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EDUCATION IN 'LATE' MODERNITY A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF NEW LABOUR REFORM, 1997-2007

EATON, ROBERT,WILLIAM

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Robert Eaton

2012

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ABSTRACT

New Labour entered into government in 1997 with a stated intention to develop a new consensus in education. This was to be practical rather than ideological in its basis, and was to provide a modernising and radical approach to reform that would go beyond the debates of the past.

This study assesses the basis for this new consensus and the extent to which it appeared in New Labour's agenda of education reform between 1997 and 2007. Discussion draws attention to the dichotomised nature of debate that existed surrounding the future direction for education reform between market-oriented or democracy-based approaches, contextualised in the ideological bases of the social democratic Left and the New Right. However, the weaknesses of each suggested a need to develop alternative perspectives and strategies for the future. Drawing upon the work of Anthony Giddens the possibilities for such an alternative approach are explored, pointing in particular to the nature of the contemporary period as one of 'late' modernity. Here the possibilities presented, as well as the risks created, present an urgent need for new approaches to government and individual life.

New Labour's attachment to Giddens's ideas are examined through their take-up of the Third Way as a label for a project of modernisation. Analysis of the developing education policy agenda considers how change and continuity in the approach to reform was informed by the Third Way. Drawing upon an extensive research literature the limitations, conflicts, and tensions in this Third Way approach are also assessed. It is argued that whilst New Labour's policy agenda contained modernising appeal and potential, it failed to establish itself as a coherent new framework. Thus, it also failed to build a basis for radical reform.

The study concludes by arguing that a broader Giddensian perspective on 'late' modernity offers potential in a contribution to the nature and necessity of future reform. However, whilst it guards against simplistic approaches to utopian prospects, it must similarly recognise the complexity of realising such hope in practice.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Starting and finishing this thesis, along with everything in between, would not have been possible without the help and support of a lot of people. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have in some way been a part of this journey – it wouldn't have been the same without you.

In particular I want to acknowledge my supervisor, Prof. Carl Bagley, whose wisdom and guidance has been an essential part of this process. Thank you for your continued support – it really has made the difference.

Secondly, to my parents, who have gone out of their way in their love and support for me – at times quite a long way, and at quite short notice! – 'thank you' doesn't really sound enough, but I mean it intensely.

My thanks also go to the staff, fellows, tutors, and students of St. Chad's College, of which I have had the privilege of living, working, and studying alongside. Whilst Wikipedia may have made a university education 'all but pointless' (Partridge, 2011: 34), it is a great honour to be part of a community that shows what education can, and really should be, all about – *non vestra sed vos*.

INTRODUCTION

'Education will be the passion of my Government' – Tony Blair, 1994

In his 1996 Ruskin Speech, Tony Blair (1996a) set out his desire to transform education in Britain: 'I believe there is the chance to forge a new consensus on education policy. It will be practical not ideological. And it will put behind us the political and ideological debates that have dominated the last thirty years'. On entering power New Labour's project of educational reform was supported by a language that stressed its modernising and radical appeal. The aim of this study is to examine the basis for the necessity of this 'new consensus', and to assess the extent to which New Labour realised its ambitions to build it in education. The focus of this study lies on policy developments concerning schools reform between 1997 and 2007 as a period in which a clear narrative for this radical and modernising desire was set out. This is contextualised in a broader approach to understanding New Labour as a political project alongside the nature of social change in contemporary society as a means to explore the political and ideological divides that existed, and how New Labour sought to move beyond these. This study offers a critical reading of education policy in this period, seeking to assess the extent to which it has moved towards a new consensus in its relationship to social change. Contributing to the debate on the nature of New Labour education reform, an exploration of the work of Anthony Giddens informs not only an understanding of the influences acting upon New Labour, but a critical assessment of education reform in 'late' modernity.

A HISTORY OF REFORM

Two moments in particular mark the history of English education reform in the last seventy years. The first, the Education Act of 1944, also known as the Butler Act, was a major turning point in opening up the provision of schooling to all children. Implemented in an era of 'post-war consensus' the changes that the 1944 Act sought to bring about were part of a wider project of reform that was to create the beginnings of the welfare state in Britain. Following on from this starting point the introduction of a comprehensive system of education in the 1960s was 'a key moment in the constituting of the social democratic settlement that pursued social justice based on redistribution' in which 'an age of 'professional knowledge'...would deliver the good society for its clients' (Harris & Ranson, 2005: 571). However, in 1988 a new conception of the public good was to emerge through the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) that gave privilege to individual rights in a wider political

paradigm of neo-liberalism, resulting in a new 'post-welfare' educational settlement (Tomlinson, 2001) and a new focus for research and criticism. After 18 years of Conservative administration a New Labour government entered into power in 1997. Prime Minister Tony Blair promised a project of radical and modernising reform with a 'new consensus' in education at the centre of his government. This study is located in an attempt to explore the nature of education reform in this period, and to examine the extent to which such a new consensus was developed.

Under New Labour education has undoubtedly received unprecedented attention with Tymms (cited in Henderson, 2003) noting that over 650 initiatives were introduced in their first term of office alone. However, the increasing importance of education in governmental agendas can be traced back to the post-war period in which 'a rising birth rate, economic growth and, most importantly, political will for social reform, coalesced in the expansion of education' (Ranson, 1994: 428). The importance of education to governmental planning was signalled by David Eccles when, as Minister for Education in 1956, he argued for greater attention to be paid to the role of education in producing a viable economy. However, as Kogan (1971) highlighted, the system of policy-making at this time reflected the consensual approach to politics in general, with little centralised control over education as a whole and a demonstrable mood against increased governmental involvement. The term 'consensus' itself was popularised to describe the post-war years that were built upon a Keynesian approach to economic management, a mixed economy with large areas of state ownership, a significant role for the trade unions, and a Beveridgean welfare state in which the state engaged in redistributive policies (Addison, 1975; Kavanagh, 1990; Seldon, 1994).

The erosion of this post-war consensus that had underscored such expansion and its replacement with a new neo-liberal paradigm has been the focus of increasing interest, examining the impact of rising public expenditure, economic globalisation, and the nature of the education system itself. Indeed, education was both part of the problem and a necessary part of any solution to the problems experienced by governments in this period (Barber, 1994). Concerns over the nature of the education system existed with regards to the proliferation of 'progressive' teaching methods as well as the structure of localised management and administration that had 'brought a dull uniformity to the system and a levelling down of standards' (Whitty, 2008: 166). Prime Minister James Callaghan's Ruskin Speech of 1976 is well referenced in narratives of educational reform over the past half-century as a key moment of change in the direction of education. However, whilst his speech made use of the economic context to create a space for 'considerable and far reaching structural activity' (Batteson, 1997: 371), this failed to materialise. Change was, however, to come soon after during the Conservative administration of Margaret Thatcher. As noted above, it was a period of transformation that has been widely heralded as producing a paradigm-shift in education policy,

extending from a wider transformation of the social and political landscape. Although this change was initially 'incremental' (Seldon, 1994: 511), it nevertheless resulted in radical and seemingly permanent change. Culminating in the 1988 ERA these changes were not only the most comprehensive reforms since 1944 (Ranson, 2008; Whitty, 2008), but the extent of their radicalism 'virtually reversed the direction of British educational history' (Johnston, 1992: 165) and 'expunged' the language of the post-war decades from the record (Lawn, 1990). Such changes in education were built upon a neo-liberal impetus (Ball, 2008; Ranson, 2008) that had gained ascendency from its 'utopian intellectual' roots through the aggressive politicisation of Reagan and Thatcher (Tickell & Peck, 2002: 380). Central to this new era, and indeed language, of education policy was the introduction of marketised features into the school system. Replacing the comprehensivisation of schools that had marked the post-war decades was a commitment to choice and competition as an organising framework: 'Instead of satisfying the needs of bureaucracy and democratic institutions, competition for students will force schools to pay attention to the demands of their primary clientele – students and parents' (Smith & Meier, 1995: 462). The role of education in social reform was seen to be at an end.

Whilst the reforms of the Conservative era effected a paradigm-shift in education policy and changed the language of debate, criticism of the reforms was marked by a divide between those who argued for a return to social democratic approaches to reform and those who considered that the reforms had not gone *far enough* in the direction of neo-liberalism and marketisation. New Labour were to enter this debate with a 'Third Way' that was built upon a sociological and political conceptualisation of the contemporary world that provided them with the impetus and basis to pursue reform. New Labour's promise of a radical and modernising approach to government was a vision espoused not only through a period of reorganisation as a political party, but also throughout their time in office, and particularly with regards to education. With this vision New Labour sought to go beyond the apparent dichotomy of debate:

> The old dispute between those who favour growth and personal prosperity, and those who favour social justice and compassion, is over. The liberation of human potential – for all the people, not just a privileged few – is in today's world the key both to economic and social progress (Blair, in Rentoul, 2002).

The concern with the contemporary period expressed here chimed with repeated claims to be a Party marked by a modernising approach to government and a forward-looking approach to policy-making that would result in a new understanding of education. Whilst the appeal to a new consensus established a connection with both recent British and Labour Party history, the New

Labour vision was based very specifically in a modernising framework in which there could be no going back to the policies of the post-war years:

> In each area of policy a new and distinctive approach has been mapped out, one that differs both from the solutions of the old left and those of the Conservative right. This is why new Labour is new. We believe in the strength of our values, but we recognise also that the policies of 1997 cannot be those of 1947 or 1967 (The Labour Party, 1997).

Here the notion of consensus was not an attempt to reach cross-party agreement on political action as had been the case in the post-war years, but instead was based upon a renewal of social democracy itself and the ideas it presented for policy reform.

EDUCATION, IDEAS, AND POLICY

Underlying arguments for or against particular policies are attempts to understand what education itself is, what it should be, and even what it could be. Such debates about the nature of education have, of course, existed throughout the generations. Aristotle's *Politics*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, and, more recently, the works of John Dewey and Michael Oakeshott, to name but a few, have all engaged in a continual philosophical debate over the role and purpose of education, and all have in their own ways affirmed its importance. In this way education has always been a political concern and activity, and thus been central to debates over control and influence. As the education system has become increasingly under centralised governmental control this political nature has become clearer and the political nature of education policy widely appreciated, for it is, on the whole, organised and controlled by the state and therefore represents influences unevenly (Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Olssen et al., 2004). Education is therefore a site of conflict and struggle for, as Apple (2003: 1) states, 'as inherently part of a set of political institutions, the educational system will constantly be in the middle of crucial struggles over the meaning of democracy, over definitions of legitimate authority and culture, and over who should benefit from government policies and practices'. The political nature of education would be of no surprise to Aristotle who himself held that there was a strong relationship between the two. Whilst his politics was charged with the responsibility for achieving human good, it was education that he held as the most influential way of bringing about this goal (Mulgan, 1977; Ross, 1995).

Despite this connection, the literature suggests that the relationship between education and philosophy is one under strain, both from in education and from outside. From in critics cite the ease with which much philosophical discussion retracts to internal academic debates, losing contact with the difficult and uncomfortable world of practice. On the other hand, but still in the educational field, there are criticisms of the dominance of certain forms of research privileged by economic and

governmental demands to the apparent exclusion of investment in the deeper exploration of the ramifications of philosophical thought upon education (Hodgson & Standish, 2009). From outside the educational sphere there can be adjudged to be a separation between educational philosophy and 'mainstream' philosophy. Certainly, as Standish (2007) points out, the structure of many academic institutions serves to emphasise such a situation.

Nevertheless, there appears to be a shared concern in both philosophical and political fields as to the nature of today's world and the shape of education in it. Shilling (cited in Whitty, 2002: 4) argues that we live in a world in which there is 'radical doubt as to what precise goals education should achieve', whilst David Miliband (1994a: 1) notes the scepticism of politics that results from the 'denial that there is any structure to the present or any way of organising the future'. Green (1997: 64) presents the contemporary picture as dominated by two 'contradictory tendencies' in education: '...one has to do with shaping malleable young people to serve the needs of technology in a post-industrial society; the other has to do with educating young people to grow and become different, to find their individual voices, and to participate in a community in the making'. The importance of this dichotomy is less to do with its existence *per se*, but more precisely concern lies in the attempt to understand the relevance of each side to the particular conditions of today's world and to consider ways in which their apparent conflict may be resolved.

It is in this space of conflict and confusion that the role of policy assumes a special significance: 'the debate about education is often construed at some distance from the processes it purports to describe. It has however, through policies, a real effect upon the educational system itself' (Finn, Grant and Johnson, cited in Ball, 1990a: 17). Education policy therefore represents an important site for the 'playing out' of political control and authority over the nature of education. Indeed, Johnston (1992) argues that the transformations of the 1980s were not so much important for the way that they were justified – the concern with 'quality' in education was not new – but it was in the forms of control that were brought into play. These represented 'new patterns of power, authority and responsibility, created with an ideological end in view' (Johnston, 1992: 167). Certainly the New Labour government has done nothing to lessen the significance of the relationship between government and education through policy, although its image of a new consensus is, as noted above, to be based upon pragmatism rather than ideology.

The ideological end of education policy was for the Conservatives one based in a neo-liberal perspective towards the nature of contemporary society and the means required for meeting its demands. It built upon a conception of the public good not only through an interpretation of present-day circumstances but also through a complex amalgamation of philosophical perspectives surrounding the nature of the individual and the role of tradition that ensured a resultant change in

education. Accompanying this 'paradigm-shift' in education policy-making has been the development of an expansive literature of research and commentary. This vast array of literature, alongside its dominance in political and public debate, reveals a similarly complex and highly contested picture of educational change. Despite the sheer number of reforms and initiatives seen in recent decades, it is clear that, as Lawton (1992) noted, this contest had failed to produce an agreed vision for education. Such an observation would appear to have underpinned New Labour's commitment to building a new consensus in education. Indeed, their stated intention for a radical and modernising approach to such change would indicate that there was substantial disagreement over the direction of policy. However, the present nature of debate on New Labour's time in office again fails to offer clarity over the extent to which any new consensus on education policy has developed. Here questions are raised over the continuing influence of a neo-liberalist agenda in policy, and over how possible it is to talk about 'New' Labour in any meaningful way. Despite the undoubted attention and investment in education, and the commitment to a modernised social democracy, has the role of education in social reform changed since the paradigm-shift experienced during the Conservative years?

It is in response to these questions that this study seeks to contribute to the debate. Offering an exploration of the work of Anthony Giddens this study aims to establish the extent to which New Labour made possible radical and modernising approaches to education reform. This study is not intended as a critical examination of Giddens's work as a whole, but, as will be developed later, an appreciation of his contributions outside of that specifically related to the notion of the 'Third Way' allows for a better informed analytical perspective on New Labour reform to be taken. Giddens not only informs the debate on the direct influences acting upon the direction of the New Labour project, but his theory of social reproduction and change allows for a critical perspective on the extent to which recent policy developments put education at the centre of social reform.

POLICY ANALYSIS

Hill states that 'the study of social policy is the study of the role of the state in relation to the welfare of its citizens' (Hill, 1996: 3). Or, as Sabatier writes:

> All policies aim to resolve a public problem that is identified as such on the governmental agenda. Thus, they represent the response of the political-administrative system to a social reality that is deemed politically unacceptable…some instances of social change do not give rise to policies, mainly because they are not visible or expressed…or because no mode of state intervention proves feasible and consensual (Sabatier, 2007: 21).

The centrality of education to New Labour's project is therefore significant in understanding the role of the state in recent history, as is their commitment to building a new consensus to reform based upon a practical rather than ideological appeal. To analyse policy developments in this project is therefore to explore the nature of social change that was recognised by New Labour, and the extent to which education proved a 'feasible and consensual' domain of state intervention.

Although policy is a widely-used term its connections to governance are clear. Ranson (1995: 440) highlights their purpose in governments 'to codify and publicise the values which are to inform future practice and thus encapsulate prescriptions for reform'. The significance of the state in policy may be attributed to a theory of modernisation. Hill (1996: 17) outlines this noting that 'in all advanced industrialised societies collective efforts have been made to develop elaborate social policies'. Indeed, Sabatier similarly points to this state-centred approach arguing that 'it was only from the 1930s, and in close association with the development of the state, that there were efforts on the part of the public service to design interventions directly targeted at concrete problems. This state interventionism is at the root of the conception of real public policies…' (Sabatier, 2007: 25). Thus the concept of policy here is caught up with notions of public and social issues, the solutions to these, and the role of the state in providing these solutions. This rising concern with public policy and the role of the state as a 'problem solver' certainly resonates with the experience of the education system since the post-war period (Bochel & Duncan, 2007: 1). Indeed, there has been both expectation and support for governmental involvement in such issues: 'equality and democracy are the key concerns which lead people to want the state to intervene in education. Others are worried about social cohesion, or crime, or economic growth' (Tooley, 2000: 8). Thus, public policy reflects the changing nature of society, both in terms of the problems facing it and in the role of particular institutions in providing solutions to these. Therefore it also plays an important role in social change itself. These changes are resultant from the development of complex societies and the growth of the role of the state that has been central to the nature of modernisation (Hill, 1996). Thus, as education policy has assumed greater significance as a result of modernisation, so then its politicisation and role in conflicts and struggles for control over the direction that modernisation should take emerges.

The development of policy in the last century as a concept tied to the nature of the state therefore leads policy studies into political analysis. It is in this context that definitions of policy such as Kogan's (1975: 55) 'authoritative allocation of values' are grounded. Whilst the notion of policy and its place in politics and governance has long been found in political studies literature, it has acquired a new status in the last 50 years. This orientation towards policy in political studies can be found to be linked to the changing focus of political science from an institutional to a behavioural perspective

as a result of changes in politics and governance (Ham & Hill, 1993: 5). The increasing attachment of policy to society through its role in providing solutions to social and national issues saw policy analysis itself change from being a 'sterile and invisible activity' carried out in governments (Olssen et al., 2004: 2) to one eager to make use of research from the social science disciplines (John, 1998; Lowe, 2004; Hogwood & Gunn. 1984). Further, more sophisticated understandings of policy have moved beyond viewing it as a discrete entity, merely the output of a political system, to understanding policy as a process (Ham & Hill, 1993). Descriptions of the policy process draw particular focus to the place of decision. These decisions, or more accurately, networks of decisions taking place over a long period of time (Ham &Hill, 1993), represent the climax of disputes over values and ideas and of material influence (Bowe et al., 1992). Attempts to separate policy into sequences and stages thus fall foul of the nature of policy as an ever changing and evolving entity – as Ball (1994: 16) states, 'a policy is…always in a state of 'becoming', of 'was' and 'never was' and 'not quite'' (see also Ham & Hill, 1993; Lowe, 2004). In this light Ball offers caution in attempting to read off political philosophy from policy.

In this light this study approaches the reading of policy from a critical perspective. Hammersley (1996) makes useful observations of this critical approach which are relevant to the nature of this study. As such it is characterised by:

  - a concern with analysis at a societal and social structural level…
  - an interest in ideology as a means by which existing structures and social arrangements are legitimated and maintained,
  - a commitment to not taking for granted what-is-said (and therefore to not rely on the manifest content of documents, and also taking a critical stance to them by examining their role in relation to ideology, power and control) (Hammersley, 1996: 46).

As noted this study makes use of Giddens's sociological analysis to inform a reading of New Labour's 'Third Way' in policy, and also to inform a critical analysis of how such policies are related to issues of power and control at a societal level. The aim is to remove what Dale (1994: 37) terms 'unreflective retorts' to political ideology and provide detailed examination of these theories and the nature of their relationship with education and education policy. This study also guards against 'reading off' ideology from policy documents through the use of a range of supporting literature and research to draw attention to the conflicts and contradictions in and between policies and their implementation.

Although bringing about a radical shift in education policy the 1988 ERA took almost a decade to emerge in the Conservative administration. Given this, alongside the gradual nature of 'consensus politics' (Heffernan, 2002), this study has chosen to study the development of New Labour policy

over a significant period of time rather than analysing one specific policy. Further details on the scope and structure of this study are detailed below.

SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

Before outlining the structure of this study a few considerations on the parameters of investigation are noted. Firstly, this study is concerned primarily with policy relating to the compulsory sector of education, that is, with primary and secondary schools, and further education, although related policy developments pertaining to aspects of the education system outside of these boundaries are referred to where appropriate. This decision rests largely in practical considerations of space and in maintaining sufficient focus on depth of analysis as well as breadth. As this study will detail, whilst education was to receive a broadening profile under New Labour, it was schools reform which remained central to this and to the narrative of the New Labour project. Given this, it is felt that such focus offers an appropriate and sufficient investigatory field for this study to explore New Labour's commitment to radical and modernising change. Secondly, and relatedly, is the decision to focus on policy developments in the period 1997-2007. Whilst issues of space also pertain here, this limitation is motivated by the desire for the analysis of education reform presented to remain focused upon its contribution to an understanding of how such transformations respond to the nature of contemporary change. Whilst the basis upon which New Labour, and consequently its education reforms, were built was clearly more than *Blair-ite* or *Brown-ite*, as will become clear through this study, the decade of power held under the leadership of Tony Blair was to give the clearest shape to the narrative of this project. There are, of course, important discussions that could be held over the nature of the New Labour project in the Blair and Brown eras, as is indicated by key individuals themselves. In 2004 Giddens (2004) was adamant in his belief that the New Labour project would continue beyond Blair's premiership: 'I defy anyone to find, in Brown's speeches over recent years, more than a slither of difference from Blair. His Third Way credentials are impeccable'. Yet, Blair (2011) himself was to later write: 'From 1997 to 2007 we were New Labour. In June 2007 we stopped. We didn't become old Labour exactly. But we lost the driving rhythm that made us different and successful. It was not a government of continuity from 1997'. However, as the final chapter of this study will argue, the significance of this later period to an exploration of education in 'late' modernity lies more in the broader context and nature of events than in the specific developments of education reform occurring at this time which themselves serve more to emphasise the conclusions arising from the period in question than to contribute to any significantly new understanding of reform. Thus, the period of analysis presented in this study allows sufficient and relevant scope for an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of New Labour's Third Way to be established without being distracting by debates which tend towards discussions of

Labour Party politics rather than the broader context in which this study seeks to place its observations of recent education reform.

Thirdly, this investigation concerns policy reforms pertaining to the education system in England. Scotland has historically had a different system in operation, with the 1998 Scotland Act finalising this by giving legislative control over all education matters to the Scottish Government. Although historically tied to the English education system Wales experienced greater identity throughout the twentieth century culminating in the establishment of the Welsh National Assembly in 1999 to which almost all powers over education were devolved.

STUDY STRUCTURE

The following chapter, Chapter Two, starts by examining in more detail the policy changes that occurred during the Conservative administration drawing attention to their ideological underpinning as part of an attempt to respond to changes in contemporary society. In reviewing the research literature on the limitations of these policy developments it is noted that there is a conflict of opinion between those who argue for further extension of the neo-liberal marketisation of education and those who seek a return to a democratic and collaborative approach to policy. This dichotomy is examined further drawing attention to conflicting perspectives on the nature of contemporary society, and thus on responses to it. This provides the basis for moving to explore the work of Anthony Giddens – both as offering a critical sociological perspective on society and change in the contemporary period, and as a significant influence on the basis of New Labour thinking.

In exploring the work of Anthony Giddens Chapter Three outlines the significance of his work in understanding the nature of 'late' modernity. His thinking allows for a critique of the New Right response to this period of modernity, as well as of the possibilities of a return to traditional social democratic solutions, building instead towards a 'Third Way' perspective. The chapter concludes by discussing the significance of his understanding of 'late' modernity in relation to his theory of social reproduction and change. Giddens presents the contemporary period as one that offers the possibility of significant social change based in what he terms a stance of 'utopian realism'. Further, such change is urged as both necessary in response to the challenges posed by 'late' modernity, and as requiring an active approach in order to bring it about.

Chapter Four examines the influence of Giddens's thinking in the development of New Labour. Drawing on a range of primary and secondary sources it is argued that New Labour embarked upon a radical transformation as a party, however, whilst significant, this was necessary to create space for a substantive project of reform to take shape. New Labour's use of the 'Third Way' as a label for their project of modernisation is discussed, drawing attention to its connections with the work of Giddens. Despite criticisms of its vagueness with regards to policy commitments the chapter

concludes by arguing that the Third Way can be read as a significant attempt to provide a series of broad guiding principles for policy development. Whilst also noting that the Third Way enabled a range of influences to find a complementary approach around which to unite, a distinction is made between the scope of New Labour's vision and that of Giddens.

Having established an understanding of Giddens's perspectives on social change and contemporary modernity, as well as the extent to which the 'Third Way' had been used by New Labour to embark upon a project of modernisation, Chapter Five moves to examine the development of education policy in this light during the years 1997-2007. The chapter provides a critical reading of policy drawing attention to continuity and change and the influence of Third Way thinking. Significant changes, as well as conflicts and limitations, are noted, drawing on the extensive research literature that has developed on New Labour policy during this period. This chapter provides the basis for further discussion of the extent to which policy in this period represented a radical and modernising approach towards a new consensus in education.

The final chapter, Chapter Six, draws the study together through a discussion of the significance of Third Way thinking in New Labour's education project. It examines the extent to which policy developments have drawn on the radical and modernising possibilities contained in Third Way thinking to bring about a 'new consensus' on education. Returning to Giddens's sociological perspective on change it is argued that whilst showing recognition of the intensification of change in contemporary society, education policy reform has been mainly concerned with managing such change in a narrow economic perspective, working to reinforce existing patterns of social practice and identity rather than developing education as a site for radical social change. Drawing attention to perspectives which question the radical motivations of New Labour, the persistence of class-based inequalities reproduced through localised and individualised struggles in education, and the limitations of Giddens's own conceptualisation of the nature of change, the chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the potential that a Giddensian perspective holds for future analysis of educational reform. It is argued that whilst Giddens informs a sophisticated understanding of utopian thinking for reform, this must be complemented by analysis which recognises the complex and political nature of social change.

A NEW AGENDA FOR EDUCATION?

Whilst New Labour entered into power in 1997 with education as their priority they did not enter a policy vacuum. The radical transformation of education that occurred under the Conservative administration had not only established a new policy agenda but produced a divided response as to the future direction of such change. This chapter begins by providing an outline of the context into which the New Labour project was to enter, before moving to assess the nature of the criticism that emanated from the educational literature. Whilst the reforms in this period transformed the education system in a way not seen since the post-war years it will be noted that there was widespread criticism of both the basis and effects of such policies. Such criticism is seen to arise not just from the 'Left' but also from those for whom the establishment of 'quasi'-markets had not gone far enough to fully allow the benefits of a system based on choice to be fulfilled.

The result of this was a dichotomised debate over the direction in which educational reform should proceed. As this chapter will observe, both sides demonstrated their relevance to education as a response to the demands of contemporary society, yet equally each displayed weaknesses and limitations. As reflective of broader political and sociological positions or ideologies the future for education rested upon the contested nature of contemporary society itself. Such observations provide a basis for considering the contribution of Anthony Giddens to this debate, and to the possibilities for new approaches to education reform. The relevance of this to an understanding and assessment of New Labour education policy is explored in subsequent chapters.

THE BASIS OF RADICAL CHANGE

Policies of educational reform were present from the beginning of the Conservative era of power that began in 1979, with the 1980 Education Act introducing the Assisted Places scheme that sought to provide funding to support some academically able children to attend elite private schools. The Act was also responsible for the development of parental choice in the education system, giving parents the ability to state a preference for the school that their child would attend. Notably though, the period of 1979-87 saw very little in the way of radical educational change (Chitty, 1989). Le Grand (1991) supports this view noting the surprise of many commentators that the market ideology of the 1979 Government did not result in immediate transformations to the structure of welfare provision. However, for whatever reasons 'the calm was not to last', and 1988 and 1989 were years that 'in retrospect will be seen as critical in the history of British Social Policy' (Le Grand, 1991: 1256).

Indeed, it is the 1988 Education Reform Act that has dominated much of the educational debate in the last two decades, not only as a topic of analysis itself, but in the way that it has shifted the discourse of educational thinking and the focus of research since its introduction. The 1988 Act marked a significant moment in policy reform, representing not only the culmination of Conservative thinking surrounding education to that point, but setting a new agenda for the following decade. For right or wrong it challenged, as Hodgson & Spours (1999) note, political and ideological assumptions about the nature of educational provision, and transformed the structure and funding of the system (see also Halpin, 1990). Whilst there had always been a relationship between the purposes of the education system and national economic and social demands the nature of reform expressed in this period was to mark a new approach to this. Education was not to be understood from 'in' but instead, as Lawn (1990: 388) writes:

> The language with which schools are to be described is no longer a private educational or curriculum language, made up from its own reference points; it is now the language of the city pages and business news. Enterprise, entrepreneurship, cost centres, incentive contracts and privatisation are now all educational terms. The language of the previous decade and of the post-war decades has been expunged from the record.

The beginnings of this relationship between education and society are seen in the 1985 document *Better Schools* that laid out several areas of concern:

> The Government believes that the standards now generally attained by our pupils are neither as good as they can be nor as good as they need to be for the world of the twenty-first century. School education should do much more to promote enterprise and adaptability and to fit young people for working life in a technological age (DES, 1985: 2).

The report expressed the Government's intention to raise standards at all levels and 'secure the best possible return from the resources which are invested in education' (DES, 1985: 1), highlighting in particular the areas of curriculum, assessment, teacher professionalism, and school government as requiring action. Central to the reforms was the restructuring of Local Educational Authority (LEA) control through the introduction of Local Management of Schools, a scheme designed to give schools more control over its budgets and decision-making. Existing schools were given the ability to opt out of LEA management, with school governing bodies being given new powers. Transferring such powers to schools was seen as a means of tackling inefficiency by reducing unwanted goods and services being provided to schools (Glennerster, 1991). A category of 'grant-maintained' school was created, again offering increased independence of decision-making. New City Technology Colleges were similarly outside of LEA financial control, to be run by an independent trust with

business sponsors, and introduced a focus on science and technology in the curriculum. Building on the earlier policies of the 1980 Act parental choice was extended through open enrolment and the removal of school catchment areas. A further significant development was the introduction of a National Curriculum in all schools, with designated Key Stages of age-related learning targets. Coupled with the publishing of league tables of examination results and reforms of teacher training and school inspections, such changes sought to respond to a belief that standards were too low and that high attainment was not widespread across the school system (see *Better Schools* (DES, 1985), and later in *Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools: A Discussion Paper* (DES, 1992)).

Further Education Acts in the period of Conservative administration built upon features brought into play in 1988. The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, for example, extended the university system through the promotion of polytechnics to university status, and continued the pattern of encouraging independence by removing further education colleges from LEA control. The 'opt out' scheme was extended to more schools in 1993, alongside the development of new specialist schools, and the extent of school independence was further enhanced by allowing changes to enrolment schemes.

The transformation that occurred in this period drew the education system into line with the broader ideological project of the New Right that characterised the Conservative Government at this time. Underlying the 1988 Act was the belief that, as Sexton (1990) observed, high quality education was 'best achieved through a free-market in education with the suppliers seeking to provide what the consumers want, both in quality and quantity, and the consumers seeking out what they consider to be best and appropriate for their purpose'. Lauder (1991: 418) posits market theory as based upon the assumption that 'individuals are rational-egoists, fundamentally concerned with the pursuit of self-interest, and that it is in the marketplace that individuals can best realise the freedom to pursue their self-interest' (see also Ball et al., 1996; Walford 1997). Arguing from Hayek's (1960: 87) notion that 'the desire of making people more alike in their condition cannot be accepted in a free society as a justification for further and discriminatory coercion', Lauder (1991) points to the separation of wealth and power from individual freedom and choice at the centre of neo-liberal thinking. The desire for equality in society goes against individual freedom from coercion, thus Hayek rejects the idea that 'liberty can be identified with wealth and, hence, that a condition of liberty is that wealth be redistributed to those on low income or benefits' (Lauder, 1991: 419). That is, individual freedom and the ability to choose one's own path is defined as being free from coercion by the arbitrary will of others. Therefore, attempts to redistribute wealth with the aim of making society more equal go against this right to freedom from coercion. 'State-sponsored' co-

operation – co-operative practices 'enforced' through redistributive policy – is thus considered an infringement on the freedom of individual action. Both in the liberal sense of the right to choose, and the economic imperative of encouraging entrepreneurialism and adaptability for the workforce, the individual was central to neo-liberal thinking and it is this individualist element that is also presented as the driving force behind the processes of the quasi-markets, with schools responding to the demands of local clients (parents and pupils) for school places and curriculum choices. Thus, the schooling system represents a market offering a new structure of consumers (parents and pupils) and providers (schools) with the mechanisms of consumer choice and provider autonomy as the means for providing diversity and quality (see Le Grand, 1991; Chubb & Moe, 1988). Whilst the monopoly of state provision is replaced by competitive independent providers, Le Grand (1991: 260) distinguishes this structure as a 'quasi-market' on the basis of several differences to a conventional market system (see also Maclure, 1988). For example, schools, as independent providers, are not out to maximise profits and are not necessarily privately owned. They also operate in a system that remains highly regulated by the state (Le Grand & Bartlett, 1993).

The policies detailed above all contribute to this 'marketisation' of the education system. Examining the nature and direction of education policy in the Conservative era it is clear that the major reforms were built upon ideologies and modes of thought that had developed not in education, but outside of it. Thus, with regards to the Local Management of Schools, which as noted above was a policy continually strengthened throughout this period, Levacic (1998: 332) writes:

> Local management is a policy predicated on the hypothesis that changing the decision-making structures at the levels of central government, local authority and school management will induce improved educational outcomes for pupils at the level of the classroom.

Such structures that brought about the creation of an educational market were strongly aligned with economic theories of organisation, and were thus, according to Lauder (1991: 424), 'an attempt to take education out of the political sphere, where the pursuit of self-interest leads to socially undesirable outcomes…and situate it in the economic sphere where the same pursuit of self-interest will have socially desirable outcomes'. Again, as Levacic (1998: 332) notes, '…the theoretical basis of local management regarding hypothesised causal links between changing structures and improvements in school performance owes more to economic and organisational theories than it does to the principles of school effectiveness derived from educational research'. Thus, the direction of education policy was driven by a language and theory that were configured according to a broader understanding of contemporary change.

Education, as part of a wider approach to social policy, was to be radicalised by the market ideology of the New Right (Le Grand, 1991). This ideological blend of free-markets, industrial modernisation

and the 'traditional culture Right' (Jones, 1989) offered a response to the erosion of standards and concerns over international competitiveness (Hess, 1992). Maclure (1988) argues that the 1988 Act replaced an ideology of equality with one of opportunity where the focus was to be shifted onto the provision of education rather than working towards a universal goal of outcome. Further, Jones (1989) argues that the response offered by the Conservative New Right was not just a blend of free-marketeering and cultural traditionalism, but an attempt at modernisation. Thus, it was 'not simply a programme of investment, but an eradication of ingrained habits – those of labour and those of leading sections of society' (Jones, 1989: 80). Modernisation was therefore a political project with the goal of radical change, led by the belief that the state had a role to play in the pace and content of this (Jones, 1989).

Despite the dominance of the New Right-informed policy agenda, and the apparent lack of a credible alternative direction in the political sphere, the Conservative reforms have been subject to sustained criticism. As Le Grand (1991: 1266) states, the arguments for the marketised direction of reform 'gloss over a number of serious problems'. The following section examines these issues and seeks to draw some broad observations from the educational research over the limitations of reform. Recognising the need for change in education alongside the limitations of the Conservative approach, this chapter is able to set out its intended direction of enquiry into the New Labour period – exploring how the need for change and the limitations of marketisation were to be reconciled in the New Labour project.

LIMITATIONS EXPOSED

That the policies of the Conservative governments of 1979-97 resulted in a radical transformation to the education system is beyond doubt. Through a New Right-informed ideology the education system was reconstructed on the principles of a 'quasi-market' system. This saw the decentralising of power to schools and parents as the basis of a choice system amongst an increasingly diverse selection of independent schools responding to the needs of clients. In the other direction centralising changes took place to leave the state as the primary funder and regulator of the system. As noted, these substantial changes were taken as part of a broader reform of public services, with the aim of improving efficiency, raising standards, and promoting traditional values.

However, the ideological turn to neo-liberalism in the New Right found itself facing criticism that its underlying assumptions were unable to produce the proposed increases to educational standards that were the central justification of the reform movement (see Lauder, 1988; 1991). Central to such criticisms was the distinction between the ideal of a perfect market in neo-liberal economic theory and the realisation of this in practice. Given the economic basis for the establishment of quasi-markets in education, significant efforts have been made to highlight the political nature of market

functionality in practice. Evidence for the cultural and political nature of choice comes from Ball (1990) who investigated the attitudes towards choice in different groups, and the social, economic and cultural resources that supported their ability to take part in this market (see also West et al., 1997). Given this 'class cultural context' of choice mechanisms, the working of the school market in practice undermined the assumption that 'the market is the natural realm of human freedom when it is undistorted by politics' and thus, 'since this is the case it follows that the distinction between the political and the economic cannot be sustained. There is then no *prima facie* case for asserting the superiority of market determined outcomes in education over any other' (Lauder, 1991: 426). Such inability to separate political action from economic action thus undermined the potential for a market system to produce socially desirable outcomes. If the economic basis of the market was put into question then 'the central issue concerning the likely effects of an educational market come down to the question of how the market is politically and culturally constructed' (Lauder, 1991: 426). In this respect Ball et al.'s (1996) study provided revealing evidence of such political and cultural effects. The imposition of choice on the education system was seen to construct consumers (parents and pupils) as individual agents. However, as Ball et al. demonstrated, choice could not be understood to operate in just one economic dimension. Using categories of skilled, semi-skilled, and disconnected 'choosers' Ball et al. examined differing approaches to choice, and abilities to choose, based upon the relative balance of social, cultural and economic capital. This revealed a complex picture regarding the factors affecting choice decisions. In conclusion they argued that choice is not only directly affected by social class differences, but that these differences are supported by the choice function. For example, semi-skilled choosers were said to have a 'strong inclination but limited capacity to engage with the market…Their biographies and family histories have not provided them with the experiences or inside knowledge of the school system and the social contacts and cultural skills to pursue their inclination to choose 'effectively'' (Ball et al., 1996: 102). Such insights acknowledged how individuals were required to act in ways that undermined the economic purpose of marketisation, and thus how the nature of individual self-interest in the educational market failed to reflect the economic model that was used to justify the creation of such markets initially.

Whilst Chubb & Moe (1988) point to the role of institutional environments in creating the conditions for effective schooling, arguing for the role of individual choice to drive school effectiveness and responsiveness to 'consumer' demand, Ball et al.'s (1996) study demonstrated that choice is itself affected by the environmental conditions of the individuals through which it works. The attributes that 'newcomers' brought to their engagement with choice were shown to result in less than optimal outcomes. The operation of choice, and the production of desirable results (in the case of education, a system of effective and responsive schools that increase quality of provision, and for

individuals a school that meets their educational requirements), can only result from what might be termed 'desirable' actions of individuals. These desirable actions of the individual are, drawing from Chubb & Moe's (1988) outline, an active engagement with local school governance, the use of school effectiveness data (league tables of assessment results and inspection reports, for example), and, underlying all of these, a concern for education and educational improvement. In Chubb & Moe's (and other proponents of choice systems) outline such 'desirable' actions are assumed to take place (this is perhaps explained by the context in which they are observed (already existing private schools) where the individuals (parents) are in the 'skilled' bracket of expertise with regards to the operation of choice. Indeed, the schools in Chubb &Moe's assessments were patronised by high-income families). This assumption of 'desirable' action on the part of individual consumers appears as an oversight in the argument for the extension of market-based institutional reform of schooling. As Ball et al. (1996) argued, individuals brought a relative imbalance of economic, social and cultural resources to choice decisions. Further, Conservative reform of the education system had left individuals isolated – an isolation that was amplified by the deconstruction of local authority power and funding as the removal of localised support for individuals (Kean, 1991).

