a frame within which to examine documents from the first thirty-seven years of State funded education in New Zealand, and to discover how relationships with schools were articulated, justified and managed within the growth of a national focus and development of liberal discourses and hegemony by the early twentieth century.

The centre-periphery framework provides a rich set of concepts through which to consider the relationship between the Department of Education, Education Boards and schools as one of tension and conflicts of interest, between 1877 and 1914. During that era, control shifted from schools and communities into the hands of one central Department. This study explores the role of the small school in this transition in the context of the Auckland Education Board between 1877 and 1914.

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[221] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity.*
[222] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*, p. 61.
[223] Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*, p. 64.
[224] Whitehead and Peppard, 'Transnational innovations', p. 178.

Chapter Four

Methodology

Introduction

This historical study explores and analyses official documents about education in New Zealand, found in the *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives* (AJHR). This chapter defines and justifies the choice of research design for the study.

The chapter begins with a perusal of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research in the history of education. This is followed by a presentation of the design of the study including a discussion of analysis of documents and engagement with discourse.

Quantitative and qualitative approaches in the history of education

The general starting point for identifying an appropriate design for research is to address the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative traditions. Approaches to research in the history of education overlap with these traditions. The choice of methodology is 'inevitably interwoven with and emerges from the nature of particular disciplines,'[225] indicating the importance of seeking methods appropriate to this historical context.

The influence of the positivist scientific paradigm resting on quantitative methodology shaped an empirical, neutral and objective approach to research from the end of the nineteenth century that gradually made room for more humanistic approaches by the middle of the twentieth century.[226] Gradual acceptance of qualitative methodology, having formerly been identified oppositional to positivist methodology, as subjective and value-laden, is now embraced as an additional approach that is both enriching and legitimate. Post-structuralism and postmodernism evolved through rigorous epistemological debate responsible for a

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[225] Y. S. Lincoln and E. G. Guba, 'Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences', in Y. S. Lincoln and E. K. Guba, *The discipline and practice of qualitative research (2nd ed.)*, Thousand Oaks, Sage, 2000, p. 164.

[226] G. de Lansheere, 'History of educational research', in J. P. Keeves (ed.), *Educational research, methodology, and measurement: an international handbook*, Oxford, Pergamon, 1997.

shift resulting in a blurring of boundaries between formerly discrete traditions.[227] This shift to acknowledging and embracing complementary paradigms[228] rejects a neutral and impersonal stance as limiting, particularly given that social issues, and human relationships are irremediably 'interest-, power-, and value-laden.'[229] Qualitative approaches have enriched understanding of social phenomena through engagement with social theory.[230]

Historical research and the history of education

Approaches to the history of education traditionally tended to offer linear interpretations of chronological progress, reflecting an epistemological perspective that rested on assumptions of neutrality and objectivity of researchers.[231] The work of Cumming and others in New Zealand has been described as Liberal histories which were descriptive, relied on official rhetoric,[232] and tended to pursue themes relating to prominent educators and evolution of educational policy and administration.[233] These descriptive perspectives gave way to more critical approaches from the 1970s, described as revisionist,[234] which expanded understanding of the history of education through engagement with Marxist theory.

Engagement with social theory, in large part from the field of sociology, provides 'explanatory power' to what might otherwise be a bland and lifeless litany of 'acts and facts.'[235] This development has led to questions about those whose

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[227] G. McCulloch and W. Richardson, *Historical research in educational settings*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 2000.

[228] T. Husén, 'Research paradigms in education', in J. P. Keeves (ed.), *Educational research, methodology, and measurement: an international handbook*, Oxford, Pergamon, 1997.

[229] K. R. Howe, 'The interpretive turn and the new debate in education', *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1997, p. 19.

[230] McCulloch and Richardson, *Historical research in educational settings*

[231] G. Weiner, 'Harriet Martineau and her contemporaries: past studies and methodological questions on historical surveys of women', *History of Education*, Vol. 29, No. 5, 2000, p. 389 – 404.

[232] I. Cumming, *Glorious enterprise: the history of the Auckland Education Board 1857 – 1957*, Christchurch, Whitcomb and Tombs, 1959; I. Cumming and A. Cumming, *History of state education in New Zealand 1840-1975*, Wellington, Pitman, 1978.

[233] W. Richardson, 'Historians and educationalists: the history of education as a field in post-war England, Part I: 1945-72', *History of Education*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1999, p. 1 – 30.

[234] R. Shuker, *The one best system? A revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1987.

[235] G. McCulloch and R. Watts, 'Introduction: theory, methodology, and the history of education', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2003, pp. 129-132.

experiences are not recorded, and to examination of causal relationships and the operation of social forces.[236]

When research in the history of education is viewed as a dialogue between the past and present, mediated by interrogation of surviving evidence,[237] the role of the researcher is acknowledged. This includes bringing a level of scepticism and common sense to bear rather than accepting at face value the documents left by dominant social groups.[238] It also acknowledges that engagement with documents is active, selective and purposeful.

Qualitative research methods in educational history have diversified to include, but are not limited to, exploration of oral history,[239] visual images,[240] technology[241] and architecture.[242] Documentary analysis remains, however, the 'bedrock of academic history.'[243]

Documentary analysis involves number of practical issues that need to be addressed relating to engagement with social realities. It is not as a neutral tool. Interpretation of text acknowledges bias and intrusion of values – by the writer and by the researcher, emphasising the need for reflexivity and ethical conduct.[244] As a qualitative form of analysis, documentary analysis requires the researcher not only to locate and analyse, but to interpret and draw conclusions about what is read.[245]

Evidence from official records and reports, which are the source of data for this study, remain vital sources of information about the past. Primary sources, as eyewitness accounts of actual events, tend not to contain interpretation of that event and so may be treated as raw data.[246] As such, useful questions to ask of primary

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[236] Shuker, *One best system?*

[237] Shuker, *One best system?*

[238] A. Bryman, *Social research methods (2nd ed.),* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.

[239] P. Gardner, 'Oral history in education: teacher's memory and teachers' history', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2003, p. 176.

[240] K. Rousmaniere, 'Questioning the visual in the history of education', *History of Education*, Vol. 30, No. 5, 2001, pp. 109 – 116.

[241] M. Lawn and I. Grosvenor, ''When in doubt, preserve': exploring the traces of teaching and material culture in English schools', *History of Education*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2001, pp. 117- 127.

[242] W. Whyte, 'Building a public school community, 1860-1910', *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 6, 2003, pp. 601-626.

[243] G. McCulloch and W. Richardson, 'Introduction: theory, methodology, and the history of education', p. 18.

[244] Bryman, *Social research methods.*

[245] T. Fitzgerald, 'Documents and documentary analysis: reading between the lines', in A. R. J. Briggs & M. Coleman (eds), *Research methods in educational leadership and management (2nd ed.),* London, Sage Publications, 2007.

[246] Fitzgerald, 'Documents and documentary analysis'.

sources relate to their authenticity, their credibility, their representativeness and their meaning.[247] The researcher takes into account the historical, social and political context in which documents were written, and as a result, is in a stronger position to engage with the discourse contained within the text.

In the case of historical documents, the researcher is involved in second order interpretation as an outsider seeking underlying coherence or sense of meaning in the data.[248] The central concern is with interpretation of what it means in the context in which it was written, and acknowledging that primary sources of this nature may contain bias or lack accuracy of fact.[249] In the particular case of official documents, produced for public consumption, these are intentional documents with specific purposes and audiences.[250] Beyond the level of reading on the 'surface' which includes understanding definitions, phrases and concepts of the topics written about, is the next level of interpretation. Within a qualitative approach this involves seeking key terms and themes. These key themes may require testing, refining and/or amending as part of an 'iterative' process of research.[251]

Engagement with documentary evidence is not without its problems. Public and private organisations systematically gather many types of information, for policy decisions, or as a public service,[252] that may or may not be appropriate for purposes of this research. Documents written by people in the past require interpretation.[253] However, the documents and the data obtainable from them are a permanent record and so are available for re-analysis, providing not only a stronger imperative for researcher trustworthiness,[254] but also opportunities to uncover fresh perspectives.

Similarly, the researcher needs to be mindful that aspects of available statistics may not be appropriate units for analysis, or that data were collected in categories that do not match those under investigation. Other complications may arise from

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[247] McCulloch, & Richardson, 'Introduction: theory, methodology, and the history of education'; Fitzgerald, 'Documents and documentary analysis'.

[248] W. L. Neuman, *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches (4th ed.)*, Boston, Allyn & Bacon, 2000.

[249] Fitzgerald, 'Documents and documentary analysis'.

[250] G. Anderson, *Fundamentals of educational research,* London, The Falmer Press, 1990.

[251] Fitzgerald, 'Documents and documentary analysis'.

[252] Neuman, *Social research methods.*

[253] Anderson, *Fundamentals of educational research.*

[254] M. Bassey, 'Case study research', in M. Coleman & A. R. J. Briggs (eds), *Research methods in educational leadership and management,* London, Paul Chapman Publishing, 2002.

weaknesses in the original collection of data where not all relevant information was gathered, or where errors were made in collecting, collating or organising information. Problems relating to reliability may be caused by discrepancies between official definitions and those of the research, or when methods of collecting information change over time.[255] Where data is missing, or not collected for some reason over a period of time, these factors impact on research dependent on documents as the only source of statistical data.

An overriding consideration is that of organisation. In order to ensure reliability of both evidence and conclusions drawn, the researcher needs to approach the task of collecting, recording and organising information systematically.[256]

Design of this thesis

This historical study is based on two premises; firstly that at the turn of the twenty-first century New Zealand still has a high proportion of small schools compared to other comparable societies and this must have roots in the past.[257] Secondly, at the end of the twentieth century increased interest in the benefits and advantages of small schools over large and impersonal educational institutions[258] suggests a revisit of the past may provide new insights about what happened to small schools and their role, if any, in contributing to the shape of universal education in New Zealand.

The study takes a qualitative approach that engages with official documents located in the National Archives, Mt. Wellington. Specifically, the sources are the *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), which include the annual reports over the period 1878 -1914 of:

- Ministers of Education;
- the Auckland Education Board;
- the Inspector General of Schools; and

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[255] Anderson, *Fundamentals of educational research.*
[256] Fitzgerald, 'Documents and documentary analysis'.
[257] E. B. Fiske and H. F. Ladd, *When schools compete: a cautionary tale*, Washington DC, Brookings Institute Press, 2000.
[258] M. A. Raywid, Successful school downsizing, *School Administrator*, Vol. 54, No. 9, 1997, pp. 18-23; L. D. Hood, *Our secondary schools don't work anymore: Why and how New Zealand schooling must change for the 21st century*, Auckland, Profile Books, 1998; Toch, T., *In the name of excellence: the struggle to reform the nation's schools, why it's failing, and what should be done*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991.