This individual isolation in the education system not only existed in relation to producers (schools) but to other consumers (parents and pupils). Critics of the market influence on the schooling system argued that this inter-consumer relationship had become one of competition rather than co-operation as a result of the demand for limited places in 'good' schools. The policy of open enrolment was placed under scrutiny with concerns expressed over the extent to which it furthered the cause of parental choice. Where popular schools had naturally received large numbers of applicants under the new system it was argued that processes of selection arose as schools sought to maximise their 'cultural capital' through their intake of children. As Whitty & Power (1997: 229) note, where schools are in demand 'then it is the producer who is empowered and it is the consumer who has to establish fitness for the school's purposes'. Indeed, Le Grand (1991; 1993) pointed to the potential for such 'cream-skimming' to arise under such a policy. In this situation it was the school that had become the empowered 'chooser' rather than the parent, undermining the freedom of parental choice and serving to enhance the place of cultural and social capital in the system. As above this appears as an oversight in the propositions of market enthusiasts. In Chubb & Moe's (1988) analysis there is no such consideration of inter-consumer relations. Again, this would seem to derive from the limited context of operational school markets that they are able to draw upon. As they point out, the investment in private education is based upon a decision that the cost differential from the 'free' public system is worthwhile. Here, choice is 'bought'. However, when choice itself becomes 'free' through systems of open enrolment, the 'client base' of popular schools

in the public sector is expanded. Where demand exceeds available space then choice cannot be guaranteed even through 'purchase', for as noted, it is the schools themselves that are empowered to choose. Choice may still be 'bought' where a private sector remains (as is the case in the UK), however, this still only mobilises choice for those able to afford these costs directly, and where access to 'good' education may be obtained for free this may not represent an economically worthwhile investment. The competitive element, whilst not guaranteeing success in choice, mobilises the resources of individuals who are unable to 'buy' out of the public system. Now, social, cultural and (indirect) economic resources can be used to enhance selectivity. This necessarily involves 'bettering' oneself against others. Individuals, or at least a new grouping of individuals, are enabled not through direct purchase but through indirect methods of self-enhancement. Parents and children now find themselves as individuals forced to draw upon their own resources to operate effectively.

Whilst Ball et al. (1996) refer to broad categories of 'choosers' they resist using the term 'class' as an accurate description of such groups, arguing that the differences in capital observed reflected a more complex situation. Nevertheless, issues of equality featured strongly in the sociological literature and considerable concern was raised with regards to the outcomes of market mechanisms in socially disadvantaged areas (see Raab et al., 1997; Walford, 1997; West et al., 1997). In particular the movement of pupils away from schools in socially disadvantaged areas has resulted, because of the funding system in place, in the loss of resources from such schools, leaving those children still there in a worse off position (Levacic, 1998: 346). Here Gewirtz et al. (1995) point to the ghettoisation of children in under-resourced and under-staffed low-status schools. Levacic (1995) argues that this situation is compounded by the insufficient attraction of such schools to experienced governors, leaving institutions unable to take advantage of the powers afforded to them, and, as Kean (1991) notes, with local authorities unable to offer targeted financial support.

Further concern was expressed over the nature of diversity in the system. Again such criticism was directed at a discrepancy between the justification of reform and the effects experienced in practice. Although introduced under the premise of offering specialised education to meet individual needs, Walford (1997) argued that only a small proportion of diversity was initiated by parental pressure, that is, through a bottom-up process: 'what is noticeable about government policy is that the demand has been largely generated by the government itself and has not been the result of pressure from parents' (Walford, 1997: 165). This perspective is supported by Gewirtz et al. (1995) who note that diversity through specialisation of school type was not the concern of parental choice. Rather, the importance of choice was attached to the quality of school where parents wanted the choice of a better school for their children. The introduction of City Technology Colleges offers support for this

criticism. Whitty et al. (1993) state that parents, local politicians and industrialists, rather than support their creation, actually opposed them. Indeed, Glatter et al. (1998) note that it was government intervention rather than parental choice that was responsible for the take-up of specialist technology schools. Further still, Gewirtz et al. (1995) offered evidence that suggested competition between schools resulted not in diversity, but in increasing similarity. Indeed, the effect of 'cream-skimming' and other selective techniques on the part of schools had been to structure school competitiveness on terms of cultural capital rather than quality of provision or diversity of curriculum (Bowe et al., 1992; Gewirtz et al., 1995; Raab et al., 1997).

Examining the new place afforded to the individual in policy raises questions over the extent to which power in education has experienced transformation. Stevens (2010) draws attention to the pluralistic, local government led approach to welfare in the post-war years, and the contrast with the market-orientated, centralised system developed since the 1980s. The contrast between the key moments of 1944 and 1988 provides evidence for both the nature and extent of change that education policy experienced in this period (see Halpin, 1990). The increasing power of the state with regards to education was a key concern surrounding the development and implementation of the 1944 Education Act, resulting in the creation of a 'triangle of tension' between central government, local government, and schools to temper this (Stevens, 2010). By contrast, and in a reversal of the 1944 consensus, the reforms of the Thatcher period were marked by the extent to which power was moved to the centre of government (Johnston, 1992: 165). Here a clear focus of criticism lay upon the transformation of power under the Conservative reforms, highlighting the breakdown of democratic relationships between government and teachers, the centralisation of control, and the end of the 'age of consensus' in policy-making. In this way, Johnston (1992: 174) questions whether increasing centralised control of education had an 'enforcing' or 'inducing' quality. Such 'inducing' behaviour supposed a degree of participant responsibility and the development of an active engagement with decision-making where the role of the central state became one of providing the conditions for this to take place. On the other hand, an 'enforcing' approach necessitated a more authoritarian approach and a tighter control of possible action.

Thus, whilst predicated on the basis of individual empowerment, Ball et al. (1996), drawing on Bourdieu, argue that the individualism at the heart of education reform is a process by which violence 'is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity' (Bourdieu and Passeron, cited in Ball et al., 1996: 111) (see also Walford, 1997). That is, it is through the individual that political and class struggles are maintained, and further, individuals themselves are forced to contribute to this as part of the process. Here the extent to which the New Right had restructured education according to

a new language and organising framework was an essential factor in this form of control. As Bowe et al. (1994: 45), also drawing on Bourdieu, stated:

> What is interesting in Bourdieu is his shift of emphasis away from people being influenced by information…towards the way in which people uncritically accept 'a whole range of postulates, axioms, which go without saying and require no inculcating'. Consequently, Bourdieu indicates that we need to analyse this 'doxic acceptance of the world' because, 'Of all forms of "hidden persuasion", the most implacable is the one exerted, quite simply, by the *order of things*'.

Bowe et al.'s study adds weight to the individualistic direction of education reform, but looks to broader social and cultural processes of consumerism in identifying the rise of self-interest in the processes of choice in education. Consumerism is thus an activity 'characterised by a melange of contradictory cultural images and signs which derive from the processes of both economic and cultural production' (Bowe et al., 1994: 47). This understanding takes the notion of consumerism beyond the rational model used by Tooley (1995) (and indeed, Ranson (1993; 1995a; 1995b)), and raises questions surrounding the many factors influencing the actions of agents in a system. Processes of consumption and production thus actively structure people and their actions. The individualism experienced in recent policy does not merely limit agency, but actively works *against* some as they have no choice but to act to maintain the inequalities they face. Those for whom individualism has desirable outcomes are also complicit in this system, challenging the place of co-operation in education and its role as a public good (Ball et al., 1996).

Beyond criticism of the effects of policies, scepticism of the Conservative reform agenda is also to be found throughout the educational literature, much of which was directed towards the undermining of educationalists and teachers through the centralisation of power, new inspection procedures, the National Curriculum, and the competitive arena in which schools found themselves. However, such sceptical outlooks also ran to a deeper level, to the point of a belief in a hidden agenda to restore elitism in society through education. Walford (1997: 166), for example, argued that the move towards specialist schools 'must be seen as a further way of slowly and surreptitiously reintroducing selection'. Criticism of this sort reveals a concern at a fundamental ideological level over the purpose of education and the nature of society, and not merely with relative efficiencies of 'this' or 'that' approach to the education system. It is clear that this period of reform posed radical challenges to the shape of educational provision in the UK, stemming from broad philosophical and ideological standpoints rather than minor 'tinkering' with the system.

MARKETS VERSUS DEMOCRACY?

However, it is important to recognise that the limitations of Conservative policies since 1988 were not only the concern of the 'Left' in educational sociology. Tooley (1995), for instance, similarly argues against the limitations of quasi-markets in education, yet his proposal, rather than to revert from neo-liberal ideology, is to *extend* the marketisation of schools. For Tooley it is the *quasi* nature of the introduction of markets that has resulted in the inability of a market system to provide educational benefits. Indeed, so removed from market theory do these policies appear to him that he coins the term 'so-called markets' to describe them. Writing with regards to Ranson's (1993) critique of markets Tooley (1995: 23) writes:

> Interestingly, though, we find [Ranson] slipping backwards and forwards between criticising markets in general and the Conservative's so-called market in education. This is regrettable, because arguments against the so-called market are not arguments against markets in general, nor can defences of more authentic markets be applied in general to defence of this so-called market.

For Chubb & Moe (1986; 1988), societal control of schools through the marketplace was more conducive to improving effectiveness and efficiency than societal control through democratic politics. Using data comparing schools in the public and private sectors in the USA they argue that private schools outperform public schools as a result of their autonomy with regards to governance and leadership, their stress on academic achievement, parental support for the school ethos, and better staff relations as a result of freedom in work. Chubb & Moe use these observations to argue that the differences observed are attributable to the institutional context in which such schools find themselves. Thus:

> Public schools are products of our democratic institutions. They are subordinates in a hierarchic system of control in which diverse constituency groups and public officials impose policies on local schools. It is no accident that public schools are lacking autonomy, that principals have difficulty leading, and that school goals are heterogeneous, unclear, and undemanding. Nor is it accident that weak principals and tenured, unionised teachers struggle for power. These sorts of characteristics constitute an organisational syndrome whose roots are deeply anchored in democratic control as we have come to know it (Chubb & Moe, 1988: 1084) [Note: Chubb & Moe write of the American context where 'public' refers to a state-funded school].

Conversely, 'private schools are controlled by society too, but not through politics or bureaucracy. They make their own decisions about policy, organisation, and personnel subject to market forces

that signal how best they can best pursue their own interests' (Chubb & Moe, 1988: 1084). Thus, any attempts to reform schools through increasing autonomy or enhancing leadership can only be achieved as part of an institutional transformation: 'It may well be, then, that the key to school improvement is not school reform, but institutional reform – a shift away from direct democratic control' (Chubb & Moe, 1988: 1085). Chubb & Moe's critique of democratic systems of education also holds also for the 'quasi-markets' of the Conservative period. The extent of centralised control as part of these policies has done little to wrest educational provision from politicians and dominant interest groups. In this sense the 'institutional' form of education, to borrow Chubb & Moe's terminology, under the Conservatives still fits the democratic model, as it is ultimately organised and regulated by a democratically elected government. Whilst they do not propose that public education should be freed from all democratic control, it is clear that attempts to combine democracy and markets present serious tensions in the system. It is the freedom from politics that distinguishes Chubb & Moe's concern.

However, Ranson (1993: 339) argues that it is under the democratic process that 'judgements are formed about what is in the public good based on reasoned argument that leads towards practical collective choices that are monitored, revisable and accountable to the public'. A similar call for democracy where collective decisions form the basis of public policy can be seen from Whitty & Power (1997: 236): 'we now need to experiment with and evaluate new forms of association in the public sphere in which citizen rights in education policy can be reasserted against current trends toward both a restricted and authoritarian version of the state and a marketised civil society'.

Chubb & Moe argue that whilst cast as 'democratic' the public system fundamentally fails to respond to the needs of individuals, acting rather as a system of bureaucracy to serve the interests of dominant groups. Thus, 'voice cannot remedy the mis-match between what parents and students want and what schools provide' (Chubb & Moe, 1986: 1068). That is, whilst every individual has a right to voice their preferences, this voice is accorded equally to others who may be in a better position to articulate or fight for their demands. As democracy only offers 'voice', whereas markets offer 'voice' and 'exit' as strategies of action, Tooley (1995) reasons that this strengthens the disadvantaged against the dominance of the 'voice' strategy by those more able to engage with it. Ranson (1995b) counters that markets in fact *replace* voice with exit and therefore the disadvantaged lose their ability to deliberate upon their life-chances. Conversely, Chubb & Moe(1986: 1069) see the lack of exit in democratic control systems as itself the attempt to 'facilitate the imposition of higher-order values'. Accordingly, 'politicians have the authority to shape the schools through public policy, and precisely because they have this authority, they are consistently under pressure from interest groups to exercise it' (Chubb & Moe, 1986: 1070). Thus, whilst Ranson

argues that markets in practice fail to match the ideal models of theory, as Tooley (1995) points out, ideals of democracy were a long way from the realities of democratic practice. Whilst this study is not concerned at this point to agree or disagree in an ideological sense with Tooley, it is noted here that the nature of his argument presents some important conditions for the discussion of future reform in education. Tooley's argument demonstrates that whilst there is widespread agreement over the limitations of Conservative policies, such criticisms do not necessarily lead to a rejection of the wider direction of reform. Again, where Ranson points to evidence suggesting the reinforcement of inequality under Conservative market policy, Tooley (1995: 28) argues that 'this may well have such negative effects, but these could be used as much as criticisms of heavy state control as of markets'.

The nature of discussion has produced a debate that is dominated by a markets versus democracy discourse, with the former position seeking the extension of individual agency as the driving force for reform and the latter based upon a social or collective understanding of the public good and policy-making. A general argument can be seen to emerge here between a future for reform that is based upon either *more* marketisation or *more* democracy. Jones (1989: 173), for example, suggests that the task for opponents of the New Right is to 'give a deeper and more radical meaning to the term 'democracy', pulling it away from the orbit of individual choice towards one of collective determination of policies that recognised the needs of all'. Yet, at the same time the limitations of both systems have been placed under scrutiny. Thus, whilst Chubb & Moe (1988) expose the limitations of previous social democratic approaches, making a valuable contribution in highlighting how schools in a democratic system are held to political interests and are unable to respond to local demands, their observations of the market system note the importance not just of school autonomy but also of parental involvement and initiative. In proposing further marketisation Chubb &Moe still need to demonstrate that the high levels of school effectiveness, parental 'ownership', and strength of leadership found in schools that serve mostly high-income families could be created through market forces alone in less privileged environments. As analysis of existing Conservative reforms demonstrated, such outcomes appeared harder to achieve in practice than in theory.

The polarisation of these positions reflects the fundamental rejection that each would appear to hold for the other. Indeed, proponents of free markets such as Chubb, Moe or Tooley would readily agree with Ranson's statement that markets erode democracy (Ranson, 1993: 334). Where they fundamentally disagree, of course, is over the value of this erosion for public education. However, there is room to question whether this dichotomised position is helpful or applicable. Glennerster (1991) provided a more nuanced approach considering the differences in the applicability of market systems to secondary and tertiary education. He concluded that 'the case so far has been that

schooling has some peculiar characteristics that do not adapt readily to a full market solution. Schooling can be reconciled with an element of market discipline but only with a number of safeguards' (Glennerster, 1991: 1272). Whilst clearly demonstrating reservations in some areas, his position did not lead to a necessary, or fundamental, rejection of marketisation, but one that sought to acknowledge and respond to its limitations.

PUBLIC POLICY, GLOBAL ISSUES, INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Despite their ideological nature proponents of both market and democratic futures for education sought to demonstrate their relevance to contemporary social issues. As noted, for the New Right market organisation of schooling responded to a need for greater efficiency, standards, and diversity arising from transformations in the global economy. For those on the 'Left' there was a concern that in a marketised system policy became less the people's call for collective welfare, and more the voice of those empowered by the market. Here issues of equality were of central importance. Indeed, whilst Chubb & Moe (1988: 1070) argued that a private school, as exemplification of the benefits of a marketised system, might provide excellence in a specific service provision this 'says nothing about their relative effectiveness in transmitting democratic values or an appreciation of cultural diversity'. That is, as well as demand for private and individual needs (in Chubb & Moe's example, religious and moral training) there is also a question of the purpose of schools in articulating important social goals. This statement concedes that there is a role, at least in potential, for schools and education to work towards social goals, not just individual or group interests. This, Chubb & Moe (1988) state, is in principle the justification for democratic control. Under a democratic system education should respond to the collective expression of values by society. Proponents of a return to a social democratic approach to policy shared a commitment to education as a public or collective good with Ball et al. (1996), Ranson (1993; 1995a; 1995b) and Whitty & Power (1997) all noting the repositioning of education as a private good in a quasi-market system. Following Ranson's clear commitment to the role of education as a public good, public policy itself therefore stands as an act of democracy, the expression of collective values on the system as a whole. Whilst their analyses of the democratic nature of choice differ slightly, both Jones (1989) and Lauder (1991) also argue for the strengthening of democracy in education policy as an alternative to individualism, and they reflect a large number of contributors to the debate on the future development of education policy in this period who centre their proposals upon enhancing this relationship. For Jones (1989) neo-liberalism works through a limited notion of democracy, restricted to the operation of individual choice. Lauder (1991: 417), however, is more adamant in his rebuttal of the neo-liberal turn, describing it as the 'severing' of democracy from education. The individualism that has structured much of the nature of education reform in this period is attacked

for its failure to bring about improvements in school effectiveness, and for its effects upon equity. Whilst education has become another commodity to be pursued through self-interest, it is needed as a collective good in order to meet the challenges posed by contemporary society:

> the predicaments of our time present a number of collective action problems…which depend necessarily upon cooperative and deliberative public action for their resolution at a moment when the authority of the public institutions required to enable the appropriate action is being eroded and is in need of radical renewal (Ranson, 1995a: 37).

Whilst Ranson does not elaborate here on the nature of these predicaments it is clear that education is important to meeting the demands of these wider societal issues. Here the place of co-operation and democracy over the pursuit of individual needs is posited as vital for both the purposes and processes of education. Yet, for Moe, Chubb, Tooley, and other proponents of free markets, this same act of public policy reflects the very limitations of democratic forms of governance, revealing the limits of democratic practice through the 'voice' and empowerment of organised and well-enabled interest groups. Thus, Chubb & Moe suggest that only a free market structure can secure autonomy and a genuine responsiveness to individual demands. Ostensibly, following Moe, Chubb, and Tooley, the full marketisation of a school system would lead to the denigration of public policy as schools respond more to local demand. Whilst the 'democratic' system offers some localised specification, for example through LEAs, it still operates primarily through a centralised political process, manifested in the production of policies for the whole system.

This debate marked a clear divide between market and democracy advocates on the means by which education reform should be based. Market proponents, as noted, insisted on the driving force of the individual to guide improvements in education, whilst the call for democracy was based upon the need for co-operative public policy as a means of ensuring individual voices were heard. Both positions responded to the demands for individual fulfillment through education alongside the contribution that education makes to wider societal issues. Thus, the critical concern with the experience of quasi-markets in education related to the likelihood of individual action that such a system generated. Ranson (1995b: 38) argued that 'the dilemma is that the chance to win a larger short term individual gain overrides the security of a longer term benefit for all'. That is, whilst choice creates the opportunity for individual action the weighting of these choices and their benefits enhances self-interested individualism over co-operation. However, Tooley (1995) dismisses the critique of self-interest arguing that Ranson 'simply denies the possibility' of self-interest having a positive effect, also pointing to literature on public choice theory 'which sets out to explain democratic behaviour in terms of self-interest' (Tooley, 1995: 25).

Beyond a mutual rejection of each other, such debates represented something of an impasse for the direction of future reform. Halpin (1999) similarly recognises the polarised nature of debate over the future of educational reform at this time, where education was to serve either as a collective or an individual good, provide either efficiency or equity, offer comprehensive or selective schooling. He argues that 'the historic impact of particular `either-or' proposals for educational reform...suggests that their proponents may also be guilty of over-simplifying the problems they seek to address' (Halpin, 1999: 346). Thus, 'it may be the case too that the problems are themselves resistant to solutions that embody imperatives that are ideologically inflected in one dimension only' (Halpin, 1999: 346). Johnston (1992) also provides some acknowledgement of this, pointing to weaknesses in the underlying assumptions made about the purposes of education and its role in society:

> While it is axiomatic that education systems must meet and adapt to the needs of the society they serve, it has proved difficult to conceptualise and control the relation between education and society in a precise and meaningful way. Both the tenor and content of recent reforms in Britain oversimplify the relationship between school output, social change and economic prosperity…Now and in the future, the education system through its school and its teachers must cope with an increasing diversity of challenges, such as preparing children for a life in which unemployment may greatly expand leisure time, developing their social competence in an increasingly unstable environment and nurturing their talents in a particularised way through a curriculum which must continually be refined, reviewed and updated (Johnston, 1992: 166).

For Halpin (1999: 346) the reduction of educational issues to an 'either-or' approach was 'largely to do with the fact that many aspects of education are profoundly value-laden, making it an area of public life that inevitably attracts comment of a politically partisan nature and therefore one that is easily politicised as a result'. It is in this context that he suggests the potential for an 'and-also' approach to policy as one which:

> eschews such bi-polarisms by seeking out integrated solutions to problems instead of unilateral ones. These solutions derive less from the extremes of political analysis and more from a strategic mix of genuinely experimental ideas whose ideological derivation is neither here nor there, but which connect meaningfully with what is judged to be actually happening in society (Halpin, 1999: 346).

Such an approach would not therefore necessitate the wholesale rejection of existing policies but an understanding of their contribution to wider social issues. Thus, with regards to the Conservative reform agenda there is potential, as Whitty & Power (1997: 221) note, 'to envisage some of the

reforms discussed here being part of a rather different political configuration. In that situation, their outcomes might well be different'. Here the 'necessity of developing alternative strategies' (Whitty & Power, 1997: 237) is based upon an understanding of the context in which policies operate, rather than providing 'oppositional' solutions. In this situation the calls for a return to democratic policy-making and education as a public good risked further entrenching such binary understandings and solutions.

As this study has already drawn attention to in the previous introductory chapter, New Labour were to set out their vision for a radical and modernising approach to education reform in a way that went 'beyond the debates of the past'. This chapter moves towards exploring the possibilities for such an approach, noting in particular the arguments of Anthony Giddens. As subsequent chapters will develop, his work sought to overcome a polarised debate on social and political reform, and was to be significant in New Labour's own project of education policy. Importantly, for this approach to take hold there had to be an acknowledgement of the extent to which the radical reforms of the Conservative era had not only taken hold, but had done so by connecting to existing social, economic, and electoral challenges.

THE CONSERVATIVE CHALLENGE

For Walford (1997) the transformation of education carried out since 1988 was nothing short of a 'conspiracy', making it the realm of neo-liberal thought that sought to preserve the advantages of the few through selection and elitism. Similar thoughts are expressed by Ranson (1993: 340) who states that either the New Right is 'ignorant of all the evidence…or understands perfectly the effects of competition and has developed a rhetoric of choice to bamboozle a supposedly unwitting public'. However, in spite of the criticisms they raised of the Conservative reforms, Ball et al. (1996) note that the previous system was itself marked by inequality (see also Le Grand, 1991; Dale, 1989; Arnot, 1991): 'The point is not that we have moved away from what was a smoothly functioning egalitarian system of schooling to one that is unfair. That is crude and unrealistic…We do not seek to celebrate or romanticise the *previous* here' (Ball et al., 1996: 110).

Far from being a conspiratorial plot against educationalists Jones (1989) argued that the Conservative education reforms derived from widely held concerns with the standard of education provided under the post-war system – concerns established well before the Conservatives took office in 1979 (see also Hall, 1988; Lauder & Brown, 1988; Arnot, 1991). Le Grand (1991: 1262) notes that diagnoses of these problems came from all parts of the political spectrum and were concerned not just with questions of economic efficiency but with the unresponsive nature of the present welfare system to the needs of disadvantaged people. Indeed, that similar propositions have been put forward in other Western countries suggests these movements have a global underpinning

(Dehli, 1996; Young & Levin, 1999). Tooley (1995) argues forcefully that the tendency to renounce the proponents of the New Right fails to acknowledge the integrity of thinking that has led to a belief in market-led solutions. Further evidence of this viewpoint in the United Kingdom comes from Gamble (1985a) and Skidelsky (1987) who both argue that the general trend towards monetarism had begun under the Labour government of the 1970s. Indeed, Le Grand (1991), using the example of the national transport voucher system, notes that such quasi-market ideas had previously been employed in public sector policies, alongside their occurrence in the private sector. However, whereas the Left was unable to produce a coherent radical programme, the input of the Conservative government to these concerns was the ability to give both shape and response through the New Right critique of the weakness of social democracy, and the recognition of the changes necessitated by the changing nature of global economic and social structures – seen by Gamble (1985b) as embodying a more doctrinal and ideological politics (see also Biffen, cited in Seldon, 1988). As already noted, the New Right agenda underlying the education reforms of this period was driven by two strands of thought in the Right. Whilst, as Jones (1989) notes, these two tendencies – 'cultural rightism' and 'classical liberalism' – would appear to be at odds with each other, 'their present interconnectedness is a consequence of the historical problem which they both need to resolve' (Jones, 1989: 32). The New Right represented the attempt to 'understand, and turn to political advantage what Gamble has called the 'breakdown of authority and stability in the world system and in national politics'' (Jones, 1989: 32). For Johnston (1992: 166) it was not so much the justification of reform that provided the radical centre of these changes – the issue of quality control, he argues, 'has roots stretching back into the last century' – but it is in the forms of control of the education system that have been brought into play.

As such the period of Conservative reform can be seen as an attempt to break with these limitations, seeking a new approach to contemporary challenges. In this the themes of choice and individual freedom resonated with large numbers of people and, in this sense, it is clear that the Conservative education reforms were remarkably successful. As Jones (1989: viii) notes, 'Conservatism in education has made contact with popular discontents, and has been decisive in linking education to overall strategy. The power of its arguments has to be registered...'.Johnston argues that it would be easy to distort the education reforms of the 18 years of Conservative government between 1979 and 1997 by considering them 'purely British, entirely of the 1980s or the outworking of a vendetta between a Thatcherite Conservative government and the Inner London Education Authority' (Johnston, 1992: 168). Rather, the nature of reform was paralleled in other countries such as America and New Zealand, and can be seen as a continuation of the battle for educational control that had existed for some time already (see Johnston, 1992; Ranson, 1995b).

Whilst comparisons of the nature of reform experienced since the 1988 ERA with that of the 1944 'consensus' reveal the extent of change, little critical insight may be gained from any 'romantic' attachments to this earlier period. Despite the limitations of the Conservative reforms, the New Right had sought to tackle contemporary challenges where social democratic responses had failed, and the focus on the individual had resonated with its audience. Indeed, as will be noted, it was claimed that neo-liberalism, as part of a global movement towards liberal democracy, represented the final stage of modernisation for society. As if to reinforce this the 'moment of 1989', culminating in the collapse of the Berlin Wall, was seen to have brought the end to any hope for a socialist vision of the future. What possibility, then, remained for 'alternative strategies' in the direction of education reform?

RESPONDING TO MODERNITY

This chapter has argued that the existence of a polarised debate in education stemmed from broader ideological positions which exhibited strong exclusionary tendencies (Halpin, 1999), such that to argue for one was to necessitate a rejection of the other. Education policy was reflective not just of competing demands for the goals and purposes of education, but of wider understandings and visions of society, even modernity itself.

For many analyses of the nature of contemporary society the events of 1989 provide a common focal point. As Held (1993a: 250-1) states, 'the debate about 1989, and the form and character of modernity, is a debate about the world as it is and might be'. The collapse of Soviet communism underlined 'the urgency of the search for new political policies, strategies and institutional arrangements' (Held, 1986: 1), representing the final confirmation of socialism's economic credentials (Giddens, 1990a). Thus, the collapse of 'actually existing socialism' widely appeared to mark the end for an alternative form of economic management to that offered by the neo-liberalism of the New Right. As Callinicos (1991: 14-5) states, for many on the left it was accepted that, 'rather than offer an alternative to Western liberal democracy, socialists should work in its framework to remedy the dysfunctions and injustices of unfettered capitalism. The idea of socialism as an alternative socio-economic *system*, a mode of production in Marxist parlance, was gone'. Indeed, for Francis Fukuyama (1989) the spread of forms of liberal democracy represented the 'end of history': 'that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government' (Fukuyama, 1989: 3). This was not to be understood as the end of events, or even of conflicts, but as the end of societal progression (Fukuyama, 1992). Fukuyama argued that both the normative assertion that this form of government, based upon freedom and equality, represents the highest set of principles, and the empirical evidence of the rise of liberal democracy demonstrated that nothing will in time replace

them (Fukuyama, 1998: 202). As Callinicos (1991) observes, this perspective connected with a Hegelian notion of philosophical consciousness. For Fukuyama the process of economic modernisation instigated by the scientific revolution has brought about a 'universal history'. That is, it is economic modernisation that is the basis for 'history'. Whilst he admits that the move towards both capitalism and liberal democracy were less universal than that of economic modernisation, technology points towards marketised forms of economy. Similarly, with regards to the prominence of liberal democracy, Fukuyama states:

> What is even less universal than capitalism is the preference for liberal democracy. Nonetheless, as a purely empirical matter, there is an extraordinary correlation between high levels of industrial development and stable democracy. With modernisation, there has been a corresponding growth in the legitimacy of the idea of human equality, the idea noted by Tocqueville (Fukuyama, 1998: 205).

Whilst such democratic developments suggest the legitimacy of equal worth, as this chapter has discussed, in education processes of market capitalism had acted to maintain and even increase inequalities in economic, social and cultural realms. Giddens (1994a) argued that this idea of human equality was at odds with the liberalism that had been the basis for the turn to market economies. Indeed, it is a tension that Tocqueville himself acknowledged:

> [Tocqueville] argued that there was an endemic conflict between the two prime modern values of equality of condition and individual freedom. So, of the ideals of the French Revolution, liberty and equality were eternally at odds with one another, while fraternity had dissolved into the endless pursuit of private gratification endemic in democratic societies (Callinicos, 1999: 71).

In the light of these disparities Callinicos (1991: 112) cautions against accepting liberalism as the final form of societal organisation, for whilst the notion of an alternative to liberal democracy had for many 'become a Utopian dream which perhaps harbours in it the nightmare of Stalinism', the equation of Marxism to Stalinism was, he argued, a false representation. Callinicos argues that the history of the Soviet Union, rather than demonstrating the failure of Marx, should be seen as having actually *failed* Marx. Instead, it was the development of workers' councils in the time of Lenin that was the example of a social democratic alternative to liberal democracy (Callinicos, 1991: 112), whilst the Stalinist regime was to have brought about a particular form of capitalism. In this way Callincos seeks to turn on its head the accusation thrown at the failure of socialism in the light of the events surrounding 1989, demonstrating instead that these events were 'thus the vindication, rather than the refutation, of the classical Marxist tradition…' (Callinicos, 1991: 20). This turn of argument

has faced much criticism (see Held, 1992), yet, in any case, if 'actually existing socialism' was evidence for the failure of Marxism, Callinicos (1991) is keen to point out that 'really existing liberal democracy' is no less of a failure. The centralisation of power, development of a passive citizenry, and the inability of the state to respond to capital's fluctuations are all taken to show the limitations of liberal democratic forms of government. For Callinicos it is not that events have still happened, but the *nature* of what has occurred, that challenges Fukuyama's 'end of history'. Can the Gulf War and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Croatia be seen as nothing more than 'surface disturbances' to a history which has reached its final form (Callincos, 1995: 17)? Further, the parliamentary institutions of liberal democracies failed to make the executive accountable to citizens: 'liberal democracy rests on a passive and atomized electorate which, on those relatively rare occasions when it is invited to express an opinion on who should govern it, is subject to a massive propaganda bombardment from media usually directly controlled by capital' (Callinicos, 1991: 114). The concern with passive citizenship is also expressed by Held, despite his criticisms of Callinicos's defence of Marxism (see Callinicos, 1991; 1993; Held, 1992; 1993a; 1993b).

Modernity, for Francis Fukuyama, is the victory of liberalism and, for Alex Callinicos, also the rise of capitalism (Held, 1993b). For Zygmunt Baumann (2006), however, the triumph of capitalism and the demise of communism marked not a victory but a defeat for modernity. In this contest to understand the nature of the contemporary period Anthony Giddens argued that modernity could not be reduced to either liberalism or capitalism. Instead it must be understood as having a multi-dimensional nature, as Held notes on his behalf:

> By equating capitalism with modernity, and working-class struggles with non-sectarian, progressive interests – i.e., by making the standpoint of the labour movement the general or universal standpoint – Marx failed to grasp two central matters; first, that there are forms of politics that cannot be understood from the perspective of class alone; and, second, that a 'critical' account of modernity must embrace a far wider perspective than labour interests if it is to claim to represent 'a humane and just social order' (Held, 1993b: 267).

Whilst radical forms of Islamic theocracy appear as the only powerful political challengers to the liberal democratic ascendency in Western modernity (Hobsbawm, 2001; Fukuyama, 1998) it is argued that a utopia brought about by the free markets is no longer credible, and that a return to socialist forms of government can no longer apply. For Hobsbawm (1990) the apparent demise of socialism was an ironic turn in a situation where 'the reasons for maintaining a steady scepticism about the future of the capitalist world (let alone its neo-liberal utopias) remain compelling'. The limitations of free markets provided an opportunity for democratic approaches to display their relevance. Yet, the challenges of globalisation, economic prosperity, and ecological problems

demonstrated the limitations of a democracy based upon the 'will of the people' whose vote-counting and consumer preference procedures were unable to provide solutions to such issues (Hobsbawm, 2001; Giddens, 1994a). Thus, for Held, democracy must be concerned with both the reform of state power and the restructuring of civil society:

> If democratic life involves no more than a periodic vote, the locus of people's activities will be the 'private' realm of civil society and the scope of their actions will depend largely on the resources they can command. Few opportunities will exist for citizens to act as citizens, as participants in public life (Held, 1993a: 277-8).

Indeed, Hannah Arendt acknowledged such concerns from as far back as Thomas Jefferson: 'the danger was that all power had been given to the people in their private capacity, and that there was no space established for them in their capacity of being citizens' (Arendt, 1963: 256). As noted previously from Chubb & Moe (1988), education policy under such democratic control becomes the enforcement of political interests (politicians, bureaucrats and dominant interest groups), rather than the expression of public welfare that was claimed. Nor does it meet individual needs. However, the concern to restore public activity to the heart of civil society echoes Ranson's (1993; 1995a; 1995b) argument that this is central to meeting the challenges of contemporary society rather than relying upon self-interest and the pursuit of private goods. However, this concern must also face up to other present challenges. As Held observes:

> While the new left theorists have highlighted a number of fundamental difficulties with liberal accounts of democracy and, in particular, with the new right position, the new left conception of democracy as it is and as it could be cannot simply be accepted. For fundamental issues are left unaddressed. Little is said, for instance, about how the economy is actually to be organised and related to the political apparatus (Held, 1986: 6).

If calls for democracy to be at the heart of education policy theory are to be realised (see Ranson, 1995; Walford, 1997; Whitty & Power, 1997; Olssen et al., 2004; Tomlinson, 2005) then such positions must also respond to the 'multi-dimensional' nature of contemporary modernity and the issues it raises. For Giddens the debate over contemporary society, or modernity, suggests that it is more complex than 'liberalism' or 'democracy' can either account for, or provide a solution to. Therefore, what is important is not the victory of one over the other, but how a deeper understanding of the nature of modernity might be realised. It is in this light that the work of Anthony Giddens stands out as an attempt to develop an understanding of such themes that goes 'beyond' the domains of liberalism and socialism. Locating his argument in a conceptualisation of the nature of modernity, and the specific form of 'late' modernity experienced today, Giddens argues

that not only are new approaches required, but that radical new futures are made possible. Rejecting the respective utopias offered by neo-liberalism and Marxism, Giddens suggests that understanding the nature of contemporary change is also the means to imagining the nature of the future, a perspective he describes as 'utopian realism'.

TOWARDS A NEW INDIVIDUALISM

There exists an extensive literature on education policy in the recent period stimulated by the radical nature of the transformations made. Ranson (1995a) notes that this literature is significant for its focus on the theorising of education policy, dominated by a debate between pluralist and Marxist perspectives. In response, he argues that education policy analysis and the theorising of education policy is in need of a 'radical redirection' (Ranson, 1995a: 427). Taking Giddens's perspective the polarised nature of educational debate at this juncture fails to take account of what appears as the multi-faceted nature of modernity, paralleling instead Tocqueville's expression of the difficulty that exists in reconciling individual freedom and individual equality. Calls for a return to democratic policy-making and education as a public good represent responses to the individualism of the New Right rather than to the deeper processes at work in contemporary modernity, and are thus unable to offer a radical redirection that connects with the experiences of today's world. Bowe et al.'s (1994) reference to Ulrich Beck is therefore important for it positions the treatment of individualism in education in a broader conceptualisation of the processes of modern society. For Beck (1992: 131) 'the individual is indeed removed from the traditional commitments and support relationships, but exchanges them for the constraints of existence in the labour market and as a consumer, with the standardisations and controls they contain'. Thus, 'Beck emphasises the need to analyse this transition as part of the process of individualisation that has characterised social change since at least the early 1950s' (Bowe et al., 1994: 50). This suggests a difference between individual*ism* and individual*isation*, with the former representing a more specific display of the latter's condition. Whilst the economic individual and self-interest are at the centre of the neo-liberal market model (Lauder, 1991), it is processes of individualisation that are central to the transformations occurring in modern society. Critique of current education policy and calls for the redevelopment of a democratic future are enhanced by this understanding, but are also subject to its challenges. As the following chapter will explore in more detail, Giddens similarly moves to conceptualise the nature of change occurring in contemporary modernity. His approach to democracy demonstrates the concern seen likewise in Hobsbawm, Held, and Callinicos with the nature of citizenship and the restriction of democratic theory to parliamentary representation. Yet, as will be discussed, he moves to construct this in a quite different way arguing that democracy, as understood in this way, 'is not enough', seeking to make a distinction between the emancipatory goals of democracy and the domain of

what he moves to term 'life politics'. Thus, whilst there is potential for education's relationship to democracy to be reaffirmed, the concept of 'personal development through education' (Ranson, 1988: 4) and the emancipatory goals of this objective so clear in the 1944 reforms must be reconceptualised in the nature of contemporary society. In order for utopian hope to be restored Giddens (1993: 292) argues that 'these emancipatory anticipations of a social order beyond modernity need to be complemented by life - that is, political questions'. Thus, Giddens writes:

> A 'double-sided democratization' I think, is an implicit possibility of the very transformations that are affecting the social order today. A characteristic of what I call high or late modernity is the increasing connection - a two-way and dialectical connection - between personal life and global systems. On each of these levels, which cross-cut the nation-state, we see processes occurring that suggest that pre-established forms of power might be replaced by democratic communication. Democracy in each of these contexts means not only the representation of interests, but the opening up of decision-making to dialogic mechanisms' (Giddens, 1993: 291).

This study presents Giddens's approach to contemporary modernity as important for the analysis of education reform during the New Labour administration. Giddens criticises the understanding of the individual by the New Right, setting out life political issues as central to a new form of democracy. As the following chapters explore, Giddens presents a new account of the individual as one engaged in a new form of democracy and life politics. This perspective on individual agency relates to deeper understandings about the state of knowledge in contemporary modernity. The tensional outcome of the Thatcherite reforms is testament both to deep conflicts over the nature of society and to the limitations of the polarised responses that have dominated debate. Challenges to individual identity, the nature of state and society, and the development of industry and technology all pose difficulties for understanding how education may be seen to take shape in contemporary society. Giddens's attempts to draw upon the importance of both the individual and democracy in a thesis on the nature of contemporary society moves away from the dichotomised perspectives that have dominated educational critique. As a result the future for educational reform may be both radical and realised.

RESPONDING TO MODERNITY: WHAT CONDITION IS EDUCATION IN?

'I go back from age to age up to the remotest antiquity, but I find no parallel to what is occurring before my eyes: as the past has ceased to throw its light upon the future, the mind of man wanders in obscurity' – Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

'The modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from all traditional types of social order, in quite unprecedented fashion'
– Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*

Having discussed the tensional outcome of the radical transformations made in education policy during the Conservative period of government, especially as a result of the 1988 ERA, the previous chapter argued that the future direction of reform was limited by the polarised and exclusionary nature of debate. Noting that education was transformed in response to wider economic and social change, it was argued that the limitations of the New Right response, and the ideological commitment of opponents to social forms of democratic organisation despite its own failed history, reflected an inability to conceptualise fully the nature of social change, and thus solutions to educational reform, in such a dichotomised arena. The chapter concluded by pointing to the work of Anthony Giddens in demonstrating that contemporary social change, as a part of the history of modernity, does not represent the final stage of modernisation, neither does it allow for a return to socialist thinking of old. Rather, this present stage of modernity requires a new means of understanding. As this chapter will develop in greater depth, Giddens develops from his general theory of sociology to posit the period of 'late' modernity as enabling radical change requiring a new approach to both individualism and democracy. On the basis of his conceptualisation of such immanent changes he argues for a perspective of 'utopian realism' by which new futures for modernity might be considered possible. Indeed, it is through his exposition of the condition of 'late' modernity, and particularly the importance of a 'new individualism', that it is possible to connect his earlier theories of social reproduction to a utopian perspective that offers the possibility of social change beyond 'the end of history'.