- Inspectors employed by the Auckland Education Board.

The approach to documentary analysis in this investigation is qualitative and involves close reading of selected archives to seek evidence of the mention of small schools and to evaluate the discourse. This includes interpreting attitudes or judgments expressed and administrative procedures employed in relation to these schools within the story of the first thirty–seven years of universal schooling in New Zealand. The data are words that are woven as quotes into discussion of their significance.[259] Interpretation of these official documents necessitates acknowledgment of the place of discourse.

Discourse analysis

The importance of coming to grips with discourse in engagement with authentic documents from the era under investigation is evident. Reading closely relevant reports from the *AJHR* involves noting key terms and themes relating to small schools and seeking evidence in support of the understandings gained from reading in greater depth about centre-periphery relationships.

This involves cognisance of the power of words not as 'simply a static set of signs through which individual agents transmit messages to each other about an externally constituted world of 'things'.'[260] Rather, discourse embodies both a system of signs and 'a domain of socially constituted practices.'[261] Through discourse the writers (in this case of government officials) interpret themselves in relation to others, position themselves relative to the rest of the world[262] and therefore sustain relations of domination.[263]

The implication of discourse in the context of this research is how it represents the views of those in power by making their views *common-sense* and *right*.[264] In this sense, power is neither coercive nor tangible, but rather a

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[259] Fitzgerald, 'Documents and documentary analysis', p. 148.
[260] J. Codd, 'Policy documents and the official discourse of the state', in J. Codd, R. Harker & R. Nash (eds), *Political issues in New Zealand education (2nd ed.)*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1990, p. 137.
[261] Codd, 'Policy documents and the official discourse of the state', p. 137.
[262] P. Adams, J. Clark, J. Codd, A. O'Neill, R. Openshaw and H. Waitere-Ang, *Education & society in Aotearoa New Zealand: an introduction to the social and policy contexts of schooling and education*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 2000.
[263] Codd, 'Policy documents and the official discourse of the state'.
[264] Codd, 'Policy documents and the official discourse of the state'.

misrepresentation of reality that enters the political rhetoric and the national psyche by embedding itself within 'structures of distorted communication and also constructions of social reality.'[265]

If these documents are viewed as instruments of the State working to 'maintain relations of power throughout the society as a whole'[266] then discourse is a selection of understandings that builds up a particular depiction of reality designed to achieve certain goals. It does this by developing a particular view of social reality and establishes this reality as *the* version of the world in the face of competing versions.[267] It actively seeks to persuade others and accomplishes this through apportioning blame, or presenting one argument. This logically necessitates within discourse the positioning of *others* through hegemony. What is common sense sustains domination through comparison with and definition of what is abnormal and different.[268] Logically this difference must be contested in some form and so hegemony is put at risk by what happens in actual interactions.[269]

In analysing the reports of Ministers of Education, the Auckland Education Board and Inspectors of schools, documentary analysis in this study focuses on interpretive repertoires. These are discernible through accounts of events and reasoning, making up global patterns of explanations dependent on recognisable common understandings.[270] Also part of the discourse is quantification rhetoric,[271] by which figures and statistics are used to reinforce argument. It follows that discourse may also be generative through reordering institutional structures in favour of particular social groups (and by implication to the detriment of others). A role of discourse is in controlling and imposing limits on areas of schooling including classroom practices, curriculum, and teacher autonomy, and demonstrates

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[265] Codd, 'Policy documents and the official discourse of the state', p. 139.

[266] Codd, 'Policy documents and the official discourse of the state', p. 139.

[267] Bryman, *Social research methods.*

[268] M. A. Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building: explaining institutional difference in New Zealand education: theorising the development of state education in New Zealand.* Paper presented at NZARE conference, Christchurch, 6 – 9 Dec, 2001.

[269] N. Fairclough, 'The dialectics of discourse', *The dialectics of discourse textus*, XIV. 2, 2001a, 2001, pp. 231 – 242 downloaded from the Worldwide Web on 8th June 2007, from http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/norman/norman.htm

[270] Bryman. *Social research methods*; also C. Davidson and M. Tolich (eds), *Social science research in New Zealand: many paths to understanding (2nd ed.),* Auckland, Pearson Education, 2003.

[271] Bryman, *Social research methods.*

the instrumental exercise of power through discourse and its effects on the direction of education.[272]

This study probes official documents to investigate what was said and what was not said. This includes statistical information and how it was collated and presented as part of the discourse, over a period of thirty-seven years: a period that saw the heyday of the Education Boards[273] eclipsed by 1914 as control of schooling passed firmly into the hands of the Department of Education in Wellington.

Conclusion

Coming to grips with discourse in official documents forms the justification for historical research as illuminating the impact of State rhetoric on all levels of schooling. The next two chapters seek out small schools and what was written about them in New Zealand, within the context of the Auckland Education Board between 1877 and 1914. In this light, understanding of implications of discourse becomes central as 'historically specific sets of meanings and practices which 'offer' various positions to us.'[274] This study positions small schools within a centre-periphery relationship, in discourses where the *voice* of the State tells its story.

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[272] Codd, 'Policy documents and the official discourse of the state'.

[273] I. A. McLaren, *Education in a small democracy: New Zealand*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.

[274] S. Middleton and A. Jones, *Women and education in Aotearoa 2*, Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 1992.

Chapter Five

The story of small schools: 1877-1900

Introduction

The theoretical construct of centre-periphery provides a framework to analyse the data uncovered in this study, through which the story of small schools may be magnified. It also provides a framework to explore small schools in a relationship with administrators that was more than a matter of distance and location.

This chapter begins by presenting data about schools as they were reported in the *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives* (*AJHR*) between 1878 and 1900. The discussion that follows combines examination of data in the form of references and quotes from the *AJHR* with discussion of relevant literature on the theme of centre and periphery. It includes an examination of the discourse relating to small schools and a comparison of the way small schools were reported by Ministers of Education, the Auckland Education Board and its school inspectors. It becomes apparent that small schools were a site of tension in terms of fiscal decision-making and as evidence of the progress of the education system, with ambiguity apparent in the reports of administrators towards their continued proliferation by 1900.

Small schools in the Auckland Education Board, 1877 – 1900

The *Education Act* (1877) was described at the time of its passage as creating the most decentralised education system of any English-speaking country.[275] However, a devolved administration reflected the tenuous and immature nature of central bureaucracy rather than central government preference for local administration. A 'bureaucratically complex'[276] structure of administration was a pragmatic response

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[275] I. A. McLaren, *Education in a small democracy: New Zealand*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974.

[276] 'Constrained by existing locally forged identities and loyalties, the new national system was administered in a bureaucratically complex way' to accommodate both provincial and centralist interests within the new structure. M. S. Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building: explaining institutional differentiation in New Zealand education*, paper presented at NZARE conference, 6 – 9 Dec, 2001, p. 9.

to existing provincial systems and the regional preoccupation of politicians,[277] and is consistent with the theoretical stance that a weak centre tolerates and enlists the support of those on the periphery in order to achieve its aims.[278] It does not pre-empt what contemporary observers such as the Director of Education for the Australian state of Victoria suggested in 1902. He noted that the devolution of much controlling power to local level accounted for the intense interest in education by the public in New Zealand.[279]

The twelve regional Education Boards, elected by parents through school committees,[280] were responsible for teacher recruitment and remuneration, school construction and establishment, as well as the examination of pupils and supervision of teachers by school inspectors. Funding was determined and distributed by the Department of Education in Wellington, as was the syllabus and a raft of regulations to be adhered to by the Education Boards.

In 1878 the Auckland Education Board inherited a rudimentary schooling system from the provincial era.[281] The Board was responsible for administration of schooling from the far North of the country to Lake Taupo in the south, encompassing the remote East Cape. As one of the least developed parts of New Zealand, in terms of settlement, stability and infrastructure,[282] it was a large and complex region.

In 1879 there were 183 schools in the Auckland region, making up 25 percent of the schools in New Zealand. By 1900 there were 354 schools in the Auckland region, representing 21 percent of the schools in New Zealand.

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[277] K. Sinclair with additional material by R. Dalziel, *A history of New Zealand*, Auckland, Penguin Books, 2000.

[278] P. Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools: overcoming lingering obstacles', *Phi Delta Kappan*, Oct., 2005, pp. 116-122.

[279] R. Arnold, 'Women in the New Zealand teaching profession 1877-1920: a comparative perspective', in R. Openshaw and D. McKenzie (eds), *Reinterpreting the educational past: essays in the history of New Zealand education,* Wellington, NZCER, 1987.

[280] McLaren, *Education in a small democracy.*

[281] J. Simon, 'Education policy change: historical perspectives', in J. Marshall, E. Coxon, K. Jenkins, and A. Jones (eds), *Politics, policy, pedagogy: education in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 2000.
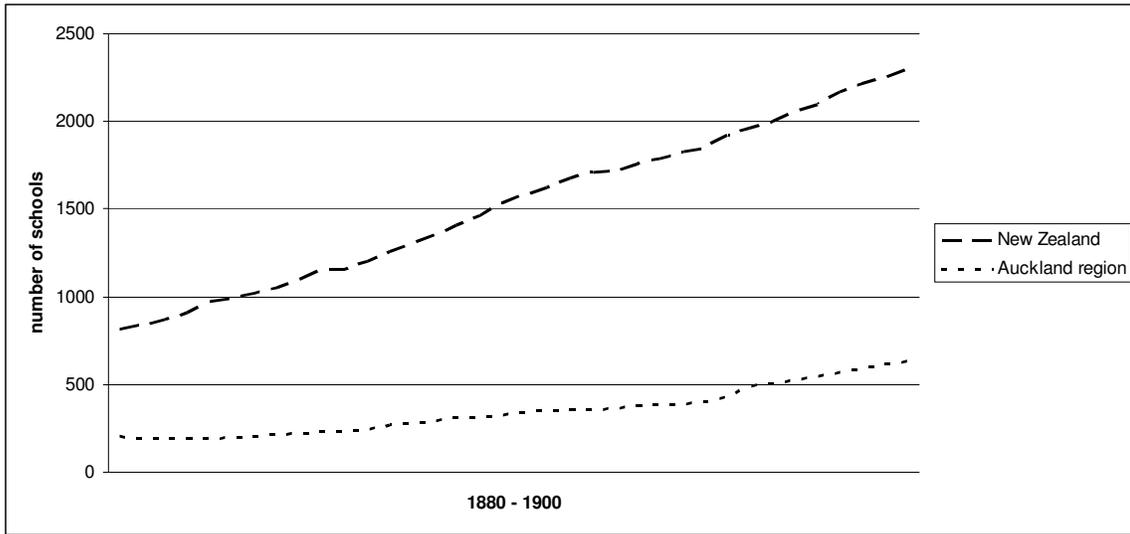
[282] Simon, 'Education policy change'.