This chapter starts by considering the project of 'modernity' from its outset, in order to draw attention to Giddens's specific conceptualisation of the contemporary period as one of 'late' or 'high' modernity. The discussion of modernity is used to assess the radical nature of the New Right project of modernisation, seeking to present it as a 'weak' response to the nature of contemporary change. In this light it is possible to consider how a stronger approach to modernisation might be developed. Giddens's thinking plays a significant role in the development of New Labour's own

political project, as the following chapter will chart in more detail. Therefore an understanding of his work is essential both in examining the nature of recent education reform, and in assessing the extent to which it has worked to a radical and modernising agenda.

A HISTORY OF RADICAL REFORM

Highlighting the radical nature of education reform experienced during the 1980s Thatcher administration, Ranson (1995a) states that the changes involved a transformation from a system of collective choice and action 'designed to ameliorate class disadvantage and class division' into consumer democracy based upon the agency of the individual to 'deliver the goals of opportunity and social change' (Ranson, 1995a: 427). The 1988 Education Reform Act came to symbolise the biggest reform of education since that of 1944, an Act that itself was presented as a radical transformation of the education system. As discussed in the previous chapter, these changes occurred in a wider reform of the polity distinguished as part of a new political order and a neo-liberal response to the social democracy of the post-war period. The 1944 and 1988 Acts are important markers in the history of education reform for they reflect the broader history of which they are a part, that of modernisation – a modernisation understood not through a singular process or concept, but through the nature of interpretation and response made to it.

This study is concerned with understanding the nature of education policy under the New Labour administration that came to power in 1997, and the extent to which it was part of a new political order. The reforms of the Thatcher era are important for they provide the context into which New Labour took power, and to which they offered their own political project. Having already discussed the outline of these reforms, this chapter seeks to understand the nature and extent of their radicalism in greater depth through a consideration of the complexity of modernity and modernising processes. Importantly, it will be argued that modernity does not exist as a discrete or defined concept, but as a multi-faceted interaction of processes, each operating in their own frames of time and space. Recognising the understanding of modernity that political projects rest upon provides a key means to understanding the nature of their response, mediated through policy. Further, it is through consideration of different conceptualisations of modernity and the processes of modernisation that critical analysis of such political projects can take place.

ENLIGHTENMENT, MODERNITY, MODERNISATION

Much like 1989 was provided a starting point for consideration of contemporary political change, the 1789 revolution in France is frequently cited as a catalyst for the period that has become known as 'modernity' (Arendt, 1963; Giddens, 1971; Mazarr, 2007). Yet, whilst Hegel's observation of the decline of society in France after the revolution, and the replacement of one form of social and

political existence with another, was crucial in developing the notion of progress and the historical nature of economics and politics (Morrison, 2006), the revolutions not just in France, but also in England and America, should perhaps be represented as markers of the nature of change, rather than the key determinants themselves (Callincos, 1999). Indeed, it was an *age* of Enlightenment in which such *philosophes* were to develop. Whilst encompassing different movements there were several trends held in common – reason and rationality, empiricism, science, universalism, progress, individualism, toleration, freedom, uniformity of human nature, and secularism (Hamilton, 1995). These themes were to transform the understanding of man's approach to society and history, as Huntington (1968: 32) comments: '...modernisation involves a fundamental shift in values, attitudes, and expectations. Traditional man expected continuity in nature and society and did not believe in the capacity of man to change or control either. Modern man, in contrast, accepts the possibility of change and believes in its desirability...'. As Hamilton (1995: 51) states, the Enlightenment 'created the elements from which intellectuals could begin to construct an image of society which reflected human interests'. Thus the Enlightenment played its part in a series of distinct but overlapping historical processes and events that led to the developing notion of 'modern society'. The notion of 'modernisation' must therefore be distinguished not as a single process in itself, but as an amalgam of all these involved processes and activities.

Modernity, like the Enlightenment, is a complex term that should be approached as one encompassing several interacting themes rather than as an attempt to provide an over-arching concept (Mazarr, 2007; Hall, 1995). Such themes are those of the transformations of industry, economy, social structures, the nation-state, and culture. Thus, taking the example of the nation-state, its development was a process in its own right, and in its own time-scale, yet it played an active role in the making and shaping of modernity. Further, 'although the transition from the absolutist to the modern state was marked by dramatic events and processes such as the English and French revolutions, an exclusive focus on these hinders an understanding of the way in which the absolutist state itself was crucial in the development of modern political rule' (Held, 1995: 71). The processes of modernisation are themselves influenced by the conditions in which they took place, and the influence of these factors is crucial to an understanding not just of the direction of modernisation but of the nature of the tensions and consequences created, as will be discussed further shortly.

In Kantian terms modernity can be based in a point of exit, or as Wain (2000: 36) expresses it, a 'coming to maturity' in the period that has come to be known as the Enlightenment where rational autonomy allowed an 'exit from a state in which the will was subject to diverse heteronomous laws, into a state where it recognised itself as self-legislating, obedient only to the law of pure reason

which is a law of nature'. This change marked a turning away from traditional sources of authority such as the Church to the promotion of knowledge as the principle organising concept of society. Jurgen Habermas (1987: 7) summed up this movement away from tradition as the realisation that '[modernity] has to create its own normativity out of itself'. Such a revolution mirrored the contemporary transformations of industry, and expressed a belief in the advancement and progression of knowledge and society (Peters & Burbules, 2004). The Enlightenment can therefore be seen as the historical basis for modernity which Green (1994: 72) describes as constructed from a set of grand narratives including a 'belief in scientific rationality, historical progress, the autonomy of the subject, the possibility of objective reason, and indeed a coherent thought-system which attempts to find an overall pattern in social structures or historical development'.

THE CHALLENGES OF MODERNITY

The development of modernity, its distinction from the Enlightenment, and its relationship to revolutions in Western nations are complex and hotly debated issues and space does not permit a thorough analysis of the nature of these discussions here. However, having briefly outlined the broad nature of transformation that occurred, it is important to draw attention to the ways in which the processes of modernity caused upheaval and the responses that resulted. This background will prove important in understanding more clearly the specific nature of the challenges and responses of the contemporary period.

Modernity is not a distinct concept but one 'constituted by the articulation of a number of different historical processes, working together in unique historical circumstances' (Hall et al., 1995: 426), and shaped by internal and external forces. Hall et al. (1995) present an understanding of modernity that, in each of the areas that constitute its development – that is, the economic, political, social and cultural – is one of increasing complexity. Thus, the capitalist relations that have provided the economic dynamic for modernity's growth and expansion have become more complex through their globalisation, but also in the patterns of social inequality and distinctive class relations that they have produced. Similarly, the notion of the individual has become more complex through the processes of modernisation and growth of cultural pluralism, alongside an increasing scale of bureaucratic systems of social organisation (Hall et al., 1995).

Modernity and the processes of modernisation are therefore seen through economic and technological growth to bring about changes in society and related movements towards individualism and the rise of democratic forms of government. However, such transformations are neither simple nor without problems. As Bendix (1964) states, and as noted previously with regard to the formation of the modern state, the process of change is a complex interaction of tradition and modernisation:

The most general experience is that modern industrial societies retain their several, divergent traditions...Social structures and attitudes persist long after the conditions which gave rise to them have disappeared, and this persistence can have positive as well as negative consequences for economic development...Accordingly, our concept of development must encompass not only the products and by-products of industrialisation, but also the various amalgams of tradition and modernity which make all developments 'partial' (Bendix, 1964: 9).

This partial nature of development draws attention to those consequences resulting from the interaction of the processes of modernisation with the social, economic and political traditions that had come before. However, there was also considerable upheaval where modernisation took hold:

The very fact that modernisation entails continual changes in all major spheres of a society means of necessity that it involves processes of disorganisation and dislocation, with the continual development of social problems, cleavages and conflicts between various groups, and movements of protest, resistance and change...the potential for alienation of wide groups from the central political and social system, for the development of feelings of anonymity and anomic estrangement from their societies (Eisenstadt, 1966: 20).

Indeed, Engels's (1958) commentary on the social disintegration of Manchester during the 19th century highlights the problems that resulted from the processes of modernisation itself. Modernisation thus produced tensions both in the social changes that it brought about as society and individuals were forced to adapt to new systems and structures, and also in relation to the remnants of traditional elements of social structure that remained.

Alongside the 'modernisation' of society attempts to develop coherent models of such transformations also gave rise to the emergence of the social sciences – attempts to forge an understanding of society that had been lacking in Enlightenment thought itself. As Giddens (1971) notes, the characteristic processes of how modernity operated demanded a new means of analysis and understanding:

The existence of a science of history, therefore, presupposes a world in which change is ubiquitous, and, more especially, one in which the past has become, in some degree, a burden from which men seek to be freed. In the modern era, men no longer accept the conditions of life into which they are born as necessarily given for all time, but attempt to impose their will upon reality in order to bend the future into a shape which conforms to their desires (Giddens, 1971: xi).

However, as Callinicos (1999: 25) points out, whilst the situation described above led to optimistic claims for the future, it is the case that 'many *philosophes* expressed powerful reservations about

the sustainability and even the desirability' of this historical progress. Thus, as modernity sought to justify itself from in – to create its own normativity, as Habermas had posited – there were doubts over the positive nature of progress, the universality of truth, and the nature of the self. The ideals of the French Revolution expressed in the slogan of 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' were not only made possible by the Enlightenment movement but were at the same time problematised, as Tocqueville had noted in his observation of the conflict between equality of condition and individual freedom (Callinicos, 1999). The polarised argument between individual liberty and social equality discussed in Chapter Two was thus both a product and problem of modernity.

The works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim mark some of the most influential contributions to analyses of society in this period. Marx in particular demonstrated a concern with action and the need for philosophy to be complemented by knowledge of material forces (Giddens, 1971; Callinicos, 1995). From Marx it is seen that 'human beings' relationship to nature is indeed fundamental, but it is an active relationship defined by the productive activities through which they transform their physical and social environment' (Callinicos, 1999: 82). In this way Marx takes Hegel's abstract notion of labour and apply it materially as a theory, rather than a philosophy, of history, or as Callinicos (1995: 43) describes, a theoretical account of the 'inner dynamic' of history. Again, space does not permit a full discussion of these early thinkers, however the examination of modernity discussed in this chapter follows a line of sociological examination concerned with exploring this 'inner dynamic'.

UNDERSTANDING CONTEMPORARY CHANGE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE RADICAL NOW?

If modernity presented challenges in its earlier history, then it is also the case that recent decades have questioned the nature of modernity and modernising processes in contemporary society. Anthony Giddens introduces his first major contribution to this debate with the belief that 'there is a widespread feeling among sociologists that contemporary social theory stands in need of a radical revision' (Giddens, 1971: vii). Morrison (2006) similarly draws attention to the transformations in industry and capitalist dynamics that have challenged understandings of personal liberty and traditional understandings of capitalism, science, progress, and philosophic rationalism. Modernity today presents challenges to the processes of change in society and also to the ways that have been developed to make sense of these. Describing the nature of the challenge that modernity faces, Hall et al. (1995) provide the following key indicators of the move to a radical revision. Firstly, with regard to contemporary transformations in politics, economics, society and culture they note:

the meaning and implications of the collapse of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe; shifts in the dynamics and organisation of the global capitalist economic order; the changing

forms of contemporary culture and identity formation; the growing interconnectedness between states and societies; and challenges to that quintessentially modern political institution, the nation-state (Hall et al., 1995: 425).

And, further, such challenges to modernity necessitate an understanding of:

...the changing role of social science and the nature of modern 'knowledge', which we have depended on in the past to make sense of these changes and which, if these shifts are taken far enough, could undercut some of the underlying intellectual assumptions of leading forms of human inquiry (Hall et al., 1995: 425).

There is, therefore, something about the nature of contemporary change in the processes of modernisation that challenges the existing means of understanding them. The search to make sense of the modern world today is therefore directed at both the nature of modernity and the means by which it can be understood. The changes noted above have been variously described as having a dislocating and disorienting effect. Whilst such dislocation was a feature of modernity, these new experiences are argued to be a dislocation and disorientation of modernity itself. This represents a challenge not just to the nature of modernity, but to its very being. As Seidman & Alexander (2001: 13) state:

Central to current theoretical debates is the question of whether social developments, at least in Europe and the United States, indicate a shift from modern to a post-modern type of society. According to many social thinkers, modernity is an historical era characterised by the industrial revolution, the rise of the nation state, the nuclear family, clearly marked gender roles, and a faith in reason to establish general standards of truth, beauty, and rightness. Does the rise of an information and service-based economy, multinational organisations, globalising processes, relativising, post-foundational discourses, and a decline in the belief of social progress underscore the arrival of postmodernity?

For Giddens these challenges raised new questions of society that could not be answered by modernity as previously understood (Giddens, 1994: 35). Indeed, post-modern and post-structural approaches have raised serious critiques of the narratives of historical progress and meaning that have held modernity together (see in particular, Baudrillard, 1983; Lyotard, 1984; Jameson, 1991; Foucault, 2002). The state of modernity in this period is, Held (1986) argues, only possible by interpretation.

The history of recent reform in education, such as that experienced from the 1980s, represents an interpretation of the nature of contemporary society and a response based upon this. This study, with its focus upon education reform in the New Labour era, therefore seeks to examine the

relationship between education and society that was developed in this period. The influence of Giddens's thinking is important to analyse for, as will be discussed further in the following chapter, it played a significant role in guiding the direction of the New Labour project, symbolised in their use of the 'Third Way' as a label for a programme of reform. This chapter moves to explore recent perspectives on modernity, with a central focus upon the work of Anthony Giddens. Examining his conceptualisation of 'late' modernity provides the opportunity to develop a critical approach to recent responses to the issues of contemporary society from both the Left and Right of the political spectrum. It will be argued that the New Right project was weakened in its response as it failed to sufficiently develop a conceptual understanding of contemporary modernity. The 'radical' nature of the education reforms of the 1980s is therefore brought into question. Further, in seeking to understand what form of radicalism Giddens argues for, traditional social democratic approaches are also critiqued.

LATE, LIQUID, OR IN CRISIS: PERSPECTIVES ON MODERNITY

The concept of 'late' modernity, as developed by Anthony Giddens, presents an understanding of modernity as entering a specific form of 'reflexivity'. Whilst the focus here is upon Giddens's specific exposition of the state of contemporary modernity, his broader position is supported by a body of theorists working in a similar interpretation (such as Ulrich Beck, noted in Chapter Two). However, as O'Brien (1999: 24) rightly notes, Giddens's contribution has been to 'pose the question of this difference as the central problematic of contemporary sociology: in what does the condition of modernity consist?'. Giddens's work seeks to explore not just the changes that modernity has worked in the social world, but to investigate and expose the nature of modernity itself, and what it is that separates it from the pre-modern traditional order. Following his exposition of the characteristics of modernity, Giddens presents the contemporary period as one of 'late' or 'high' modernity in which the challenges to society are radicalised as a result of the intensification of the dynamics of modernity.

Before moving to explore in more detail Giddens's approach to the nature of contemporary modernity it is necessary to set out the basis of his sociological approach, for his most recent works represent a culmination of thinking that started with his critical consideration of the dominant sociological perspectives supplied by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim (Giddens, 1971), rather than a new theory in itself. His new perspective on social change was most clearly elaborated in *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Giddens, 1984). In seeking to bring together a divide in sociology over the nature and role of structure and agency Giddens's structuration approach sought to develop a new sociological method for understanding the 'uniqueness' of the contemporary world (O'Brien, 1999: 17).

Giddens's theory of structuration develops a focus upon social practices ordered across space and time rather than upon individual agency or structure specifically, in what he terms 'the duality of structure' (Giddens, 1984). In this way structure creates action, as action creates structure, and in so doing overcomes any distinction between the two as separate sociologies: 'social structures are both constituted by human agency and yet at the same time are the very medium of this constitution' (Giddens, 1976: 121). Through social activity agents create, or, more accurately, reproduce, existing social practices through their knowledge of these practices, for example, the actions, logic, and etiquette of consumer purchase. As well as reproducing these practices, such agency also reproduces 'unintended consequences', such as the reproduction of market or class relations (O'Brien, 1999). In this way social structure is reproduced, and at the same time works to enable and constrain further activity:

> Human social activities, like some self-reproducing items in nature, are recursive. That is to say, they are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In and through their activities agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible (Giddens, 1984: 2).

This focus upon social practices, argues Craib (1992: 34), thus 'enables Giddens to present himself as a theorist of praxis' to emphasise 'the creative and transformative aspects of action'. Indeed, action is central to Giddens's approach. As Craib (1992: 36) further notes, 'the ability to act is prior to our reflexive ability – it is always there and we must act; we are, perhaps, doomed to act'. However, this point is less important and consequential than the fact that action presents the opportunity for transformation.

Fundamental to this reproduction is the concept of 'ontological security'. Social action through reflexivity is not, for Giddens, just a method but '*the* ontological condition of human society' (Craib, 1992: 35). This form of subjectivity therefore operates at an unconscious level (Cohen, 2000; Craib, 1992). Action provides meaning and, resultantly, security. As agents engage in activities that result in reproductive consequences (both intended and unintended) they produce such security by sharing in a mutual knowledge of how practices occur, thus finding trust in the social relations that these require and in the security of their results (a knowledge of what will result from a certain social practice). Such trusted relations produce social solidarity and also security in self-identity (Giddens, 1991) as they produce 'confidence and trust that the natural and social worlds are as they appear to be, including the basic existential parameters of self and social identity' (Giddens, 1984: 375). As Craib (1992) argues, the place of routine in providing security plays an important role in Giddens's theory (indeed, ontological security would remain important even in a future post-modern world order (Giddens, 1990b)). Resultantly, as Cohen (2000: 95) notes, 'there is a danger of presuming that

structured practices exist, while forgetting how they are reproduced, and ignoring the possibility that they may be altered'. Indeed, action in structured practices can be seen to occur in everyday life in a 'taken-for-granted' fashion that brings about the reproduction of such practices without any consideration of how this occurs, or how things might be different. Social change thus occurs through the interruption of such routine and 'taken-for-granted' practices. In these instances actors engage in activity at a level of 'discursive consciousness' brought about by the disruption of unconscious ontological security. Such action requires reflection and reasoning in order to produce responses that will replace anxiety with security, and bring social change (Cohen, 2000: 97). Social change is possible because of the power that individuals possess in action: 'because it is inherent in human action, power can never be absolute, nor can it disappear' (Craib, 1992: 36). It is this 'taken-for-granted' notion of social praxis that, as will be explored further below, is challenged most extensively by the nature of contemporary modernity, leading to a period of intensified reflexivity and risk. Reflexivity caused by the breakdown of knowledge leads to a conscious engagement with the previously taken-for-granted way of acting. As such it causes ontological *in*security and anxiety.

THE CONDITION OF MODERNITY

Developing from the Marxist interpretation of history as marked by discontinuities Giddens argues that the modern period of history must be understood not just as a discontinuity of history but as a particular set of such ruptures (Giddens, 1990b). However, he argues that the dominance of evolutionary thinking with regards to social theory has undermined our ability to recognise the full nature of the discontinuities of modernity. In arguing against such directional understandings of history Giddens seeks to present 'definite episodes of historical transition...whose character can be identified and about which generalisations can be made' (Giddens, 1990b: 6).

Central to Giddens's conception of modernity is that its transformations exist at both the level of the 'extensional' and the 'intensional'. That is, relating to both the global and personal spheres of existence. Further, it is the nature of modernity that changes in these fields occur in an inter-connected manner, such that the condition of 'modernity' – of modernising – is specifically this form of 'reflexivity'.

Giddens identifies the discontinuities which separate modern from traditional social orders as the pace of change, the scope of change, and the nature of modern institutions. The evidence for these themes have been largely described previously in this chapter as relating to the transformations of industry and technology, the development of capitalist economic relations, the nation-state as a political system, and the increasing globalisation of these features. However, Giddens argues that sociological attempts to make sense of modernity have been impeded by generalisations of classical social theory, namely the inclination to look for a singular point of reduction, the centrality of

'society' as the focus of investigation, and unsophisticated understandings of 'reflexivity'. 'If we are adequately to grasp the nature of modernity', Giddens (1990b: 16) states, 'we have to break away from existing sociological perspectives in each of the respects mentioned. We have to account for the extreme dynamism and globalising scope of modern institutions and explain the nature of their discontinuities from traditional cultures'. It is therefore the particular nature of the discontinuities that modernity represents that must be the focus of investigation, and Giddens describes several features that reflect the specificity of modern discontinuities that distinguish them from other historical separations.

As noted, Giddens's understanding is centred upon the changes at both global and local levels which he describes as having ruptured time and space such that pre-modern localised social activity transformed into one influenced from distance and not limited to that which was visibly present. Here the concept of 'dis-embedding' is used to refer to the organisational shift of modern institutions from their pre-modern basis in specific local spaces and times of activity, to structures where distance and time are dislocated. Money, in its modern form, is posited as an example of such a 'dis-embedding' mechanism for it allows the event of the transaction to be deferred both spatially and temporally.

Yet, at the same time, seeking to highlight the notion that such changes do not take the form of replacement – that is, the global replacing the local – Giddens draws upon the process of 're-embedding'. Further still, such re-embedding processes are as much involved in the transformation of global structures as the global is with regards to the local. The dynamic of change specific to modernity must therefore be seen not just as one of the dominance of an increasing globalisation, nor even of an appreciation of both globalising and localising transformations, but as the inter-connected and transformative nature of such change.

Beyond the increasing globalisation experienced as a part of the dynamics of modernity, and the ever more complex relationship of the local and the global, Giddens also draws attention to the nature of risk in society and to transformations with regards to the individual. The issue of risk is reached through examination of the nature of trust that has evolved as a result of the dis-embedding of institutions 'linking local practices with globalised social relations' (Giddens, 1990b: 79). Such trust involves both dis-embedding – faith in systems and expert knowledge, and re-embedding – the grounding of the work of such systems in localised processes. Thus, the discontinuities of modernity include the nature of risk. Risk is assessed with regards to 'generalisable knowledge about potential dangers', and is based upon the acceptance that the possibility of things going wrong cannot be eliminated (Giddens, 1990b: 111).

The extension of abstract systems sees a shift in trust in personal relations to trust in the abstract systems themselves. Giddens argues that attempts to re-embed trust are seen in the nature of friendships – that is, in making trust a personal relation specific in time and space that is not available through the increasing everyday engagement with abstract systems. This transformation of the nature of personal trust, brought about as a result of the processes of modernity, has resulted in an understanding of trust as 'a mutual process of self-disclosure' (1990b: 121). This self-disclosure requires that personal trust 'has to be established through the process of self-enquiry: the discovery of oneself becomes a project directly involved with the reflexivity of modernity' (1990b: 122). It is not that the routines with which abstract systems have us engage increasingly overwhelm personal life, but that the nature of this personal element is very different, such that 'personal relations whose main objective is sociability...become as much a part of the social institutions of modernity as the encompassing institutions of time-space distanciation' (1990b: 120).

Throughout his work on the nature of modernity Giddens is keen to stress that its development has resulted in a transformation of features of life. In this sense features such as 'community', 'risk', or 'trust' are not lost or gained, but are redefined in ways that are only possible because of modernity. Understanding 'risk' today must therefore be based upon an understanding of the dynamics of modernity – of what 'risk' means in modernity. Recognising globalisation should not therefore result in a loss of localised activity, but an understanding of how local activities are reconfigured:

> The dis-embedding mechanisms lift social relations and the exchange of information out of specific time-space contexts, but at the same time provide new opportunities for their reinsertion. This is another reason why it is misleading to see the modern world as one in which large, impersonal systems increasingly swallow up most of personal life (Giddens, 1990b: 141-2).

The breakdown of community and personal relations as a result of globalisation and abstract systems is rejected by Giddens (1990b: 142), who argues that modernity must be understood as creating new forms of intimacy and personal living in complex and subtle ways.

Giddens uses the concept of 'reflexivity' to refer to the 'plastic' nature of modernity. Specifically, he highlights the modern form of reflexivity as one in which the constant examination of social practices is extended to all aspects of human life (Giddens, 1990b: 39). Thus, modernity is not so much about what is new *per se*, rather such 'newness' arises from a condition of continual reflexivity in all areas. Reflexivity in modernity is distinguished from that of pre-modern societies by its radical application to all aspects of life: 'The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character' (Giddens, 1990b: 38). This form of

reflexivity is specific to modernity because of the scale of knowledge and information available for use (O'Brien, 1999). Further, this all-embracing reflexivity is extended to knowledge itself, such that the notion of certitude even from knowledge is lost: 'We are abroad in a world which is thoroughly constituted through reflexivity applied to knowledge, but where at the same time we can never be sure that any given element of that knowledge will not be revised' (Giddens, 1990b: 39). Modernity thus marks a transformation from the pre-modern period through the nature of knowledge. However, the nature of this discontinuity is deeper still as it is reliant upon a knowledge which cannot be certain. The metaphor of the careering juggernaut is used by Giddens to distinguish an understanding of modernity from one that is open to complete control or mastery. In this understanding, or recognition, Giddens begins to mark out his conception of the contemporary period as one of 'late' modernity.

The reflexivity of contemporary modernity distinguishes the world as one 'constituted by information rather than pre-given modes of conduct' (Giddens, 1998a: 115). In this way it is possible to see what is meant by the notion that modernity is not about what's new so much as the way modernity operates – its 'dynamic' or 'condition' is one in which 'newness' is inevitable. That is, the reflexive conditioning of action describes a situation in which the availability of knowledge leads to a constant and continual examination of social practices, and even knowledge itself. The nature of this reflexivity in contemporary modernity causes Giddens (1998a: 116) to comment that:

> Reflexive modernisation says something about late modernity, reflecting on the limitations and difficulties of modernisation itself...In the West and the developed industrial societies, there are conditions of reflexive modernisation, with the key problem of modernisation being what modernisation itself is all about.

Here Giddens distinguishes between two periods of modernisation. First-phase modernisation 'refers to modernising processes that take a society, as it were, in a straight line towards increasing wealth, and where prosperity, security and improvement in overall quality of life tend to go together' (Giddens, 1998a: 197). Second-phase modernisation 'happens where these conditions no longer hold, and where modernisation means coming to terms with some of its own limits, tensions and difficulties' (Giddens, 1998a: 197). This second phase requires the development of a reflexive approach to problems as 'issues raised by second-phase modernisation can't be resolved by means of first-phase strategies' (Giddens, 1998a: 197). Ulrich Beck (1994) similarly distinguishes two phases of modernisation, described respectively as 'simple' and 'reflexive'. For Beck this second phase of reflexive modernisation is characterised by a 'creative destruction' as 'by virtue of its inherent dynamism, modern society is undercutting its formations of class, stratum, occupation, sex roles, nuclear family, plant, business sectors and of course also the prerequisites and continuing forms of

natural techno-economic progress' (1994: 2). Crucially, however, it is not a crisis of modernity and modernising processes which is responsible for this situation, but in fact it proceeds from the 'victories' of modernity. In such a way this form of reflexive modernisation brings about a transformation of industrial modernity as that revolution itself brought about the rupture from tradition. Here, however it is (one form of) modernisation acting upon (another form of) modernisation. Resultantly there is a call to understand the challenges of contemporary modernity in broader terms than class struggle, for it is the nature of modernity itself that is responsible. Beck categorises this second phase of modernisation as developing a risk society where it is the consequences, limitations, and threats of modernity itself that dominate. That is, modernity becomes more and more about itself. There is an obvious similarity here to Giddens's (1998a: 116) observation, noted above, with the 'key problem of modernisation being what modernisation itself is all about'.

Giddens explores the nature of the contemporary world and our approach to it – both in practice and in theory – through the concept of modernity as that which shapes the processes of life. The above discussion has highlighted the key features of this 'dynamic' with which Giddens attempts to draw out the nature of the challenges facing human society today. Giddens's modernity is characterised by new and expanded risks, alongside new approaches to trust; increasing separation of time and place, alongside new forms of localised activity; increasing engagement with impersonal abstract systems, alongside a new understanding of intimacy and the self. All such transformations show the form not of a dichotomy, but of a complex and continual process of reflexivity and reappropriation in which both 'poles' are transformed and continue to transform each other in 'dialectical interplay' (Giddens, 1990b: 144).

As mentioned, Giddens describes the nature of modernity as that of a juggernaut and being a part of modernity as the attempt to ride it. What, then, does Giddens prescribe with regards to handling such a vehicle?

CRISIS OF MODERNITY OR CRISIS OF SOCIALISM?

In responding to the nature of contemporary modernity, as explored by Giddens, there are several key themes that arise. Firstly, modernity is shown to be more than capitalism or industrialism. The distinction of a 'second-phase' of modernisation serves to highlight that the challenges presented by contemporary modernity are of a different order. That is, they refer not to the limitations of the processes of simple modernisation (although these still exist), but, as Beck (1992; 1994) argues, reflect a predominance of conflicts over the very success of these processes such that new issues of responsibility and self-limitation are raised. Thus, responding to the condition of contemporary modernity requires new modes of engagement and thought as future-oriented planning becomes

central. Today modernity must be regarded as multidimensional in character. That Giddens sees no alternative to capitalism demonstrates that, for him, the capitalistic dynamic is less relevant to the nature of contemporary modernisation, for it has already established itself. Therefore:

> a single-minded preoccupation with labour movements, though at one time largely justified by their strategic importance in the development of modern institutions and capitalistic expansion, reflects the one-sided emphasis upon capitalism or industrialism as the sole significant dynamic forces involved in modernity (Giddens, 1990b: 159).

As Beck (1992; 1994) has argued, the challenge of contemporary modernisation does not result from a crisis but from its own victories. Thus, such challenges require engagement with the dynamics of contemporary modernising processes rather than a reduction to singular or outdated issues.

Secondly, Giddens argues that emancipatory politics must become connected to 'life politics'. Here the collective nature of emancipatory movements is seen as limited in a world in which the 'self' takes a new form of one of 'self-actualisation' or 'self identity'. Importantly, 'life politics' or 'self-identity' must not be seen as a 'desperate' response to the 'socially inadequate character of the larger institutions of modernity' (Giddens, 1990b: 157). Giddens cautions against negative readings of the self as lost in an impersonal and globalised world without tradition and community to fall back upon for support (Giddens, 1991). Rather, having a personal identity to discover is an experience of modernity, and is interwoven with the dynamics of global change (where global connections provide some of the very conditions for such forms of individual self-actualisation). Life politics 'as a fully distinctive set of problems and possibilities' is to be understood as a condition of late modernity where the reflexivity specific to modernity 'extends into the core of the self' (Giddens, 1991: 32). The demand for this reflexive approach to the self is predicated upon the removal of traditional forms of identity formation (such as rites of passage). Further, the continual reflexivity of modernity as a result of the availability (and now also, reflexivity) of knowledge requires individuals to continually adapt to changing social practices. The development of the self as a central dynamic of modernity causes Giddens to argue for life politics as an arena of increasing importance for the possibilities of a fulfilling and satisfying life for all (Giddens, 1990b: 156). Life politics is distinguished from emancipatory politics on the nature of choice: 'Life politics does not primarily concern the conditions which liberate us in order to make choices: it is a politics *of* choice. While emancipatory politics is a politics of life chances, life politics is a politics of lifestyle' (Giddens, 1991: 214). This notion of personal identity is therefore specific to 'late' modernity and its potential, with regards to constructing a fulfilling life, responds to the negative conception of the self as dislocated and disoriented by modernity. Rather, the self must be understood as reformed in new ways at both the intimate and the global levels. Not that this does away with negative consequences for the

individual, but that these too must be understood in terms of the new forms of risk associated with this reflexive actualisation.

Indeed, Giddens argues that the increasing importance of life politics has consequences for our approaches to both democracy and governance of society. The concept of risk has already been highlighted in Giddens's outline of modernity. Through the radicalisation of 'late' modernity the nature of such risk has changed with the development of 'self-actualisation' such that previous forms of societal planning and provision are now inadequate. Giddens argues that the nature of modernity today has proven socialism to be an outdated form of economic management and that the changing dynamics of risk and life politics also demand that social systems, such as the welfare state, themselves change: 'we need a positive restructuring of welfare institutions, which will allow people to take more active attitudes to risk but at the same time give them protection' (Giddens, 1990b: 164). The nature of risk today opens up questions of personal responsibility, the role of the government, and the forms of insurance offered. Further, life politics demands a new approach to democracy. As noted, Giddens presents self-actualisation as a politics of choice. In relation to democracy, Giddens argues that 'it is not enough' in that it 'provides a framework for decision-making, but it does not supply the criteria in terms of which these decisions are formulated' (Giddens, 1993: 292). This exploration of personal and ethical politics searches the possibilities for new forms of social order in late modernity. It is an expansion of the idea of democracy that has previously been limited to an 'affirmation of multi-party parliamentary representation' based upon the 'increasing connection between personal life and global systems':

> On each of these levels, which cross-cut the nation-state, we see processes occurring that suggest that pre-established forms of power might be replaced by democratic communication. Democracy in each of these contexts means not only representation of interests, but the opening up of decision-making to dialogic mechanisms (Giddens, 1993: 292).

Democracy is thus important for more than representation. The importance of self-actualisation that has arisen in 'late' modernity requires that decision-making itself (rather than just the opportunity or ability to choose) be open to processes of democracy.

THE INDIVIDUAL IN LATE MODERNITY

This chapter has so far discussed the development of modernity from its origins to the present period through the conceptualisation of this transformation provided by Giddens. Before moving to discuss the translation of this analysis into the political sphere, the notion of the individual is explored in more detail. Through the above examination of Giddens's work it has been noted that despite the globalising processes of modernity the individual remains important. Thus, experiences

of disorientation and dislocation point not so much to the loss of identity but the need for the individual to be constructed in new ways. Indeed, the notion of 'construction' is important as it points to the reflexive nature of society in which the individual resides, and to the active process of self-actualisation that has been noted in Giddens's 'life politics'. This section seeks to further the notion of the individual and of 'individualisation'. The need for this comes from recognition of the importance of the individual throughout the key themes of Giddens's own approach to 'late' modernity, and its centrality in the distinction between this conceptualisation and that of the New Right. This section highlights further the centrality of the individual in Giddens's work and places this in a broader literature which supports such centrality before returning to discern the specific emphasis that Giddens's approach can be seen to make.

Although Giddens's work on the nature of late modernity is frequently referenced with regards to issues of globalisation and the nature of risk in contemporary society, less attention appears to be given to the place of the individual. Lash (2002: vii) (speaking of Beck but applicable also to Giddens) argues that the theory of reflexive modernisation is characterised by the 'risk thesis' and the 'individualisation thesis' and that whilst 'in Anglo-Saxon sociology the risk thesis has been enormously influential, the individualisation thesis, for its part, has passed virtually ignored'. This may be attributable in part to a lack of emphasis in Giddens's own accounts ('individualism' as a discrete topic only receives a few pages of attention in *The Third Way* (Giddens, 1998b) for example). However, reading Giddens corpus of work it is difficult not to see that the individual is an intrinsic feature of the contemporary society that he seeks to outline. Even with regards to the processes of globalisation and risk the individual is, as noted previously in this chapter, involved in such processes in a two-way relationship – shaped by, and shaping, society through an engagement with these processes that is both necessary and unavoidable (see Giddens, 1991). Whilst issues of globalisation, ecology and risk are central to 'late' modernity, these themes cannot be discussed without acknowledging the role of the individual, and importantly, the nature of individualism in this period. Thus, there is shown to be a direct connection between the effects of globalising processes on industry and the need for individuals to construct their own lives with regards to jobs and careers. Ecological problems and the nature of risk are also centred upon the decisions made by individuals – a necessity brought about by the undermining of tradition. Giddens makes it clear that approaches to contemporary societal problems can only be met once such issues are understood in relation to the nature of 'late' modernity. A failure to do so results in weak responses with limited ability to forge new responses to new problems (this point is taken up shortly with regards to the New Right).

It is not just in Giddens's analysis of contemporary society that the individual and individualism are a central point (Elliot & Lemert, 1996). Indeed, it should be noted that individualism has been a key theme throughout modernity. Despite their differences in interpretation both Tocqueville and Hegel identified individualism as a key feature of modernity. For Tocqueville (1956: 192) this individualism resulted from the liberal democratic movements of modernity and has become the defining feature of modern life as 'a novel expression, to which a novel idea has given birth'. As Habermas noted that modernity worked to create its own normativity out of itself, so Tocqueville describes the modern individual as seeking for his opinions in himself (Toqueville, 1956: 192), thus distinguishing it from an egoisme of selfishness – the notion of individualism that existed prior to modernity. Whilst Hegel argued that individualism was not specific to modernity, he did move from a methodological to a moral analysis of it. As Villa (2005: 679) notes, 'For Hegel, individualism (understood as *subjectivism* or the tendency to promote interiority to a privileged moral and epistemic position) first appears with Socrates'.

However, given the shifts in the processes of modernisation and the challenge to accepted sociological perspectives that this has brought about, it is argued that the nature of individualism in 'late', 'liquid' or 'post' modernity must be examined again. Giddens's approach to the individual attempts to distinguish itself from other forms of 'individualism' found throughout modernity, and finds recognition with other contemporary theorists, particularly Ulrich Beck. The essential feature of individualism must be understood in relation to the nature of society today (Kateb, 1992).

The individual is, of course, a key concept in neo-liberal discourse, specifically with reference to the basis of choice in a free market approach to economics. Yet there is a clear and coherent refutation of this individual as narrow and limited in the literature surrounding the sociological conceptualisation of contemporary modernity. The individual of Thatcherism and of the free markets is characterised by an 'egoistic' approach concerned with self-gratification and 'insulated hedonism' (Elliot & Lemert, 2006: 5; Beck, 1998; Lash, 2002). Rather than being constrained to the boundaries of economics, the narrow individualism found with neo-liberal approaches to free markets appears also to have influenced societal and cultural expressions of individualism and self-identity. In an interesting contribution to the debate Elliot & Lemert (2006) argue that *perceptions* of individualism are of importance. Bauman (2002) presents a similar concern, observing that the notion of the individual is at war with that of the citizen and thus constructs a dichotomy between the two. He attributes this to the prominence of 'individuals qua individuals' in the public space where:

The 'public' is colonised by the 'private'; 'public interest' is reduced to curiosity about the lives of public figures and the art of public life is tapered to the public display of private affairs and public confessions of private sentiments (the more intimate the better). 'Public issues' which resist such reduction become all but incomprehensible (Bauman, 2002: xviii).

Further, as Richard Sennett (cited in Elliot & Lemert, 2006: 61) outlines, 'the deadening of public political space...arises not simply from impinging forces of commodification or bureaucratisation but from the dominance of notions of self-fulfilment, sensual gratification and self-absorption at the expense of social bonds'.

Similarly, there exists a strong criticism of the relevance of social democratic responses towards individualism. Firstly, in demonstrating the egoistic conception to be a 'misleading' characterisation of late modernity, social democracy cannot rely upon critiques of market forces as damaging society for 'if institutional individualism is not the same as egoism, it poses less of a threat to social solidarity' (Giddens, 1998b: 37). Further, however, traditional social democratic approaches to society can no longer be supported for whilst the neo-liberal individualism might be shown as a false perspective, new forms of social cohesion are required in a world where individuals are responsible for their lifestyle choices. Critiquing social democratic responses to late modernity Giddens argues that:

Because their new stance is more based on a reluctant retreat from the old views than positively motivated, it isn't surprising that social democrats have struggled to accommodate to the rising importance of individualism and lifestyle diversity. They have been unable to make up their minds how far the new individualism is the same as the self-seeking individual portrayed in neo-liberal economic theory, and hence to be hedged around with constraints. The idea of the 'autonomous individual', after all, was the very notion that socialism grew up in order to contest (Giddens, 1998b: 34).

There are explicit attempts by Giddens to distinguish the individual that lies at the centre of life politics and dialogic democracy from the egoistic individual of neo-liberalism. However, this distinction whilst important in its own right must be accompanied by an understanding of how the nature of this individual relates to the themes and features of contemporary modernity – that is, how the individual is created by, and at the same time creates, today's society. As noted previously, Tocqueville, as Triandis (1995) and Villa (2005) also comment, moved to present the individualism of modernity as more than merely selfish egoism. Yet the egoism referred to here by Tocqueville is the condition of individualism known to society before modernity – a selfishness that 'originates in blind instinct' (Toqueville, 1956: 193) – and is replaced by the new idea of individualism as '...a mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his

fellows and to draw apart with his family and his friends, so that after he has formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself' (Toqueville, 1956: 193). However, whilst his appreciation of this broader sense of American individualism is praised by some, such as Bellah et al. (1992), Elliot & Lemert (2006) caution against attempting to move beyond this individualism in the ways that Tocqueville did, namely through attempting to raise appreciation of traditional forms of public association. As noted from Giddens already, the place of tradition has been eroded and its basis as an approach to modern society undermined. Thus, any attempt to understand, or to build, the individual in ways that go beyond the egoistic model must relate to the features of late modernity. If the individual is understood as finding self-fulfilment through traditional means then this limits the ability to consider how new forms of social and public practice might be found. Even the forms of response to early modern individualism brought forward by Hegel and Tocqueville are, according to Villa (2005), limited by the conditions of the society in which they were written. The 'new individualism' thus represents a development beyond both traditional *egoisme* and the egoism that has come from modern individualism in both conceptualisation and response.