Figure 1: The number of primary schools in New Zealand, and in the Auckland region, 1880 – 1900 (source: aggregated data from the AJHR, 1880-1900).

As indicated in Figure 1, the first two decades of State funded schooling saw a steady increase in the number of schools.
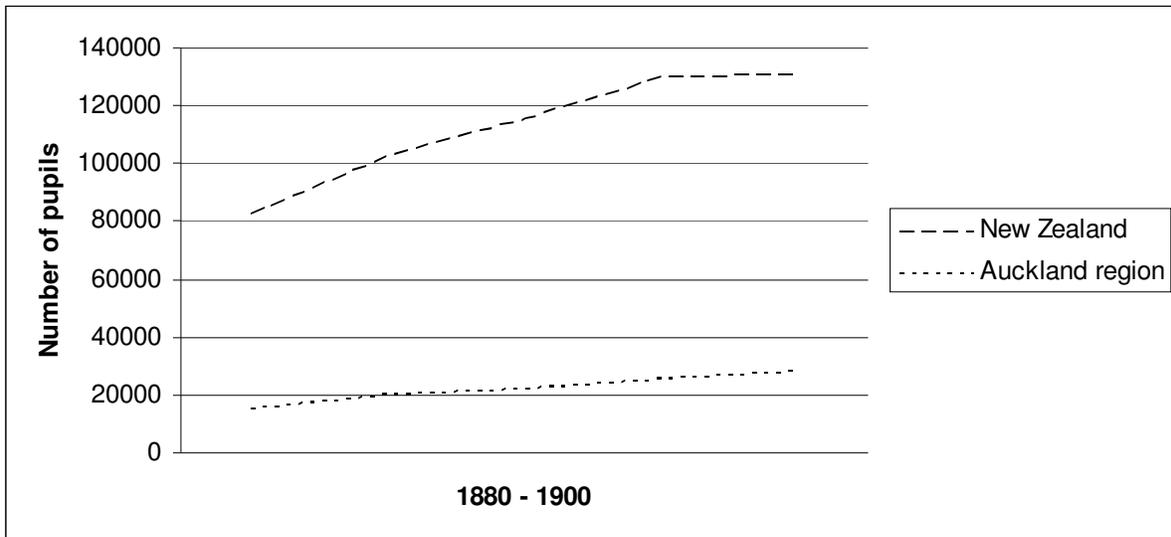

Figure 2: The number of pupils attending primary schools in New Zealand, and in the Auckland region, 1880 – 1900 (source: aggregated data from the AJHR, 1880-1900).

A similar trend is discernible in the increase in the number of children attending school, as shown in Figure 2, although by 1898 there was an apparent levelling off of pupil numbers nationally. Apart from this anomaly, Auckland figures followed the national trend.
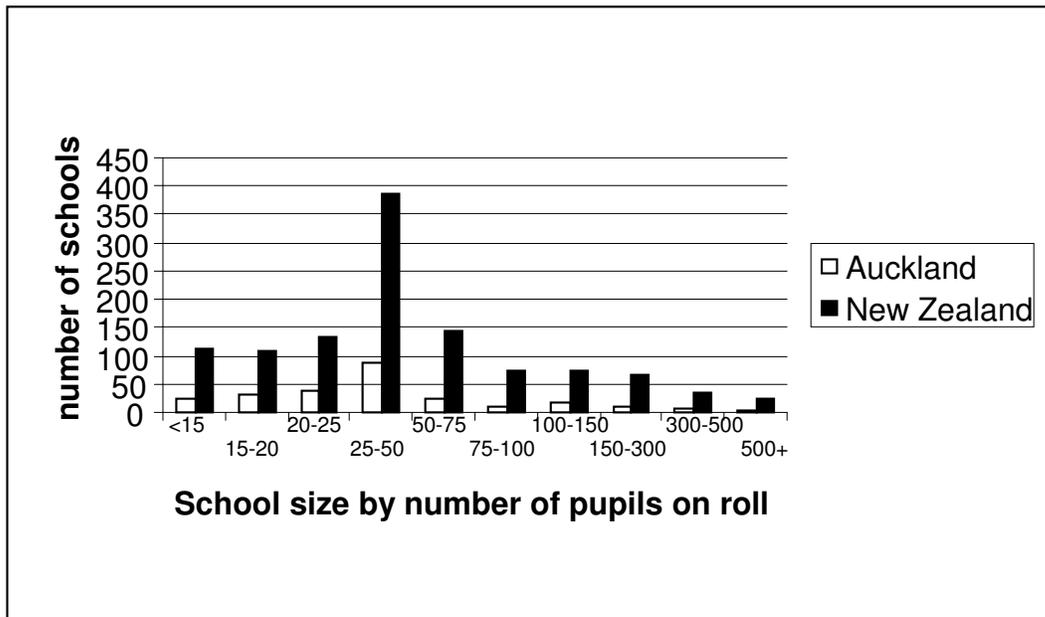
Figure 3: The number of primary schools in New Zealand, and in the Auckland region, by school size (source: aggregated data from the AJHR, 1879 – 1898).

It is apparent from Figure 3 that the majority of all primary schools in New Zealand prior to 1900 had rolls of less than 50 pupils in regular attendance. Schools with a roll of 15 children or less made up 10 percent of all such schools both nationwide and in the Auckland region. Schools with rolls of 15 to 20 pupils made up 9 percent all primary schools in New Zealand compared to 12 percent in the Auckland region. Those with rolls of 20 to 25 pupils made up 11 percent nationally and 14 percent in Auckland and those with rolls of 25 to 50 pupils made up 33 percent for the whole country and 34 percent in Auckland. The percentage of schools with a roll of fifty students or less in the Auckland region made up 70 percent of the total, compared with 64 percent nationwide. Small schools outnumbered large schools. From the perspective of this study, however, the small school is more than a matter of school *size*.

By the standards of the time schools were an idealised 'unequivocal good'[283] judged in part by pupil attendance. Every school required a minimum investment in buildings, teachers and equipment, regardless of size.[284] The funding received by each school was determined by the number of pupils attending on a regular basis. A balance of income and expenditure was reached when a school achieved a roll large

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[283] D. McKenzie, H. Lee and G. Lee, *Scholars or dollars? Selected historical case studies of opportunity costs in New Zealand education*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1996, p. 11.
[284] AJHR, 1881, Vol. 1 A-E, E-1.

enough to generate the funds to cover the costs of its operation and became *self--supporting*.[285] The search for this equilibrium was a preoccupation of reports, but the wisdom of such a funding structure was never challenged in either the reports of the Minister of Education or the Auckland Education Board. However, tensions were inevitable as retrenchments in government spending during the depression of the 1880s contradicted the Minister of Education who reported in 1884 that compared with the more populous 'mother-country' the 'cost of public schools per scholar must be greater in a sparsely-settled young colony.'[286] In the face of such a large proportion of the country's schools being too small to achieve economies of scale, pressure was exerted on Education Boards and in turn on teachers, to lift pupil attendance and, by implication, the size of the school to an *efficient* level.[287]

In addition, schools throughout the Auckland region faced multiple challenges. Inaccessibility of much of the region due to lack of roads and bridges,[288] and the movement of population into and between rural areas,[289] as evidence of a 'nomadic habit' in the colonial society,[290] prevented a planned and predictable expansion of schooling.[291] The extension of settlements into outlying districts[292] saw the establishment of new schools, that were often subsequently moved to new sites or closed down again as populations fluctuated. So while the reports show gradual increases in both the number of schools and in pupil attendance, they obscure the practical difficulties and fluctuations experienced.

As documents written by officials, difficulties were glossed over and small schools were seen to operate 'as well as can be expected.'[293] The upward trend both in attendance (Figure 1) and the number of schools (Figure 2) and the high proportion of small schools not only in the Auckland region, but throughout the country were both initially viewed as indicators of support for schooling and success of the government's programme. The buoyant tone in the first years following 1877 supports the idea that 'educational policies were a mixture of

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[285] AJHR, 1883, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1, p. 60.
[286] From a report presented to parliament on the cost of primary education in a number of countries. AJHR, 1884, Vol. 1, A-F, E-2, p. 7.
[287] AJHR, 1883, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1.
[288] AJHR, 1880, Vol. 2, G-I, H-1a.
[289] AJHR, 1893, E-1.
[290] AJHR, 1893, E-1, p. xi.
[291] AJHR, 1883, E-1.
[292] AJHR, 1889, E-1, p. 54
[293] AJHR, ???

ideological belief and political passion.'[294] The tensions created between the promises and passion and the reality of lack of funding, equipment, buildings, and teachers were evident in the reports of school inspectors but did not feature in the reports of the Ministers of Education.

It was assumed by the Board over the first years of reporting that with improvements in accessibility, small schools would be merged - the 'weaker' giving way to the 'stronger.'[295] The reports of the Minister of Education expressed contradictory messages by acknowledging how elusive uniformity was in the face of so many small, 'no-paying' schools,[296] while anticipating the development of large, 'strong' schools to subsidise the small ones.[297] Linked to this imperative was an expectation of sufficient passes in the *standards* across schools to justify government expenditure, and a focus on statistics relating to increased attendance as proof of progress.

A reality of small schools

The tone of the reports in the early 1880s was that of optimism, cooperation with local communities and confidence in the Board's ability to meet the educational wants of the region 'in a liberal spirit.'[298] However, there were tensions between the existence of many small schools 'as a satisfactory feature in the administrations of educational affairs'[299] and as the 'chief difficulty' faced by the Board being the 'unavoidable multiplication' of small schools.[300] The result was repeated efforts by the Board to appeal to government for special provision for the support of these schools.[301]

When James McNaughton was appointed to Hukerenui South School in the far north of the Auckland region, in 1889[302] he may have envisaged a wooden school

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[294] W. Reese, *History, education and the schools*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, p. 56.

[295] The use of the words 'weak' and 'strong' in Board reports ceased after 1882. The tone of the reports indicated an assumption that schools would both increase in size and decrease in number.

[296] AJHR, 1884, Sess. 1, Vol. 2, D-H, E-1, p. 61.

[297] AJHR, 1880, Vol. 2, G-I, H-1a.

[298] AJHR, 1883, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1.

[299] AJHR, 1883, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1, p. 57.

[300] AJHR, 1884, Sess. 1, Vol. 2, D-H, E-1, p. 59.

[301] AJHR, 1881, Vol.1, A-E, E-1, p. 30.

[302] J. Rolfe (ed.), *From slates to computers: classroom teachers, pupils and others recall school experiences through a century of staggering change*, New Zealand, Castle Publishing Services, 2005, p. 22.

building, with an outside porch and, inside, rows of wooden desks and benches, a wooden floor and a potbelly stove for heating: the standard expected of the *one best school*.[303] It would have included a teacher's desk, a blackboard and other equipment, perhaps rudimentary, but adequate. In fact the building was:

> draughty and the roof leaked. The teacher had extreme difficulty in arranging desks so that the children did not have to sit with their feet in pools of water. The constant stream of water running down the walls ruined maps.[304]

In addition if there was a teacher's residence it was likely to be just as rudimentary. The one room building Thomas Read occupied had no chimney and

> the smoke had to pass through two doors first. He also complained about the stove which was unfit for use and added a hopeful note that the house would be more comfortable if the walls were papered. Six years later nothing had happened.[305]

Robert Hilford, at Waikiekie ''completely unpaid', taught about fifteen pupils, some almost twenty years of age and bearded.'[306] Such circumstances faced by teachers and pupils were invisible in the reports of the Minister of Education and the Auckland Education Board. Nevertheless there are hints of tensions generated by the conditions such as those experienced by James McNaughton, Thomas Read and Robert Hilford in the reports of the Board from the mid-1880s.

The pursuit of the *one-best-school* across Western countries in search of uniformity not only focused on external appearance, classroom layout, furniture and teaching apparatus.[307] The centralising imperative was aimed primarily at global consistency of administration across the country, and demanded that teachers all followed the same syllabus and adhered to the same regulations. Children would start school at the age of five and whole classes would progress simultaneously through clearly defined *standards* to Standard 6 by the age of thirteen.[308] This imperative did not acknowledge the reality teachers faced: combined classes of

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[303] L. Cuban, *Why is it so hard to get good schools?* New York, Teachers College Press, 2003.
[304] It was not until 1911 that school residences were built with indoor bathrooms and kitchens.
[305] Rolfe, *From slates to computers,* p. 23.
[306] Rolfe, *From slates to computers,* p. 23.
[307] D. Tyack and L. Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: a century of public school reform*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press 1995.
[308] Stephenson, *Education, state formation and nation building;* Tyack and Cuban*, Tinkering toward utopia.*

children of different ages from five years up, lack of continuity of attendance and problems of isolation and rudimentary working conditions. However in the 1880s the longevity of the small school was not anticipated.

Geographic logistics rather than systemic weaknesses were explanations for the poor performance of small schools in attaining adequate passes in the standards, as were their dependence on unqualified teachers, pupil teachers or 'sewing mistresses.'[309]

Unsteadiness of attendance was seen to militate 'against the efficiency of schools' and a lack of certified teachers accounted for inefficient teaching of the syllabus. The absence of teacher training facilities meant reliance on a pupil teacher system inherited from Britain that school inspectors did not favour.[310] A lack of school buildings and teacher residences, particularly in the Auckland region were exacerbated by fluctuations in population. Remote and predominantly small schools spread over vast areas of the region[311] faced lack of continuity due high turnover of teachers and temporary closures during the year caused by bad weather or epidemics.[312]

It was a requirement of the *Education Act* (1877) that a new school would be established when there were ten pupils 'in regular attendance.'[313] The Board was committed to extending 'the benefits of school instruction to remote and sparsely peopled localities,'[314] but this was not straightforward, as James McNaughton's and Robert Hilford's cases illustrate.

Small schools came to exemplify the features of schooling that contradicted the State goals of uniformity and efficiency. When children did not start school until well after their fifth birthday, or were held back for failing to pass the *standards*, concerns were increased about 'unsteadiness of the attendance,' and 'unwise' promotion of students in the standards.[315]

Despite increased numbers of 'certified' teachers by the 1890s; most schools in the Auckland region 'were for the most part so small that certified teachers would

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[309] AJHR, 1881, Vol. 1, A-E, E-1.
[310] AJHR, 1880, Vol. 2, G-I, H-1i.
[311] AJHR, 1880, H-1a.
[312] AJHR, 1886, Vol. 2, D-F, E-1b.
[313] AJHR, 1895, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1, p. 60.
[314] AJHR, 1880, H-1a, p. 3.
[315] AJHR, 1886, Vol. 2, D-F, E-1, p. ii.

not give up positions as assistants to become head-teachers in them,'[316] with isolation and pay 'barely above a labourer's wage'[317] added disincentives. By 1894 the high proportion of small schools led to calls for a 'national scale'[318] of salaries that would standardise pay and remove at least one disincentive for teachers to take up positions in small schools. Isolation and rudimentary accommodation remained barriers to the recruitment of teachers to most small schools. It follows that the calibre of teacher required by the educational State was not to be found in small schools, for reasons beyond the control of either the State or the schools concerned, due to a shortage of both teachers and funds to pay them, and due to the unattractiveness of difficult working and living conditions.

Apart from these difficulties, small schools represented places that children did not attend regularly, or progress at a similar pace, or adhere to a sequential curriculum.[319] They were variable in both their circumstances and needs. Whatever skills and attributes the teachers of these schools exhibited they were not those sought by the State. By definition small schools embodied the antithesis of the *one-best-school*, and in terms of a centre-periphery relationship, faced increasing disadvantage as the State regulation increasingly failed to address local issues in its pursuit of uniformity.

Tensions between centre and periphery

The way different families used schools differently and their location on the periphery provided an 'opportunity structure'[320] and relative independence. As the apparatus of the educational State took control of determining the content and form of schooling with increasing intrusiveness, the small school became a site of tension between State imperatives and peripheral variations. Small schools at the periphery represented a space increasingly influenced by external forces within a system of authority and subordination.'[321] The relationship was increasingly based on control

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[316] AJHR, 1886, Vol. 2, D-F, E-1, p. viii.

[317] AJHR, 1886, Vol. 2, D-F, E-1b, p. 6.

[318] AJHR, 1894, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1. In 1899 the Auckland Education Board introduced a set salary for teachers in schools of less than 20 pupils, having considered the idea since 1891.

[319] Reese, *History, education and the schools*.

[320] Rokkan and Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 2.

[321] Rokkan and Unwin , *Economy, territory, identity*, p. 7.

by the centre exerted through 'its institutions, to its individual members and their thoughts and behaviours.'[322]

Teachers and school inspectors, both representatives of the State, but located and influenced by local conditions and aspirations at the periphery, were exposed to tensions between the demands of a distant centre and the challenges faced by the schools. Teachers were described in contradictory terms in reports of school inspectors as being thwarted in disciplining pupils by parental interference, or conversely as failing to live up to departmental expectations by pampering children.[323] The efficient teacher was seen to be able to 'attract higher attendance' and be 'superior to local influence.'[324] On the other hand, inspectors repeatedly called for more flexibility to be given to teachers in interpreting the syllabus and described regulations as 'unnecessary and troublesome.'[325] They promoted allowing teachers faced by multiple challenges in schools to 'adapt the syllabus to local circumstances' and be granted 'greater freedom of choice' in their schools.[326] They noted the multiple demands placed on teachers in small schools who 'conducted single-handed many classes.'[327] The inspector's report of 1891 referring to these teachers stated that 'any originality on their part which tends to cultivate the minds of their pupils, and to foster in them a taste of knowledge, will meet with our most cordial approval.'[328]

Throughout the 1890s small schools became the point of convergence between the Board's obligation under the *Education Act* (1877) to establish schools 'in remote and scattered districts, so as to place the means of education, as far as possible, within the reach of every settler,'[329] and government failure to provide buildings, establish effective teacher training outside the pupil teacher system or fund the schools to a level necessary to achieve its goals.

Furthermore, by the 1890s the Auckland Education Board's advocacy of the region's particular needs, criticism of government regulations by its school inspectors and its failure to solve the problems caused by its 'rather costly

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[322] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p.20.
[323] AJHR, 1880, Vol. 2, G-I, H-1a; AJHR, 1881, Vol. 1, A-E, E-1b.
[324] AJHR, 1886, Vol. 2, D-F, E-1b, p. 6.
[325] AJHR, 1885, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1.
[326] AJHR, 1885, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1c.
[327] AJHR, 1889, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1b, p. 3.
[328] AJHR, 1891, sess. 2, Vol. 2, E-1B, p. 1.
[329] AJHR, 1896, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1, p. 60.

administration'[330] increasingly alienated it from the Department of Education. Because Boards throughout the country were in competition for funding, by 1900, these very problems became the justification for aspects of administrative control to be removed from their control.

In 1890 the Minister of Education reported satisfaction that the number of schools nationwide with rolls of less than fifty pupils was less than the previous year.[331] In 1891 he noted volatility in rolls as the number of these schools had jumped from 693 to 741.[332] In 1892 the report notes an evening out of pupil numbers, describing the closure of a number of 'failing schools.'[333] However, by 1894 the continued increase in the number of small schools was described as 'remarkable.'[334]

From 1894 an apparent levelling off in pupil numbers, but the continued opening of new schools led by the turn of the century to a political consensus that regions were failing to achieve the efficiencies sought by the Department of Education. The continued increase in the number of small schools made them the obstacle to achieving efficiency and uniformity in discourses of the State.