As this chapter has discussed, Giddens attempts to find a vocabulary for the individual in late modernity through the construction of 'life politics'. Giddens's *Self-identity and modernity* (1991) provides the most detailed analysis of the importance of the individual in contemporary modernity in his repertoire. In this he makes clear an institutional approach to understanding the nature of the individual and of self-identity. That is, identity is shaped through connections with the institutions of modernity, and in this sense is investigated sociologically rather than psychologically (Giddens, 1991: 1). The notion of the individual should be distinguished from proclamations of the 'death of the subject' that Elliot & Lemert (2006) see as presenting a paradoxical situation in contemporary academic and political discourse. Neither should the growth of individualism and of globalisation be seen as paradoxical, for globalising and individualising processes are not mutually exclusive or oppositional in nature, but rather, as noted, inform each other. The apparent contradiction between the growth of individualism alongside claims to the end of the subject fits into the broader theme of 'endism' also noted earlier. However, as Anthias (2006: 21) comments, it is still the case that 'from discussions of identity politics to discussions of the modern self, the issue of identity sticks out as one of the most important in modern-day life'. Having established these consequences, Bauman (2006) states that the fact of individualism cannot be disputed nor can it be simply revoked. Individualism is, he argues, the condition we find ourselves in and the one in which we must work.

The institutionalised nature of individualism is more explicitly expounded by Beck (2002) who seeks to show that the individual is neither 'juggling in a virtually empty space' nor merely a 'subject'. Rather, the individual should be contextualised and understood as part of a 'highly efficient, densely

woven institutional society' (Beck & Beck-Gernshein, 2002: 2). Here the notion of reflexivity is important in understanding individuals not as 'an outcrop of inner desires or forces of socialisation' (Elliot & Lemert, 2006: 67), but as continually revising and reinventing their identities in the light of knowledge about the state and direction of the world. Tradition and custom have been undermined, which has meant that individuals 'are increasingly expected to produce context for themselves. The designing of life, of a self-project, is deeply rooted as both social norm and cultural obligation' (Elliot & Lemert, 2006: 13).

Whilst Lash (2002) argues that there are clear differences in the backgrounds and influences of Beck and Giddens's works, there are also features of their understandings which show clear similarity. Indeed, the shared language of 'reflexivity' and 'embedding' demonstrates the closeness of the conceptualisation of contemporary modernity used by each. Such terms are used in comparable ways to refer to the features of 'late' or 'second' modernity. Thus Beck's assertion of the nature of individualisation is recognisable to that of Giddens discussed previously in this chapter:

> 'Individualisation' means, *first*, the dis-embedding of industrial-society ways of life and, *second*, the re-embedding of new ones, in which the individuals must produce, stage and cobble together their biographies...put in plain terms, 'individualisation' means the disintegration of the certainties of industrial society as well as the compulsion to find and invent new certainties for oneself and others without them (Beck, 1994: 13).

As has been noted, Giddens similarly distinguishes between simple and late modernity on the basis of increased reflexivity, and has argued that the individual is not separated by globalisation but is drawn into new forms of being (or perhaps more accurately, becoming). It is this notion of 'becoming' that Lash sees as distinguishing the new individualism from that of early modernity: 'indeed Enlightenment individualism is more about 'being individual' than becoming individual at all' (Lash, 2002: xiii). Thus individualisation in late modernity moves beyond both the atomistic individualism of the pre-modern era, and the 'anomic individualism' that Durkheim writes of in early modernity as the individual is uprooted from tradition and awaits its routinisation in the normativities of industrial modernity. The new individualism, however, never becomes routinised: 'It is, even in its mature phase indeterminate, full of risk and precarious freedom' (Lash, 2002: xiii).

Again, it is possible to see similarities between theorists in the nature of the task or challenge facing the individual in today's society. Rather than reflecting on oneself, today's individual 'must choose fast, must – as in a reflex – make quick decisions' (Lash, 2002: ix). Beck's (Beck & Beck-Germsheim, 2002) 'tightrope biography', Giddens's (1994a) 'life politics', and Bauman's (1993) 'vagrant morality' all derive their basis from the nature of increased reflexivity in contemporary modernity. Lash (2002) argues that reflexive modernity is characterised by its internal feedback by which it does not simply

reproduce or meet external forces, but is inherently a system of change. These feedback loops involve the individual who is therefore reflexive, rather than reflective as is the case in simple modernity. Despite differences in emphasis, common themes are addressed by all of these theorists pointing to the inherent nature of risk facing the individual, the reconstituting of social forms (not, however, the removal or destruction of society), the responsibility of the individual to actively construct their identity, and the nature of reflexivity as the key feature of contemporary modernity by which identity is never routinised.

A distinction between Giddens and Beck might be noted in the nature of what the individual constructs with such reflexive actions. For Giddens there is a clear sense of the individual having to construct a 'life-story', whereas for Beck 'second-modernity individuals haven't sufficient reflective distance on themselves to construct linear and narrative biographies' (Lash, 2002: ix). However, the extent of any distinction here is limited. Rather, both comments point to the challenge of reflexive modernity. Whilst Giddens highlights its necessity as an inherent part of late modernity, Beck notes that this is not matched by an inherent ability to carry it out. As Bauman (2002: xv) observes, the individualisation of late modernity 'consists in transforming human 'identity' from a 'given' into a 'task' – and charging the actors with the responsibility for performing that task and for the consequences of their performance'. In drawing attention to the active nature of *becoming* what one *is*, and the associated responsibility for the consequences of this, the aspect of risk becomes clear. Whilst the individualism of neo-liberalism is criticised for its narrowness and its separation from aspects of citizenship, the institutional individualism discerned by Giddens and Beck is not a conceptualisation that is free from its own challenges. Indeed, risk itself is seen to be central and inherent to this form of individualism. However, in making clear the broader picture of the nature of individualisation arising from the processes of 'late' of 'second' modernity, the challenges presented by this period are more readily seen.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE NEW INDIVIDUALISM

Bryant (2010) notes that the key feature of late modernity has been that whilst individualism has intensified, individuality has diminished. In this sense it is the process of becoming individual that is important rather than the resultant individuality itself (see also Elliot & Lemert, 1996). Beck & Beck-Gernsheim (2002) make similar observations, although these are linked to the institutional basis of individualism. Thus, whilst individualisation refers to the freedom from categories of class, gender, family, and neighbourhood, individuals are simultaneously submitted to new demands and constraints: 'these are institutional reference points marking out the horizon in which modern thinking, planning and action must take place' (Beck & Beck-Gernshein, 2002: 2). Elliot & Lemert (2006: 6), following Richard Sennett, argue that 'the shift to temporary, part-time, flexible

employment is eroding people's capacity to create coherent narratives about their experiences of work, and to create predictive narratives about the personal and social value of their life'. Yet, such difficulties result in the structural marginalisation of 'those individuals and communities who do not fit into the mainstream profile of the well-educated, secular, mobile and flexible manager and consumer of his/her modern life style' (Yuval-Davis et al., 2006: 4). Gupta and Ferguson (1997) highlight the difficulty of becoming individual as twofold. Firstly, the breakdown of tradition means that the new individual is unable to 'grow out' of – to have roots in – such forms of identity. Secondly, neither can the new individualism be owned or possessed by the individual. Becoming and being individual is a construct of 'mobile, often unstable relations of difference' (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997: 13). That is, being individual – being different – is not a discovery of difference but a construct of difference, and one that is contingent and inherently unstable. Clegg (2010) similarly questions the extent to which a 'liquid society' enables identity construction to take place (although he acknowledges the opportunities opened up for individuals to construct their working lives outside of traditional models of life-long careers and defined trajectories). Here, then, the necessity of involvement in life politics presented by Giddens is shown to be potentially dangerous for individuals. Individual freedom thus takes the form of both promise and threat (Bryant, 2010).

Such a position contrasts with Triandis's (1995: 179) description of this situation where 'individualists have a sense of high self-efficacy. Because their self-esteem is high, they are more likely to try risky activities, so achievement is often associated with individualism'. For Giddens the involvement with risk is not something that individuals engage with on the basis of high self-efficacy, but out of necessity of the demands of contemporary society where tradition no longer dictates direction. Elliot & Lemert (2006) describe this as leading to an 'experimental' way of living in a world where the old certainties and ways of living no longer take hold. There is, therefore, an important question to ask about the nature of protection from such risk. How and when should individuals be protected from the consequences of their decisions? How does this 'experimental' notion of living challenge the approach to protecting individuals from risk?

Indeed, as Lash (2002) and Mulgan (1998) both note, the role of government is brought into question, for 'what kind of institutions can regulate an individual whose *differentia specifica* is precisely not to be determined by the rules of institutions. What institutions can enable individuals to be reflexive in the sense of being rule-finders. At issue here is an individual that is not so much anomic as auto-nomic' (Lash, 2002: xi). The question for governance in 'late' modernity is thus one of 'what type of constitutive rule is consistent with a set of rule-finding, as distinct from rule-determining, activities?' (Lash, 2002: xii). Lash argues that in the global information age power and inequality work through exclusion rather than through exploitation, and that this involves

constitutive rather than regulative rules. Escape from exclusion is thus less about class struggle – that is, against the prescription of activity – than away from institutions that are used to govern exclusion. The difficulty of individualisation thus lies in the fact that both exclusion from it, and inclusion in it, pose problems to individuals. Exclusion limits an individual's ability to thrive, perhaps even survive, in contemporary society, whilst inclusion requires the resources to manage and navigate risk.

This chapter has previously noted Giddens's arguments for the need for government to move beyond traditional approaches to politics, particularly with regards to the nature of the welfare state. In questioning the role of government in contemporary society Mulgan (1998: 188) states that the argument for the loss of government focuses primarily on welfare and services, 'claiming that the conditions that supported mass demand for generous government provision have now disappeared'. However, Mulgan, like Giddens, moves to argue that whilst the government is still important, its approach must change in response to the nature of the challenges that it faces. Thus, Mulgan (1998: 195) argues that the traditional system of government in which bureaucracies were divided according to function 'makes government bad at dealing with an individual's life as a whole'. However, he asserts that 'it is now possible to imagine a very different model of government that could act more holistically, and that could anticipate problems rather than trying to cure them once they have happened' (Mulgan, 1998: 196). Two challenges for government arise here. Firstly, there is the need for government to recognise the inter-connected nature of living in order to more effectively enable individuals to navigate contemporary society and construct their own biographies. Secondly, risk is to be managed not primarily through response but through anticipation.

Whilst Lash addresses exclusion as the feature of second modernity that effects individualisation, Bauman focuses upon the effects of individualisation upon society and citizenship. Reading the two together it is possible to observe that both pose vital challenges for contemporary society. As Bauman (2002: xix) notes, individualisation is not going away: 'we have no other conditions in which to act'. Individualisation as the key feature of modernity poses the challenge of enabling individuals to 'become' themselves, but for such becoming to be protected from the 'naked, frightened, aggressive ego in search of love and help' (Bauman, 2002: xviii). In Giddensian terms this is the search for ontological security. This requires an understanding of what individualism and being/becoming individual in contemporary society mean, and the need to develop approaches to community which go beyond outdated class-solidarity movements or momentary and fragile collectives. It is in this space that democracy and citizenship reassert their importance in contemporary society by taking account of the 'new individualism' that arises from the nature of contemporary society. This 'individualism' is important to understand because it is an important

feature of contemporary or 'late' modernity. This must go beyond 'egoism' or concerns at the loss of traditional forms of social solidarity to an appreciation of the reflexive demands upon individuals, but also the new forms of social and public activity that this might create.

This study started by noting the radical reforms of education in the United Kingdom in 1944 and 1988 as significant markers in a broader context of transformation in the nature of the relationship between education and democracy. In moving to explore the conceptualisation of contemporary society found in the work of Anthony Giddens, and consolidated through examination of other theorists such as Ulrich Beck and Zygmunt Bauman, this chapter provides a context in which to explore the radicalism of recent approaches to education reform. The sociological analysis of modernity discussed above leads Giddens to a more explicitly political perspective in which he explores how the dynamics of radicalised 'late' modernity challenge the political alliances that have developed throughout modernisation. Before moving to examine the content of Giddens's proposals, this chapter explores the New Right project that brought about the radical education reforms of the 1980s. In light of the above discussion it will be argued that the New Right, though not 'anti-modern', represents a 'weak' response to contemporary modernity. It is argued that the radicalism required in 'late' modernity must be distinguished from the 'weak' and narrow response of the New Right, demanding a thorough connection to the challenges of contemporary modernity where the nature of individualisation is a central feature.

REDEFINING RADICALISM IN RESPONSE TO MODERNITY

The Conservative Government of 1979-97 has been popularly termed as a political project of the New Right. The name has been used to encapsulate the move to neo-liberalism predominantly pursued in the UK by Margaret Thatcher and in the USA by Ronald Reagan. Whilst the New Right cannot be seen to exist as a distinct and defined approach to government (Barker, 1997), nor indeed neo-liberalism as 'a complex assemblage of ideological commitments, discursive representations, and institutional practices, all propagated by highly specific class alliances and organized at multiple geographical scales' (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004: 276), and despite obvious differences in influence and response existing on both sides of the Atlantic, the broad themes of these administrations are identifiable and related. However, the national contexts place important conditions on the application of such a project to policy, particularly social policy. In this sense, the term 'Thatcherism' marks the distinctive approach followed in this period in the UK. The following section explores the nature of the Thatcherite political project, drawing upon the broader developments of neo-liberalism and the New Right to provide a wider understanding of the context in which this project resided. Modernity has been presented as the interaction of political, economic, social and cultural processes that exist in their own time-frames rather than as a discrete process in itself. Examining

what the New Right have responded to therefore provides a means to view how they have made sense of the nature of modernity and the processes of modernisation in this period (a period, as noted above, marked by a wide recognition of disorientation in, if not of, modernity). It will be argued that Thatcherism represented a specific response to the experience of disorientation brought about by the modernising processes at work in a particular historical period of modernity. It is these structural conditions, and their interpretation, that brought about the growth and development of neo-liberalism leading to the reforms of education noted previously.

MODERNISATION IN CRISIS?

There is a strong recognition of the economic stagnation of advanced capitalist nations during the 1970s as the situation to which neo-liberalism responded and was to gain its ascendency (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004: 276). Before this period the post-war economies of these advanced industrial nations had been built on a Keynesian consensus which reflected a 'classical modernisation theory' or 'liberal developmentalism' (Berger & Beeson, 1998: 488). This 'Golden Age', as termed by Eric Hobsbawm (1994), was based upon an implicit critique of the market in its unregulated form. In the post-war context, Harvey (2005: 10) argues, the assurance of peace had to come through 'some sort of class compromise between capital and labour'. The solution was argued to be one of state intervention 'in order to smooth out demand fluctuations and to regulate the activities of individual capitalists, thereby ensuring the stability of the system as a whole' (Tickell & Peck, 1995: 368). Harvey (2005) and Ruggie (1982) both use the term 'embedded liberalism' to describe the environment of regulation that existed with regards to market processes.

Tickell & Peck (1995: 370) argue that the Keynesian approach to economics, with state regulation and a strong welfare state, was built upon Fordism where 'collective bargaining and monopoly pricing were institutionalised; policy instruments were deployed to maintain and aggregate demand; and norms of mass consumption and 'American ways of life' were generalised'. These features of social regulation and policy, as noted by Harvey (2005) and Ruggie (1982), were therefore rooted in the nation-state. As Tickell & Peck (1995: 370) continue, because 'the tools of regulationist analysis were forged in studies of Fordism, this central role for the nation-state is to a certain extent reflected in the architecture of regulation theory...'. The Keynesian approach to regulation and state involvement therefore found its tools for achieving such regulation based upon the nation-state. Yet such national forms of regulation were in tension with the global dynamic of accumulation. Here the functional tools of Keynesian regulation were limited to the nation-state, but in a capitalist process of increasing globalisation. Thus, Tickell& Peck (1995) argue with regards to America, it was essential for the welfare state that the international system could be regulated. The Bretton Woods agreement, signed by the 44 Allied nations in 1944, represented an attempt to create a global

economic order centred upon America and involved the creation of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund with the aim of providing the allied powers 'with an instrument which could be used both to consolidate and manage the post-war international political economy' (Berger & Beeson, 1998: 488). However, despite achieving some form of control through Bretton Woods, it was to be the development of transnational corporations and Euromarkets that caused Keynesian nation-states to lose control of macro-economic regulation, and further, the globalisation of Fordism, that challenged their accumulation and capital:

> The internationalisation of production and the growth of the export sector meant that wages were increasingly seen as a drag on economic competitiveness rather than a contributor to consumption. Consequently, real wages began to slow and then decline, compounding the problems of stagnating consumer demand. The virtuous cycle of Fordism had turned vicious (Tickell & Peck, 1995: 373).

After two decades of significant economic growth the crisis of Keynesianism was met by a neo-liberal call for a free market economy and the minimising of state regulation.

Alongside the economic changes to industry and global structures, there were also social and cultural events that invoked a particular response from the New Right. Isaac (1990) notes the dismissal of the 'permissive claptrap' of the 1960s by leading Conservative thinkers, including Margaret Thatcher, as leading to the collapse of discipline and self-restraint in society. The processes and developments of modernisation were seen as leading to a breakdown of national and economic strength. Thatcherism responded to the developments of the 1960s and 70s with a reaffirmation of traditional values and institutions through religion and individual discipline. The response offered by the neo-liberalism of the New Right demonstrated a belief that such processes could only be reversed by an appeal to tradition. This was primarily founded upon classical individualism but was underpinned by a moral appeal that sought to strengthen the ability of a free market state (as argued by Hayek) and at the same time to provide a moral justification for it (Isaac, 1990; Smith, 1994).

RESPONDING TO MODERNITY?

This chapter, whilst having modernisation at its centre, has argued against the concept of modernisation as discrete and defined. This reflects the nature of modernity and modernisation as involving several distinct processes each occurring in their own time frame, rather than as one singular process. What, then, does the neo-liberalism of the New Right reflect of its interpretation of modernity and modernisation? How does such a position relate to modernity and modernisation?

Several analyses of the New Right see it as an 'anti-modern' position, particularly with regards to its return to traditional, and morally justified, forms of the family and nationalism in response to what it saw as the 'social decay' of the 1960s and 70s, and also in its appeal to classical forms of individualism. However, the term 'anti-modern' must be used with care, and it is argued here that such categorisation is neither appropriate nor useful for critical analysis. It is important to note that the responses noted here are themselves only possible because of modernity. With regards to the rise of fascism and Stalinism, Giddens (1990b: 8) notes, 'we can see that totalitarian possibilities are contained in the institutional parameters of modernity rather than being foreclosed by them'. The concentrated forms of political, military and ideological power seen in fascism and Stalinism are therefore distinct from traditional despotism (Giddens, 1990b). These projects were responses to, and in, modernity, and in their concentration of power have made active use of the processes of modernisation (Mazarr, 2007). Indeed, as Mazarr (2007) argues, such responses were predicated on denial and hatred, but not a full rejection of modernity itself. Rather they responded to negative experiences of the processes of modernisation. In the case of the fascist regime of Nazi Germany this related to the failure of capitalist modernisation processes experienced in the 1930s. Indeed, it is argued that the reactions to the failures of modernising processes experienced over the last century in Germany, Japan, Romania, Russia and today in parts of the Arab-Muslim world, 'view the collapse of social order around them and set themselves up against a crisis in society, claiming to have identified the underlying causes of that crisis beyond the economic, political, or cultural symptoms through which it is manifested' (Mazarr, 2007: 27). That is, economic and social problems are reduced to a 'primarily psychological nature' (Sternhell, cited in Mazarr, 2007: 25) in an effort to undermine modernity. Indeed, the most recent experiences of violence and hatred encountered with Islamist terrorism represent a rejection of modernity and its processes, and therefore represent the only significant 'anti-modern' challenge today (Hobsbawm, 2001; Mazaar, 2007). By comparison the New Right response to modernity is not one that reduces such problems to this level, where transformations occurring in economics and society were instead tackled by a reversion to traditional forms of these processes. It is important to see the New Right as a specific response to modernity. As Smith (1994: 29) notes with regards to the British situation, 'The Thatcherites invoked the themes which have been central to the entire Tory tradition, including 'nation' and 'family', but they did not simply impose an abstract Tory philosophy onto a contemporary political agenda. They re-shaped these traditional themes to respond to actual popular anxieties…'. Thatcherism must therefore be understood as a contemporary political project. In noting the appeals to tradition this must be seen as responding to an understanding of the nature of challenges facing society and the world today. Smith (1994: 32) again makes this clear, arguing that:

Given the specific historical contexts of their representations, Powell and the Thatcherites were able to construct the black immigrant and dangerous queerness such that they operated as particularly credible figures of outsider-ness. These demonisations were central to the legitimations of specific authoritarian measures, such as the intensification of racially defined immigration policies and the reduction in local government autonomy, and to the more general re-orientation of the British right wing from the pragmatic 'consensus' approach to a radical right-wing populism.

Thatcherism therefore stood as a specific response to an interpretation of the nature of modernisation in the contemporary historical period. Further, the neo-liberalism of this project must be distinguished from the field of neo-liberalism as a whole, conditioned as it was by the state into which it entered (Tickell & Peck, 1995). The response was based upon recourse to elements of tradition in both economic and social fields, yet such tradition was adapted to the challenges of the contemporary context.

Whether the fascist response of Nazi Germany, or the appeal to tradition in the New Right, critical assessment should focus upon the nature of how such projects conceptualised the nature of modernity. It is argued here that this is best approached by understanding such projects as necessarily *modern* but distinguishing them by the strength of their conceptualisation of modernity. Here, then, the previous discussion presented in this chapter, centred upon discerning the nature of 'late modernity', provides a context with which to assess the Thatcherite project. From this perspective the New Right formed a 'weak' response to the specific conditions to which they faced. That is, it was the New Right's failure to adequately conceptualise modernity and the specific nature of the challenges presented in the contemporary period that caused it to appeal to tradition. The move to neo-liberalism reflects a state of flux in the processes of capitalism in modernity. That this move was predicated upon the specific economic situation of the 1970s means that this was actually a particularly *modern* response. However, in other areas the experiences of the consequences of modernisation were not adequately conceptualised and there was therefore an inability to think anew with regards to such challenges. The nature of this inherent 'weakness' can be found through analysis of the New Right based upon Giddens's conceptualisation of modernity. Taking the nature of tradition Giddens (1990b: 38) argues: 'To sanction a practice because it is traditional will not do; tradition can be justified, but only in the light of knowledge which is not itself authenticated by tradition'. This, then, describes the process by which modernity overturns the place of tradition, in place of rationality and knowledge. Tradition, as noted earlier in this chapter, stills plays a role in modernity. However, the importance of such tradition, Giddens (1990b: 38) argues, is less than might be expected for 'justified tradition is tradition in sham clothing and receives its identity only

from the reflexivity of the modern'. In this sense 'tradition' is only so in name, for its underlying basis is found in the knowledge received through modernisation. However, Giddens notes that despite being deployed in response to contemporary experiences of modernity, the conservatism that has accompanied the neo-liberalism of the New Right has sought to defend traditions in the traditional way, that is, by 'asserting its ritual truth' rather than upon the 'basis of knowledge' (Giddens, 1994a: 48). Crucially it is not the issue of the appeal to tradition itself that is criticised, but the appeal to tradition in traditional ways. Indeed, Giddens, as will be noted in more detail later, insists that 'tradition' still plays a role in modern society. However, this appeal is not based upon the intrinsic traditional*ism* of a specific tradition, but the defence of its rationally justified role in contemporary modernity. Fukuyama's (1989) notion of the 'end of history' provides a useful means by which to observe the nature of the New Right's reversion to tradition, demonstrating that in some areas this position fails to reflect the development of ideas necessary for the nature of contemporary modernity. As discussed previously, Fukuyama argued that the 'end of history' is being reached through the increasing globalisation of liberal democracies, and describes a state where modernisation has run its course and where no great ideological battles are left. His condition is seen not just as a finalisation of the difficulties faced in the contemporary processes of modernisation and modernisation theory, but of modernity itself:

> What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government (Fukuyama, 1992: 271).

Whilst maintaining neo-liberalism as the best model for development (Fukuyama, 2009), Fukuyama (1989: 18) observes that in such a state, '...I can feel in myself, and see in others around me, a powerful nostalgia for the time when history existed...'. The melancholic nature of this reflection is, Mazaar (2007: 44) comments, a longing for 'wars that enable 'man' to feel the immensity of his spirit'. Mazarr (2007) links this disposition to the nationalism of the New Right in America, evidenced there most notably in attitudes towards foreign policy development. However, Wheeler (1996) similarly notes the melancholy of the Thatcher period, in this context reflecting the turn to traditional notions of the 'family'.

Despite his close involvement with the development of neo-conservatism under Reagan, and initial support of George W. Bush's 'war on terror', Fukuyama's recent distancing from such foreign policy reflects a position of unease with the nature of such a response. His praise for neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism was based upon a belief in the universality of individual rights, but not upon 'illusions about the efficacy of American power and hegemony to bring these ends about'

(Fukuyama, 2006). In this sense the neo-liberalism of the New Right became caught up alongside a neo-conservatism that did not reflect a new approach to understanding in contemporary 'end of history' modernity, but rather a 'weak' response to this situation. Whilst Fukuyama's notion of the end of history reflects a significant tradition of thinking itself (Williams et al., 1997), it is a distinctly secular concept, as opposed to the religious eschatology of the New Right.

The turn to tradition thus reflects a paradoxical nature at the heart of neo-liberalism for it both appeals to, and depends upon, tradition for legitimacy, yet actively promotes an economic project that is 'one of the main forces sweeping away tradition everywhere' (Giddens, 1994a: 9). This contradiction, when set alongside the failure to appeal to 'tradition' on the basis of reflexive justification, further demonstrates the weakness of the New Right's conceptualisation of the nature of contemporary modernity. Indeed, it might be argued that whilst neo-liberalism offers a response to the failures of socialist programmes, it does not do so to the challenges of 'late' modernity. Socialism, whilst undoubtedly enjoying a 'Golden Age', was unable to keep up with transformations in the processes of modernisation. The New Right, legitimating its project on these failures and addressing changes in society, 'did not, and could not, provide an accurate interpretation of what these changes were' (Giddens, 1994a: 42). Its lack of such an interpretation of the *nature* of change has meant that:

> The theories of the New Right address these basic transmutations in a partial and paradoxical way. The impact of globalisation, with its manufactured uncertainties, is understood in terms of the need to deregulate markets. The transformation of daily life is grasped only via a dogmatic stress on traditional values in the family and elsewhere. Detraditionalisation in these domains is fiercely condemned, even though the unconditional endorsement of market forces actively helps further it (Giddens, 1994: 42-3).

Brohman (1995) similarly argues that neo-liberalism fails to understand the nature and plurality of modernity, reducing it instead to an economic development project. In this way, he argues, neo-liberalism further demonstrates its weakness in that it actually takes up many of the contradictions of post-war modernisation theory, such that it is susceptible to its own critique. Here, then, both socialism and neo-liberalism are charged with the same criticism of an inherent failure to conceptualise the contemporary nature of modernity. As Giddens (1994a) concludes, in the conditions of reflexivity today there is no longer such a clear division between the Left and the Right. When the nature of modernity is placed as the central organising feature of debate this situation comes most clearly to light. Thus, for Giddens, a radical political programme is still of necessity – this is not the 'end of history' – but the conditions of modernity must mean that it is 'freed from an intrinsic connection to either left or right' (Giddens, 1994a: 49). The Left and Right are shown to

have addressed changes in modernity in their own specific periods, but the nature of contemporary society is such that these polar positions cannot be fallen back upon. Socialism is ineffective in the new dynamics of modernisation, and neo-liberalism is built upon a 'weak' and contradictory project. Examination of the 'late' modernity conceptualisation, specifically through reference to the construct of the individual, has allowed the distinction with the New Right to be made more forcibly. With regards to contemporary approaches to education this argument must mean that policy should respond not to the 'radicalism' of the New Right, now seen as a weak response, but to the conditions of modernity themselves. In examining the nature of New Labour education policy, therefore, the question must be of the extent to which their reforms attempt and manage to move beyond the limitations of the 'weak' modernising position of the Thatcher period. Such questions require analysis of the extent to which education policy has acknowledged the challenges that individualisation poses to policy – the inter-linking strands of the need for individuals to engage in life politics, and the need for new forms of citizenship and democracy.

RIDING THE JUGGERNAUT: THE FUTURE OF RADICAL POLITICS

Giddens's proposals for the future of politics display a recognition of the contemporary demand for democracy, and an attempt to identify the nature of this desire. Dismissing Fukuyama's notion of the prevalence of liberal democracy as the 'end of history', Giddens instead argues that the need for democratic organisation is a result of the dynamics of 'late' modernity and expresses the need for forms of social solidarity (in doing so he responds to Held's (1993) criticisms of his failure to account for the prevalence of democracy in the contemporary period). However, further to expounding the basis of the desire for democracy, Giddens argues that the conceptualisation of liberal democracy is in need of radical reform. Here the development of life politics is an important influencing dynamic in this. Whilst recognising other contributing influences identified by Giddens, the following section explores his conceptualisation of life politics in more detail and its influence upon his construction of democracy as the future of radical politics. In particular this section examines how the conception of the individual is understood by Giddens in contemporary society, and how such a conception leads his proposals for radical new directions with regards to democracy. This radical approach also recognises the limitations of democracy, and how the dynamics of late modernity must similarly form the basis of a response to these limitations. This section therefore provides further discussion on the weakness of the New Right's 'radicalism', as well as developing a critique of prominent socialist responses. This allows for a basis to consider the move to Third Way politics and its influence upon the development of New Labour.

This chapter has considered the conceptualisation of 'late' modernity, and in particular has focused upon the understanding of individualism and individualisation that lies at the heart of this. The argument for the 'new individualism' goes beyond an attack upon the 'egoistic' conceptualisation of individualism, and extend to the uncritical association of it with democracy. As Dallymayr (2008: 163) notes:

> As a result of both the Cold War and subsequent developments, it became customary virtually to associate democracy with 'liberal democracy' or a system prioritizing individual rights — completely neglectful of the long-standing tension between the latter and democracy seen as a shared political regime.

Giddens (alongside others such as Daniel Bell, John Dewey, and Walter Lippmann) attempts to divorce this egoistic version of individualism from democracy. As both Hegel and Tocqueville had sought to do, so Giddens attempts to show late modern individualism, and thus democracy, as something other than atomistic or self-seeking. However, as noted, the conditions of late modernity cause this to be conceptualised in new ways.

Giddens understands the spread of liberal democracy as associated with the increase in social reflexivity and detraditionalisation: 'part of the attraction of liberal democratic institutions is that they allow individuals and groups to free themselves from the political sphere, rather than that they create general conditions of legitimacy' (Giddens, 1994a: 111). Increasing social reflexivity has broken down tradition and nature and thus the accepted and set-out pathways for individuals to inhabit. Rather, individuals are now required to make decisions about their own lives in ways which go beyond the formal political arena. In a two-way development people are both more knowledgeable about the political domain and increasingly able to detach themselves from it: 'that domain becomes for them one among multiple points of reference, local and more global, in a cosmopolitan globalising order' (Giddens, 1994a: 111). Such an understanding of the processes driving the spread of liberal democracy informs Giddens's proposals for radical approaches to democracy in two key areas. Firstly, democracy must be understood in wider terms than formal political institutions of parliaments, assemblies and electoral procedures, but as necessary for everyday living in a globalised cosmopolitan society. Thus, secondly, democracy is important for social solidarity, understood as providing the conditions for individuals to pursue life political issues whilst respecting the life decisions of those with which they must interact as a necessary part of social reflexivity. These areas demand that democracy becomes more than a system of participation by representation – the form given by liberal democracy. In Giddens's proposals it is clear that democracy must become 'dialogic' in form. In this way he builds significantly on an explanation of

how and why democracy must be pursued, with consequences for understanding its future relationship with education. Thus, following Giddens's argument, the dynamics of late modernity explain not only the present demand for democracy, but the limitations of the conceptualisations upon which these demands are built. In this way understanding increasing social reflexivity works to demonstrate not just the need but the form that democracy must take in the future.

WHAT DEMOCRACY?

Whilst defending the need for social solidarity and the role of democracy in this, Giddens's basis for such a proposal emanates from his exposition of late modernity and the increasing importance of life politics. In order to realise this form of democracy Giddens attempts to demonstrate that the approaches of both Left and Right fail to draw upon the nature of contemporary society. Whereas social solidarity is an issue of defending community for fear of social disintegration for both sides of the political spectrum, a more positive approach is attempted by Giddens in which such solidarity is necessary for the enhancement of individual autonomy.

Giddens argues that the desire for a revival of community on the Left arises from the neo-liberal representation of the individual as self-seeking and profit-maximising. Thus, reconstructing community represents, for the Left, an attempt to protect 'social cohesion around the edges of an egoistic marketplace' (Giddens, 1994a: 13). The defensive element can be clearly noted here where the reconstruction of community refers to an ideal placed under threat by neo-liberal developments. Yet, following Giddens, where individualism is not understood in the economic stresses of neo-liberalism, but as the condition of increased reflexivity in which 'an individual must achieve a certain degree of autonomy of action as a condition of being able to survive and forge a life' (Giddens, 1994a: 13), the issue of social solidarity becomes important not for defending against rampant egoism or maintaining traditional civilities, but instead as a necessary condition for enhancing and supporting the ability of individuals to be autonomous in the ways that late modernity requires of them. Here individual autonomy is based upon 'reciprocity' and 'interdependence'. The need for a form of social solidarity is therefore to be understood 'as one of *reconciling autonomy and interdependence* in the various spheres of social life, including in the economic domain' (Giddens, 1994a: 13). Social solidarity in this understanding thus represents a radical new form that is not based upon a return to tradition or community as previously experienced. Social solidarity is here presented in a more positive light as a means of enhancing the dynamics of late modernity, rather than as an attempt to defend against them. This 'enhanced solidarity' thus requires new forms of social bonds that take into account the nature of contemporary society. As has been noted from his sociological analysis, Giddens stresses that whilst globalisation and the dis-embedding of institutions are features of late modernity, these are accompanied by new forms of individual and local

processes of re-embedding. Further, these two dynamics are not necessarily in conflict – the global as destroying the local – but are interconnected in ways which that each affects upon the other. Giddens's conception of democracy seeks to move beyond its constraint to the 'formal' domain of politics, that is, parliaments, assemblies and procedures of electoral representation. Here, again, it is in the areas of the personal and of the global into which democracy must enter: 'the potential for dialogic democracy is...carried in the spread of social reflexivity as a condition both of day-to-day activities and the persistence of larger forms of collective organisation' (Giddens, 1994a: 115). Importantly, dialogic democracy recognises that in a social order of developed reflexivity it must stand against fundamentalism. Dialogic democracy counters the fundamentalist aspects of the New Right response to contemporary modernity (or, more accurately, its response to socialism's failures) by arguing that late modernity is ordered on a condition of increased reflexivity. Issues of social solidarity are to be found in democracy, based upon this reflexivity, rather than in a return to traditions. Where fundamentalism represents a weak response to reflexivity, dialogic democracy is championed as promoting the conditions for communication between an increasingly personal and global community. Giddens (1994a: 124) argues that across the political spectrum there is 'a fear of social disintegration and a call for a revival of community'. Such calls for community are presented as asking for a return to a form of 'cultural segmentalism', yet not only have the processes of modernity brought about the deconstruction of such 'communities', but a return to such forms denies the contemporary situation of social reflexivity. For Giddens (1994a: 126) 'a return to cultural segmentalism means an increased likelihood of social disintegration' not only because it denies autonomy, but because traditional communities exhibited high levels of oppression. The revival of community therefore represents a weak response based upon a lack of recognition of the processes of late modernity. In recognising that 'the advance of social reflexivity means that individuals have no choice but to make choices' (Giddens, 1994a: 126), it is possible to acknowledge that such choices can only be made through interaction with others. Such interactions require the development of relationships of trust, and thus establish new solidarities. Social solidarity, then, is what Giddens offers as the new form of community. The development of autonomy demands that individuals interact on the basis of mechanisms of trust. Further, it demands that these relationships recognise the autonomy of each agent. Developing from Oakeshott's notion of 'civil association' such relationships do not form a community in the traditional sense, that is, community at large (Oakeshott, 1975; Giddens, 1994a). Rather than coming from large-scale community, social solidarity is instead found in a civil condition – a condition with the possibility of a global form through cosmopolitanism.

To summarise Giddens's position: the nature of late modernity is one where globalisation, reflexivity and detraditionalisation create dialogic spaces. These spaces relate to the dislocation and disorientation noted previously as accompanying contemporary society. However, such spaces can, indeed must, be filled. Giddens argues that by effectively grasping the nature of social reflexivity it is possible to see that forms of solidarity can be built through an expansion of the conception of democracy into one of dialogue built upon trust, integrity and a respect for autonomy, and an expansion of democracy beyond its formal arenas of parliaments and representation. Social solidarity is thus founded in the recognition of individual autonomy and reflexivity, and not on the reconstruction of community that is shown to be not only divisive, but outdated. The call for community is, in fact, representative of a fundamentalist response to contemporary modernity.

Life politics must be seen as central to Giddens's conceptualisation of this expansion of dialogic democracy. Further, it is the failure to recognise the importance of such life political issues that is the basis of the turn to fundamentalism found in the New Right:

> Community is inseparable from tradition; yet, as I have stressed, we cannot go back to tradition to resolve current social problems. Or we cannot do so, at least, where tradition is defended in the traditional way. It follows that we cannot go back to civil society either, in anything like *its* traditional form. For, as it is ordinarily understood, civil society was the product of social arrangements that no longer exist (Giddens, 1994a: 125-6).

The final proposition of the above quotation provides a useful summation of Giddens's political interpretation of his earlier sociological examination of the nature of modernity. It is in the understanding of the dynamics of late modernity that the weaknesses of the New Right response lie lie, and further, neither can socialism be defended on the same grounds. Thus, democracy is necessary for the nature of late modernity in contemporary society. However, the form that this democracy takes is radically different from that understood on either the right or the left.

BEYOND LEFT AND RIGHT

Whilst the previous section has challenged the extent to which the neo-liberalism of the New Right has conceptualised the challenges of modernity, Giddens does recognise that it responded to failures of the socialist 'post-war compromise'. However, it is that the New Right understood these failures in terms of a large state regulating and restricting the natural growth of the markets and the weakening of virtues through a culture of welfare dependency that separates it from Giddens's critique of socialism, which is again based upon his understanding of the changing dynamics of modernity. From this perspective it is the increase of social and individual reflexivity that becomes problematic for socialism. Thus, 'in the shape of Soviet Communism and the Keynesian 'welfare

compromise', socialism worked tolerably well when most risk was external and social reflexivity was relatively low' (Giddens, 1994a: 8). Giddens (1994a; 1994b) argues that consequently socialism has become dominated by attempts to protect and defend the welfare state. However, such a position not only reflects one of conservatism, but cannot be defended any longer given the nature of 'late' modernity.

It has been noted that the appeal of the Left to community has been criticised in much the same way as the Right's move towards tradition. However, Giddens's major critique of socialism arises from an examination of the limitations of democracy – especially the dialogic form that he has proposed. Importantly though, this does not represent an attack upon the values of socialism but an examination of why historical forms of response are inappropriate for the conditions of contemporary society. Having noted how life political issues should transform our understanding of democracy and democratic practices, Giddens argues that democracy is limited by the 'intrusive influence of inequality' (1994a: 132). Thus, whilst material equality is not necessary for a dialogic form of democracy in which individuals are involved in the creation of relationships based upon trust and respect of difference, such dialogue works on the presumption that any inequalities are not used to silence voices or limit participation. The critique here points to democratic practices as occurring in an uneven field. Giddens draws attention to the strength of the Left critique of liberal democracy as one based upon a parallel demand for economic equality in order to counter the effects of such unevenness. In this way it appears that equality becomes a form of defence against abuse in democracy – a form of guarantee. However, Giddens argues that economic equalisation (typically presented in socialism as a welfare system based upon the redistribution of wealth) is of little use for emancipation unless driven by life-politics. Whilst acknowledging its continuing importance, he moves away from socialism's championing of economic equality alongside democracy to argue that emancipatory politics must be connected to the ability of how to choose: 'Emancipatory politics is a politics of life chances and hence is central to the creation of autonomy of action. As such it obviously remains vital to a radical political programme...Life politics is a politics, not of *life chances*, but of *life style*' (Giddens, 1994a: 14). Here, then, economic equality is of no benefit on its own, for it merely provides the conditions for an equality of the opportunity of choice. Emancipation is a necessary process in order to bring about autonomy, yet such individual autonomy must be coupled with the power of how and what to choose. This latter demand has been brought about by the increase in social reflexivity detailed previously, which requires individuals to make decisions about their own lives in ways that transcend traditional understandings of life choices. Ferguson (2001: 46) summarises this distinction well:

What is characteristic of the post-traditional era, then, is not that people have to make decisions about their lives, but we have to actively make our lives in the context of the increased amount of decision making and number of choices that are open to us...Not only are there more decisions to be made, but this has to be undertaken in the context of heightened sense of how risky and consequential decisions are.