The response of the Board

The Auckland Education Board responded to the blossoming number of small schools throughout the Auckland region in number of ways, none of which addressed the real issues. The proportion of large schools in the Auckland region was not enough to generate sufficient surplus funding to subsidise the dominant number of small schools. The Board introduced half-time schools that involved sharing one 'competent' teacher between two schools. It employed 'visiting' teachers who travelled from home to home in particularly isolated locations[335] and 'aided' schools operated in buildings not owned by the Board.[336] None of these pragmatic strategies were able to tackle the root cause of the problem which was the tension between centrally ordained expectations and a reality of fiscal constraint, geographic barriers and a failure to acknowledge the individual men, women and children who

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[330] AJHR, 1886, Vol. 2, D-F, E-1, p. iii.
[331] AJHR, 1890, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1.
[332] AJHR, 1891, Sess. 2, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1.
[333] AJHR, 1892, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1, p. vi.
[334] AJHR, 1894, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1.
[335] AJHR, 1892, Vol. 2, D-F, E-1b.
[336] AJHR, 1880, Vol. 2, G-H, H-1a.

'struggled to chart pathways through changing familial, economic and institutional landscapes.'[337]

Access to schooling was, at the individual level, an active process of choice, struggle and personal ambition that determined the responses to the control of the State over education and which operated at the periphery of State surveillance. The ambition of centralised authority to achieve 'public discipline, and personal duty'[338] created tensions that seriously affected families, children, and inexorably, their local schools.[339] Similarly, unequal funding and regional differences by the turn of the twentieth century indicated 'many people remained outside the magic circle of the politics of progress, excluded, segregated, or given an inferior education despite the rhetoric of democracy and equality of educational opportunity.'[340]

The incompatibility of central aspirations and those of people located at the geographical or social periphery converged as small schools continued to grow in number even when increased urbanisation became more noticeable after 1900.

The convergence of a range of difficulties associated with small schools meant that they did not (and arguably, could not) fit within the model of an efficient and uniform system.[341] Their dispersed and inaccessible locations and low attendance figures were, according to this logic not only inefficient, but a threat to the achievement of uniformity across the country.[342] They were dealt with initially as a problem that could be solved by local initiatives. Because they maintained a predominant presence, they enter official discourse as increasingly detrimental to the achievement of national efficiency and order.

The reports of the Auckland Education Board (as a body elected by parents) and its school inspectors, however, were conciliatory. The Board tended to qualify any criticisms with explanations that conveyed the idea that it was on the same side as local communities. Despite the fact that many children were expected to work at

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[337] P. Miller and I. Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal State', in M. R Theobald, and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1990, p. 21.

[338] D. Hamilton, 'Notes from nowhere: (on the beginnings of modern schooling)', in T. S. Popkewitz, B. M. Franklin, and M. A. Pereyra (eds), *Cultural history and education: critical essays on knowledge and schooling*, New York, Routledge Falmer, 2001, p. 203.

[339] Cuban, *Why is it so hard to get good schools?* , p. 54-55.

[340] D. Tyack and L. Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: a century of public school reform*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 23.

[341] Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*.

[342] Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia.*

home and travel long distances to school and many teachers had to 'conduct single-handed many classes,' small schools were reported to be fairly efficient.[343] Statements about how well schools performed were relative. Small schools were described by the school inspectors as meriting:

> approval or even praise, though the percentage of failures may be higher and the percentage of passes lower than those we should expect in order to obtain similar commendation in a large school.[344]

The tone of inspectors' reports implies that small and large schools were not comparable. What constituted efficiency, however, were criteria expected to fit all schools.

Tyack and Cuban suggest that the pursuit of efficiency was achieved by the State through persistence 'during a long period of steady effort,'[345] implying that the achievement of 'efficiency' was a long way off in the 1880s. The decades leading up to 1900 were characterised by economic depression followed by increased State control and development of infrastructure under Liberal rule, such that conditions were gradually created leading to greater access to schools by bureaucracy and greater centralisation of government departments. In this light, the actions of the Auckland Education Board in siding with its region and to report criticisms of the Department of Education are evidence of a gradual shift in its relationship with the Department.

Small schools gradually entered the discourses of the State as synonymous with disorder, inefficiency and unruly elements that stood in the way of achieving the goals of the State. They became associated with "irregular attenders."[346] When many schools remained closed for part of a year, or when no teacher was available there was little continuity. These factors contributed to pupils repeating standards and becoming 'over-aged' and likely to leave school without passing the 'standards.'

Administrators promoted compulsory attendance laws as a solution to students' irregular attendance, disorderly progress and early school-leaving. Although they were aware of the children's economic value to their families, central

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[343] AJHR, 1889, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1b, p. 3.
[344] AJHR, 1892, Vol. 2, D-F, E-1B, p. 1-2.
[345] Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*, p. 18.
[346] AJHR, 1885, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1C, p. 6.

regulations tended to overlook the insufficient 'infrastructure to enforce such legislation.'[347]

The progressive coerciveness and rigidity of the regulatory system imposed throughout the first two decades of State funded schooling reflects two apparently contradictory attitudes embedded in official discourse. On the one hand there was a supreme confidence in the rightness of government one-size-fits-all policy,[348] but on the other, a lack of trust in those charged with implementing regulations, particularly at the periphery of government control. The Auckland Education Board became less an agent of the centre and more an advocate for its region, thus becoming arguably less trustworthy. This is consistent with the idea of centre-periphery and the tendency for the centre to simplify and consolidate control. The imperative of ensuring professional experts take charge implies the undesirability of local input, or 'lay control.'[349] Problems common to most schools, when combined with isolation and multiple difficulties associated with staffing, attendance and inspection of small schools presented growing concern to administrators. The Education Boards increasingly failed to discharge their role as representatives of the Department of Education and by 1900 the heyday of the Education Boards was over.[350]

To put the New Zealand case in perspective is to note the similar experience of the one-room schools of Australia, Canada and the United States of America.[351] Schools that initially served the local needs of people gradually became the domain of the State. Through the pursuit of uniformity and efficiency, education became an essential vehicle to maintain social harmony and develop a citizenry commensurate with the demands of capitalism and the 'State's 'ideological apparatus.'"[352]

Conclusion

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[347]Whitehead & Peppard, 'Transnational innovations', p. 182.

[348] Predominantly white, middle class men who dominated the ruling elite were unaware of their bias. Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia.*

[349] Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia.*

[350] McLaren, *Education in a small democracy*.

[351] See M. R. Theobald and R. J. W. Selleck (eds), *Family, school and state in Australian history*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*.

[352] R. Shuker, *The one best system? A revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand,* Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1987, p. 20. Also see Miller and Davey, 'Family formation, schooling and the patriarchal state'.

The first twenty years of State funded schooling in New Zealand were characterised by a level of independence and local control through the Education Boards and their school committees. This needs to be qualified by the fact that Boards were dependent on central financing that disadvantaged small schools, and departmental control of syllabus that in fact exerted ever-increasing direction and supervision from the centre.[353]

The aim of achieving a uniform education system in the face of diversity of local circumstances prompted the Inspector General of Schools to note in 1885, 'the contrast between the poorest (smaller) and richer (larger) districts is, I fear, too great as yet to render uniformity possible'.[354] The ambivalent tone of reports is one of lower expectation of the small schools, sometimes indulgent and at other times patronising. On the one hand small schools positively reflected the egalitarian ethos that espoused the virtues of education for all citizens and the rights of children to receive an education.[355] On the other hand, small schools' remoteness from control, lack of properly and appropriately trained teachers, and precarious existence made them the antithesis of uniformity, stability and efficiency. Small schools gradually became embedded within the discourse of national unity, in need of control, and symbolic of undesirable elements of colonial society.

The nineteenth century ended with the Auckland Education Board and its school inspectorate increasingly critical of the Department of Education. Despite continuing to cite its many small schools as needing 'some special provision' for their support,[356] along with Boards throughout the rest of the country, the Auckland Education Board's difficulties merely became one reason to gradually curtail its powers.

[353] McLaren, *Education in a small democracy*.
[354] AJHR, 1885, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1C, p. 4.
[355] AJHR, 1883, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1, p. 57.
[356] AJHR, 1881, Vol. 1, A-E, E-1, p. 30.

Chapter Six

Small schools peripheralised: 1901 – 1914

Introduction

As the twentieth century began, small schools continued to preoccupy educational administrators. However, official discourses displayed increasing ambivalence towards them, making their continued proliferation throughout the period 1901-1914 problematic.

The story of small schools in this chapter from 1901 to 1914 is one of their steady peripheralisation as part of a centralising government agenda, within a disciplinary and paternalistic pursuit of national order.[357] Gradual erosion of the influence of regional Education Boards over the direction of schooling culminated in the transfer of administration to the central Department of Education in 1914.

This chapter begins by presenting data about schools as they were reported in the *Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives* (AJHR) from 1901 to 1914. The discussion that follows explores the figures and statistics used to reinforce the position of the State. It includes examination of data in the form of references and quotes from the reports of Ministers of Education, the Auckland Education Board and its school inspectors. Relevant literature on the theme of centre and periphery supports an examination of the discourse relating to small schools and a comparison of the way small schools were reported. It becomes apparent that small schools became the object of domination that took effect in the disguising of their input and importance, thus justifying the actions of the State in enacting increasingly intrusive regulation.[358]

More schools and changing demographics

Party politics and a national focus developed as New Zealand entered the twentieth century, with an increasing orientation towards national concerns. It is useful to

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[357] R. Shuker, *The one best system? A revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand*, Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1987.

[358] P. Rouse, 'Cultural models of womanhood and female education: practices of colonisation and resistance', in C. Hobbs (ed.), *Nineteenth century women learn to write,* Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia, 1995.

note the growth in complexity of reports in the AJHR following 1900. There were more sections, including detailed reporting about secondary schools and more statistical data collected on children's ages in each standard, and ages of starting and leaving school. There was also significant space given to comparing New Zealand with Australian states as well as other countries, particularly in relation to attendance and training of teachers.

The aggregated data of the number of schools for the period from 1901 to 1914 is presented in Figure 4, indicating a continual and gradual increase over the period in both the Auckland region and over the country. Similarly, the number of pupils continued to increase nationally and in the Auckland region, as indicated in Figure 5, apart from a slight drop in the first five years of the twentieth century. The Auckland region continued to follow the national trend.
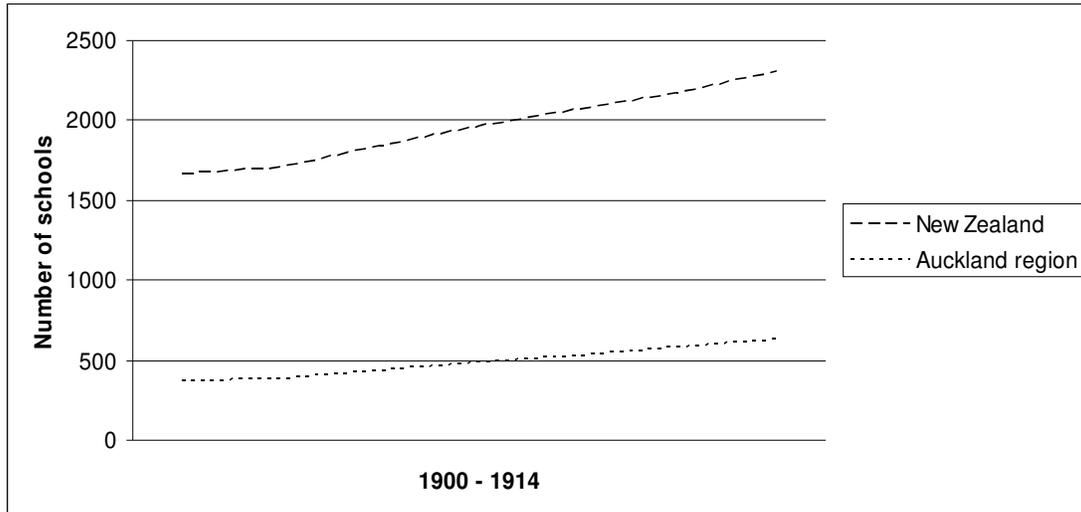

Figure 4: The number of primary schools in New Zealand, and in the Auckland region, 1900 - 1914 (source: aggregated data from the AJHR, 1901-1914).

Figure 5: The number of pupils attending primary schools in New Zealand, and in the Auckland region, 1900 – 1914 (source: aggregated data from the AJHR, 1901-1914).

A feature of the first decade was that while the Auckland Education Board continued to note unceasing demand for schools in outlying areas, there was an increase in the numbers of children attending larger urban schools.[359] An increasing prominence of large schools in urban settings arguably pointed to the gradual achievement of efficiency on the part of the educational State. From such a stance, small schools logically became scapegoats of inefficiency. This becomes apparent in the way data were manipulated to convey a sense of progress in terms of growth in the proportion of larger schools.

The way data on schools were organised changed four times between 1900 and 1909, making it impossible to directly compare data. This in itself indicates how statistics entered the discourse.[360] They appear to de-emphasise the number of very small schools by the way data were grouped. Because of the difficulties in comparing data relating to the period between 1900 and 1909, the data presented here focuses on the five years between 1909 and 1914.

Between 1909 and 1914 the number of *schools* of small size continued to dominate, as evident in Figure 6. Grade 0 represented schools with a roll of less than 9 pupils, and Grade 4 represented schools with rolls of between 36 and 80 pupils The proportion of schools in New Zealand, from aggregated data, between Grade 0 and Grade 4, was 8883 out of a total of 10823, or 82 percent. The proportion of

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[359] The Board noted by 1909 the increase in population in the suburbs of Auckland. AJHR, 1909, E-2, Appendix A.
[360] N. Fairclough, 'The dialectics of discourse', in *The dialectics of discourse textus*, XIV. 2, 2001a, pp. 231 – 242 downloaded from the Worldwide Web on 8th June 2007, from http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/staff/norman/norman.htm
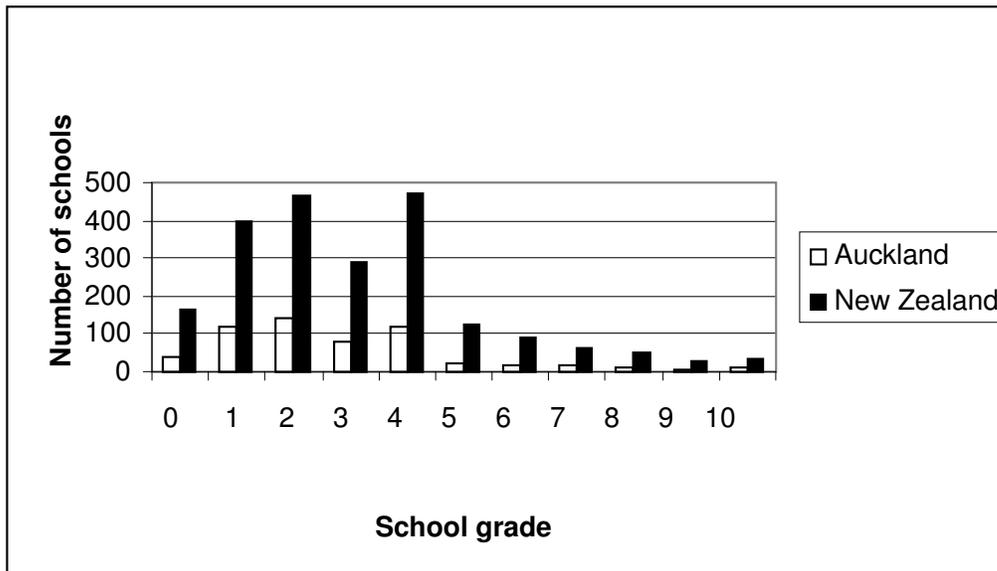
Figure 6: Total number of schools in each grade for Auckland & New Zealand: aggregated data 1909 – 1914 (source: aggregated data from the AJHR, 1910-1914).
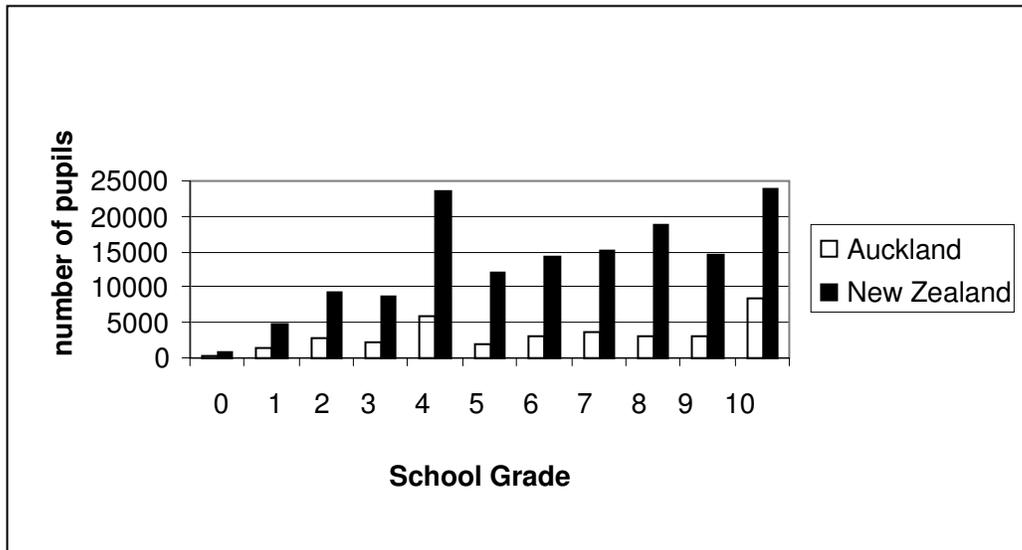

Figure 7: Total number of pupils in each grade for Auckland & New Zealand: aggregated data 1909 – 1914 (source: aggregated data from the AJHR, 1910-1914).

schools in the Auckland region, from aggregated data, between Grade 0 and Grade 4, was 2470 out of a total of 2869, or 86 percent. However, by this time, the number of *pupils* attending larger schools began to overtake the numbers in the smallest of schools as indicated in Figure 7. The proportion of pupils in New Zealand, from aggregated data, in Grades 0 to 4, was 235,087 out of a total of 721,197, or 33 percent over the period 1909 to 1914. The proportion of pupils in the Auckland region, from aggregated data, between Grade 0 and Grade 4, was 63,401 out of a total of 184,264, or 34 percent over the same period. In general terms this means that by 1909,

approximately only one–third of all primary school pupils attended over four-fifths of the schools.

The higher proportion of pupils attending large schools coincided with increasing urbanisation and concerns about overcrowding in many suburban Auckland schools by 1910.[361] However, the way the statistics were collated and reported appears to skew the numbers in an attempt to convey a growing balance between small and large schools. This makes the use of such data appear to become an instrument in support of discourses of efficiency and uniformity, by promoting larger schools as evidence of this. In fact, small schools continued to dominate the educational scene.

Table 1 shows the five years between 1909 and 1914, during which time statistics were plotted according to an elaborate system of Grades established by the *Education Amendment Act* (1908).[362] The size of each category is uneven. Grade 0 contained schools with a range in roll size of 0 to 9 pupils, Grade 1 contained schools with a roll size of 10 to 15 pupils (a range of 6) while Grade 2 (schools with a roll size of 16 to 25) and Grade 3 (schools with a roll size of 26 to 35) both contained a range of 10. The next Grade covered schools with a roll size of 36 to 80 pupils (a range of 45). Grades 5 to 10 similarly categorised schools in uneven, though progressively larger categories with ranges of 40, 80, 100, 150, 250 and 450 respectively.

From the aggregated data for the five years from 1909 to 1914, the proportion of small schools appears to be less than it was, by keeping the number of schools in each category down (as far as possible) in comparison with the far fewer number of schools of large size. For example, between 1909 and 1914, the average number of schools in New Zealand in Grade '0' was 167 compared to 32 schools in Grade 10. However, Grade '0' consisted of all schools with a roll of only 9 or less, whereas Grade 10 consisted of all schools with a roll between 601 and 1050. When the number of schools with an average roll of between 0 and 450 (an equivalent range to the category of Grade 10), is considered, then the average number of these schools was 2,108 (or 74 percent of all schools), showing the actual weight of small schools disguised by the grading structure. The figures for Auckland show a similar trend. Between 1909 and 1914, the average number of schools in the Auckland region in Grade '0' was 37 compared to 11 schools in Grade 10. However, the number of

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[361] AJHR, 1910, E-2, Appendix C.
[362] AJHR, 1909, Sess. 2, Vol. 3, E-G, E-1.

schools with the equivalent range as Grade 10, being Grades 0 to 8 was 556 (or 71 percent of the total number of schools in the region). The statistics were skewed to disguise the dominant number of small schools

It would seem that while small schools were the norm, this was disguised in the statistics. They were reported and represented in negative ways, and were progressively further marginalised by changes to regulations. It was even suggested that because only a quarter of teachers in Grade '0' schools were certified, a fairer idea of the proportion of certified and uncertified teachers would be obtained by omitting them from the calculations of net increase of adult teachers as part of phasing out pupil teachers.[363]

When Grade '0' school teachers made up almost one in ten of all teachers, it was a significant omission and supports the idea that the centre consolidated its control over the periphery through disguising its input and importance, thereby justifying its lower status and lack of opportunity for advancement.[364]

The use of statistics and detailed surveys of children's participation in school over the first decade coincided with similar concerns in other countries. The emphasis on comparative data indicates the commonality of attitudes and ambitions for public schooling during this 'progressive era.'[365]

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[363] AJHR, 1909, Sess. 2, Vol. 3, E-1, p.12.
[364] Rouse, 'Cultural models of womanhood and female education'.
[365] D. Tyack and L. Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: a century of public school reform*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995.