Increasing democracy is not, therefore, merely about extending the representation and participation of those individuals and groups who are materially underprivileged – that is, of hearing and recognising their need for equality in economic terms – but must be about extending the ability of such individuals to participate in the issues of life politics – that is, in their ability to make choices and decisions about their own lives. As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995: 25) state, 'for modern social advantages one has to *do* something'. Centrally organised systems of welfare can therefore only go so far in securing such advantages for individuals. Emancipatory politics, whilst still important for radical politics, is not the end of the story. Further to being freed from the ties of hierarchical relations of power, individuals must possess *generative* power – the ability to make choices about their lives based upon reflexivity, to engage in a dialogic democracy, and to cope with the nature of manufactured risk. Thus, being freed from structures that limit choice, and that act to define an individual, is only an initial stage. This freedom must be connected to the individual's ability, or generative power, to make choices – for the nature of late modernity (increased social reflexivity based upon the availability of knowledge) requires individuals to make their own biographies. In periods where reflexivity was low and roles were well-defined the Left's concern with emancipation was of an economic nature. Being emancipated from material inequality offered individuals better life chances through access to health care, education, pensions and better paid employment. In late modernity, with increased reflexivity, the well-defined nature of life has disappeared. Instead, individuals must make decisions themselves about life. Not only does this create a 'risk society' to which the welfare state is ill-prepared to respond (for risk is manufactured rather than external), but it means that individuals must have the *generative* power necessary to make life choices: 'A major problem with emancipatory politics is that it cannot confront power in its generative aspect in terms of individual capacities for action, critical reflection and the (re)making of lives' (Ferguson, 2001: 47).

Giddens's criticism of socialism's focus upon the welfare state and its ability to cope with life political issues has already been noted (see Giddens, 1994a; 1994b). Yet he acknowledges that inequality still places limitations upon an individual's ability to act in democratic processes. However, it is that such inequalities prevent individual action, rather than representation, that is the key distinction here. For, as noted previously, Giddens argues for a dialogic understanding of democracy through which

individuals engage in relationships as a part of self-actualisation and life politics. This form of democracy operates beyond the 'formal' arena requiring individual agency rather than representation. Giddens does not argue against the need for a welfare system, but attempts to present such a system as a means by which to enable individual action through the provision of capability and responsibility, and through safeguarding against new forms of individual manufactured risk. Welfare based upon economic redistribution – that is, the provision of goods – fails to equip people to take individual responsibility (as evidenced in examples of welfare dependency). The provision of unemployment benefits for example may free people from economic deprivation, but does not equip nor encourage individuals to find new employment:

> We need a positive restructuring of welfare institutions, which will allow people to take more active attitudes to risk but at the same time will give them protection. That means exploring forms of insurance mechanism which are not so closely related to welfare receipts (Giddens, 1998a: 164).

The division between those who are well off and those less well placed lies in their ability to face responsibility and risk. It is, therefore, not just about who can afford to insure themselves against risk, but who has the ability to face risk well – for in the socially reflexive nature of late modernity risk cannot be avoided. Education is crucial to the development of individual capability and responsibility, and it is for this reason why it has been seen to open up 'a bigger economic fault line than before' (Giddens, 1998a: 165). Education thus begins to take centre stage as a key factor for society in late modernity, for 'the educated person is better able to survive and prosper in an active, reflexive world' (Giddens, 1998a: 165).

TOWARDS A THIRD WAY

Amongst the slogans used during the students protests of 1968 in Paris was the following: 'Be realistic, demand the impossible'. This paralleled Max Weber's (1946/1958: 128) assertion that 'all historical experience confirms that men might not achieve the possible, if in this world they had not, time and again, reached out for the impossible'. Whilst the decades since the unrest in Paris may have been dubbed by many a period of 'endism' – the end of ideology, of history, of utopia, of equality – Giddens offers what he terms a perspective of 'utopian realism'. Giddens defends this as the new radicalism for a society in which the radicalism on both the Left and Right has taken conservative forms. Being realistic and imagining the future is, for Giddens, both possible and desirable, yet requires a transformation in approach to understanding society and politics. The significance of Giddens's deliberations on the nature of 'late' modernity, the rise in reflexivity, and the demand for a democratisation of democracy is found in considering the consequences of this for

social change. Here the utopian content of his thinking is important for it draws together his understanding of social reproduction and change alongside his thesis on the condition of 'late' modernity to offer a vision of a potentially radically different future. Thus, whereas Foucault invites us to 'suspend our taken-for-granted assumptions about reality in order to envisage it differently' (Halpin, 1999: 350), Giddens's theory of 'late' modernity presents this not as an invitation to be taken-up, but as an actually existing experience of contemporary living.

For Giddens ideas of the future extend beyond Fukuyama's liberal democratic 'end of history' to explore possibilities of a global society ordered through post-modern and post-scarcity environments. Yet such futures should not be seen as structured by history or emanating from evolutionary understandings of social progress (or, if there is some identifiable semblance of an evolutionary nature in his work (see Kaspersen, 2000), the metaphor of the juggernaut appears to displace any notions of mastering control over this process). Thus, 'history is not on our side, has no teleology, and supplies us with no guarantees' (Giddens, 1990b: 154), and therefore, unlike Marx, 'there are no privileged agents in the process of transformation geared to the realisation of values' (Giddens, 1990b: 155). This position derives from the nature of 'late' modernity in which processes of individualisation intensify the extent to which 'the interests of the oppressed are not cut of whole cloth and frequently clash' (Giddens, 1990b: 155) for no group 'has a monopoly over radical thought or action in a post-traditional social universe' (Giddens, 1994a: 250). Thus, there can be no presumption or guarantee that social change will occur through social force. Rather, he argues that 'beneficial social changes often demand the use of differential power held only by the privileged' (Giddens, 1990b: 155). A clear pragmatic understanding of power emerges here as a 'means of getting things done': 'sympathy for the plight of the underdog is integral to all forms of emancipatory politics, but realising the goals involved often depends upon the intervention of the agencies of the privileged' (Giddens, 1990b: 162).

Importantly the focus on the processes of contemporary modernity also requires a movement away from the connection of democracy and free speech with labour movements. For whilst such a connection made sense in earlier periods of modernity where the expansion of industrialism and capitalism were the significant forces of modernity, the contemporary period displays a multi-dimensional character (Giddens, 1990b).This multi-dimensional aspect therefore has implications for considerations of the future:

> Considered solely in terms of the politics of emancipation, going beyond capitalism would imply the transcendence of the class divisions which capitalistic markets bring into being. Life politics, however, points us still further, beyond circumstances in which economic criteria define the life circumstances of human beings (Giddens, 1990b: 165).

However, despite Giddens's development of a pragmatic perspective on power there are obvious concerns over the extent to which the experience of 'development fatigue' and a 'general awareness that continued economic growth is not worthwhile unless it actively improves the quality of life of the majority' (Giddens, 1990b: 166) actually hold sway not only with the majority of opinion but in the privileged agencies of power themselves. Further, the possibilities of a utopian future, being connected to the 'immanent trends' of the contemporary world, are also connected to the high-consequence risks which 'late' modernity presents. Indeed, the comparison between Giddens's models of such futures is stark (see Figures 1 and 2 below).
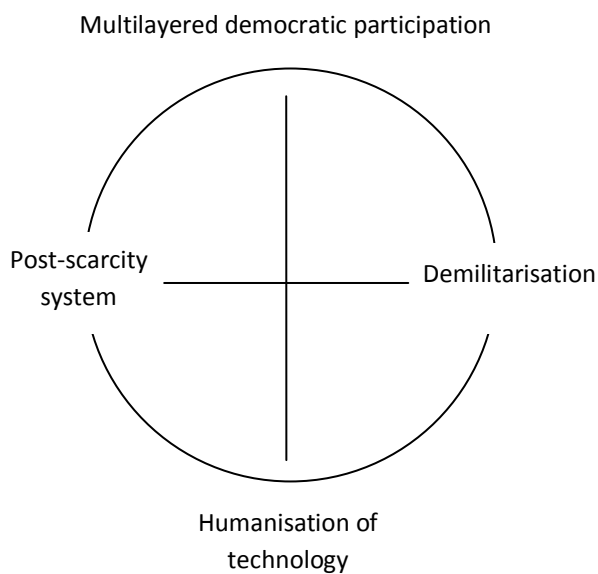
Figure 1: The contours of a post-modern order (Giddens, 1994b)
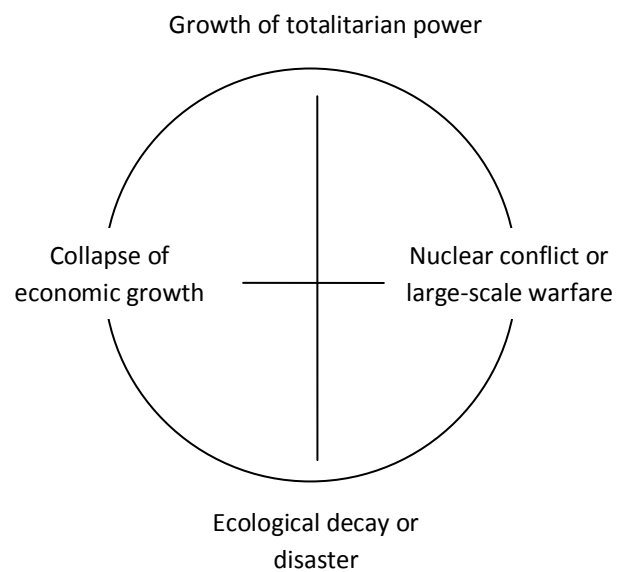
Figure 2: High-consequence risks of modernity (Giddens, 1994b)

This challenges Halpin's (1999) notion that utopian thinking 'is always figured positively', but at the same time, in whichever direction such trends go, the grounding of utopia in an immanent 'realism' serves to remove some of the (deliberate) ambiguity contained in Thomas More's (2003) original construction of the concept, presenting the future as real and forthcoming: 'No providential forces will inevitably intervene to save us, and no historical teleology guarantees that this second version of post-modernity will not oust the first. Apocalypse has become trite, so familiar is it as a counterfactual of day-to-day life; yet like all parameters of risk, it can become real' (Giddens, 1990a: 173). Giddens's utopia is neither fixed nor final. Indeed, it is 'a critical theory without guarantees' (Giddens, 1994: 249b).

In developing a new approach to radical politics the responses of the Left and Right are shown to be weak, limited and outdated. Indeed, as Mouzelis (2001: 440) states, it is more that 'the terms no longer apply to the emerging new politics that have more to do with life styles than with distributional issues'. Following Giddens's attempts to demonstrate the nature of modernity, and to highlight the particular form of 'late' modernity in the contemporary period, this chapter has argued that the reforms of the New Right reflect a 'weak' form of response to the challenges faced in society. Whilst this position cannot be categorised as anti-modern, their 'radicalism' displays levels of fundamentalism that betray their ability to conceptualise new approaches to modernisation. 'Late' modernity has a multi-dimensional nature characterised by discontinuities and dislocations at global, national and individual levels which mark it out from previous episodes of modernity. However, in drawing attention to the nature of modernisation, Giddens has argued that such insecurities do not reflect the whole picture of the contemporary situation. That is, all is not lost to impersonal and abstract globalising processes. Rather, the local and the personal are transformed and operate in a dynamic interaction with the processes of abstraction and globalisation. Understanding modernisation today means new approaches to the global, the local, and the personal must be sought in the political arena. Giddens's contribution has been to outline several key areas in which political thinking must move beyond the binaries and dichotomies that have developed in response to specific periods of modernity. Giddens argues that meeting the demands, and opportunities, of the contemporary world requires new roles for individuals and the state, and a new relationship between the two.

The discussion of modernity that has taken place in this chapter thus provides a context for considering the nature of recent education reform. The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts frame a period of transformation in the nature of modernity and the responses that have been made to it. Whilst the 1944 Act proposed radical changes to the education system in the United Kingdom, the economic and social conditions in which this occurred have altered fundamentally. The reforms centred around the 1988 ERA were part of a political project that sought to respond to these changes – changes that exposed the weaknesses in previous forms of approach. However, the argument of this chapter has been that, following Giddens's conceptualisation of the nature of contemporary society as 'late' modernity, the response embodied in the 1988 Education Act was weak and failed to come to terms with the nature of the challenges presented. The question of recent policy reform must, therefore, be of the extent to which it has transformed education in relation to the challenges of the contemporary world.

Education is positioned as a central factor in equipping individuals to deal with the insecurities of today's world whilst also empowering them to make the most of the freedoms that they offer.

Whilst education has for a long time been considered important for improving life chances, for example by providing access to better paid employment, this emancipatory objective is today challenged by the need for individuals to possess a generative ability. The importance of education is intensified in 'late' modernity where the ability to make life choices is crucial to an individual's ability to succeed and prosper. Dialogic forms of democracy are presented as essential not only for individual 'ontological security' but also for wider forms of social cohesion. Being capable and responsible requires individuals to engage in new forms of social relationship which go beyond traditional forms of liberal democracy. In so doing, Giddens (1994b: 115) argues, dialogic democracy 'presumes only that dialogue in a public space provides a means of living along with the other in a relation of mutual *tolerance* – whether that 'other' be an individual or a global community of religious believers'. Giddens suggests that recognition of these concerns opens the way to social change and new futures. This application of what Halpin (1999) terms the 'utopian imagination' is therefore highly significant in seeking to establish a new consensus in education that goes beyond the debates of the past: 'By facilitating the process of temporarily putting to one side our assumptions about the existing order of things, and the current supposed limits of change, it assists the development of radical, previously untried and potentially successful policies for education' (Halpin, 1999: 347).

NEW LABOUR, NEW BRITAIN? FROM PARTY TO PROJECT

'The battle of ideas in the 1990s is less clear cut than in 1945 or 1964. The grand ideologies are dead'
– Tony Blair, 1996

This study has so far explored the context into which New Labour entered power and in which it aimed to build a 'new consensus' in education based on practice rather than outdated ideology. The nature of education reform during the Conservative administration has been examined, alongside the criticisms that have arisen of it. The discussion held in Chapter Two pointed to the limitations of a polarised debate over the future of education reform in response to the demands of contemporary society. Subsequently the work of Anthony Giddens has been explored as a means of developing a new approach to recent features of social change. As the previous chapter has argued, Giddens's conceptualisation of the contemporary period as one of 'late' modernity draws attention to the specific and intensified nature of social change. Further, critiquing both neo-liberal and social democratic responses to such change, he moves to establish how new forms of living might be understood that offer both radical demands and possibilities for the future.

Giddens's work therefore represents a significant contribution to understanding contemporary modernity, and further, plays an important role in the development of the New Labour project. Therefore, this chapter presents a continuation of this developing study of recent educational change, seeking to provide a more detailed analysis of the Labour Party itself in recent decades, with specific reference to its expressed commitments to reform in the period leading up to its electoral victory in 1997. As noted in Chapter Two, the notion of modernisation was important to the Conservative reform agenda. However, in light of subsequent discussion this can be observed as of a 'weak' form. As this present chapter will discuss, modernisation was also central to New Labour, both as a reorganisation of itself as a political party, and as a political project. Whilst establishing the significance of such party reorganisation as a symbolic and necessary condition to create space for change, analysis here moves to explore the understanding of modernisation in New Labour's project. It will be argued that New Labour presented a substantive project of modernisation that reflected significant features of Giddens's work. The period under examination is, as Haylett (2001: 44) states, 'continuous with a longer welfare history whose debates and struggles form a central part of British post-war politics'. However, in becoming 'New', Labour sought to actively distinguish themselves from this history, in particular a specific notion of their 'Old' Labour past. Whilst still connecting with a revisionist trend in the Party, the use of the 'Third Way' sought to further distinguish the New Labour approach, using the space created in becoming 'New' to set out a programme of reform that

was to go beyond Left and Right. An understanding of this 'Third Way' provides a suitable basis for moving to assess the nature of educational change itself in Chapter Five.

WHAT'S LEFT OF LABOUR?

This chapter begins by discussing the issues surrounding the formation of 'New' Labour, drawing out the key factors involved in order to present a critical assessment of its characterisation. It is argued that the reforms undergone by Labour in becoming 'New' represent a change in both party and project. This distinction is important for understanding the transformation of the Labour Party in this period.

PARTY ORGANISATION

The late 1970s and 1980s marked a period of turmoil for the Labour Party in which they lost four consecutive general elections and ultimately spent 18 years as a party in opposition. Resultantly it was a time marked by much internal debate over the Party's future and the direction of change that should be followed. Whilst the focus of this study rests upon the Labour Party since its arrival in government in 1997, it is necessary to understand the period which saw the construction of 'New' Labour.

The process of reform started long before Tony Blair's leadership of the Party, with Neil Kinnock and his successor John Smith. During this period the Party as an institution was apportioned blame for failures in both government and opposition, and specifically the political culture and constitutional arrangements of the Party were highlighted as being out of touch (Cronin, 2004). Blair sought to take the process of reform that had been started in this period further still. Whilst lauding the post-war Labour Government in his 1945 Anniversary Lecture (Blair, 1995a), such praise was based upon an acknowledgement of values and not practice. This important distinction meant that whilst the values of the Party's post-war agenda were acclaimed, the conduct, organisation and approach to government were not accorded the same reverence. As Blair (1996c) himself declared in his 1996 Party Conference speech, 'Labour had to move beyond its shrinking base in the industrial working class by reaching towards and capturing the centre…'. Similarly, Shaw (1994) noted that the era of the Party's strength had been in the age of Fordist production which had given rise to high levels of unionisation, a strong sense of class identity and solidarity, and allegiance to the Labour Party as the party of the working class. Breaking with this portrayal of the Party's past, both institutionally and ideologically, was central to ensuring reform was visible and conscious. Such a move invoked notions of a 'new populism' – but crucially a populism of the centre, not the left (Cronin, 2004; see also Fielding, 2003). This new perspective portrayed two main aims. These were to escape Labour's traditional identification with the poor and working class, whilst at the same time embracing a new

audience, or more relevantly, a new electorate. This understanding of a new electorate was typified by Peter Mandelson, a close advisor to Tony Blair, who argued that Labour must acknowledge 'the end of pure representative democracy' (Mandelson, cited in Fielding, 2003: 133). Such a view held that attempts to appeal through the traditional lines of party membership and involvement in the party organisation were not compatible with a modern, individualistic electorate who sought involvement with politics through new routes. Giles Radice (1989) argued that a new model of the Labour Party was needed to meet its new audience where they were, requiring the Party to reassess its values and actions in the light of economic and social change, and representative of the whole nation rather than its narrow traditional supporter base. As Hutton (cited in Cronin, 2004: 385) notes, the notion of Labourism, with its associated view of politics 'shaped by Labour's history, an extant neo-Marxist ideology and the shape of the British state', was proof to voters that the Party was still trapped intellectually. The dominance of Thatcherism was seen to be due to its ability to connect with the Middle England majority (Cronin, 2004). Indeed, as Radice (1989) points out, even the success of Labour's post-war government was built on a programme of ideas and policies supported across the political spectrum. Labour therefore needed to reach out with a new message for a new audience. As Neil Kinnock had proposed as leader, '…if the goods failed to sell, then the goods would have to change…' (cited in Powell, 1999: 6). Indeed, in an incisive comment Young (1995) notes that Blair wanted the Party 'to understand that it [the Party] is not really the point'. Whilst the Party may be part of the solution it could not be the goal. Blair identified the need for this transformation to be made visible to both the Labour Party and to the wider electorate and it was tied to public demonstrations of a break with the past, exemplified in the revision of Clause IV of the Party's constitution. The Clause was originally written in 1918 and now, according to Blair, was a sign that pointed to an outdated version of Labour's past (Blair, 1995b; 2010). Jack Straw (cited in Cronin, 2004) similarly argued that the Clause stood as a symbol of the Party's inability, even lack of courage, to change (see also Blair, 2010). Its revision marked both a break with the past and a commitment to the future (Radice & Pollard, 1994; Driver & Martell, 1998). This is not to say that the move went unopposed, indeed many on the Left argued that it marked the end of Labour's commitment to socialism. However, as Crosland had argued previously, there are many forms of socialism and Labour needed to redefine its socialism in the face of new economic and social times (Radice, 1989). Such redefinition was hindered by a clause that confused means and ends: 'New times demanded a new Labour Party with a new set of policies to deliver the old socialist values' (Wright, cited in Driver & Martell, 1998: 26). The changes made to Clause IV were thus a strong symbolic indication of the direction 'modernisers' wished to take, as shall be explored in more depth presently.

Radice (1989) and Driver & Martell (1998) both draw attention to the need that Labour faced to put into place structural changes which would allow it to appear more open and representative. Change of this nature was demonstrated in the Party's policy-making process. Again, it was a transformation which saw its initiation under Neil Kinnock but was finalised under the banner of Tony Blair's 'New' Labour. The process had been in continual reform since Kinnock replaced the National Executive and its sub-committees with a system of joint committees. John Smith's creation of special committees, working parties and groups such as the Commission on Social Justice continued, according to Cronin (2004), a shift from policy-making by the party to policy-making by the 'politically engaged'. Changes to Party voting procedures, such as One Member One Vote (OMOV), served to weaken the influence of the trade unions. These changes, alongside financial streamlining, led to a reliance on others for ideas and initiatives and the increased likelihood of ideas that broke with party traditions. Fielding (2003: 85) describes New Labour's approach as 'preference-accommodating', a strategy which further demonstrated New Labour's appeal to a new electorate by talking their language, rather than challenging them to accord with the Party. Indeed, Party membership soared under Blair's leadership serving to introduce a new electorate to the Party, and to draw upon their active support for new policy directions. In so doing this met the concerns expressed by the Labour Reform group that Blair's government would only be sustained if it drew upon the active support of its members in the form of their contribution to policy-making (Fielding, 2003). Reforms such as the aforementioned OMOV followed the initial work of the 1987-9 Policy Review which had sought to take power away from Party committees and activists. However, whilst OMOV opened the potential for policy debate, its effect on the strength of the Unions, combined with an unprecedented commitment to presentation and communication from the Party leadership, served to further strengthen the leadership's power in the membership, such that the Party Conference, whilst remaining 'sovereign' in matters of policy, would in practice, 'be set by the leadership, discussed (privately) in the Policy Forum, and presented to Conference in such a way that open disagreement would be minimised' (Panitch & Leys, 1997: 235; see also Driver & Martell, 1998; Cronin, 2004). Indeed, policies themselves became increasingly strategic, based upon evaluations of electoral opinion (Driver & Martell, 1998) and a desire for the Party 'not to repeat [the] past by promising more than it could deliver or by claiming that a Labour government could do more than in fact was possible' (Cronin, 2004: 424).

MAKING SENSE OF NEW LABOUR – FROM PARTY TO PROJECT

Through this brief introduction it is possible to note the sense of the need for change in the Labour Party held by key leaders and advisors. This need was centred upon a recognition of changing social and economic circumstances in contemporary society that necessitated a modernisation of both

party and politics. It was argued that changes to Labour politics needed to reflect the condition of the world today, whilst as a party it similarly needed to reflect a new situation of increasing pluralism. However, it is also clear that in such a climate of change there remained a strong resonance of 'old' or 'traditional' values and ideology, with differing approaches to how a modernisation of these might take effect. Indeed a commitment to past values is expressed across the spectrum, from those who resisted modernisation outright to those who were at the forefront of the move to 'New' Labour. Developments, such as the revision of Clause IV and the centralised control of the policy-making process, represented structural changes that the Labour Party underwent in order to become 'New'. However, updating Party structures was not enough. For electoral success Labour's new electorate had to be 'sold the goods', and if policy promises and commitments were to be limited then how was Labour to achieve this? As Giddens noted after the General Election of 1997:

> The Labour manifesto says, 'We have modernised the Labour Party and we will modernise Britain'. But the first doesn't supply much guidance for the second. It is quite easy to see what 'modernisation' is when applied to the Labour Party: applied to an industrial country as a whole, deciding what the word means is much more demanding (Giddens, 1998a: 194-5).

Thus, this chapter moves to explore in more detail the nature of modernisation that New Labour sought to demonstrate through an analysis of its political project. Whilst acknowledging the influence of post-war values, perhaps most clearly and consistently expressed by Tony Blair, there has been a serious and determined effort to break with the past structurally. This movement has been represented in becoming 'New', with such transformation emanating from a core group of 'modernisers' made up of Labour politicians, advisors, and thinkers. The following section will deal in more depth with what it meant for Labour to become 'New'. However, as Ludlam (2004:1) states, 'the full picture of what New Labour represented politically, beyond an electoral rebranding by Labour's right wing, was unlikely to emerge until the second term was in the bag'. Indeed, the discussion above identified electoral strategy as a major influence upon the formation of 'New' Labour. It is, therefore, important to develop a long-term perspective of Labour's time in government. Whilst they stressed their novelty in this way prior to election, it would perhaps be less appropriate once in office (Marquand, 2003). Therefore it is necessary to understand how Labour sought to remain 'New' once the novelty of its original construction had worn off, or to phrase this another way, once what being 'New' had originally entailed was no longer 'New' (Richards, 2000). Thus, behind the rhetoric of 'newness' it is important to consider the extent to which Labour had a substantive understanding of such a vision. In this way this study moves to deal with the substance

of 'New' Labour, the role of rhetoric and language, and the popularity of the 'Third Way', both in political analysis and Labour's modernising core itself.

EXPLORING THE PROJECT: FROM 'NEW' TO MODERN

The wide range of organisational and structural reforms made in the light of the Party's realisation of the need to reform were not to be an end in themselves, but were to enable the Party's message, its substance, to embrace the reality of 'new times'. Thus, aside from the structural and organisational nature of transformation there were also signs of change in the Party's vision and appeal. This is evidenced in the Party leadership contest of 1992, with both candidates for the position challenging Labour's substance and pointing to the need for change. John Smith's (1992) speech in particular acknowledged the changing global situation. Highlighting the demands upon government brought about by issues such as gender equality, ecological pressures, globalisation and the increasingly individualistic nature of society, Smith presented a picture of the 'new times' which were to become a prominent feature of Blair's modernisation of the Labour Party. Similarly, Brian Gould's speech is interesting in its appeal for the Party to return to its roots rather than occupy 'some mythical centre ground' (1992: 1). The concern was for a modernisation programme that did not see Labour's appeal to the majority through a dissolution of its own values or a synthesis of the 'popular'. Taken together these speeches signalled the situation that Labour found itself in during this period, faced with the need to adapt to the modern world, but desiring to stay true to its values. As Gould (1992) notes, the centre ground was not seen as a place able to accommodate this. Instead, something different was needed.

For many Labour 'traditionalists' any concessions to the policies of Thatcherism were a denial of the Party's history and values. However, Jacques (1992a) argued that 'it is not at all obvious why this new world should necessarily belong to the right'. That it did appear to do so was as much a reflection of the Left's conservatism and inflexibility as it was of the strength of the New Right. As Jacques (1992a) continues:

> Finally, Labour has to come to terms with the new society, to feel at ease with it. If it cannot, it is doomed. If it can, it is in with a chance. But to live in the new society requires a wholesale transformation in Labour's politics: abandoning the idea of the state as the universal saviour, a war on privilege, a ruthless commitment to a level playing field, a return to the left's pre-Labour belief in the individual.

It is this need for something different which has pointed thus far towards an examination of New Labour as a project. Gould (1992: 12) argued that socialism 'is not just about responding to capitalism'. Here, then, was acknowledgement that a substantive understanding of 'newness' would

need to have the vision to present something different, that is, to be more than a reactionary movement. Smith, Gould and Jacques all posited contemporary society as presenting new challenges to people and to government. As such they argued that the Labour Party must respond to this new society by recognising its challenges and developing means by which to meet them. It is precisely from this point that Tony Blair (1994) started in his Fabian Pamphlet, *Socialism*:

> The Left can lead this new popular mood but only if it understands its nature and presents a clear vision of the country's future that is both radical and modern…In doing so, it must show how this is not a break with its past or its traditions but, on the contrary, a rediscovery of their true meaning (Blair, 1994: 2).

Here lay a clear presentation of the belief that the Labour Party must adapt to a modern world, but was able to do so on the basis of its traditional values. That is, as Blair (1994: 4) further argued, 'learning from history rather than being chained to it': 'Once being 'radical' is redefined as having a central vision based around principle but liberated from particular policy prescriptions that become confused with principle, then in fact being radical is the route to electability' (Blair, 1994: 7). Translating this approach to change into practice would require '…policies that are entirely consistent with [the Labour Party's] traditional principles…but applying them in a different way for the modern world. How it does so should be where the new thinking and ideas are developed, released from false ideological constraints' (Blair, 1994: 5). As has been previously noted, Blair's vision of radicalism provided the space to move away from particular policy prescriptions that had become confused with statements of principle, creating, in his words, 'the development of a new policy agenda and in many ways a broader one at that' (Blair, 1994: 5). As he stated, 'What we should really be asking is whether the constitution of Britain's left-of-centre political party, as we approach the 21st century, would look like ours. The plain answer is it would not' (Blair, cited in Jacques, 1992a).

For all the reform and transformation of the 1980s initiated by Neil Kinnock, it was change that was mediated through conservatism. This can be read in two ways. Firstly, changes were reactive to, and dependent upon, the New Right. Secondly, Labour itself did not demonstrate radicalism in its response. It had itself become, in lower case form, conservative. As Jacques (1992b) comments, 'No attempt was ever made to root Labour reforms in the society outside itself. They were never driven by a desire to really understand the nature of the new Britain'. For Hay (2003: 61) this consigned Labour to a reactive and defensive approach resulting not in a new response to social and economic issues but to an appeal to 'pre-formulated sensitivities of the electorate viewed as a fixed constraint to which policy appeals must be oriented'. Thus, Labour's inability to represent the widely perceived and experienced state of economic dislocation as a crisis and to mobilise an alternative on the basis

of a new populist political and economic project represented a weak form of politics (Hay, 2003). Indeed, this marked the difference between the moments of the late 1970s and early 1990s, with the former seeing the Conservatives successfully represent such a crisis and providing a popular alternative vision. Further, as Wheeler (1996: 104) argues, 'as much as the traditionalists of the old left might still want to think of themselves as radicals, they are, in fact, now conservatives who seek to conserve a tradition of labour and class division which has more or less passed'. The irony of the situation was clear: in their apparent similarity to the Conservatives, 'New' Labour were presented as the new radicals, and those who stood for the 'Old' ways were now marked by their conservatism. Indeed, Blair (1995b)himself argued that:

> The purpose of the changes I have made is to start from first principles, to change the points of reference in radical politics. The re-drafting of our constitution was essential to rebuild the party's ideology on the foundation of its values. The changes in organisation are to increase the power of members. If these elements are right, then the ideas can start to flourish and the culture can become more representative of the people whose support we seek. The objectives won't change: a prosperous and just society; tackling the evils of unemployment and poverty; coping with massive economic and technological change; a modern industrial partnership between government and business, and at work between management and workforce; good public services; safer communities; and a political constitution that fits a new age. All those would be instantly recognisable to Labour politicians throughout the century, and very different from the laissez-faire, socially indifferent politics of the last 16 years. And they are profoundly radical. If we carried through even our present programme, the effect would be an entirely new direction in British politics. But the means of achieving our objectives must change. If we fail to understand this, then our politics are not really 'left' at all, if by 'left' we mean radical; they will just be another form of conservatism (Blair, 1995b; see also Blair, 2010).

The intention was clear, to build an image and understanding of the Left on the basis of a radical approach, and not on an outdated amalgamation of fixed policy prescriptions. The difficulty was to be in presenting a clear and coherent vision of such radicalism whilst retaining a flexible and pragmatic approach to specific policies.

WHAT IS 'NEW' LABOUR?

There is clearly a broad range of analytical perspectives on 'New' Labour, what it stands for, and the foundations it stands upon. Underlying all such arguments can be found the search for depth, or substance, in Labour Party politics. That is, a vision or project that encapsulates a clear and coherent

representation of how they sought to transform their politics. This chapter aims to present an exploration of this 'substance' to New Labour. In order to develop this position the present section considers certain criticisms of 'New' Labour and seeks to make a distinction between the purposes of rhetorical and substantial transformations by Labour.

Criticisms of the development of New Labour label the Party as a short-term coalition concerned above all else with election to government. It was an analysis that had been levelled at the Labour Party reforms of the 1980s (see Jacques, 1992a), and a concern that has already been noted in the previous discussion of the organisational and structural changes made in the 1990s. In representing Labour's development in the 1980s and early 1990s as 'catch-up politics' Hay (2003) is critical of a missed opportunity by the Labour Party. That is, the lack of alternative vision offered by Labour in the face of the economic and social situation that presented itself not just to the Party's leaders but to the electorate. However, there is in Hay's argument some support for the direction of transformation: 'what is certain…is that such an alternative could not be constructed out of a nostalgia for a past to which there can be no return' (Hay, 2003: 63). As is highlighted by Panitch and Leys (1997: 241), the work of the Thatcher years had been not just to implement market practice into state institutions such as the National Health Service and education system, but to transform the discourse of these such that 'the public were encouraged to think of themselves not as users of collectively-provided services such as patients, school parents, or people with disabilities, but as 'customers''. Indeed, Chapter Two made similar observations concerning the transformation of the language and organisation of education.

Much of the literature on the rise and development of 'New' Labour centres upon arguments over the extent to which New Labour represents a modern vision of socialism, or merely a form of 'Thatcherism Mark II' (Kenny & Smith, 2003: 66). Heffernan (2003) typifies such criticisms regarding the 'newness' of New Labour. As he states, 'although cast in the guise of modernisation, the broad economic appeal outlined by "New" Labour has little historical purchase on "Old" Labour' (Heffernan, 2003: 50). From this perspective 'New' Labour displayed little connection to its past, or, to cite a French journalist's response to Blair's address at the French National Assembly, 'Clearly, it's easy to make a mistake in English with the term New Labour, it just means Conservative'(Devidjian, cited in Henley, 1998). Here, then, the transformation of Labour represented a shift from left-reformist social democratic politics to right-reformist neo-liberal politics. An issue of note here is that such a perception of ideological shift is generalised from attitudes towards economics. That is, there is an unstated assumption of the dominance of economics over other societal and governmental issues. The argument that New Labour was a continuation of Conservative neo-liberalism, as typified by Heffernan, is centred upon New Labour's take-up of several key

Conservative policies and positions with regards to economics and particularly the importance of markets. There is some depth to this argument. Indeed, it is possible to recognise several developmental stages in Labour Party reform from the early 1980s which led to such a position. Specifically the Policy Review of 1988 was to lead to acceptance of market principles centrally, and the developing organisational trends that have previously been discussed (Heffernan, 2003; Seldon, 1994). Whilst such a turn to market principles may reflect a 'seemingly irreversible shift' (Heffernan, 2003: 50), whether this amounts to a straightforward continuation of New Right Thatcherism is more difficult to demonstrate. Thus to argue that 'a sharply contrasting new economic discourse dominates Labour politics today' (Heffernan, 2003: 51) should not necessarily suggest that New Labour are merely Conservatives 'in disguise'. Indeed, Hay (2003), who agrees with Heffernan on the transformation of Labour's social-democracy to neo-liberalism, argues that evidence as far back as the Policy Review presents Labour changes not as a 'concession to Thatcherism, but rather as an overdue modernisation which had, for too long, been thwarted by the cloying influence of the trade unions and the inertial influence of left extremists' (Hay, 2003: 59). Whilst apportioning Labour with a stronger basis of development that was not merely concessionary such a transformation still leaves Labour open to the attack of playing catch-up politics. The relevant question to this study is thus the extent to which New Labour have advanced political reform through a substantive vision of 'newness'.

Similarities between New Labour and the Conservatives cannot, and should not, be overlooked. Indeed, Tony Blair has himself recognised the extent to which Conservative policy had transformed the political landscape, regarding many of the changes as both irreversible and, further, desirable (Blair, 1998b; Gamble, 1996). It is also undeniable that Thatcherism stands as one of the major factors in the radical reform of Labour organisation and political thinking. However, despite the significance of these influences, it is not a necessarily simple next step to assert that New Labour represent a straightforward continuation of Thatcherism. As Gamble (1996: 35) states, 'the significance of New Labour is not so much an endorsement of explicit items of Thatcherite policy...but the acceptance that if socialism is to regain its appeal then it has to reconnect with the radical egalitarian individualism of the Enlightenment from which it was born'. This is an important argument for it transfers the focus of attention from the importance attached to policy similarities to the context in which such policies are realised. Whilst the endorsement of specific items of Conservative policy is important, what is more important is the context in which this has occurred - that of a rethinking of socialism. The following discussion seeks to extend discussion of the nature and extent of this rethinking of socialism through an exploration of New Labour 'ideology'. Firstly the nature of rhetoric in the development of New Labour is assessed, with a distinction drawn between

the rhetoric observed in 'New' Labour and that of the 'Third Way'. It is argued that whilst the rhetorical transformation of Labour into 'New' Labour is important in its own right, it is in their presentation of a Third Way that the substance of New Labour's approach is to be found.

A 'NEW' RHETORIC

Rhetoric holds an important role in political presentation and New Labour certainly kept a keen eye on their public face such that their approach to media management has been the subject of much scrutiny and critique. However, away from this attention on media presentation, there are also serious critiques made of the extent to which their rhetoric matches their substance. Thus, the rebranding of Labour as 'New' leads to questions as to just how this conception of 'newness' is identified, and how Labour relates to its past, particularly that categorised as 'Old'. It is important to ask, therefore, what the nature of this 'New' Labour is. As Driver & Martell (1998: 159) state:

> as an encapsulation of what New Labour is all about this reduction to a media and marketing ploy is sorely lacking…our argument is that there is a complex but definite substance to New Labour…It may be stylised in presentation, and driven by electoral calculation as much as ideological imagination, but substantive it is.

Whilst this study acknowledges the attention given to modernisation through shaping traditional values to 'new times', this is not in itself a 'New' principle amongst political parties, and particularly the Labour Party. As Fielding notes (2003: 208), 'The 'modernisation' of the party ostensibly initiated by Kinnock and continued by Blair actually marked the resumption of a process rudely interrupted by the party's historically aberrant move left'. Further, Fielding states:

> …all successful parties have evolved as circumstances dictated and amended certain of their assumptions to allow them to operate successfully in the new environment. As a result, Labour's past is one of unremitting transformation and adaptation; its history only appears static in retrospect (Fielding, 2003: 217).

For Fielding, understanding 'New' Labour is about recognising the electoral concerns of modern politics: 'The point to be stressed here is that the assertion of 'New' Labour was an extreme reaction to the dire position in which the party found itself by the early 1990s. To the likes of Blair and Brown it appeared the only way the party could end a run of four back-to-back election defeats' (Fielding, 2003: 208). As Cutler et al. (2007) observe the 'New' prefix marked the attempt to distinguish the present Party project from a distinct period of its recent history. Appeals to the 'New' alongside this characterisation of the 'Old' represented an 'epochal' form of argument. Clearly, the 'New' addition was important, as Blair himself admits: '…at the time there was a furious dispute, I can tell you. At one point there was even talk of a compromise, 'new Labour', i.e. no capital N. And it wasn't as

trivial a point as you might think…' (Blair, 2010: 85). Whilst 'New' Labour attempted to break with a particular period of its past which it believed was attached to outdated and factionalist politics that were not only inappropriate for contemporary social and economic change but marginalised its electoral appeal, Blair's appeal to the Party's values demonstrated that, as Fielding (2003) observed, Labour's broader history was still important. However, it still did not in itself represent the substantive understanding of what being 'New' was to mean. As Fielding (2003) suggests, moving beyond the rhetoric of 'New' and 'Old' may provide the opportunity to observe this. Thus, this discussion returns to examine the substance of the 'New' through analysis of how Labour themselves presented the nature of their project as that of a 'Third Way'.