Grade number:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Size of school roll in each grade	≤ 9	10–15	16–25	26–35	36–80	81-120	121-200	201–300	301–450	451–600	601–1050
Size of each category	9	6	10	10	45	40	80	100	150	250	450
Average number of schools (New Zealand)	167	392	468	287	463	124	91	62	54	25	32
Average number of schools (Auckland region)	37	120	140	80	117	20	18	14	10	6	11

Table 1: School Grades 1909 – 1914 showing the average number of schools in each Grade, in New Zealand and in the Auckland region (aggregated data from the AJHR, 1910-1914).

Towards centralisation

Between 1900 and 1914 two Acts of Parliament heralded in a number of major changes that undermined the power of Education Boards and impacted on small schools.

The legislation that introduced a national pay scale for teachers in 1901[366] had the immediate effect of removing from regional Education Boards all powers to employ, transfer and dismiss teachers. The passage of the legislation led to the dismissal of uncertified sewing teachers, a reduction in the number of pupil teachers and removal of the power of Boards to appoint relief staff. These moves undermined small schools, already dependent on uncertified teachers. Pay scales for teachers of the smallest schools were already a disincentive to certified teachers. The school inspectors criticised the way salaries were structured, finding it 'deplorable' that the onerous workload and requisite skill and 'alertness' needed to manage small schools 'counted for so little.'[367] Taking away the Board's power to subsidise teachers' removal expenses further exacerbated difficulties in staffing the remotest schools.

As a centrally conceived and imposed mechanism, the 'colonial scale'[368] had been pursued and the idea had been supported by Boards to improve the lot of teachers in the smallest schools by removing their vulnerability to drops in attendance. These protections did not eventuate. The initial impact of the new regime was a sudden drop in teaching staff that led to a sharp increase in teacher-pupil ratios from a fairly static 30 pupils to one teacher on average, to 42.5 pupils to one teacher in two- teacher schools, and to 38.4 nationally.[369] In fact, the new scale had an effect that was opposite to that anticipated and severely undermined the Board's ability to respond to and meet the particular needs of its region. This is consistent with the notion of subordination of peripheral interests through the use of

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[366] A commission set up to consider the best method of 'establishing a uniform scale of staff and salaries' resulted in a uniform scale of staffing teachers salaries, 'The Hogg Report', A. Jones, J. Marshall, K. Morris Mathews, H. G. Smith and L. Tuhiwai Smith, *Myths and realities: schooling in New Zealand (2nd ed.),*Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1995.

[367] AJHR, 1906, E-1, p. 7.

[368] AJHR, E-1, 1894 - mention made of the need for a colonial pay scale given the 'remarkable' increase in the number of small schools, lowering teachers' salaries. Pupil teachers made up one third of all teachers.

[369] AJHR, 1909, E-2I, p. 9.

regulation and the control of bureaucratic systems. By eliminating Education Board authority, the Department of Education simultaneously simplified the decision-making process and distanced small schools and their communities from access to decision-makers and the seat of authority.[370]

The elimination of pupil teachers, sewing teachers and work mistresses was aimed at encouraging the certification of teachers. Their removal in lieu of certified teachers placed additional pressure on small schools as the price of a lack of 'properly' trained teachers. Lobbying for a training college included advocacy for a model 'country' school to familiarise prospective teachers for 'one of the most difficult tasks a teacher has to undertake;'[371] an indication of how ubiquitous these small schools were. This did not however alleviate the ongoing staffing problem faced by the Auckland Education Board.

Teachers in small schools were consistently seen as inefficient and easily influenced by parental pressure. Pressure from parents to promote their children to the next 'standard' in the face of departmental disapproval resulted in the reinforcement of a lack of confidence in the abilities of these teachers by the Department of Education. A lack of trust attached to teachers of small schools is located in suggestions that head teachers in small schools could not be relied upon to promote pupils in the standards with the necessary sternness, and that recommendations for places in secondary schools from small schools needed an inspector's approval before being placed before the Inspector General.[372]

The move to a national pay scale was a centralising mechanism that had a number of effects. It reflected the first step in the gradual centralisation of aspects of schooling in the first decade of the twentieth century. It demonstrated what Reese calls a 'consolidating trend' characteristic of twentieth century[373] The tendency of centralisation is demonstrated by simplification within a national pay scale. Those detrimentally affected were remote communities on the periphery that already experienced difficulties attracting qualified teachers and which as Fiske described

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[370] Rokkan & Urwin, Economy, territory, identity; J. Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, London, Verso, 1993.
[371] AJHR, 1906, Session 2, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1, p. xvi
[372] AJHR, 1914, E-2, Appendix C.
[373] W. J. Reese, *History, education, and the schools,* New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

did 'not have easy access to the system of power' and could not 'in general, turn it to their own advantage.'[374] This shift placed increasing power in the hands of central decision-makers over children's access to secondary education.

Teacher accommodation

Another ongoing constraint that maintained the unattractiveness of small schools was a lack of teacher accommodation. Changes to funding formulae for school buildings, maintenance and repair and the assumption of control by the Department of Education led to 'vexious delays.'[375] The Auckland Education Board already dealt with a dearth of teacher residences in comparison with the rest of the country, so in addition to substandard existent buildings,[376] delays of up to two years under the new centralised structure were another source of frustration.

There are numerous reported cases in Northland of teachers working in abysmal conditions, whose frustrations in their dealings with the Board were alleviated only by the kindness of local people in providing repairs and in some cases new school buildings from their own pockets,[377] demonstrating the peripheral tendency to struggle to preserve its integrity in the face of central regulation.

Centralisation of building and maintenance meant that peripheral concerns were even further removed from the decision-making centre. Whereas previously the Board had often struggled to respond to local concerns, the impersonal and geographic distance of the Department of Education in Wellington only exacerbated delays. Such developments are consistent with central consolidation of power through regulations and bureaucracy.[378]

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[374] Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, p. 11.

[375] AJHR, 1904, E-1, p. 71.

[376] By 1909 there were still 115 teachers' residences without bathroom or washing facilities, AJHR, 1909, E-2, Appendix A, p.35.

[377] J. Rolfe (ed.), *From slates to computers: classroom teachers, pupils and others recall school experiences through a century of staggering change*, New Zealand, Castle Publishing Services, 2005.

[378] J. McAuley, S. Tietze, L. Cohen and J. Duberley, 'Developing the interface between centre and periphery as an agent for organisational learning: issues of strategy and local knowledge', paper presented to the *3rd International Conference on Organisational Learning*, Lancaster, 1999.

Compulsory attendance

The Education Amendment Act 1908 introduced compulsory attendance for all children aged between seven and fourteen. It followed many years of legal exemption whereby children could in effect attend school for three days a week. This exemption was removed in 1912, following a number of years of intense surveying of children: their ages of starting and finishing school, their progress through the *standards* and the link to attendance, as part of detailed ongoing investigation by the Inspector General of Schools, G. Hogben. He urged the imposition of compulsory attendance in 'the interests of the children and the State'[379] without any 'local option.'[380] One argument presented was the link between truancy and the acquirement of the 'nomadic habit.' Worse still, was the extent to which this would lead, according to 'leading authorities on juvenile depravity,' to the subsequent swelling of numbers in industrial schools, reformatories, prisons, refuges and lunatic asylums.[381] The discourse of moral panic[382] that accompanied efforts to control unruly elements in society is directly linked to this concern to achieve compulsory attendance. From a centre-periphery perspective, increased power of the centre exacerbates 'distance, difference and dependence' of peripheries that are 'part of the system and yet marginal to it.'[383] Tyack and Cuban suggest that in a diverse schooling system such as New Zealand's, there was 'uneven penetration' of reforms, so that attendance remained a concern in the most remote areas.[384] This may reflect the effect of geographic remoteness that created difficulties of access. It could also reflect resistance of communities to externally imposed constraints.[385]

The Auckland Education Board's criticisms of the Department within its reports, led it to be increasingly marginalised by the Department of Education. The

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[379] AJHR, 1909, E-1, p. 5.
[380] AJHR, 1912, E-2, p. 26.
[381] AJHR, 1902, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1, p. iii.
[382] R. Shuker, *One best system? A revisionist history of state schooling in New Zealand,* Palmerston North, The Dunmore Press, 1987.
[383] Rokkan and Unwin, *Economy, territory, identity,* p. 4.
[384] Rokkan and Unwin, *Economy, territory, identity,* p. 56.
[385] P. Theobald, 'Urban and rural schools: overcoming lingering obstacles', *Phi Delta Kappan,* Oct., 2005, pp. 116-122.

Auckland Board refused to make use of a government transport allowance to facilitate the conveyance of children to schools at distance from their homes.[386] The Board cited a lack of roads as the reason. Taking up the allowance would, however, have led to the closure of a good many small schools. The Board regretted the fact that the government did not consult it before making its decisions,[387] and on a number of occasions protested at retrenchments, delays, inconvenience and hardship caused by the loss of its powers.[388]

The school inspectors working for the Auckland Education Board over the first decade of the twentieth century worked under pressure to examine more rigorously. They acknowledged continued improvements in Northern schools,[389] and renewed their criticism of the new syllabus as too prescriptive, not only in content but also in prescribing the methods teachers were expected to use. One report stated 'the quality of work in some country schools has surprised me: it has been characterised by intelligence and thoroughness and has reached a high standard of merit.'[390] Reports noted that the behaviour of pupils in country schools was considerably better than in larger ones.[391]

The positive tone used by inspectors in connection with small country schools accompanied their praise of the energy and resourcefulness of 'inexperienced' teachers. In this period inefficiency continued to be linked to unqualified teachers, and to uncontrollable problems that detrimentally affected attendance, to small schools' 'gross carelessness'[392] in keeping attendance registers up to date and to deficiencies in their schemes of work.