THIRD WAY POLITICS

In the desire to reach Middle England, how could New Labour balance its socialist traditions with the neo-liberal right that had dominated the political scene under the Conservatives? For Tony Blair the answer appeared to lie in the concept of the 'Third Way'. Whilst the political concept of the 'Third Way' is not new, indeed its use can be dated back at least to 1912 (Callinicos, 2001), it was a term prominently taken up by New Labour's modernisers to describe the nature of their project. As Giddens (2001: 2) notes in the introduction to his book *The Global Third Way Debate*, the Third Way refers to 'a much more generic series of endeavours, common to the majority of left parties and thinkers in Europe and elsewhere, to restructure leftist doctrines'. Exploring the nature and limitations of New Labour's Third Way thus starts by acknowledging it as a particular version of a much larger 'Third Way movement' that has been appropriated in various Western states according to their localised constraints and demands. Indeed, Giddens states that 'I see the Third Way as a label you can use or not to refer to the world-wide revival of social democracy' (Giddens, cited in Beech & Hickson, 2007: 249). New Labour's 'Third Way' must therefore be seen as *a* Third Way – both in its global context as a specific response to the neo-liberalism of 1980s Britain, and in its interpretation by Blair and other New Labour modernisers.

For New Labour the Third Way represented the attempt to justify change based upon necessity, that is, by drawing attention to features of the world today for which politics needed to think and act differently. Indeed, as Jacques & Hall purport, such change needed to move 'beyond Thatcherism':

> We live, it is suggested, in new times: dominated by globalisation; shaped by new information technologies; culturally postmodern; a new world of uncertainty and risk; sceptical of old enlightenment faiths; new times in need of new ethics; politics in search of ideas beyond Left and Right. The old ideologies which gave meaning and hope to post-war Britain – social

democracy, then Thatcherism – have crashed (Jacques & Hall, cited in Driver & Martell, 1998: 27).

Here, then, was explicit recognition of the nature of 'new times' or the 'modern world' that Smith and Gould had previously argued were necessary for the Labour Party to address. Important is the acknowledgement that the meaning and hope of the past cannot be that of today. A new ideological basis was needed to meet the characteristics of the present global and technological society, and only through a rethinking of politics could such meaning be found in society.

The use of the Third Way term itself is found increasingly in the statements of those at the forefront of Labour modernisation after the time of the 1997 General Election (see Blair, 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; 1998d; Cook, 1998). However, as will be noted, its appropriation at this time served as a label for, and framework for the extension of, the trend of modernising thought that was at work in the New Labour movement. It is clear from Tony Blair that the Third Way was important as a political tool by which to encourage understanding of what New Labour was about: '...ideas need labels if they are to become popular and widely understood. The 'Third Way' is to my mind the best label for the new politics which the progressive centre left is forging in Britain and beyond' (Blair, 1998b: 1). Walker (1998) questions the extent to which a new label was required, noting that such terms often end up presenting the ideal of a much more coherent ideology than really exists. Thus, once the surface is scratched any inconsistency or differences are represented as weaknesses and vagueness. Given the importance of language and presentation in other Labour transformations it should perhaps be no surprise that the rhetorical role of the Third Way has had similar attention drawn to it. However, for Blair the use of the Third Way was less a label for a discrete ideology than an attempt to give some form to New Labour's approach to modernisation in the new times by which the electorate might begin to relate and understand. Indeed, this discussion will argue that whilst the rhetoric of 'New' Labour was important, the Third Way drew on the opportunity presented by this discursive shift to offer more substantive possibilities for politics and reform. As Fishman (1996: 51) points out, 'circumstance and realpolitik are insufficient in the present political situation...without a new underlying perspective and an accessible body of thought which is clearly relevant to the present situation, a political party is liable to lose its way'.

BEYOND THE LABEL: THE THIRD WAY AS A PROJECT OF MODERNISATION

Giddens (1998b: 67) argues that:

> The issue of modernisation is a basic one for the new politics...Tony Blair's speeches, for example, are peppered with talk of modernisation. What should modernisation be taken to mean? One thing it means, obviously, is the modernising of social democracy itself – the

breaking away from social democratic positions. As an agenda of a wider kind, however, a modernising strategy can work only if social democrats have a sophisticated understanding of the concept. Modernisation that is ecologically sensitive is not about 'more and more modernity', but is conscious of the problems and limitations of modernising processes.

Thus, in making modernisation the centrepiece of political rhetoric it was important that New Labour were able to build upon a substantive understanding of it. For Giddens this meaning stemmed clearly from an understanding of the nature of 'late' modernity. As noted in Chapter Three, he sought to distinguish modernisation from modernity and a linear model of progress. A sophisticated approach to modernisation therefore seeks to approach the changes and transformations of new times not from a reactionary position or one concerned to reinstate previous traditions and practices (either old-style social democracy or New Right melancholy), nor by attempting to re-establish the project of modernity itself. Rather, it is about being able to respond to the 'ambiguous consequences' (Giddens, 1998b: 38) of contemporary challenges, maintaining progression through a commitment to values and a pragmatic approach to practice rather than dogmatic adherence to prescribed ideology and policy. Giddens also moves to connect such an approach with his perspective of 'utopian realism', seeing the acceptance and recognition of contemporary changes as immanent trends that can be used to create new and positive futures, rather than the collapse of modernity into dystopia (Giddens, 1998b: 138-9) (although, as noted in the previous chapter, there is no assurance that such positive futures will develop in an evolutionary sense).

Tony Blair's exposition of the Third Way, most clearly explored in his Fabian pamphlet (Blair, 1998b), demonstrates both a commitment to modernisation – evidenced in the belief in the possibility of progress and the centrality of guiding values and principles – and also a recognition of the nature of the state of knowledge in the modern world – noted in the commitment to individualism, marketised forms of economics, and globalisation: 'Our mission is to promote and reconcile the four values which are essential to a just society which maximises the freedom and potential of all our people – equal worth, opportunity for all, responsibility and community' (Blair, 1998b: 3). This necessitated a pragmatic approach to practice, responding to a decade of infighting in which the Labour Party had been caught up in a battle to 'reconcile its core values and old policy prescriptions to a changed world' (Blair, 1998b: 5). Blair emphasised the centrality of values but also that policies were to 'flow from' these values. The challenges of new times could not be met with defined and pre-determined policies, but must rely instead on a new flexibility in approach. The Third Way was therefore to be centred upon an attempt to redefine specific values in response to new challenges by means of an approach to politics that was beyond the understanding and means offered by

traditional ideologies: 'it is a third way in the sense that it is an attempt to transcend both old-style social democracy and neo-liberalism' (Giddens, 1998b: 26), an understanding echoed by Blair (1998b: 1), 'the Third Way is not an attempt to split the difference between Right and Left'. A complementary approach to Giddens's perspective of 'utopian realism' can also be noted in Blair's outline:

> Values are fundamental. But socialism has to be made real in the world as it is and not as we would like it to be. Our commitment to a different vision of society stands intact. But the ways of achieving it must change. Those should and will cross the old boundaries between left and right, progressive and conservative (Blair, cited in Coates, 2000: 8).

THE THIRD WAY AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Discussing the response to contemporary change Blair argued that the Third Way was not a 'shopping list of fail-safe policy prescriptions' (Blair, 1998b: 7). Thus, instead of specific policy commitments, Labour, under Blair, was distinguished by broad guiding principles (Richards & Smith, 2002). These were described as:

1. A dynamic knowledge-based economy founded on individual empowerment and opportunity, where governments enable, not command, and the power of the market is harnessed to serve the public interest

2. A strong civil society enshrining rights and responsibilities, where the government is a partner to strong communities

3. A modern government based on partnership and decentralisation, where democracy is deepened to suit the modern age

4. And a foreign policy based on international cooperation (Blair, 1998b: 7).

This categorisation of principles finds much similarity in Giddens's outline of the Third Way in respect of the 'Old' Left and the New Right, although some apparent differences are of note as will be discussed later in this chapter (see Figure 3 below).

Social Democracy	Neo-liberalism	Third Way
Class politics of the left	Class politics of the right	Modernising movement of the centre
Old mixed economy	Market fundamentalism	New mixed economy
Corporatism: state dominates over civil society	Minimal state	New democratic state
Internationalism	Conservative nation	Cosmopolitan nation
Strong welfare state, protecting 'cradle to grave'	Welfare safety net	Social investment state

Figure 3: The Third Way (Giddens, 1998c)

Blair's own critique of the fundamentalist Left who had hardened policy prescription into ideology demonstrated the desire to free policy from ideological concerns (Blair, 1998b: 1). Further still, 'New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works' (Blair, in The Labour Party, 1997: 4). In this respect the removal of Clause IV had been a significant move at an ideological level, removing a fixed and dogmatic approach to the implementation of values (Blair, 1995a). Powell (1999: 23) proposes that in this new approach 'it is possible to see a new 'end-of-ideology thesis' in which the debate on the welfare state is shifted on to the secondary technical issues of delivery and efficiency'. As Gordon Brown stated: 'I have been trying to think of a single, central theme which expresses all our ideas and ties them all together. It would be wrong to call this an – ism – that sounds too ideological' (Brown, cited in Beech & Hickson, 2007: 273). Indeed, David (2000: 144) suggests of commentary on the New Labour project that, 'It is even difficult to find agreement amongst the various authors on whether it is new, a third way, *post*-any*ism*– Thatcherism, modernism, structuralism, colonialism, feminism or whatever'. Whilst the concern to identify an underlying political philosophy preoccupies some analysts, Ludlum (2000) argues that it would appear to be less of a concern to the New Labour modernisers themselves. It is thus a mistake to assume that the Third Way is driven by a normative political philosophy at all. Finlayson (1999) argues that 'New Labour relies theoretically not on moral philosophy but on a sociological perception of threats to social cohesion…'. Such a conclusion generates a significant attachment between New Labour and Giddens who, as discussed, builds his case for a Third Way on an understanding of the characteristics of social change in 'late' modernity. This attachment is discussed further below.

As noted in Chapter Three, globalisation is, for Giddens, a prominent factor in a sociological understanding of contemporary change. Indeed, he argued that models of the 'good society' must not be limited to the sphere of the nation-state (Giddens, 1990: 156). However, whilst Giddens explores the possibilities of the new global order in the 'multi-dimensional' nature of 'late' modernity, particularly the notion of a global cosmopolitan democracy or 'global civil society' (Giddens, 1998b: 137), for New Labour there is a more evidenced focus upon the significance of global change in economic terms. Here Blair (1998b) pins the demise of old-style social-democracy upon an inability to respond to developments in economics:

> ...demand management and very high levels of state ownership and direction became increasingly ineffective at promoting growth and containing unemployment in a world of growing competition, external shocks and industrial and technological change. Social democracy proved too inflexible in response. In particular, it was too inefficient and low quality in its provision of public services, notably those such as education, telecommunications and other utilities where it was the near-monopoly supplier (Blair, 1998b: 5).

Thus, an economic structure built upon national economies, male workforces and traditional manufacturing was not suitable for a world in which the increasing globalisation of economies, the deconstruction of gender and identity, and the transformation of industry and technology were the new challenges. The call to modernise socialism was therefore centred upon an affirmation of traditional values but a rejection of the economic basis of socialism. New Labour's defence of the 'Left' was thus defined with regards to values, and the view that socialism as a 'state-steered economic system is dead' (Callinicos, 2001: 8). Yet, whilst the Keynsian-informed agenda of post-war social democracy was outdated, Blair also sought to argue against the New Right extreme of 'advocating wholesale dismantling of core state activity in the cause of 'freedom'' (Blair, 1998b: 4). National economic strength was central to the New Labour project, for from it, it was argued, would come prosperity that would benefit the whole of society. As Giddens (2010a) reflects, the argument was that 'an increasingly prosperous economy would generate the resources to fund public investment, dispensing with the need to raise taxes'. New Labour could therefore further enhance a break from the prescribed policies of their own past, particularly with regards to their image as a 'tax-and-spend' government, whilst pursuing an active role in institutional investment that had been neglected to devasting effects for social cohesion and equality in the dogmatic economic ideology of neo-liberalism (Blair, 1998b). Thus, economic prosperity, which necessitated the acceptance of globalised markets, would rely on the building of human and social capital (Blair, 1998b). New Labour echoed Giddens in maintaining a strong governmental role in the economy (Giddens, 1998b).

Indeed, Giddens (1998b: 27) argued that, 'Tony Blair's election in 1997 confirms the failure of socialism as an economic system of management. Yet, rather than marking the 'triumph of Margaret Thatcher', it confirms also the failure of Thatcherism, and neo-liberalism more generally'. Whilst classical social democracy 'thought of wealth creation as almost incidental to its basic concerns with economic security and redistribution' and neo-liberalism 'placed competitiveness and the generating of wealth much more to the forefront' (Giddens, 1998b: 99), the new 'mixed economy' would rely upon a joint public and private effort. Blair (1998b: 5) states that whilst some of the reforms of the Conservative Government during the 1980s were 'necessary acts of modernisation' in coming to terms with the changing nature of political economy, the nature of this neo-liberal response 'went hand-in-hand with a visceral antipathy to the remaining public sector, damaging key national services, notably education and health...'. Such a response had gained ground by a faltering response from the Left who had failed to come to terms with these changes themselves, and were distracted by the infighting and divisions noted previously. For Giddens, embracing the globalised nature of market economics did not necessitate the neo-liberal, and specifically Thatcherite, response. New Labour's election therefore presented the opportunity for a renewal of social democracy through a stronger response to the nature of 'late' modernity. Such 'visceral antipathy' had demonstrated an instinctive guide to government described by Giddens as a 'moral traditionalism' (1991; 1998b), or further, as Wheeler (1996: 114) argues, a 'Freudian melancholia' (see also Fielding, 2003). In such terms the neo-liberal reforms of Thatcherism were contextualised in nostalgia and an attempt to recapture the past. Such melancholic grief was therefore unable to build a narrative of renewal. This critique was developed in Chapter Three, positioning the New Right as a 'weak' response to the nature of contemporary modernity. Wheeler (1996: 123) argues that the Labour modernisers, in reimagining socialist values for contemporary times, were involved in 'stealing meanings' – a perspective that reflected a concern with the future and not the past. On the notion of legitimisation and authority Giddens (1998b: 66) argued that the Conservative appeal to tradition (the melancholic side of the New Right) was weakened 'in a society where tradition and custom are losing their hold'.

As such, as well as maintaining a central role for government at an economic level in the regulation of markets in the public interest and promoting the development of human capital through education, Giddens argued that there remained a strong governmental imperative in response to an age of increasing individualisation. Rather than reasserting 'traditional forms of deference' (Giddens, 1998b: 66) a modernising government must embrace the opportunities that individualisation presents both for individuals themselves, and for building a modern state. Traditional social democratic parties based upon social movements as were appropriate at the turn of the last

century, Giddens (1998b: 47) argues, have faced an ideological crisis and 'find themselves outflanked by new social movements'. Combined with neo-liberalism's undermining of the role of government in pursuit of individual and market freedom, this presented a challenge to the question of political agency. That is, how can political renewal be brought about? For Giddens the rise of individualism did not necessarily lead to the corrosion of authority, however it must 'be recast on an active or participatory basis' where the role of government was to 'provide means for the representation of diverse interests' and 'offer a forum for reconciling the competing claims of these interests' (Giddens, 1998b: 47). Thus, education was not only important for developing human capital, but should find a central role in the formation of a civil society where government, as well as reflecting norms and values, can also help to shape them (Giddens, 1998b: 48).

Here the development of a new relationship between the individual, or citizen, and government can be observed. Whilst recognising and protecting individual interests, government could also expect that in return their authority would be legitimised and enforced. In this balance of rights and responsibilities both state and individual would reinforce the importance and acceptance of each other, and produce a new form of civil society. Indeed, the new participatory role for the individual was seen as essential for the state, particularly in the attempt to reconstruct the welfare state as one that empowered activity rather than acting as a 'safety net'. In an active welfare state 'independence, initiative and enterprise for all' would replace a traditional structure that rewarded dependency (Blair, 1999a). The 'taken for granted' habits of welfare dependency were, for Giddens (1998b: 100), incompatible with the reflexive nature of 'late' modernity where risk had become internalised and individualised to an extent where the state could no longer offer protection in the way that social democrats had come to consider as defining of their values. Established systems of practice informed by tradition and enforced by traditional welfare programmes on the basis of 'old' patterns of industry and employment were undermined by the transformations of economy and society in this period of intensified reflexivity. Today the unconscious human demand for security through knowledge and reproduced social practices could only be met by an active engagement with risk on the part of the individual agent: 'People need protection when things go wrong, but also the material and moral capabilities to move through major periods of transition in their lives' (Giddens, 1998b: 100). Again, this was echoed by Blair, with an emphasis on the role of work in restoring individual security: 'Effective access to the labour market is the key to personal prosperity, and New Labour is organising government services – welfare and educational – around the imperative to equip people with personal tools to make the most of their talents at work' (Blair, 1998b: 11). David Miliband (1994b) also made this clear: 'Today's welfare state must be active throughout people's lives...Welfare has to be preventive rather than ameliorative, economic as well as social: the most

potent social policy is a successful economic policy'. Coupled with the necessity of national economic prosperity, employment became a central focus for New Labour's Third Way. Indeed, Blair and Brown both made speeches expressing a vision of full employment in the 21st century and the Government's aim to rebuild the welfare state around work (Powell, 2000; see also DSS, 1998). As Jessop (2003) notes, unemployment was seen not as a shortage of jobs, but 'is interpreted instead in workfarist terms as the product of a shortfall in job-readiness that is reflected in a lack of full employability'. Thus, there was a focus both on preparation for work through skills and training, and on reinforcing a work ethic and a reduction in welfare dependency. Yet, for Giddens (1998b: 100), in the new vision of welfare it was important to strike 'a balance between the economic and the non-economic in the life of society'. Indeed, not only was employment fragmented in 'late' modernity but the goal of full employment was, for him, unattainable: 'Work is another area of unknowable risk. We don't know if full employment will exist again globally, or even in the west. It doesn't look like it: we should assume it will not' (Giddens, in Lloyd, 1997: 19). Instead Giddens argued for the need to go beyond work as the major definer of life and, thus, a singular route to self-actualisation and security (Mouzelis, 2001). Here he presented suggestions for recognising meaningful contributions to society outside of work through, for example, tax breaks for involvement in voluntary work (Giddens, 1998b). However, for New Labour, the focus remained emphatically upon paid work (Driver & Martell, 1998; Powell, 2000) where education was critical to developing the human and intellectual capital that was 'the main source of value and competitive advantage in the modern economy' (Blair, 1998b: 10). Thus, investment in education was essential, not just in schools but in a system of lifelong learning: 'Show me an educated youngster and I see someone with great prospects; show me school-leavers with no qualifications – who still, deplorably, account for nearly one in ten of 16-year-olds – and I see lives of constant struggle and insecurity' (Blair, 1998b: 10). Here the issue of equality was made prevalent, justified, as made clear in the pragmatic renewal of values discussed above, on its importance for meeting contemporary demands where there was now 'an unprecedented premium on the need for high educational standards for the many, not the few' (Blair, 1998: 6). Where access to the labour market was key to personal prosperity, the focus of equality was switched from outcome to opportunity, reflecting both the acceptance of the limitations of the government's ability to control individual outcomes in a market environment, and the demand that individuals take an active responsibility for their lives. Whilst recognising that Giddens sought to provide a broader definition of life outside of work, his perspective supported New Labour's stance. As Beech &Hickson (2007: 255) observe, 'in the life politics approach advocated by Giddens, a central argument of the traditional social democrats for the reduction of inequality in income and wealth is less important since empowerment does not concern the barriers

to freedom so much as self-actualisation'. That is, in the individualised nature of contemporary modernity, identity could not be secured through emancipation alone, but required an active construction of the self. As noted previously from Giddens, individualisation and life-politics necessitated not only life chances, but life choices. Thus, equality of opportunity meant equipping individuals with the necessary 'generative power' to make such decisions. The New Labour focus upon the individual thus lies upon the transformation of 'individualism' as freedom from the state to freedom conceived in terms of opportunity. Clearly there is a shift here from 'freedom from' to 'freedom to' that parallels to some extent Giddens's notion of generative power. However, as noted, New Labour emphasised such opportunity in relation to the labour market and the need for individuals to enter work in order for personal, and national, success and security. This was demonstrated not only in the commitment to education and training in order to provide individuals with the skills to enter the new technological and information-based industries, but in a range of initiatives such as welfare to work, the New Deal, the minimum wage, and tax credits and child-care tax credits, in order to show that 'work pays' (Powell, 2000). This paralleled Giddens's (1998b: 117) guideline of 'investment in human capital wherever possible, rather than the direct provision of economic maintenance'. Here the welfare state was to become the 'social investment state' (Giddens, 1998b), an approach that not only put a 'positive gloss' (Arestis & Sawyer, 2001: 7) on public expenditure, but followed an ecological principle of 'getting more for less, understood not as downsizing but as improving delivered value' (Giddens, 1998b: 74). Thus, the state '...should not row, but steer: not so much control, as challenge. Solutions to problems must be joined up. In the public sector bureaucracy at all levels must be reduced, performance targets and objectives formulated, the quality of public services rigorously monitored, and bad performance rooted out' (Blair & Schröder, 1999).

Here again the role of the state was to diverge from that previously experienced under either Left or Right: 'The Old Left sometimes claimed that the state should largely subsume civil society; the New Right believes that if the state retreats from social duties, civil activism will automatically fill the void' (Blair, 1998b: 14). Thus, the Third Way would 'recognise the limits of government in the social sphere, but also the need for government, in those limits, to forge new partnerships with the voluntary sector' (Blair, 1998b: 14). In doing so, two strategies were legitimised. Firstly, in keeping with the demand for the state to shed its cumbersome image of inefficiency and ineffectiveness, there were to be new opportunities for private sector involvement in the provision of public services. Such privatisation had been a central, indeed compulsory, feature of the Conservative approach to local government. However, New Labour argued that in order to create a user-centred system of public services such private involvement must take place in a strong public-private

framework. Thus, private involvement was to be a means to improvement, not the end of the state (see Blair, 1998b). Investment, matched by a governmental role in driving quality through demanding targets, cost management, incentives for excellence, and inspection marked the approach required for education and health services fit for the 21st century.

Secondly, an 'enabling' government was to strengthen partnerships between the state, voluntary organisations, and individuals in all areas of social life, building upon the active role of citizens in improving their own lives. The development of such social networks, worked towards an inclusion agenda that featured heavily in New Labour rhetoric (see Levitas, 1998), again with a prominent emphasis on entry into paid employment. A commitment to empowering individual opportunity was made through the recognition of the importance of social capital: 'Community building emphasises support networks, self-help and the cultivation of social capital as means to generate economic renewal in low-income neighbourhoods' (Giddens, 1998b: 110).

As can be noted from the promotion of a new work ethic, the other side of the coin of the opportunities presented by an 'enabling government' was to be based upon individual responsibility, which in turn would reassert governmental authority: 'With expanding individualism should come an extension of individual obligations' (Giddens, 1998b: 65). For Giddens the notion of rights and responsibilities goes beyond its application to a new 'contract' between the citizen and government, being an essential feature of the ethics of 'late' modernity itself:

> An ethics of a globalising post-traditional society implies recognition of the sanctity of human life and the universal right to happiness and self-actualisation – coupled to the obligation to promote cosmopolitan solidarity and an attitude of respect towards non-human agencies and beings, present and future. Far from seeing the disappearance of universal values, this is perhaps the first time in humanity's history when such values have real purchase (Giddens, 1994a: 253).

Thus, he argues that 'as an ethical principle, 'no rights without responsibilities' must apply not only to welfare recipients, but to everyone. It is highly important for social democrats to stress this, because otherwise the precept can be held to apply only to the poor and needy...' (Giddens, 1998b: 65-6). However, as Kaspersen (2000: 178) notes, despite pointing to the need to develop forms of social solidarity as the basis of universal self-actualisation, and thus the current lack of such forms, Giddens himself cannot fill this space for 'it might be [filled] with something which could force us to defend it with all means. In other words he would end up with a type of fundamentalism – the worst possible situation for Giddens' (see also Kaspersen, 2000: 180). Cohen (2000) makes a similar recognition of this point:

the upshot of Giddens's grounding of change in anxiety-provoking situations is that he leaves himself vulnerable to the criticism that he lacks a normative grounding in social praxis for visions of a communal solidarity, democratic accommodation, or any other normative, social ideal. His theory of praxis implies no substantive vision of desirable, or for that matter undesirable, human conduct and social relations. The moral significance of praxis is what actors make of it, no more and no less (Cohen, 2000: 97).

As highlighted throughout this study, for Giddens the values of the Third Way are a response to a sociological analysis of the nature of contemporary modernity conceptualised in themes such as individualisation. For Giddens then, as Leggett (2000: 26) notes, 'it is the process of *individualisation* that Third Way values must primarily attend to...the values of the Third Way must be developed *post facto* to 'help citizens pilot their way through the major revolutions of our time', not developed on any *a priori* basis'. For New Labour the lack of such a substantive vision appeared to pose difficulties both for outlining their political project to the electorate and reconciling the concerns of individuals in the Party over moral decline: 'Blair explicitly *does* locate the growth of individualism in, among other things, the Right's economic egoism, the Left's social individualism and a more general process of moral decay' (Driver & Martell, 2000: 149). Thus, whilst the relocation of values to a pragmatic policy-making approach was clear in theory, questions have been raised over the extent to which this has occurred in practice. White (cited in Driver & Martell, 2000) recognised a division through differing interpretations of Third Way values, highlighting a spilt between 'leftists' and 'centrists' over the nature of equality, and also between liberals and communitarians over individual freedom. It was argued that New Labour's response took a more defensive and authoritarian approach to 'etho-politics' displaying a 'moral absolutism' (Kaspersen, 2000: 178, 180). Leggett (2000: 26) states that, 'while Blair broadly accepts the sociological imperatives outlined by Giddens and others, he increasingly portrays the Third Way as a value-driven, moral project'. The communitarian trend in New Labour thinking is worthy of greater investigation than can be presented in this current study (for more detailed analysis see Levitas (1998) and Prideaux (2005)). Indeed, as argued previously, New Labour's 'Third Way' was *a* Third Way among many and disparities with the theoretical outline presented by Giddens are to be expected in an arena of contested political influence (see Heffernan, 2002). Acknowledgement of this does not challenge the relevance of Giddens to an understanding of the New Labour project. Indeed, as will be explored in more depth later, such a connection allows for an important and relevant critique to develop. Returning to the social aspect of Third Way, there are considerable overlaps to be noted between Giddens and Blair on the notions of the family and community. Indeed, as Calder (2004) notes, 'communitarians may object that [individualism] is morally unedifying, but also troubling in an anthropological sense. That's to say, it shows an

alienation of the individual from the community which provides the very conditions of her individuality in the first place'. Addressing the conditions of individuality speaks closely to Giddens's approach to 'late' modernity. Thus, with regards to the importance of the family, he argues that 'the family is the meeting point of a range of trends affecting society as a whole – increasing equality between the sexes, the widespread entry of women into the labour force, changes in sexual behaviour and expectations, the changing relationship between the home and work' (Giddens, 1998b: 89-90). Reinforcing forms of the traditional family thus serves not only to idealise the past, but to reinstate the inequalities and bases of family relations that contemporary processes of modernity have overcome: 'recapturing the traditional family is a non-starter' (Giddens, 1998b: 92). Blair (1998b: 14) starts from the same position stating that 'to emphasise, as I do, the importance of the family is not to believe that we can recreate a nostalgic version of family life in the Fifties...The traditional structure of the family...could not survive the demand for equality between men and women'. Indeed, his recognition that whilst 'some marriages and relationships will not be for life. But people's need to be able to make commitments, and abide by them, has not changed' (Blair, 1998b: 14) is almost identical to Giddens's basis for proposing legal parenting contracts separate from marriage as a means of reinforcing responsibility in the face of risk. However, it is still the case that a difference lies between Blair's concern with social solidarity through the family as the best means by which to (re)produce established morals (Blair, 1998b: 13), whilst Giddens's concern is, as already discussed, not with an established moral basis but with a new ethics (or questioning of ethics), extending to a cosmopolitan global order. Active individualism is here the route to radical new futures, rather than identifying standards as an 'antidote' to egoistic individualism (Driver & Martell, 2000).

Whilst acknowledging the presence of different influences in New Labour, the Third Way for Blair presented a space in which a common and unifying project could emerge. Here the values of solidarity, justice, peace and individual dignity were not only a means of uniting different faith communities, nor of pointing to the centrality of religion as means of instilling these. Rather, through the concept of community, such values represented the possibility for universal solidarity in a globalised world:

> Traditionally, these were religious values. But we now know, through several quite different disciplines, that they are universal values. Economists call them 'social capital'. Evolutionary biologists call them 'reciprocal Altruism'. Political theorists call them communitarianism or civil society. Each of these phrases stands for what is really a quite simple idea – that what gives us the power to survive in a rapidly changing environment are the habits of co-operation, the networks of support, our radius of trust (Blair, 2000).

This universalising of values not only enabled New Labour to move from an argument centred upon a Left/Right divide, but to call upon religious, economic, anthropological and political justification and support for this. For Blair (2000), 'the idea of community resolves the paradox of the modern world: it acknowledges our interdependence; it recognises out individual worth'. Equally significant here are the notions of 'habits of co-operation', 'networks of support', and 'our radius of trust' which speak closely to the risks and insecurities of 'late' modernity outlined by Giddens. As noted in the previous chapter it was through the reproduction of social practices, or habits, that individuals were to fulfil an unconscious demand for 'ontological security'. As existing social practices, and the relations that sustained them, broke down through the erosion of tradition and processes of individualisation and globalisation, so agents required new networks of mutual support in which to develop relations of trust as a form of dialogic democracy. Thus, whilst varying influences acted upon New Labour, they found a complementary perspective in their approach to community. Although Blair's commitment to community as a theory of human nature may pre-exist the Third Way (Leggett, 2000), New Labour's Third Way allowed it to offer 'a communitarian, rather than individualist view of society in which individuals are embedded in social relations which give structure and meaning to people's lives – and that it is the role of governments to promote 'the community' as a way of enriching individual lives' (Driver & Martell, 2000: 149). Whilst there were obvious strains in New Labour, politics is all about dealing with tensions (Stoker, 2000), and New Labour were to rely on 'an overlapping consensus common to the new institutionalism and Third Way. They speak a language of embeddedness, sociality, community, social capital, networks, and partnership' (Bevir, 2005: 48).

As Levitas (1998: 89) observes, the concept of community operates at different levels, where 'at each level of remove from localities, the reference becomes increasingly one of a commonality of interest, rather than a form of interaction'. Whilst the importance of solidarity at a national level has been recognised, tied heavily to promoting economic security in the context of a globalised economy, the notion of 'community' for New Labour resonates at a much more locally conceived level. Thus, the 'habits of co-operation' are learnt in families, school congregations and communities: 'It is there that we learn the grammar of togetherness, the give and take of rights and responsibilities, where we pass on our collective story, our ideals, from one generation to the next. Without them, society is too abstract to be real. Community is where they know your name; and where they miss you if you're not there. Community is society with a human face' (Blair, 2000). This localised realisation of a social abstract meant, for Kaspersen (2000: 179), that in the Third Way 'community replaces society as the most important category'. In the search to bring together authority and freedom, rights and responsibilities, market potential and state regulation, individual

needs and social cohesion it is, as Rose (cited in Kaspersen, 2000: 179) states, 'the language of the community that is used to identify a territory between the authority of the state, the free and amoral exchange of the market, and the liberty of the autonomous, 'rights-bearing' individual subjects'. Justified on the basis of human nature 'the space of community appears as a kind of natural, extra-political zone of human relations...' and as such '...is identified as a crucial element in particular styles of political government, for it is on its properties and on activities in it that the success of such political aspirations and programmes depend. Hence community must become the object and target for the exercise of political power whilst remaining, somehow, external to politics and a counterweight to it' (Rose, cited in Kaspersen, 2000: 179). As White (2004) argues, community both depended upon, and contributed to the development of, the values of opportunity and responsibility: ''Community' is both an end that is realised through 'opportunity' and 'responsibility', and a crucial means to their realisation' (White, 2004: 30). Again, this reflected the concern with balancing state action and individual agency: 'The grievous 20th century error of the fundamentalist Left was the belief that the state could replace civil society and thereby advance freedom. The New Right veers to the other extreme, advocating wholesale dismantling of core state activity in the cause of 'freedom'' (Blair, 1998b: 4). The role of government was therefore to support the 'duality' of community, promoting individual agency by encouraging responsibility and opportunity or, where necessary, enforcing such behaviour.

A SHARED VISION?

Blair's espousal of the Third Way faced serious criticism in a number of key areas, with some arguing that it was a vague concept that lacked distinction and coherence, whilst others accused it of abandoning social democracy completely and embracing the neo-liberal politics of the Right. Whilst the Third Way was used prominently as a means of representing a refashioning of social democracy for new times – as has been noted, Blair argued that the Third Way was not a central position between the two, for it was based on the values of the left (Fielding, 2003) – critics claimed that it was difficult to define the extent to which it truly transcends an understanding of social democracy and neo-liberalism. Much critique of the Third Way as a framework for policy, and its appropriation by New Labour, derives from a critique of their perceived abandonment of traditional left-wing politics and its social-democratic history: 'a remorseless programme of modernisation...core beliefs have been stripped out and replaced with the shifting shapes of the Third Way' (Rawnsley, 1999). For critics such as Panitch & Leys (1997: 248) the acceptance of capitalist economic management, and the denial of it as 'an inhuman and ultimately self-destructive system', was the betrayal of a vocation to overcome it. Conversely, Bevir (2005: 280) argues that '...the fact that the process ended in views similar to new liberalism does not mean new liberalism played a role in the process and, if it

did not do so, it must be irrelevant to an explanation of New Labour's ideas'. As much as Labour asserted its continuing belief in its traditional values, albeit for these to be re-appropriated for the modern age, the strength of commentary and analysis focusing on the neo-liberal, even Thatcherite, face of Labour's programme indicates a failure to transcend these 'old ways'. Such inability to clarify how a Third Way could go beyond both social democracy and neo-liberalism left Francis Maude (1998) to comment: 'The truth is that the Third Way is a principle-free zone – a vacuum'. Indeed, Driver & Martell (2000) point to the prominence of definitions that base themselves on what the Third Way is not, rather than a positive affirmation of what it is. Further, the Third Way is argued to have failed to demonstrate its coherence in practice. David Halpern noted his concern in a Downing Street seminar on the Third Way, stating that 'what was lacking…was a definition of the third way which could be applied in detail to all areas of policy' (Halpern, cited in Smith, 1998). Also, as Fielding (2003) notes, the rhetoric of the Third Way language itself posed serious limitations to the electorate: 'Instead of mobilising [Middle England] behind a common outlook, the Third Way appeared only to unite voters in confusion' (Fielding, 2003: 106). There is frequent criticism of the vagueness of the Labour project under Blair (see Davey, 1996), focusing upon concepts such as the Third Way, the importance placed upon electioneering and rhetorical strategies, and the content of Blair's vision as seen in policy statements. The 1997 election campaign manifesto, for example, is evidenced for its lack of specific policy initiatives. Despite Blair's attempts to distinguish the Third Way from Labour's revisionist past, Randall & Sloan (2009: 94) state that 'the Third Way represents one of a sequence of revisionist moments in social democratic history'. Wheeler (1996) similarly argues that the modernisation of Blair is not a break with Labour tradition as definitively claimed, but 'a return to earlier nineteenth century and early 20th century socialist thought in which collectivity, or community, is thought of in broader terms than those of antagonistic class interests alone' (Wheeler, 1996: 101; see also Freeden, 2003). This representational nature of the Third Way – its use as a label – highlighted by Coates (2005), is supported by Stoker (2004), who argues that it is not a programme for New Labour but a way of framing the debate on progressive politics, that is, a rhetorical space(see also Fielding, 2003). Important as this might have been (see Heffernan, 2002), in this way the Third Way would seem to have failed to distinguish itself as a project in its own right.

Clearly, as outlined above, the New Right were an influencing cause in New Labour's reorganisation, however, there is a need to consider more fully the influences acting upon New Labour's formulation of a Third Way. Of particular interest and concern to this study is its connection to Giddens's thinking surrounding the nature of 'late' modernity. Examining the relationship between the Third Ways of New Labour and Giddens has provided a useful means of exploring the substance of the New Labour project. This chapter has discussed the transformation of Labour as a political party in terms of its

organisation and its political ideology, with both reflecting a concern with modernisation. Labour had a clear desire to become 'the natural party of government' and in many ways the transformation of the Party organisation was concerned with winning elections. For example, the centralisation not just of policy-making processes, but of the media and press relationships through which such announcements were made. Similarly the concern to reach a new electorate – 'Middle England' – was a core initiative. Initially for Blair this could have been portrayed as little more than an appeal to the sense of shared failure in the hands of the Conservatives:

> His belief that just about every class of person, from families to shareholders, from parents to victims of crime, from rail users to student strivers, has been damaged by the insanity of the prevailing Tory ideology gives Labour, as he sees it, common cause with the mass of people. This exercise, he contends, needs no ideology of its own… (Young, 1994).

Indeed, as Wright (1990: 18) notes, 'Thatcherism had won elections rather than hearts and minds. Its ideological dominance was consequence rather than cause of its dominance'. However, if New Labour was to become the party of government then coalitions based on such voter empathy would not prove strong enough. Circumstance would likely prove insufficient without an underlying body of thought that demonstrated the Party's ability to engage positively with the present and the future (Fishman, 1996). Even Giddens (1998b) notes the intensity of Labour's media-driven campaigning and whilst it might be tempting to attribute Labour's rise to power as 'a cunning combination of an organisational fix and floating signifiers' (Jessop, 2003), as Stoker (2004) observes, the Labour transformation has a deeper, even moral, dimension that was in line with a substantial notion of modernisation. As Blair (2000) affirmed with regards to education: 'Yes, it is economically vital to improve education. But is a moral case, too. Deprive a child of educational opportunity and you deny their equal worth'. Thus, while short-term management of the media, the party and political issues was apparent, the underlying ambition lay in a long-term attempt to construct a progressive coalition to dominate British politics in the twenty-first century.

This chapter has sought to distinguish between the development of 'New' Labour as a rhetorical strategy that served to create a clear separation from the Party of 'Old', and the space this created for a substantive project to be put forward in the shape of the Third Way. This Third Way was to be the basis for a radical and modernising approach to building a New Britain in the contemporary global order. The notion of modernisation is one which resonates with Labour's own history 'of unremitting transformation and adaptation' (Fielding, 2003: 217). Indeed, Coates (2000: 2) draws a comparison between Tony Blair's focus upon the necessity for vision in offering a 'distinct and alternative vision of Britain's future to that canvassed by Labour's political opponents' and Harold Wilson's attempts to outline a modernising project in 1964. However, whilst critics remain on both

sides of the political spectrum, it appears that, as Blair (1996b) suggested, constructing a modernising project for Labour and for Britain in the contemporary environment was a 'less clear cut' process than it was for Wilson in the 1960s. This chapter, alongside the preceding discussion in Chapter Three, has outlined why this might be the case. Further, whilst the revisionists of Labour's past had 'periodically tried to change the agenda...their success was limited' (Blair, 1998b: 1). The New Labour project was to point the way for a potentially more radical approach to reform (see Hirst, 1990).

Examining Giddens's contributions it is evident that, as Kaspersen (2000: 182) notes, his input is more as 'issue-raising than as policy-proposing and problem-solving'. It is also apparent from New Labour themselves that the Third Way was to be used as a descriptor of a broad approach to government rather than a discrete and defined ideology (Driver & Martell, 1998). For Freeden (2003), New Labour's politics, although possessing values and a general sense of direction, did not have a worked through ideology that told it what to do. As Driver &Martell (1998: 180) state, in a 'generation that is strong on ideals but indifferent to ideology, where instinct is to judge government not on grand designs but by practical results', it is perhaps not surprising that Labour's motivations appear pragmatic rather than ideological. Taking the apparent lack of clarity and coherence, it is clear from Blair that this was to be a reasoned approach to government, and not in one sense 'New' as such: '...the [1945] Labour Government's agenda grew out of the coalition government of the war; ...it cut decisively with not against the grain of political thinking; ...its prospectus at the election was strongest in the new direction it offered, not the minutiae of policy detail' (Blair, 1995a: 3). Yet Blair's commitment to 'what counts is what works' was also an attempt to move decisively beyond the dichotomised and exclusionary relationship between Left and Right. It might be argued that the actuality of modernisation demonstrated here was not the removal of ideology, but, as Fielding (2003: 58) argues, a redefinition of it from its popular expression as a 'closed intellectual system'.

For Blair (1998b), socialism became 'social-ism', a form which was to reflect its importance as an ethical ideal, rather than as a social system (Panitch & Leys, 1997; Freeden, 2003): 'The ideological re-foundation of the party took place through the revision of Clause IV. The party clearly said that we are in politics to pursue certain values, not implement an economic dogma...Since the collapse of communism, the ethical basis of socialism is the only one that has stood the test of time' (Blair, 1995a: 12). These ideological and linguistic 'space-clearing preliminaries' (Wright, 1990: 19) allowed Labour to free itself from the conservatism of its past (Freeden, 2003; Wright, 1990) and towards the complexities of the challenges of the modern world. It was in the creation of this new space that the Third Way worked towards the 'and also' approach noted earlier from Halpin (1999). Whilst it acted discursively to position new from old, and to present both Left and Right as outdated, it did so on

the basis of a sociological, rather than ideological, demand for a new organising framework that required new roles for the state and for individuals, and a new relationship between them mediated through civil society. Here the language of 'newness' and 'modernisation' were tied closely to the observation of actually existing changes in a world that was now more globalised and, at the same time, more individualised than ever before.

In response to these challenges the Third Way was an attempt to avoid the extremes of Right and Left, between those who said 'government is the enemy' and those for whom 'government is the answer' (Giddens, 1998b: 70). For New Labour this was presented as the basis of an essential transformation, reflecting not just a modernising approach but a radical new direction. As Wright(1990: 19) had observed, '...the issues on every side are so big and challenging that anything less than a genuinely radical politics – what G.D.H. Cole used to call a sensible extremism – will soon look inadequate'. The question was, where would the 'sensible extremism' of the Third Way and its re-conceptualisation of these challenges lead? Certainly the scope of change occurring was recognised, as Blair (2000) outlined:

> Our world is moving at breakneck speed, and continuous change is among the hardest things for human beings to bear. Small wonder that ours has been called the 'age of anxiety' or, in the title of Francis Fukuyama's latest book, 'The Great Disruption'. I believe it is no exaggeration to say that we are in the middle of the greatest economic, technological and social upheaval the world has seen since the industrial revolution began over two centuries ago.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Giddens moved to present this period not in Fukuyama's terms as the 'end of history', but instead as offering hope for a utopian realism. Here the risks of the contemporary order had brought an end to the 'conceptual security' of historical inevitability (Giddens, 1990a: 22), but through all dimensions of 'late' modernity there was a role for the Left in building towards new futures. As noted already in this chapter, as well as in Chapter Three, Giddens's visions for the future centred around a global cosmopolitan order whose characteristics and organisation grew out of the recognition of immanent change. For Wright (1990: 20) this required '...a notion of community that goes wider and deeper, recognising and embracing diversity and plurality, a community of communities of many kinds, actively defended and nurtured by an enabling state but in a framework of guaranteed and extending basic rights of citizenship'. For Giddens (1998b: 128), society needed to 'upgrade' from a work-based approach to create both individual identity and social cohesion. Here the space created by the Third Way for a pragmatic 'and-also' approach to policy-making was the means to go 'beyond' the existing dynamism of

modernity: 'it has to envisage futures whose achievement is both contingent and highly risky' (Giddens, 1990a: 21).

However, for New Labour the future appeared to centre much more upon the Third Way itself. That is, it was in the construction of an 'and-also' approach to policy, and also to living, that the future of a different society stood intact. Whilst the Third Way sought to bring together the multi-dimensional model of modernity outlined by Giddens into a political project that would benefit 'the many not the few', as this chapter has discussed, New Labour gave emphasis to employment, education and community as the prime means of meeting the challenges of capitalism, industrialism, and the role of the state in 'late' modernity. (As noted, Blair's broad guiding principles also placed an emphasis on an internationalist trajectory that responded to another of Giddens's dimensions of change, that of militarisation. Whilst significant in the broader analysis of New Labour, a focus on this aspect is of less relevance to this present study.) Thus, a new role for government was required in order to regulate the excesses of market capitalism, to provide the resources necessary to mobilise a diverse population in the 'knowledge economy', and to promote, and where necessary enforce, the values of the public good. However, as significant as the 'enabling government' was to be, its success depended upon a role for individual citizens themselves in the agency of renewal. The new 'civil society' was therefore to be built upon a citizenry who were active in response to the opportunities afforded to the self in family, community and nation. Community was to be the 'extra-political zone' in which these new roles for state and citizen would come together, alongside the resources of the private and voluntary sectors. In this localised expression of interdependency a new social citizen state would move beyond the limits of marketised 'exit' and the 'voice' of representative democracy. Voice, attached to agency, was now back on the agenda as a means of relating citizens to the institutions that were supposed to serve their needs, but that had failed to deliver in either the post-war social democratic consensus, or the New Right individualism of the 1980s (Marquand, 1990: 31). However, as Hall (2003) importantly points out, New Labour faced a challenge in seeking to apply its modern socialist agenda for reform:

> Thatcherism…certainly did have a project. Its aim was to transform the political landscape irrevocably: to make us think in and speak its language as if there was no other. It had a strategy – an idea of where it wanted to go and how to get there. But she did not, like some versions of the 'Third Way', simply project the sociological trends on to the political screen. She never supposed Thatcherite subjects were already out there, fully formed, requiring only to be focus-grouped into position (Hall, 2003: 82).

Whilst the Third Way gave both space and substance for a modernising and radical route to a 'new consensus' that was practical rather than ideological, it was yet to be seen to what extent this vision

would develop in practice. As Wright (1990: 19) observed, 'Democratic socialism remains alive and well as a statement about values, coupled with an empirical analysis showing the real-world affront to those values. But the application of those values now raises more questions than at any time in socialism's history'.

Here, then, the importance of education, and thus its analysis, reveals itself. For it was through education that the Third Way was to receive its most prominent application, as the flagship of the New Labour project, and as the basis for wider social reform. Blair's (1996c) now infamous declaration of the three priorities of his government as 'education, education, and education' signalled the intent for this field to act as the focus of the renewal of democratic socialism. Yet, as this chapter has discussed, the Third Way offered broad guiding principles for reform rather than a detailed agenda for policy. It remained to be seen how such principles would take shape in education and the extent to which these would develop the modernising and radical vision put forward. In this light, and on the basis of the analysis put forward thus far, this study moves to explore the development of New Labour's education policy and the role it played in building a New Britain. In so doing it provides the basis for a critical discussion of the impact of Third Way thinking in education and the nature of the education system in 'late' modernity.

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, AND EDUCATION

As noted from the very start of this study, education was positioned at the centre of New Labour's project of reform. The previous chapter has outlined how this project was built upon both the desire to modernise the values of the Left, and also to go beyond the limitations of the New Right. Under the banner of the Third Way New Labour sought to respond to the changes in contemporary society that were seen by them to have no suitable appreciation or answer in the dichotomy posed by social democratic and neo-liberal perspectives. In the space created not just by becoming 'New', but through a pragmatic rather than ideological response to actually existing change, education was to receive unprecedented governmental attention. However, the Third Way presented broad guiding principles of reform, rather than firm policy commitments. There is a need, therefore, to consider how, and to what extent, it can be seen to have acted as a guide in education.

This chapter explores the development of education policy in the period 1997-2007, drawing attention to continuity, change, and transformation in the organisation of the formal field of education. The chapter progresses through three broad sections that parallel the three terms of Tony Blair's office, although there is some necessary overlap between these periods. This chronological approach enables the development of policy trajectories and themes, as well as the overlapping nature of policy ideas, to be observed and discussed. Further, whilst the broadening nature of education reform is acknowledged, such an approach draws attention to the central role of schools reform in the narrative of change. The focus on this area of policy reform provides a sufficient and appropriate evidential basis for analysis of New Labour's Third Way project. In this way the individual subsections that structure analysis in this chapter respond to the themes of the discussion of New Labour's Third Way project developed in previous chapters.

Whilst noting the advance of policy through a range of governmental documents, speeches and other resources, analysis also draws on the educational policy research literature to develop a critical appreciation of the success and limitations of policy implementation. Thus, whilst a critical appraisal of the Third Way project in education is developed through this chapter, discussion surrounding the extent to which this built upon the commitment to a modernising and radical new consensus is reserved until the following chapter.

1997-2001: A NEW CULTURE FOR EDUCATION

Having already committed to education as the 'passion' of any Government they would form, New Labour had embarked on what Hodgson & Spours (1999: 15) called a 'wave of innovation' in

educational thinking. In this an emphasis on key themes of diversity, standards, community and lifelong learning had emerged through a range of publications whilst in opposition (The Labour Party, 1994; 1995a; 1995b; 1996a; 1996b; 1996c; 1996d). Statements that branded markets as 'flawed' signalled that New Labour would bring a new approach to education policy (Blair, 1994b). However, following their wider Third Way approach, such transformation in the fortunes of the nation would not be brought about by the state alone. A focus on 'social-ism' was to ensure individual success arose through community, with an emphasis upon partnerships for an education system 'provided together to improve the quality of opportunity for each of us. It cannot be left to the market' (Blair, 1994b).

The 'new times' that were so important to New Labour's call for modernisation are readily observed in the purposes and processes established for education as New Labour entered their first term in office. The approach to bringing about such transformations were configured around developing a new culture in education. This culture was to embody a new system of partnership involving not just Government, LEAs, schools, governors, and parents, but also the part played by health visitors, the school dinner lady, and the classroom assistant, as well as commitment from families and the wider community. Further, it was to be determined not just by participation alone but by transforming attitudes towards achievement, a challenge that would require 'millions of people to change their behaviour' (DfEE, 1997). Following Michael Barber's mantra, the focus of education policy was to be set upon 'standards not structures', as expressed in the 1997 Election Manifesto:

> Our task is to raise the standards of every school. We will put behind us the old arguments that have bedevilled education in this country. We reject the Tories' obsession with school structures: all parents should be offered real choice through good quality schools, each with its own strengths and individual ethos. There should be no return to the 11-plus. It divides children into successes and failures at too early an age...Standards, more than structures, are the key to success (The Labour Party, 1997).

A concern with structures was positioned as part of the 'old arguments' of recent education reform with the new emphasis on standards justified not through the resolution of these disputes but through their dismissal as outdated and outmoded for contemporary success. As Blair (1997a) stated, 'our mantra is standards. The old debate of Left and Right was about school structures. But no structure works well if we do not get things right in the classroom'. The Third Way influence is evident here, seeking to establish a different basis for reform. Dichotomised arguments over structures and structural inequality draw attention away from the vital mission of raising standards. Here it is the globalised context of economic concern that underpins Blair's call to establish a 'world class education system' (Blair, 1997b) and the need for 'human capital in the age of knowledge'

(Blunkett, in DFEE, 1997: 3). This competitive economic setting is again highlighted through the use of international comparisons of educational performance as measures of the need for change (Blair, 1996a). Echoing Blair's commitment to modernising values in order to meet the demands of contemporary society Blunkett (in DfEE, 1997: 3) states that this first period of reform 'is as much about equipping the people of this country for the challenge of the future as it is about the Government's core commitment to equality of opportunity and high standards for all'. Again, explicitly acknowledging the reasons behind his determination for education to progress, Blair (in DfEE, 1998a) argued that 'education is the best economic policy we have'. Issues of economic and social disadvantage are interwoven throughout this contextualisation of the New Labour reform programme. Educational attainment is posited as key to breaking cycles of disadvantage through encouraging aspiration and working towards equality of opportunity. In breaking these cycles of disadvantage, and in producing human capital and a civilised society, education is an 'investment for the future' (DfEE, 1997). However, the new times are again articulated as demanding an approach that is not based upon an outdated debate between Left and Right. As Blair outlined in 1999:

> The old dispute between those who favour growth and personal prosperity, and those who favour social justice and compassion, is over. The liberation of human potential – for all the people, not just a privileged few – is in today's world the key both to economic and social progress. In economic terms, human capital is a nation's biggest resource (Blair, 1999c).

Realising this potential was require the raising of standards from a low skill to a high skill average (Blair, 1999c), a goal reiterated by Blunkett (2001: 3) who argued that such low level skills have 'disastrous consequences for the individuals concerned, weakens the country's ability to compete in the global economy and places a huge burden on society'. Emphasising the need to raise standards throughout the system Schools Minister Stephen Byers stated:

> The real challenge facing the Government and our country is not the 300 schools that have been identified as failing schools by Her Majesty's chief inspector and that are under special measures as a result; it is the 40 to 50 percent of schools that are getting by. They are coasting, doing well enough. Parents may be content, but those schools must be challenged because they could do a lot better. It is those schools, thousands of them, that will play a key part in raising national attainment standards. Every school will have targets set' (Byers, in Hansard, 1997: column 595).

Here an individualistic approach to school improvement can be noted, seeking to raise standards directly rather than through the operation of market structures alone. Further, school performance is seen in absolute terms, measured against nationalised standards, rather than as a relative

outcome determined by relational interactions between institutions. Webster & Parsons (1999: 551) observe that underlying this is a logic suggesting that whilst a focus on structures 'encourages the view that what happens in one school cannot be understood without reference to other competing schools', a standards approach argues that 'standards can rise for everyone. It is not a zero-sum game in which for one to gain someone else has to lose'. In his Ruskin Speech in 1996 Blair argued that 'culture, attitude and expectations are critical to successful education, and they exist whether or not we have a market in education' (Blair, 1996a). Indeed, the 1997 White Paper appeared to deny the importance of the market structure and reinforce the importance of internal standards stating: 'we know what it takes to create a good school: a strong, skilled head who understands the importance of clear leadership, committed staff and parents, high expectations of every child and above all good teaching' (DfEE, 1997: 12).

In this way standards were to be met through a series of strategies, assessments, and targets. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) played a major part in this standards agenda with its remit extended both to LEAs and early-years education and childcare. A 'zero tolerance' approach was taken to under-performing schools underpinned by a discourse of 'failure' and, initially, the 'naming and shaming' of such institutions (Tomlinson, 2005: 96). In those schools showing insufficient recovery a 'Fresh Start' initiative was proposed. This was not to be a uniform programme but one adapted to particular local needs. Possibilities included an LEA takeover in order to redirect school management, or the re-opening of the school with a new management in place. Closely tied to this approach of tackling school failure was the mantra of 'intervention in inverse proportion to success', again arising from the influence of Michael Barber (1996, 2007). However, whilst underperforming schools were subject to direct intervention, at the other end of the spectrum there was no dramatic increase in operational freedom for schools. Whilst the White Paper put great focus on celebrating and learning from success through the development of the School Standards and Effectiveness Unit and the Standards Task Force to promote the raising of standards in LEAs and schools, as well as the creation of the Beacon Schools initiative, with regards to operational or managerial flexibility the Education Bill appeared to work to limit existing freedoms. As Stephen Dorrell, Shadow Secretary of State for Education and Employment at the time, commented, 'Clause 13 allows an education action zone to opt out of the national arrangements for school teachers' pay and conditions. This is exactly the same Bill which withdraws those rights from grant-maintained schools that have hitherto had the right' (Dorrell, in Hansard, 1997b: column 668).

Leadership was also given an enhanced importance in reform. Headteachers were to be held to greater accountability by the school governing body and new measures allowing for prompt action against inefficient heads were introduced. Alongside a requirement for new headteachers to hold a

National Professional Qualification for Headteachers the National College or School Leadership (NCSL) was also established in 2000. This development shall be considered in further detail in the following section, however, for the purposes of this section the emphasis on leadership can be seen to contribute significantly to the notion that, as the White Paper claimed, 'the main responsibility for school improvement lies with the schools themselves (DfES, 1997: 12). For Webster & Parsons (1999: 552) the policies associated with the standards agenda were the 'the perfect expression' of the denial of any relational connection between schools and their relative success and failure, with success 'seen in individuated, non-relational terms...deriving from processes internal to the school in isolation'.

New Labour's expressed desire not to focus on fundamental restructuring of the education system is evidenced in their approach to the independent sector of schooling. Whilst the Election Manifesto, and subsequently the 1997 White Paper, acknowledged that 'the educational apartheid created by the public/private divide diminishes the whole education system' (The Labour Party, 1997), policy proposals were centred upon 'building bridges' as a means of using the 'success' and resources of the independent sector to raise standards in underachieving state schools and promote educational opportunities, rather than dismantling this structural divide. Thus, proposals were centred upon promoting schemes in sport, music and art in which independent institutions gave opportunities to 'talented children from all over the country' (DfES, 1997: 72), or the opening up of facilities to the local community for homework centres, Saturday enrichment classes, and holiday courses.

Whilst not directed at the independent sector, the Beacon Schools initiative further exemplifies the concern with raising achievement at the bottom through the promotion of good practice in teaching and learning as the key to high standards. Beacon Schools were to be offered up to £35,000 extra funding in order to work with partner schools in their locality in the dissemination of such good practice. Launched in September 1998, the project began with an initial 75 designated schools, which rose to 200 in 1999. Plans were then put in place for this to grow significantly to 1000 schools by 2002. Whilst an official DfEE report produced by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Rudd et al., 2000) into the pilot phase of the scheme concluded that the initiative had 'served to reinstate the value of the principle of collaboration and partnership between schools, and to (re)establish local networks and consortia', Tomlinson (2005: 103) argues that a 'major result of such designation, reported by estate agents, was that house prices rose near beacon schools'. Indeed, the report itself observed that 'the profile of individual Beacon Schools was raised, with the effect of attracting more and better candidates for advertised posts' (Rudd et al., 2000). The emphasis upon school relationships clearly remained one focused upon absolute standards, rather than reforming structures.

Despite this focus on standards New Labour's manifesto statement demonstrated the recognition of a structural relationship between schools (Webster & Parsons, 1999). Thus, the 11-plus system was viewed as a means to divide children as successes and failures through selection. The attempt to separate out standards from structures therefore reflected the view that 'there is little point in trying to improve standards in the school for failures because part of what is depressing standards derives not from something intrinsic to the school in isolation but from the school's relation to other schools' (Webster & Parsons, 1999: 551). However, the commitment that there will be 'no return' to structural division did not result in the dismantling of mechanisms of selectivity, despite Blair's statement to the Labour Party Conference in 1995 and Blunkett's famous 'read my lips' commitment at the same time (a message further reinforced by Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott during the election campaign). As Roy Hattersley (2005) observed, Blunkett's promise of 'no selection under New Labour' was quickly qualified (indeed, the next day) as referring only to 'no *more* selection', a turn of emphasis that Blunkett persisted with, stating in 1997 that 'we are not intent on extending further the selective process' (Blunkett, cited by Dorrell, in Hansard, 1997b: column 670). Whilst the 1998 Education Standards and Framework Bill set out that no admissions arrangement for a maintained school may take provision for selection by ability there were to be several exceptions. With regards to Grammar schools there was to be no provision for the creation of new schools, however, dismantling existing schools 'would only follow a clear demonstration of support from parents affected by such decisions' (The Labour Party, 1995a). In the end a complex balloting system that gave individual communities the opportunity to remove grammar schools was introduced, effectively distancing the government from the decisions (Tulloch, 2006). Selectivity also continued in other areas. Clause 91 of the 1998 Act stated that there was to be no bar on existing selective arrangements in schools that were not Grammar schools. In specialist schools selection by aptitude was permitted, although capped at a maximum of 10% of intake for certain subjects (Edwards & Whitty, 1997). Prior selection by aptitude in other subjects was allowed to continue. Given the commitment to increasing the specialist schools initiative Hattersley (2001) rearticulated Blunkett's phrase once more: 'Read my lips. Creeping selection, introduced by stealth, is now government policy'.

Some commentators are keen to point out that whilst based upon the premise of 'standards, not structures' the White Paper of 1997, and the subsequent Education Act in 1998, were very much about structures. Tomlinson (2001) observes that 89 of the 145 sections of the Act were to do with school categorisation and organisation. Similarly, Dorrell (Hansard, 1997b: column 667) argues that 'it is not true to say that the [Education Standards and Framework] Bill does not deal with school structure' viewing it as a 'major restructuring' of the educational framework. However, as Webster &

Parsons (1999) rightly note, it is necessary to observe how the meaning of 'structures' was understood. Here it should be noted that New Labour dealt with structure in regard to individual schools, rather than to the structural relationship that existed between institutions. The focus on structure is therefore conceived in relation to the wider focus on individual standards of performance, that is, in terms of absolute performance rather than on the relational structure of success and failure as discussed above. As this section has observed, this latter understanding of structure, although acknowledged in official New Labour pronouncements, was not to be the subject of policy reform. Indeed, the competitive structure was utilised so as to create 'a climate in which schools are constantly challenged to compare themselves to other similar schools and adopt proven ways of raising their performance' (DfEE, 1997: 12). Alongside improving parental choice through the provision of greater information and the development of 'value-added' data, the DfES (DFEE, 1997) stated that schools themselves required a constant supply of performance data in comparison with other institutions, as well as a clear understanding of Governmental priorities, in order to effectively raise standards.

CHANGING GOVERNANCE

The new culture of education was therefore targeted at increasing educational achievement in all schools, and sought to do so by developing new attitudes towards attainment throughout the system. The concern with standards sought to use the existing structure to enhance the ways in which pressure was put on individual schools and practitioners in them. Thus, not only was performance data to encourage competition through the information available to parents, but was to inform governing bodies of headteacher effectiveness, to inform LEAs of school performance against targets, and where necessary to enable central Government to take its own action not only in relation to schools but also to LEAs.

Alongside this a new agenda of responsibility for learning was laid upon parents, families and local communities. The notion of responsibility in life and at work was tied to the development of a civilised and successful democratic society (DfEE, 1997), and relates heavily to the proposals of both Giddens (1998b) and Blair (1995c; 1999c) discussed in Chapter Four. Blunkett (DfEE, 1998c) further emphasised responsibility as a necessity of the lifelong learner stressing that 'the Learning Age will be built on a renewed commitment to self-improvement...'. An evident example of the responsibility laid upon parents was seen in relation to home-school contracts. Home-school contracts had the stated aim of engaging parents 'in raising pupils' achievements and in action to combat truancy, bullying and unacceptable behaviour which undermines pupils' progress' (DfES, 1997: 55) and were a statutory expectation of all schools. Although guided by Giddens's ethical principle that the expectation of responsibilities must apply to all not just the poor or needy (1998b), Hood & Ouston

(2000) point to tensions in a policy that was designed to tackle a few but implemented to all. In a similar way, concerns with the ethical application of the responsibilities agenda are seen in the fact that the failure to sign such a contract could not be used as an issue of selectivity for the purposes of schools admission. Indeed, whilst some MPs suggested that a parent's refusal to sign a contract should be used by schools as a factor for consideration in admissions, New Labour moved to repeal this provision of the Conservatives 1997 Education Act (Hansard, 1998: column 326). Deacon (2003) argues that they therefore lacked the 'welfare conditionality' that had appeared in other policy areas.

Whilst the Government remained in charge of setting national standards and targets, and of monitoring these through OFSTED, LEAs were also to perform as monitoring bodies at the local level. Although Education Development Plans were introduced to structure the LEA role in setting targets for school performance, the Code of Practice on LEA–School Relationships (DfEE, 1999) makes clear that LEA intervention was to be in the case of failing schools. Further, LEAs were themselves to be inspected by OFSTED and the extension of central power to intervene where improvement was not deemed sufficient was, according to Tomlinson (2005: 109) the end of 'any notion of democratic pluralism and partnership between central government and locally elected councillors'. Clearly, the role of the LEA marked out by New Labour can be contextualised in the changes that emanated from the Education Reform Act of 1988 (Ainscow et al., 2000). However, Blair's (1998a) outlining of his approach to local control, such that he opened the way for private organisations to take over the role of 'unwilling' LEAs, was, according to Temple (2000: 313), a decision that 'would have been inconceivable for previous administrations, *even* for the 1979-1990 Conservative governments'.

This new approach to partnerships was expressed clearly in the 1997 White Paper, closely tied to the goal of raising standards, and focused upon innovation:

> We will be alert to new ways of working with others to raise standards: new forms of Public/Private Partnership; new forms of collaboration between local and central government; new ways of involving parents in education; new relationships between private and state schools; and new ways of involving volunteers and working with voluntary organisation (DfES, 1997: 12).

Detailed in the White Paper were proposals for a number of small scale projects, some which were already in operation, to develop, for example, support for out of school study, involving schools working with LEAs, libraries, leisure facilities, arts organisations and other groups. Other projects included mentoring schemes and school-business links with the aim of raising aspiration amongst young people.

The use of partnerships and innovation was also applied to initiatives seeking to raise standards in areas of high disadvantage and underperforming schools. The Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative clearly demonstrated this commitment to disadvantaged urban areas. Blair (cited in TES, 1999) stated that the projects were to 'bring real urgency and purpose to the task of transforming standards and aspirations in the inner cities'. Therefore, projects were to extend learning opportunities and tackle barriers to learning through programmes directed towards both the lower and higher ability ranges. Thus, a Gifted and Talented scheme was established to provide greater opportunities for high ability learners, whilst a Learning Support Unit, alongside the use of Learning Mentors, sought to meet the educational and behavioural needs of underachievers. In these localised and individualised initiatives the standards agenda was reinforced by the belief that 'individual planning, target-setting and monitoring of pupil progress needs to apply to every pupil not just those with special education needs' (DfEE, 1999).

A further example of localised action was seen in the introduction of Education Action Zones (EAZs), launched in 1998. These Zones were to run as a three year project with an Action Forum the basis of bringing together parental, community, and business representation to form innovative partnerships that could 'take account of the distinctive characteristics of the areas involved' (DfES, 1997: 39). EAZs, whilst receiving specific funding from the Government, were also designed to bring in further money through partnership with business groups. Innovation was to be spurred not just by new partnerships but through flexibility with regards to the National Curriculum and teachers' pay (DfEE, 1999), a privilege that was, as noted above, restricted in the wider system. Whilst, as Hallgarten & Watling (2001) observe, business involvement with public education was already occurring through schemes such as Education Business Partnerships, the introduction of EAZs represented new opportunities, and motivations, for this engagement. Hallgarten &Watling (2001) identify several of these possibilities that partnerships could provide for both education and businesses alike. Firstly they note that private sector interest could make schools more responsive to the needs of industry, a point also made by Nick Tate, then Chief Executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority:

> Business needs to help us to revise the national curriculum so that it meets the needs of a rapidly changing economy. Business needs to tell us what qualities it is looking for in the young people pursuing qualifications in schools and colleges. Above all, business needs to be the dominant voice in the development of vocational qualifications (TES, 1998).

Further, on top of the management expertise that business could bring to the running of schools and Action Zones, the multi-agency approach presented opportunities for businesses themselves to gain experience working with agencies such as social services. Finally, through the provision of services 'Zones could prove ideal places for companies keen to market their products and services'

(Hallgarten & Watling, 2001: 145). Such developments were viewed critically by some as the privatisation of education and opening the door to a 'for profit' approach to management (Hatcher, 1998; STA, 1998).

New Labour viewed EAZs as 'the standard bearers in a new crusade uniting business, schools, local education authority and parents to modernise education in areas of social deprivation' (DfEE, 1998b). Indeed they represented several tenets of New Labour-*ism*, *s*uch as the focus on 'innovation', in their approach to deep-seated problems (DfEE, 1998b; Barber, 2000). Tony Blair stated in a speech at the launch of the second round of EAZs: 'We don't have a national blueprint - what matters is what works. We are keen to see EAZs pioneer new approaches to learning and achievement, for the benefit of their own communities and as an example to others' (Blair, 1999d). Both Margaret Hodge (cited in Gewirtz et al., 2004) and Stephen Byers (1998) also pointed to the EAZs as examples of the Third Way in practice. Indeed, with regards to attracting funding through private partnerships the development of EAZs reflected the 'what works' pragmatism espoused by New Labour. Similarly so the flexibility afforded to Zones in order to raise standards of achievement. However, EAZs also represented a new emphasis on community engagement and participation (DfES, 1997: 39) and reflected a broader approach to public service reform which also included Health Action Zones and the New Deal for Communities. These policies built upon new approaches to partnership in the provision of services, and developed a role for 'engaging local people in the development and delivery of policies' (Blunkett, cited in Jones & Bird, 2000: 491). As such, Carter (2002: 48) states, 'the combined focus upon local innovation, curriculum innovation, social inclusion and community involvement in EAZ policy, can be seen to represent a more general shift towards the concept of 'community-based' education as an underpinning feature of the 'third way''.

MODERNISING EQUALITY

This community basis also underpinned other policy initiatives launched by New Labour in their first term, such as Sure Start. Sure Start was launched in 1998 as part of a wider programme targeted at early years provision that included the National Childcare Strategy (despite, interestingly, early years provision itself not receiving a mention in the 1997 Election Manifesto) and a move that demonstrated significant change from the previous 'patchwork' attention to this area of policy under the Conservatives (Penn, 2007), as well as one that Walford (2006) conceded was based upon significant research evidence. A total of £452 million was made available for 250 Sure Start initiatives between 1998 and 2001, targeting 187,000 children in areas of high disadvantage.

Beyond a change in governance such localised, area-based initiatives reflected the New Labour concern with the bottom half of income distribution (Seldon & Kavanagh, 2005), both with regards to equality of opportunity and to raising educational standards. Enhancing equality of opportunity

was closely tied to issues of social alienation (Blair, 1996a), and the belief that educational attainment could be improved through parental and community involvement (Power & Gewirtz, 2001) resided in theories of social inclusion and social capital. Ranson (2000) notes that the concept of social inclusion connects with Third Way thinking in its attempts to move beyond an understanding of welfare based upon wealth distribution. Thus, whilst there was an element of redistribution through the funding commitments to EAZ and Sure Start policies, this was complemented both by the search for additional funding through the involvement of the private sector, and the goal of mobilising individuals in the development and delivery of initiatives, demonstrating to Power & Gewirtz (2001: 40) the recognition of 'cultural and associational dimensions of disadvantage' (although these are seen by them to be inadequately conceptualised). Perri 6 (1997) argues that whilst previous approaches to welfare have been based upon an assumption that skills and incentives are all that are needed to respond to issues of social exclusion, social networks are essential to making the creation of new jobs, financial projects of renovation, and advances in technology count in the goal of combating poverty. 6 argues that a role for government exists in stimulating the creation of these networks where 'in some of the most deprived places, the fabric of social networks has become so derelict that individual solutions will not be enough to enable people to make their exit from poverty' (1997: 1-2). In doing so he identifies a distinction between the networks required for enhanced success in the labour market, and those necessary for physical and psychological development. 6 states that it is 'weak' ties that 'span holes in social networks to reach acquaintances and friends of friends across many walks of life' (1997: 12) that are most effective in creating opportunities in the labour market. Thus, social mobility does not reside in skills and qualifications alone, but in the resources embedded in social networks. However, 'strong' ties are important for child development, reflecting a need for action directed at supporting these closer family relations. Importantly, identifying disadvantage with social exclusion is to recognise the necessity of individual power and agency, that is, people's capacity to control their own lives (Mulgan, 1998: 260). Thus, social approaches to welfare issues not only indicate that traditional concerns with income equality and material redistribution work on a limited understanding of poverty and disadvantage, but that meeting social requirements involves the participation of individuals themselves. In this way solutions cannot be premised upon the state acting on behalf of individuals. Here there is a clear role for schools, churches, charities and other agencies in offering the opportunity for such ties to be created and sustained (Perri 6, 1997: 13).

Carter (2002: 47), writing for the NCSL, argues that EAZs may be seen as 'an attempt to re-establish social justice, public service and stakeholding as key concepts in the management of the English education system'. Carter views EAZs as a Third Way response to the individualised consumerism

and loss of democratic control that was experienced in Conservative education reforms. EAZs are thus motivated by a concern for more inclusive forms of local democracy. Particularly, she argues that this shift represents a movement towards the democratic restructuring of education in the USA, described by Maguire & Ball (1994: 12) as rearticulating education 'as a communal issue and a matter of collective concern' where 'new forms of democratic participation in school-decision-making are being experimented with' and 'restructuring is related directly to issues of equity and justice in many settings'. Indeed, Ranson (2000) pointed to the potential of new forms of democratic community governance filling a 'vacuum' that had previously been filled with consumerist individualism. Thus, for Carter (2002), EAZ policy points to a concern not just with economic ends in education, but to education as a 'social liberator'. Indeed, in this first term much attention in the literature has been given to EAZs as the clearest example of a Third Way in education policy. As Power &Whitty (2001) note, this initiative bore initial similarity to the Educational Priority Areas launched under the Conservative administration, however, as argued above, EAZs have been established on a quite different conceptualisation of poverty and the means of breaking cycles of disadvantage. That EAZ policy also contains features of managerialism, private sector engagement, and multi-agency partnerships supports the view that in its own right this policy initiative is built upon a combination of many elements of Third Way-*ism*. Indeed, this intensity of Third Way application informed tensions that have been variously expressed in EAZ operation. These included concerns with privatisation and profit-making leading to tensions between different stakeholders (Hatcher, 1998) as well as managerial conflicts between partners (Gewirtz, 1999). Conflict was also observed between the concern with the standards agenda and the space for innovation (Gewirtz, 1999; Power & Gewirtz, 2001). As a result the extent to which community participation and engagement was a central feature of Education Action Zone management was questioned. Jones & Bird (2000) described the situation as being both centralising and localising where:

> simultaneously...the Department seeks through the definition and monitoring of targets and outcomes a close control of the aims and objectives of the zones; and, while it speaks in terms of promoting and empowering local initiative, the DfEE also makes use of its presence for the first time in the local governance of education to steer through its preferred agenda (Jones & Bird, 2000: 498).

Thus, in its attempts to improve equality of opportunity for those in disadvantaged areas Power & Gewirtz (2001) state that the concern with injustice is complicated by its interaction at economic, cultural, and associational levels. Whilst New Labour demonstrated an awareness of associational and cultural injustices, Power & Gewirtz argue that the remedies established in EAZ policy are either 'superficial' or misrepresented.

This section has noted that New Labour sought in its first term to develop a new culture of education. Indeed, this culture was to extend outside the realm of compulsory education under the promotion of 'lifelong learning'. New Labour's publication *'The Learning Age'* (DfEE, 1998c), which built upon the University of Industry Green Paper (The Labour Party, 1994), stated that:

> Learning is the key to prosperity...To achieve stable and sustainable growth, we will need a well-educated, well-equipped and adaptable labour force. To cope with rapid change we must ensure that people can return to learning throughout their lives. We cannot rely on a small elite: we will need the creativity, enterprise and scholarship of all our people (Blunkett, in The Learning Age, DfEE, 1998c).

The 1997 White Paper (DfEE, 1997), and subsequent Education and Inspections Bill, set out a range of initiatives to increase participation in education and learning, focusing on increasing adult involvement as 'parents, at work and as citizens'. The Learning and Skills Council formed in 2000 under the Learning and Skills Act was posited to be 'the most significant and far reaching reform ever enacted in relation to post-16 learning in this country' (Blunkett, cited in Fullick, 2004: 3), and the Government set key targets for adult learners: a 50% rate of participation of the 18-30 age in higher education, improving the basic skills levels of 1.5 million adults between 2001 and 2007, and reducing by 40% by 2010 the number of adults who lacked an NVQ2 qualification.

Whilst both the national and personal goals of prosperity and fulfilment through education have been observed, it is the relationship between these that is of note. Thus, it has been seen that personal fulfilment is resides in a prosperous national economy, and this prosperity on the mobilisation of the whole population in the labour market. Further, the mobilisation of individuals was recognised to require not only increasing skills and qualifications but the resources and solidarity provided through social networks and participation. Such conceptualisations have shown a requirement for activity on the part of the individual developed through increasing participation and responsibility. The place of community and the social contextualisation of individuals has thus been an important feature of policy in this first term. Concepts such as social exclusion/inclusion and social capital have been seen above to provide a basis for new ways of understanding and approaching disadvantage and inequality in education.

The development of social capital in policy initiatives can be seen as a means of 'embedding' the clear human capital focus that also resides in the goals of education reform. The motivations for this move can be detected at several levels. Firstly, a moral concern, particularly in relation to the notion of individual responsibility, follows Castell's (1995) assertion that social exclusion is the process of becoming detached from the moral order of mutual rights and obligation. This serves to reiterate

the importance of embedding the individual in society that flows from concerns with productivity and cohesion. In making human capital productive social capital theory posits the social arena as allowing individuals to find opportunities to put to use the skills and qualifications that they have invested in through education and training. Social capital is therefore, as Lin (2002: 19) puts forward, an 'investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace' where 'individuals engage in interactions and networking in order to produce profits'. Whilst this to some extent responds to the moral objective of moving beyond a self-interested individualism, the legitimacy of social capital as a feature of policy also resides in its ability to deal effectively with the complexities and interrelatedness of the modern world (Baron et al., 2000). Thus, it should not be seen to replace or contest the place of human capital in policy-making, but rather it complements other instruments of policy analysis that have been concerned with a top-down, mechanistic approach to economic and social life (Baron et al., 2000). Social capital therefore seeks to go beyond an understanding of skills and knowledge as an individual's major asset in the labour market (Lin, 2002: 14) by recognising the importance of relations between individuals as in themselves major contributors to individual and communal productivity. Here detachment and disadvantage are understood not just as spatially localised but also historically located, that is, as a product of the conditions of contemporary society. The notion of social complexity and interrelatedness parallels Giddens's outlining of 'late' modernity in which the need to 're-embed' individuals is a key concern. This concern with social cohesion again finds its importance at both individual and societal level where it is crucial both to individual freedom and to economic prosperity (Giddens, 1994a). The focus on enhancing individual power and agency echoes Giddens's concern not just with the rights of individuals to control their own lives, but also the necessity of a new 'active' individualism in responding to the chances and choices that 'late' modernity offers. As Finlayson (1999: 276-7) notes, 'for Giddens, equality matters because inequality leads to disaffection and conflict, undermining social cohesion...The ethics of equality are not derived from its being a key principle as such, but because the effects of its absence are an offence against the constitution of a cohesive society'. Thus, whilst Power & Whitty (2001) suggest that the mantra of 'education for the many, not the few' hints at a return to the egalitarianism of the old left, such a statement should not be read as the expression of an outright 'value', but of a value contextualised in the recognition that 'to compete in the global economy...we will have to unlock the potential of every young person (Blunkett, in DfEE, 1997: 3). This situation is reflected in New Labour's concern with raising absolute levels of standards, and with equality of opportunity rather than of outcome. Here the ideological value of equality of outcome is neither required by the demands that 'late' modernity makes through economy and society, nor is it an achievable goal: 'The truth is that any government entering the 21st century

cannot hope to create a more equal or egalitarian society simply by taking money from one set of people and redistributing it to others' (Blunkett, cited in Hattersley, 1997). New Labour's role as an 'enabling government' was therefore concerned with those in the bottom half of achievement, whilst not seeking to unsettle those at the top. A project of restructuring, with the goal of equality of outcome, would likely run the risk of limiting success at the top thereby damaging national economic potential (not to mention the electoral concerns of tampering with the middle-class advantage (Tomlinson, 2005)). As Blair himself expressed succinctly, 'it's not a burning ambition for me to make sure that David Beckham earns less money' (cited in Sefton & Sutherland, 2005).

Initiatives such as Sure Start, Excellence in Cities, and Education Action Zones therefore represented new approaches to education reform in this regard. However, as noted above, the Third Way has also been expressed through new approaches to management, governance, and provision that have caused tensions and conflicts in the partnership model. Further, as this section has made clear, the dominant concern with standards, whilst legitimated through the Third Way in terms of going 'beyond' old arguments over structures, has directed policy initiatives towards raising absolute standards, rather than towards the relations that might govern relative 'success' and 'failure'. Thus, whilst EAZs perhaps represented the clearest expression of the Third Way with regards to the modernisation of approaches to educational provision and their community focus, it is important not to lose sight of the broader project in which they took place. Here the goal of raising education standards was paramount. Indeed Blair (1999e) stated:

> ...EAZs are about raising standards dramatically. They are not about innovation for its own sake, or for topping up budgets, but about projects closely targeted on raising achievement in a defined period, particularly in schools which need support over and above that which they are already receiving. We therefore expect bids to pay attention to achievement targets agreed nationally and locally - not least our targets for raising attainment in English and maths at 11, for improving success rates across the board at GCSE, for cutting truancy and non-attendance, and for promoting participation post-16.

In this regard much of the literature published on this period of reform under New Labour has attempted to demonstrate what hasn't changed. Particular focus is laid upon the structure of the education system. As has been noted the structure of open enrolment was not been altered, neither was there any opposition to private schools, nor a sustained attempt to abolish the Grammar school system. Indeed, the delegation of grammar school admissions and the continuation of maintained school selectivity to local level decision-making reflected a lack of desire on the part of central government to be involved in a restructuring project of this sort.