Small schools peripheralised

Under increasingly centralised control, small schools were clearly prevented from overcoming many of the challenges they faced by the very nature of the system: the

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[386] AJHR, 1905, E-1.
[387] AJHR, 1908, E-1.
[388] AJHR, 1903, E-1, p. 64.
[389] AJHR, 1906, E-1B - after an absence of 6 years, the inspector noted improvements in 'educational efficiency' with 'praise and admiration'.
[390] AJHR, 1907, E-1B, p. 7.
[391] AJHR, 1905, E-1B.
[392] AJHR, 1908, E-1.

onerous regulation, inflexibility of the syllabus, lack of economic resources, unrealistic expectations and discriminatory practices. The clear message was that large schools demonstrated a high level efficiency while small schools' defects in professional training and raw, inexperienced teachers kept them at the 'borderland of inefficiency.'[393] The teachers in these schools were somehow suspect, and not to be relied upon.[394] Their prime role was 'to manage a classroom efficiently.'[395]

What is apparent is that small schools were placed in an impossible situation. By 1910, the report of the Minister of Education moved the argument to the parents. Local ambitions and aspirations that ran contrary to the centrally proposed agenda were actively discouraged.

The picture of New Zealand at the time showed 'from proficiency to matriculation, the function of the school in an increasingly urbanised bureaucratic society was to act as a social filter.'[396] Shuker notes the influence of G. Hogben as Inspector-General of schools strongly influencing the gradual centralisation of schooling through reforms in curriculum, attendance, salaries and administration as part of the 'readiness' of parliament, teachers, the inspectorate and the Education Boards to 'move forward.'[397] The educational State was promoted as an impartial benefactor delivering education to rural New Zealand.

The wider context of the era, however, demonstrates the power of ideas to direct policy. Parallel developments in Australia, the United States and Britain, for example, demonstrate the pervasiveness of 'progressive' ideas dealing with the results of industrialisation and the growth of cities, through the development of 'insider elites' who 'developed whole templates of 'scientific' reforms as the blueprints for 'progress,' and shaped a broad political agenda for reform.[398]

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[393] AJHR, 1903, E-1B, p. 2.

[394] This is consistent with findings elsewhere. See K. Whitehead and J. Peppard, 'Transnational innovations, local concerns, and disruptive teachers and students in interwar education', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 42, No.s 1 & 2, 2006, pp. 177-189;Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*.

[395] Whitehead & Peppard, 'Transnational innovations', p. 178.

[396] Shuker, *One best system?* p. 56.

[397] Shuker, *One best system?* p. 57.

[398] Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*, p. 58.

A recommendation to merge schools may not have resulted in action because local opposition was 'too strong to be overcome,'[399] but pointed to a future policy designed to improve efficiency.[400] The pursuit of efficiency raises a number of contradictions pointing to the cynical targeting of small schools:

> Schools can easily move from panacea to scapegoat. If the schools are supposed to solve social problems, and do not, then they present a ready target.[401]

Constant discourses of the period justifying regulations often based on spurious evidence, and without anticipating effects, consolidated control in the hands of the central Department of Education. This indicates its purposes to be less to serve the real needs of the communities under their control than to bolster further the reins of power. Despite inspectors reports of marked improvements in teaching in small schools compared to the previous decade, the educational State continued to emphasise anomalies in staffing in different parts of the country, and to focus on maximising attendance. Its arguments persisted around the topic of inefficiency of small schools. This is consistent with the theoretical position that the centre exercises power to benefit its own economic and political interests.

In 1914 the Minister of Education announced that the time was ripe for reforms that resulted in the inspectorate being centralised to attain 'closer approximation to uniformity in the interpretation of regulations by inspectors.'[402] This was anticipated to provide candid and impartial reports to the Minister, and allow 'really efficient and economic organisation for our educational system.'[403] Other measures included the reduction in the number of education districts, and consolidation in pay and conditions. These moves are consistent with central tendencies to simplify organisation and the discourse justified the moves to 'promote a well-ordered advance along approved lines of progress.'[404] Subsumed within the final consolidation of

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[399] AJHR, 1910, E-2,Appendix C, p. 102.
[400] Shuker, *One best system?*
[401] Tyack & Cuban, *Tinkering toward utopia*, p. 14.
[402] AJHR, 1914, E-1, p. 4.
[403] AJHR, 1914, E-1, p. 4.
[404] AJHR, 1914, E-1, p. 4.

schooling under Departmental control was the small school, relegate further to the periphery by a national focus less in touch with local concerns than the Education Boards.

Conclusion

The discourse of moral panic had not eliminated transience; neither had increased pay for teachers guaranteed improvements in staffing of small schools or decreased the high proportion of these schools throughout the country. What it did do was set up the conditions for a future policy to merge small schools and for the relegation of small schools to problems relating to rural education as a matter distance and economies of scale. This did not mean, however, that small communities and their schools succumbed to the increasingly hostile environment of the twentieth century.[405] Regional variations have been found to survive centralised education systems,[406] as did the ubiquitous small school in New Zealand.[407]

The story of small schools, when it is subsumed within the New Zealand narrative of rural education, becomes a chronicle of ingenious solutions instituted by successive governments to overcome remoteness and to cross geographical distance, rather than the story of survival in the face of a persistent government agenda of centralisation.

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[405] G. McCulloch, *Education in the forming of New Zealand society: needs and opportunities for study*, NZARE, Monograph No. 1, 1986.
[406] C. Campbell, 'State policy and regional diversity in the provision of secondary education for the youth of Sydney, 1960-2001', *History of Education*, Vol.32, No. 5, 2003, pp. 577-594.
[407] New Zealand in 2000 still had a high proportion of small schools in relation to comparable Western societies, in E. B. Fiske and H. F. Ladd, *When schools compete: a cautionary tale*, Washington DC, Brookings Institute Press, 2000.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This historical study set out to locate and examine the relationship between small schools and the Auckland Education Board between 1877 and 1914. Small schools played an important role in determining the terrain of the educational landscape well into the twentieth century in New Zealand. Their story has tended to be subsumed within the story of rural education. However, this study has demonstrated that small schools presented a challenge to the educational State that was more than a matter of their geographical location.

The Auckland region was characterised by a haphazard array of schooling options, small scale and dependent on local initiative well into the tenure of the Auckland Education Board. Most schools were small 'one-room' schools, located throughout the large and complex region, typified by inaccessibility and isolation. The Board continued, by and large, the local traditions inherited from the former provincial era. In 1914 centralisation of Education ended the effective power of the region over its own schooling arrangements.

Small schools were a meeting place of two contradictory goals of education implicit in the Education Act 1877: the provision of equality of access to education and the pursuit by government of social control. As part of nation-building, small schools enter official discourses as both evidence of egalitarian aspirations and as defying goals of uniformity and efficiency by their position on the 'borderland of inefficiency.'[408] A strident middle class sought to maintain its position through discourses of uniformity and efficiency and a political preoccupation with achieving social order.

By working within a theoretical framework, using the work of Rokkan and Urwin,[409] and Fiske,[410] building on the assumption of an oppositional relationship

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[408] AJHR, 1903, Vol. 2, D-G, E-1b, p. 2.
[409] S. Rokkan and D. W. Urwin, *Economy, territory, identity: politics of West European peripheries*, London, Sage, 1983.
[410] J. Fiske, *Power plays, power works*, London, Verso, 1993.

between centre and periphery, the relationship between administrators and small schools is interpreted as one of subordination, and insubordination. From this theoretical framework, small schools represented a perennial challenge to centralising forces, as the antithesis of efficiency. They embodied multiple characteristics of inefficiency that were used to justify intrusion by the State in the form of regulation and surveillance.

By the end of the nineteenth century the growth of party politics and a national focus increasingly undermined provincial and rural influence and led to increasing centralisation of education administration. During the heyday of the Auckland Education Board between 1878 and 1900, there was a level of tension as the Board aligned itself more and more to local peripheral concerns. After 1900 small schools continued to maintain a high numerical profile and as the centre, in the shape of the Department of Education, gradually removed Boards' powers, small schools were increasingly relegated to the periphery.

Traditional histories of schooling in New Zealand praise successive governments for developing an education system that catered for rural education. However, they did so without questioning the implications of increased State control and community surveillance. Late nineteenth century official discourses promoted the State as neutral and rational in dealing with plurality of interests,[411] and were a justification for increasing State involvement in schooling.

However, the State acted in the 'best interests' of the people largely to achieve its own ends. The small schools were embedded in discourses of efficiency, as embodying all that was inefficient: unqualified teachers, inability to cover the curriculum, and subordination to local control. The teacher was portrayed as too much under the influence of the community. All these characteristics were antithetical to the goals of the *one-best-school*.

The State, rather than assisting and delivering education as a benevolent and impartial benefactor, in fact dealt with small schools in an increasingly regulatory way as part of a drive for control in the name of efficiency. This study demonstrates that a

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[411] J. Codd, 'Policy document and the official discourse of the state', in J. Codd, R. Harker & R. Nash (eds), *Political issues in New Zealand education*, Palmerston North, the Dunmore Press, 1990, p. 135.

number of regulations had a detrimental effect in the case of small schools. Measures designed to increase efficiency in reality added to difficulties faced by small schools and their teachers.

Skills and abilities teachers needed to succeed in their work in small schools included resourcefulness, flexibility, the ability to teach children ranging in age from five years up single handed, and to cope with rudimentary conditions, seasonal fluctuations and the varying circumstance of local families, with limited professional support. These are qualities noted in passing by school inspectors and acknowledged as part of the difficult work of the sole-teacher school. Regardless of any benefits to the pupils of these schools, these qualities were not those sought by the educational State of 1914.

Much of what has been written in the history of education in recent times has focused on the impact of hegemony in reinforcing middle class aspirations and control of education. Within official discourses of the educational State, small schools were trapped. They were set up for failure by the regulations. That they survived is testimony more to the struggle of teachers, pupils, and parents. The wisdom of the system was never explored and those in the powerful centre retained the luxury of casting aspersions of 'inefficiency' on those at the periphery. Yet the real inefficiency was a failure on the part of the State to acknowledge and adapt the education system to the overwhelming proportion of small schools in the country, rather than expecting small schools to adapt to a system to which they were not compatible.

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