Whilst policies such as those concerning setting and extending specialist schools have been introduced, these did not challenge the middle-class advantage to the operation of choice (Whitty, 1998; Hill, 1999; Power & Whitty, 1999). For Whitty (1998) this demonstrated a concern with what was easy and popular rather than on 'what works', whilst for Tomlinson (2005: 101) it ensured 'a continuation of a divided and divisive school system'. Here the political situation must be acknowledged, for as was argued in the previous chapter, New Labour had sought to gain power through an appeal to a new electorate described variously as that of 'Middle England'. Electoral concerns therefore play an evident role in the nature of reform and the extent of radicalism that this might have produced. Thus, for Hattersley (2001), New Labour's stance in this first term of office was one of demonstrating how the Party had changed: 'The refusal to keep its promises on comprehensive education is – like the early attacks on teachers, the imposition of tests, the tables and all the other bureaucratic obligations – an attempt to convince middle England that Labour no longer holds with any of that equality nonsense'. Similarly the Economist (2010) argued that Blair's 'chief intention was to satisfy concerned middle-class parents' which meant a focus on choice and quality for them rather than a fundamental restructuring of education itself (see also Davies, 1999). Rather, there were attempts to 'soften' the effects of the quasi-market system such as the appointment of a schools adjudicator and the development of parental right to appeal to an independent panel with regards to admissions, changes that reflected a reactive form of regulation that kept the main structures in place (West & Pennel, 2002). Policy reform can therefore be seen to take place at the 'margins' (West & Pennel, 2002: 218) and posed little effect on the consequences of the broader system which worked against those schools to which the Government had devoted so much attention (Davies, 1999).

This situation led to portrayals of New Labour as merely continuing under the neo-liberal influence of the Conservative administration. The presence of policy continuity between New Labour's approach to education and the context in which they took power is undeniable. However, what is more open to debate is whether these trajectories represented the 'natural' continuation of Conservative reforms, an intensification of these, or the foundations of a new approach. For example, whilst Temple (2000) notes that the pragmatism towards service provision displayed by New Labour would have been 'unthinkable' under the previous administration, it was not yet clear as to which of the above trajectories such policy development spoke.

This study has, through its examination of the 'Third Way', argued that New Labour demonstrated a desire to build a substantial new basis for reform in education. Given the electoral concerns of a party hoping to become the 'natural party of government' it is perhaps unsurprising that these 'policies for the middle' (Tomlinson, 2005) had continued. As noted in the previous chapter, it was

unlikely that the shape of New Labour's project would become clear until their second term in office was secured (Ludlam, 2004). As much was acknowledged retrospectively by Michael Barber (2007: 23), who stated with regards to the focus on standards over structures, 'I have no doubt it was right for the first term, because it was the key to improving results in the first few years, which in turn gave people confidence'. Indeed, at the time he argued that the approach to policy was centred upon that 'which extends, deepens, builds upon and transforms the reforms of the previous government, rather than reversing them' (Barber, 2000: 5). This period therefore presents some areas of policy which have been left largely unchanged, and some which have been extended or intensified, such as the role of government in managing and driving school standards. Yet there are several dimensions in which education policy in this period should be seen as new. Most notably is the focus on social inclusion, and importantly the wider conceptualisation of social justice that underpins this. What might be seen as the most significant observation on this period is the *way* in which things have changed. As Temple (2002: 313) argued, 'something genuinely *new* is happening in British politics. The agenda is not ideologically driven, but output driven, although it must be stressed that a focus on outputs does not preclude a commitment to central values, which New Labour clearly has'. Thus, whilst EAZs pointed to new directions and understandings for education policy they were underpinned by a clear concern for meeting the demands of contemporary society. Indeed, it is these demands that both contextualise and legitimise such new explorations in modes of governance, funding, participation and democracy. Tackling poverty was to be a governmental priority in a way not experienced under the Conservatives (see Townsend & Kennedy, 2004) with direct schemes such as EAZs and EiCs. However, in these the centralised concern with standards is common throughout. It is in this way that the 'non-ideological' nature of the Third Way may become clear. That is, neither a concern with national and personal prosperity nor with values of equality and social cohesion exist outright, but they find their value in responding to conditions of 'late' modernity. Thus, whilst the new focus on social inclusion might mark out New Labour's education policy in this period as different from that which went before (West & Pennel, 2002), and in doing so demonstrates a commitment to new values (Barber, 2000; Temple, 2000; Carter, 2002), 'its ethical justification derives from a sociological analysis of the condition of society' (Finlayson, 1999: 277).

Whilst New Labour had used the Third Way to justify moving beyond the past without necessarily resolving the debates that had dominated it, concerns raised in this first term posed doubts over how sustainable such an approach remained. In particular the lack of attention to structural reform, and the maintenance of middle class advantage, informed critique from several vantage points. As discussed previously, Power and Gewirtz (2001) argue that in the attempts to develop social inclusion there are tensions between the evident socio-economic goals of education and pursuing

'deep' forms of understanding cultural injustices. Here the outcome orientated approach to policy is limited by a narrow definition of goals. Developing further from this concern with 'cultural' forms of injustice attention might be drawn to the extent to which ideas of social capital, whilst significant, were developed by New Labour. Here Blair's (2002) explicit reference to Putnam in his Fabian Society pamphlet in 2002 is of interest. Putnam (1995: 665) argued that social capital is of greater importance when it can 'link substantial sectors of the community and span social cleavages'. Thus, this perspective entails a move beyond an understanding of social capital as arising from social relationships and networks 'in which trust, co-operations, reciprocity and norms can develop' to one which considers the 'value' of different network ties' (Perri 6, 1997: 27). The value of social capital therefore relates to the network of relations in which it is found. Putnam (1995) states that resources offered by social capital arising from relations that link individuals to important sectors of their community, or that provide connections outside of their social 'class' are of greater worth than those which offer only 'intra-group' relationships. Perri 6 (1997)argues that it is 'network poverty' characterised by isolation, weak tie poverty, strong tie poverty, and network transition poverty, that is responsible for an individual's inability to 'exit' from poverty. The attention to this more sophisticated conception of social networks as 'rich' or 'poor' thus allows for a clearer understanding of social capital and its value (Perri 6, 1997: 27). As Putnam (1995) himself argues, the strength of 'bonding' ties can cause social capital to contribute to social inequality unless forms of 'bridging' capital can also be developed and utilised. Again, in reference to concerns over the reinforcement of the opportunities available to different social groupings, several commentators have seen the expansion of vocational training opportunities in policies directed towards the 'bottom half' as potentially creating a 'second class curriculum' for such pupils (Madden, 1999). Thus, questions are raised over the extent to which attempts to develop social capital have challenged or reinforced existing social cleavages.

Carter (2002: 48) argued that EAZs were the forerunner to 'the kind of education service which certainly local (if not central) government propose as being necessary in transforming education to meet the needs of the 21st century'. Here local forms of governance were central in responding to need, however, what was less clear were 'the specific conditions under which such participation and innovative practices have been nurtured' (Carter, 2002: 58). For local government to be legitimate and in the public interest, Temple (2002: 321) argued that 'the Third Way must *trust* local policy-making communities and embrace local autonomy, rejoice in encouraging a variety of responses to difficult problems and, most importantly, encourage and support local government as a pivot of legitimacy for policy-making networks'. After a highly managerial start, would New Labour's second term therefore see more 'letting go'? Given the nature of reform so far grounded in a non-

ideological, sociological efficacy, it should be expected that any development of a more radical approach to reform, particularly surrounding the structure of the education system, would be informed by the extent to which the inequalities of the present system were seen by New Labour to detract from its ability to meet the demands of 'late' modernity.

2001-2005: MAKING THE SECONDARY PRIMARY

New Labour won the 2001 General Election in similarly convincing style to that of 1997 with a net loss of only six seats ensuring they held onto a considerable parliamentary advantage, and with Tony Blair going on to become the first Labour Prime Minister to serve a full second consecutive term in office. Thus, with the second term secured, the period presented the opportunity that Ludlam (2004) had described for the Third Way project to become clear. Certainly this desire had been reflected in the Election Manifesto, casting the first term as the foundation for larger change, and with the chance now 'to build the future properly, to make the second term the basis for a radical programme of British renewal' (The Labour Party, 2001). As Wintour (2000) commented, New Labour had not looked to go into the election with a 'safety-first' manifesto. Renewal was again centred upon a strong and stable economy, a necessity repeated throughout the Manifesto document. However, education was to remain as the Government's priority, and was variously positioned with regards to its contribution to economic growth, the consequential raising of standards of living, wealth, and the individual opportunities that flowed from these which were the 'passion' of Blair's modernisation of Britain. The 'dynamic and productive economy of the future' (The Labour Party, 2001) was to be built upon sound economic management, investment in public services, and a continuing approach to refashion the welfare state. This programme of modernisation again resonated with the themes of the Third Way project. Standards of living were to be raised through ensuring productivity and national competitiveness in world markets. The prioritisation of education, and the mantra of 'excellence for the many, not just the few', was explicitly tied to the need to 'harness the individual talents of every pupil', thus continuing the human capital imperatives. However, this context of national and personal prosperity was again seen as requiring an attention to the social as well as the economic, thus:

> Fairness and enterprise go together. It is up to government to do everything it can to help ensure that no individual and no community is left behind...Every extra trained employed worker contributes to a fairer society, as well as a more prosperous one. With social failure, from school drop-outs to crime, comes economic failure (The Labour Party, 2001).

Similarly the role of government alongside that of individuals was re-emphasised where central policy was to enable an equality of opportunity with individual responsibility and 'hard work' the means to access this and benefit from a shared corporate wealth.

This context shaped the outline for education reform as building on the success of the first term's commitment to primary schools with a similar attention to the secondary sector as the 'critical challenge of the next decade' (The Labour Party, 2001). The Green Paper, *Building on Success* (DfES, 2001a) again located the primary goal of modernisation in the demands of the knowledge economy and modern society, requirements that could be 'simply stated' as competency in the basics of literacy, numeracy and ICT in a broad curriculum; the development of individual aptitudes and abilities tied to formal qualification and progression to post-16 education or training; and that, through schools, pupils gain 'a strong sense of independence and responsibility, to themselves and their wider community' (DfES, 2001a: 4). However, despite the apparent simplicity of these goals, the Green Paper stated that they placed greater demands upon secondary schools than in previous generations. In particular the issue of raising minority achievement was tied to the demands of contemporary society, and thus to consequential changes in the provision of secondary education. The Green Paper stated that historically poor performance was rooted in a society and economy where:

> Parental expectations of secondary schools were generally low, particularly in regions with plentiful unskilled 'jobs for life' in the local industries. Throughout the economy the demand for skills and qualifications, and all types of further and higher education, was also lower than today. There was general acceptance that only a minority would reach the age of 16 with significant formal skills and qualifications, particularly if destined for a vocational route beyond (DfES, 2001a: 4).

Contemporary society and economy were therefore clearly positioned as the basis for new reforms that the above statement indicates would need to be directed not only at schools, but at the wider 'education community', particularly the role of parents. The Green Paper made clear that the comprehensive system of the past, as well as being a reaction to the selective system of the post-war years, was shaped by the social forces of this period. Thus, for New Labour modernisation could not mean a return to the comprehensive ideal for it represented a response to different historical dynamics. Instead the principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity as well as provision for individual aptitude – a 'system appropriate for the 21st century' (DfES, 2001a: 5) – were to be met through strong leadership, local management, and a strong sense of individual character and ethos – traits that the comprehensive system was unable to provide where inclusion had become a goal in itself and where structural and pedagogical systems limited individuality. Tomlinson (2003) argues

that these arguments against the comprehensive system worked on the basis of stereotype and caricature rather than reality, and that recent decades had witnessed the gradual undermining and destabilisation of 'the principles, infrastructure and purpose of comprehensive education' (an argument similarly made by John Dunford, cited in Wintour, 2000). The clarity and explicitness of New Labour's desire to move beyond the comprehensive approach therefore stands out, although, as Michael Barber recalls (2007: 38), in taking this stance there was an awareness of the upset it would cause. Barber states that in preparing the 2001 Green Paper the biggest challenge lay in balancing Tony Blair's concern for modernisation and the need to move to a 'post-comprehensive era' with the concern raised by David Blunkett over the reaction that this would receive from both those in the educational field and in the Labour Party itself. In the end the pronouncement by Blair's then Director of Communication and Strategy, Alastair Campbell, of the end of the 'bog standard' comprehensive put across the nature of the reforms rather more bluntly than the Green Paper itself had dared, and was a phrase that served to dominate much of the media commentary on these reforms. Despite this, in whichever way it was stated, the message was clear that for New Labour diversity was the means by which reform could take a modernising direction. Indeed, diversity acted as the mechanism by which several of New Labour's approaches to the education system were to be developed.

DIVERSITY

Diversity had been a key feature in Conservative education reform as they sought to develop a system based upon choice and competition (Woods & Woods, 2002; Taylor et al., 2005). This was largely achieved by removing schools from local authority control and extending governing and admissions rights to schools themselves in order to promote parental choice that had been 'suppressed' under LEA control (Edwards & Whitty, 1997). Taylor et al. (2005) note that diversity has had a historical place in the education system, including a plurality of school types in the pre and post-war periods, as well as in the era of comprehensivisation. However, whilst diversity in these periods was based upon school type, post-1988 diversity in the education system was characterised by the effect of marketisation in different areas of the country (Taylor et al., 2005). New Labour's reconfiguration of schools as community, voluntary-aided, or foundation was, according to Taylor et al. (2005: 53) not only a formal acknowledgement of plurality, but 'it maintained the autonomy that [voluntary aided] and [grant-maintained] schools had in controlling their own admissions policies'. However, New Labour's embracing of diversity in the state system also came with several new emphases. These challenged existing justifications based upon marketisation, as well as seeking to use diversity to create a new framework based on partnership and collaboration. Both were evident to a certain extent in 1997 with *Excellence in Schools* noting that 'there is value in encouraging

diversity by allowing schools to develop a particular identity, character and expertise' (DfEE, 1997: 66), and Blunkett had, in 1996, pointed to the expectation that specialist schools would share their expertise through networks of schools (cited in Edwards & Whitty, 1997: 14). However, diversity received much greater attention in this second term – a focus that was justified now that, according to the Government, sufficient progress had been made in the primary sector and the basics had been secured (DfES, 2001b: 5).

In the emphasis upon developing individual schools with 'a distinct ethos, mission and centre of excellence' (The Labour Party, 2001), diversity was to act as a driving force for performance. Despite, as Tomlinson notes, the work of Benn & Chitty (1996, cited in Tomlinson, 2005: 122) pointing to comprehensive schools as having already developed a local and individual approach to their provision, New Labour's concern appeared to suggest that the comprehensive system was unable to provide the dynamic necessary for contemporary demands. Whilst comprehensive institutions might have held a distinctive ethos they were structurally unable to raise standards or move beyond inclusion as a goal in itself. Here the new focus on the development of a distinctive ethos and mission was to enable 'pride' and 'passion' as characteristics that promoted success – presumably, in a way that was not possible under a 'comprehensive' label. Such pride was to be the basis of bringing together staff, pupils and parents in working towards a common goal of excellence (DfES, 2001a). Estelle Morris, then Secretary of State for Education, stated, 'this greater diversity is good for pupils and parents and will ensure there is more choice and innovation in the school system' (Morris, cited in Beck, 2003: 26).

Central to this feature of diversity was the specialist schools programme as a 'flagship' model. The expansion of specialist schools was as much a means of enabling this institutional distinction as it was a way of offering a specialised education for pupils. As the 2003 paper *A New Specialist System* (DfES, 2003a: 11) argued, 'specialist schools have been successful first and foremost because they have provided a means for inspirational headteachers to forge a distinctive mission and ethos which is right for their school'. Indeed, it was mainly through specialist schools that institutional diversity was to be increased – the 2001 White Paper, *Schools: Achieving Success* (DfES, 2001b), set out that all schools, subject to meeting certain requirements, would be able to take on specialist status, with a milestone set of a minimum 1,500 such schools by 2005 (in fact, over 2,000 were operating by this time). For those not meeting requirements a new 'working towards' category was introduced in which schools could set out their intended direction of progress. The range of specialisms was also to be increased to include science, engineering, business and enterprise, mathematics, and computing, as well as combinations of these where appropriate, in addition to those that already existed in languages, technology, arts, and sports. This was broadened further in *A New Specialist*

System (DfES, 2003a) which announced specialisms in the humanities, music, and rural studies. The increase in annual spending on specialist schools from £41 million in 1997-8 to over £145 million by 2003-4 reflected their importance in the modernisation of secondary education. New Labour claimed that this reliance on the specialist school model was based on their proven success in raising standards (DfES, 2001b) citing research carried out by David Jesson (2001) into the relative value-added performances of specialist and non-specialist schools. Various critiques of this research have been put forward, including the impact of additional resources and structural inequalities as unrecognised influences in school performance (Tomlinson, 2005). Similarly, the requirement for schools to raise £50,000 of private investment as part of their specialist application was seen as a further potential limiting factor to schools in disadvantaged areas (although this amount was a reduction from the £100,000 that was required of the Conservatives specialist technology colleges, a policy forerunner in the specialism trajectory, whilst New Labour also emphasised a desire for schools from socially deprived areas to apply for specialist status (DfES, 2003a)). Thus, whilst specialism may have been a contributing factor to success, there were clear methodological difficulties in demonstrating this, and simplistic approaches to analysis were liable to cover over important complexities (Levacic & Jenkins, 2004; Schagen & Goldstein, 2002; Taylor et al., 2005). As Gorard & Taylor (2001: 5) note, 'while [Jesson's] report makes some reference to the issue of structural advantages offered to a specialist school, such as from additional resources and increasing popularity of a school, it tends to play these down as explanatory factors'. Bell & West (2003) argue that the research evidence is unclear on the extent to which the performance of specialist schools is achieved at the expense of others. Indeed, the evidence base upon which New Labour based its proposals for specialist schools was questioned by the Education and Skills Committee in its *Diversity of Provision* report (ESC, 2003a: para 125): 'It is a matter of concern the Government has made its decision to extend access to the specialist schools programme and associated funding to all schools, in the absence of clear evidence as to the alleged benefits of specialism, balanced against those of other initiatives'. The Schools Minister at the time, David Miliband, in his evidence to the Education and Skills Committee (ESC 2003b), appeared to agree that specialist status itself was not a guarantee of high achievement, stating 'what I can say to you is that for every group of schools - in the inner city or out, with specialist status, without, with an ethnic minority achievement grant, without - there is diversity of achievement'. Again the structural relations that existed between competing schools were not to be the focus of attention. Defending against accusations that league tables of data from national tests informed a competitive structure that brought about a polarising effect for schools Miliband stated, 'we publish the data and in my experience what parents talk about is not that X school is fourth in the league table, what they say is 'In that school 80 per cent of kids are

getting level four'. It is actually the achievement of the individual school that is more important than its so-called ranking in the league table' (Miliband, in ESC, 2003b). Indeed, he argued that the 'residual' diversity was dependent upon 'how teaching and learning is organised and that is where we can have our biggest impact' (Miliband, in ESC, 2003b). New Labour's focus, as seen through the specialism model, thus clearly continued to lie with individual school performance, and without attention to the effects of inter-institutional relations arising from policies of open enrolment and per capita funding. Specialist or not, it was the organisation of teaching and learning in schools that was seen as key to performance. Specialism did, however, create the opportunity for 'inspirational headteachers' to develop a distinctive ethos and mission that, as noted above, accounted for the desire to extend this particular model of diversity. 'Celebrating' a school's new specialist identity was to contribute to whole school performance as well as tackling issues of attendance and behaviour (DfES, 2003a).

This individualistic approach was not only based upon a rejection of the influences of competitive structural relations, but also of socio-economic status as a causal factor in achievement:

> While the stronger correlation is between social class, broadly speaking, and educational achievement, it is also the case that for every social class mix in the schools there are wide ranges of achievement so do not confuse a correlation between social class and achievement and the universal under-performance of either poor kids or schools with a lot of poor kids. You must not fall into that trap (Miliband, in ESC, 2003b).

As noted above this 'residual' was to be understood, and targeted, in terms of the organisation of teaching and learning, as Stephen Twigg also argued in relation to the factors determining school league table performance:

> Probably the single biggest [factor] will still be the circumstances of the school socially and economically, but in that there will be great variation between schools in similar circumstances. We can have the discussion about how we define the similar circumstances but I think all of us would see, even from our own constituencies, schools that broadly speaking have similar intakes in terms of social and economic background but where, because of the learning and teaching and leadership in the schools, the results and other features of the school will vary greatly (Twigg, in ESC, 2003b).

A focus upon teaching, learning, and leadership was thus a central feature of policy developed in New Labour's second term. As noted previously, the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) had been established in 1998 to drive transformations in school leadership. Its importance to the New Labour programme was expounded by Blair who stated that the NCSL had become 'a major

influence, arguably the major influence, on school leadership, management and administration in England and beyond' (Blair, cited in Bush 2004: 243). Indeed, this was reflected in the substantial funding that it acquired, up from £29.2m in 2001-2 to £111.3m in 2004-5.

Further institutional diversity in this period was developed through the expansion of Beacon schools (later reorganised as Leading Edge Partnerships) and the creation of Academies. The relatively lower numbers of each (at this point), and the area-based nature of the Academies initiative, continued to position the specialist programme as the central model of diversity. However, the importance of each is seen clearly in relation to the development of partnerships and networks in the education system. As such, these initiatives are considered in more detail later in this section.

DIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The desire to extend diversity in the education system was also presented at an individual, as well as institutional, level. Again the rhetoric supporting this was closely linked to the demands of human capital and the economic demands of today's world where manual work was disappearing and highly skilled individuals were required (Blair, cited in BBC, 2001). In this context Blair argued that the principle of inclusion, whilst good, could not be an end in itself. Rather, it was necessary to identify individual talents and abilities (Blair, cited in Woodward, 2001). New Labour's concern to provide excellence for everyone, as well as to meet the demand for skills from industry, led to a greater emphasis on vocational courses and qualifications (Prideaux, 2005). The 1997 White Paper (DfEE, 1997) had sought to expand work-related learning and extend pilots of the new Part One GNVQs, as well as developing more links between schools and businesses. However, as Tomlinson (2005) notes, the expansion of work-related learning was a policy focused mostly upon disaffected young people. Thus, vocational education was heavily tied to those from lower socio-economic groups, and served to reinforce the 'lesser' status that it had historically suffered in the education system. The 2001 White Paper (DfES, 2001b) considerably developed the attention to vocational education where it was envisaged that vocational study and work experience would be a feature of education for many more young people, and as such looked to strengthen the pathways of training and qualifications in the 14-19 sector and create 'greater recognition of high quality vocational routes to success' (DfES, 2001b: 31). Reforms at the 14-19 level were part of an approach that sought to develop a skills strategy drawing together all phases of education from the early years to adult education. As Tomlinson (2005: 142) states, the focus was not on a job for life, but on employability for life. A clear emphasis was placed on raising the numbers of young people in education or training post-16: 'Too many young people perceive age 16 as the end for formal education' (DfES, 2001b: 30). Responding to international comparisons that showed the UK ranked 25th out of 29 developed nations for 17 year-old participation in education and training, the White Paper set a goal of 50% of young people

progressing to Higher Education by 2010 (DfES, 2001b: 31). This area of reform was subject to a Green Paper, *14-19 Extending Opportunities: Raising Standards*, released in 2002, where the themes of social cohesion and the development of a responsible work-based citizenry as the basis of welfare reform were evident: 'Low motivation, truancy, behaviour problems and exclusion damage our communities and burden our economy' (DfES, 2002a: 1). The Green Paper also set out the contemporary demands made of young people at a more personal level: 'they can find the world and their lives more complex and more confusing...Between 14 and 19, young people are striving to develop their personal and social identities: they are assertive yet lacking self-confidence and vulnerable in their inexperience' (DfES, 2002a: 2). Further, there was a commitment to reducing the gap in achievement between socio-economic and ethnic groups and increase participation in further and higher education as part of an 'overall mission of building a modern Britain based on economic success and social justice' (DfES, 2002a: 3).

Through a combination of the extension of choice and flexibility, raising the status of vocational options, and making pathways of progression to further and higher education clearer, New Labour sought to transform the 14-19 field of education. The 2003 White Paper, *Opportunity and Excellence 14-19*, also argued that a longer term approach was necessary in order to strengthen the vocational aspect of education, noting that reform would occur through a managed five to ten year programme (DfES, 2003b). The White Paper placed greater choice and a unified qualifications framework as central features of this transformation, citing the potential for a Baccalaureate-style system (DfES, 2003b: 7). Responsibility for the development of proposals surrounding these long-term objectives was charged to Mike Tomlinson as part of a Working Group for 14-19 reform.

In the short-term the policy programme to raise the status of vocational education included the introduction of eight new vocational GCSEs in 2002 and made available to all schools in 2003. The 2003 White Paper (DfES, 2003b) also laid out plans for 'hybrid' GCSEs that offered an applied route of study as an alternative to the academic. The Government were keen to point out that there was to be no distinction between these and 'traditional' GCSEs (with a similar proposal made for A2 qualifications). To further reinforce their status vocational options were not aimed specifically at the 'disaffected' but were instead replaced by the expectation that 'high-quality and well-respected courses and qualifications should become attractive to the full spectrum of ability including many young people who aspire to entry to higher education' (DfES, 2002a: 9). Further changes were made to expand the Modern Apprenticeships scheme and to introduce greater flexibility into the 14-19 curriculum, as well as offering more support and guidance on educational routes (in a system where, as West & Steedman (2003) note, there were over 2000 separate vocational qualifications on offer). Financial assistance and, indeed, incentive, was offered through the introduction of Education

Maintenance Allowances (EMA) from September 2004 on a means-tested basis, as well as more indirect incentivisation through the Connexions Card initiative. Research commissioned by the DfES into pilot programmes of EMA had produced positive results with more young people with relatively low levels of achievement at GCSE/GNVQ level encouraged to enter post-16 education in order to raise their qualification levels (Ashworth et al., 2002). Similarly, work by Chowdry et al. (2007) found greater attainment by ethnic minorities in these pilot areas.

A focus upon diversity at an individual level also appeared in regards to achievement in schools. This 'in school variation' was described by Miliband as 'poor kids in schools that are not particularly poor and getting left behind' (in ESC, 2003b). Expansion of the Excellence in Cities initiative, and in particular the use of learning mentors for underachieving pupils, was presented as a key means of targeting these individuals and meeting their learning needs.

However, recognising such diversity of achievement was not only about raising performance levels at the bottom. At the other end of the spectrum New Labour also sought to address concerns, arising particularly in the middle-classes, over the quality and availability of provision: 'There is a significant chunk of them who go private because they feel despairing about the quality of education' (Clarke, cited in Harris & Ranson, 2005; Ranson, 2008). These concerns were, according to Tomlinson (2005), predicated on the belief that it was becoming increasingly harder to access good quality education as a result of selective techniques and middle-class manoeuvring. This was reflected by the Education and Skills Committee report on school admissions in 2004 (ESC, 2004a). As West, in her evidence to the Committee noted, whilst the majority of schools were not found to use overt or covert means of selection, the minority that did had consequences for the wider system (ESC, 2004b: para 5.5). Blair was keen to state that state schools 'should be as dedicated as any private schools or old grammar schools to high achievement of the most able' (Wintour, 2000). Accordingly there was a focus upon extending provision for the gifted and talented, including extra tuition and extra provision such as the Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth based at Warwick University which provided extra-curricular activities for gifted children from all schools. The Government also demanded 'rigorous setting' as the default mode for school organisation including 'target-grouping', 'fast-tracking', 'accelerated learning' and 'the systematic teaching of thinking skills' (DfEE, 1997: 38; Blair, cited in Wintour, 2000). Tomlinson (2005) argues that this focus on the needs of the middle classes was continuing to result in the polarisation of schools and types of qualification as they engaged in complex forms of competitive behaviour to ensure they maintained their educational advantage. An Audit Commission report also acknowledged this polarisation, but noted that Local Authorities, unable to engage in social engineering, were limited in the extent to which they could develop strategies to avoid this, and were focusing on more informal approaches

such as school twinning and citizenship education (OFSTED, 2003). New Labour's attempts to reform the nature and status of vocational education, although conceived in a vision for a modernised Britain, and necessitated by the conditions of the contemporary economic and social situation, were to fit into a long history of failed attempts to bring a solution to the vocational problem. Indeed, as Machin & Vignoles (2006: 11) note, 'the instability that this continual reform generates, itself undermines the value of vocational qualifications'. Despite the vision to offer 'a curriculum with a vocational content appealing across the ability range' (Miliband, in ESC, 2003b) the evidence showed that the A-level remained the gold standard for the middle-classes and the schools that they occupied, and that those pupils who left school to take up college courses were predominantly 'lower class disaffected students' (Tomlinson, 2005: 176). Similarly, whilst the evidence of the EMA pilots had been positive, there was doubt over the extent to which barriers that prevented individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds applying for university had been overcome (especially in the context of the new top-up fees system introduced in the White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003c)). Issues of cost, attitudes towards debt, and a 'localism' created through material constraints on travel and finance (Reay et al., 2001: 861) all posed barriers not just to choice but to the aspiration of entry itself (Pennell, 2005). Again, whilst some schools used the equivalent status of the new vocationally oriented GCSEs to improve their performance statistics, there was concern that this parity of esteem did not apply in the wider world, particularly in relation to university entrance criteria.

This situation was compounded by the Government's rejection of a radical reform of the qualification system in the order of the diploma system recommended by the Tomlinson Report (DfES, 2004a) – seen by many as throwing away a 'golden opportunity' for reform (Chitty, 2005: 211). This rejection occurred despite, as noted above, such a notion being put forward by New Labour themselves in the 2001 and 2003 White Papers (DfES, 2001b; 2003b). The Tomlinson Report (DfES, 2004a) suggested replacing the system of GCSEs, A-levels, and vocational qualifications with a new single diploma that would offer a unified approach to the academic/vocational divide that marked the present system. Although taking an evolutionary rather than revolutionary approach to the management of change, the Report sought to raise the status of vocational courses through their incorporation into the diploma system, giving them an equality of status, as well as extending the ability to make use of overlaps between different pathways, thus blurring the division noted above (DfES, 2004a: 79). However, in the end New Labour were seen to 'cherry pick' from Tomlinson's proposals rather than embrace the totality of its radical proposals (Marshall, 2005: 192). This is surprising given, as Marshall (2005) notes, the many similarities in the language used in the Tomlinson Report to that espoused by New Labour modernisers such as Blair, Miliband, and Clarke.

For example, the Report made extensive reference to enhancing flexibility and individualisation in provision and the role of users as 'co-producers' of their education. For Hodgson & Spours (2007) the Specialised Diplomas that were introduced in the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005d) were 'unlikely to usher in a new dawn for vocational education', predicting that they would result in a middle-ground qualification between the academic pathways of GCSEs and A-levels on the one hand and apprenticeships on the other. Despite claims that these Specialised Diplomas would be 'equally suitable for the most able pupils preparing for demanding university courses, for young people who find the existing education system doesn't suit them and for those who want to go straight into work after leaving school' (DfES, 2006c: 1), research by Haynes (2008) showed that there were concerns amongst headteachers that these diplomas were not suitable for the most able pupils. Similarly, Baker (2009) identified that there was little take-up of these new qualifications amongst independent and grammar schools, thus reinforcing the perception that they were not viewed with the same parity of esteem as A-levels. Thus, Hodgson & Spours (2007: 22) argued, 'the fate of Specialised Diplomas will be determined more by their context than by their content. The Government has staked a great deal on this new qualification but has done very little to change the context into which it will be introduced'.

This theme of the reform of policy content and policy context was not confined to the issue of diversity of qualifications and educational provision, but, as the following section explores, was also important to the developments surrounding the use of partnerships in the education system.

INDIVIDUALS YET PARTNERS

As observed in their first period in office, New Labour were not concerned to engage in wholesale structural reform with regards to the quasi-market system. Instead, attempts were made to 'soften' the effects of this. As part of this approach attention had been given to the development of models of partnerships and networks in the education system, as seen in the EAZ, EiC, and Beacon school policies. The 2001 White Paper (DfES, 2001b: 38) confidently asserted that 'over the last four years we have moved from a system in which every school was left to fend for itself to one in which networks of schools open to all constantly learn from each other'. Thus, whilst schools were to be targeted individually, and their performance seen individually in accordance to national standards rather than as 'better' or 'worse' than neighbouring institutions, in the face of the structural relations that existed through the system created by open enrolment and per capita funding a discourse of partnerships was emerging that sought to build a new framework of inter-institutional relationships. Indeed, the notion of partnerships featured in all the major initiatives of New Labour's second term (Briggs et al., 2007). The 2001 White Paper (DfES, 2001b) drew heavily upon the role of partnerships in education and talked of removing obstacles to their formation and operation.

Miliband, addressing the House of Commons Select Committee, expressed the pragmatic nature of the Government's approach to partnerships:

> I think the point about collaboration is that you can sponsor it but you do not want to limit it. We want to encourage schools to make the links with schools from which they have got something to learn. If we can facilitate that by funding a bit of infrastructure funding for the Specialist Schools Trust to run networks or to fund Excellence in Cities or the Leading Edge programme that is a good thing, but I would not put a limit on it (Miliband, in ESC, 2003b).

The idea of federations of schools was reflective of the aims of the partnership drive developed in this period. Federations were conceived 'as part of the Transforming Secondary Education agenda, which sees diversity and collaboration as the two main vehicles for raising standards and driving improvement in teaching and learning' (DfES, 2005e). As Miliband (in ESC, 2003b) argued, 'best practice leads the rest, whether it be the best physics department spreading its good practice or the best way of organising lessons or the best performance management system run by the deputy head, that collaboration is really important'. Federations strengthened the diversity agenda by providing the opportunity for specialist, Leading Edge (formerly Beacon), training and extended schools to contribute to a wider network of institutions. They were thus to enable the raising of standards across their partner schools by providing a variety of benefits such as the sharing of best practice and expertise, cost-effectiveness in purchasing services and resources, teaching efficiency through the sharing of planning and training, and the ability to fulfil individual student needs. Similarly they were to allow for 'transformational leadership' to take affect across a number of schools (DfES, 2005e). As Rikowski (2005) notes, an initiative of this sort had been launched in 2001 involving a chain of state schools privately managed by 3E's Enterprises. The project centred upon the use of computer and internet technology to link schools and allow the sharing of content. However, 'this was still more like a network of schools or 'virtual federation' than a federation with a strong sense of corporate identity and common purpose' (Rikowski, 2005). The 2001 Education Bill stated that it would make it possible for schools to create a full federation, with a single governing body for several schools (Allen & Gillie, 2001). However, the development of such federations was limited in this period, partly as a result of the concerns of the new Secretary of State, Charles Clarke (Rikowski, 2005). Federations were restricted to groups of five schools and Clarke expressed his concerns over the formal nature of federation structures as a 'bureaucratic and over-elaborate framework' (cited in Rikowski, 2005). A more flexible approach to the concept of federations was similarly expressed by Miliband:

> We are interested in the idea of sponsoring federations certainly in the 14-19 area where young people might have a home base at a school or a college but might take their classes

from a range of institutions. That is a really exciting way of broadening the curriculum offer and saying that there is a role for sixth form centres and FE colleges in the 14-19 system. I think that is really exciting and good and it does not necessarily need to have a shared governance structure, it could just be a form of collaboration and co-operation (ESC, 2003b).

Whilst a continuum of 'hardness' of possible structures existed between formal governance and informal collaboration, a report commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (Lindsay et al., 2007) into a pilot project of 37 federations between 2003 and 2007 noted that schools tended towards the 'softer' end of this spectrum with a concern to maintain individual school autonomy. The report observed that new governance structures were only appropriated when they were needed in order to achieve particular objectives, noting the survival in the federation programmes of informal collaborative initiatives. Thus, it was argued that the notion of partnership was not dependent upon changes to governance structures. This is a point of increasing relevance in the context of the development of other initiatives at the start of New Labour's third term in office, such as the introduction of Trust school status, and will be considered more fully later in this chapter.

As a major part of the diversity agenda specialist schools were central to the promotion of a partnership model of working. The 2001 White Paper clearly marked out this desire for specialist schools to develop a collaborative nature of operation (DfES, 2001b: 38). Indeed, applicants for specialist status were required to present a community development plan and use a third of their additional funding for work with other schools (DfES, 2003a: 4). Such community work was to involve at least five local schools including a neighbouring secondary institution. Further opportunities and funding were also provided for high-performing specialist institutions to become advanced specialist schools, along with advanced Beacon (which were to be expanded by 150 to 400 by 2005 (DfES, 2001b: 39)) and training schools, charged with a responsibility to 'spread their good practice widely' (DfES, 2001b: 41). Partnerships were initiated by specialist and beacon schools in consultation with target schools and developed localised initiatives with different schools using different models and approaches that involved direct funding, sharing expertise, or utilising existing networks such as teacher networks (see Bell & West, 2003).

In this approach specialist school policy reflected a significant shift in emphasis. Whilst the trajectory of policy surrounding specialist schools stemmed from the Conservative era and the development of a marketised system in education, there was a clear change of focus in this period of New Labour reform. This shift was noted above in the observation that, for New Labour, specialist schools, and their success, were as much about their contribution to school improvement as they were to creating centres of excellence in a specific subject (ESC, 2003a). That is, the importance of diversity

to the education system was the process of improvement that this inspired, rather than the development of a diversity of subject expertise itself. Thus, Levacic & Jenkins (2004: 4) stated that:

in contrast to the importance accorded by the Conservative Government to competition as a means to raising standards, Labour specialist schools policy emphasises collaboration through specialist schools working in partnership with other schools to diffuse expertise and thereby spread improvements in student learning.

Away from the impetus provided through the specialist model, partnerships were also enhanced through the expansion of the Excellence in Cities programme and the Networked Learning Communities Programme. Further, the introduction of School Organisation Plans sought to bring together all schools and stakeholders in an education authority as a means to provide coherence over the provision of school places (DfES, 2003d).

PARTNERSHIPS AND PRIVATISATION

Of particular note to those concerned with the role of the private sector in education, the 2001 White Paper stated its intention to enable new partners and sponsors to enter into the system (DfES, 2001b). Indeed, the 'Fresh Start' scheme that had been introduced for failing schools was ended, with the Government supporting the idea that 'instead of relying on intervention by Whitehall and local authorities, the preferred option would be private or voluntary organisations being brought in to improve them' (Woodward, 2001). Beyond the use of the private sector in cases of failing public performance, the Government also appeared to be developing greater potential for their involvement through partnership opportunities. It was clear that New Labour clearly saw a role for the private sector, not just through funding and sponsorship as with specialist schools, but through involvement in leadership and in bringing skills from the business environment into school management. However, the potential was, at this time, presented with regards to local business leaders rather than those from larger corporations (Rikowski, 2005).

The diversity programme, with its increase in specialist schools and new church and faith-sponsored institutions, presented new opportunities for varied private sector interest. The 2001 White Paper stated that new providers could be:

...an important stimulus for new thinking, particularly in tackling some of the most intractable problems that remain unresolved. New providers can benefit pupils by bringing fresh ideas and perspectives and particular skills and expertise to schools. Similarly, the stimulus and competitive pressure that new entrants can bring to the sector can have the benefit of driving up performance more widely (DfES, 2001b: 43).

In particular the City Academies programme featured an explicit role for such involvement. Indeed, Academies drew upon many of the policy agendas in education at this point, including not only private sector involvement, but increasing diversity, a focus on inner-city regeneration, and shifting the balance of power to local schools (as well as central government) at the expense of LEAs (Tomlinson, 2005: 127). Academies were to replace failing schools in inner-city environments and so 'break the chronic cycle of educational underachievement' (DfEE, 2000). They were therefore developed with a specific goal of raising educational standards and participation in defined areas of disadvantage. In this way they reflected the principles underlying the creation of Education Action Zones that centred upon the contemporary demands for social cohesion and human capital. Further, they represented the desire to go beyond the 'outdated mass production approach that too often characterised public services after 1945' (Blair, 2002: 5) with a new emphasis on the individual child. Whilst only three were created initially, by 2005 there were 27 in existence and plans to extend this to at least 200 by 2010 (DfES, 2005a). Enhanced autonomy was seen as central to the academies project. Launched in 2002, Academies were independent of LEA control and so had greater say over staff pay and conditions. Although non-selective, they were to be their own admissions authority, and as they were also created with specialist status could admit 10% of their students by aptitude. Sponsors, appointed by the Government (and reflective of the 're-spatialisation' of education policy (Ball, 2009: 101)), contributed 20 percent of the initial capital costs (up to £2 million) and were entitled to hold seven out of the thirteen places on the governing body. As Machin & Vernoit (2010) state, 'the hope was that the combination of independence to pursue innovative school policies and curricula, with the experience of the sponsor, would enable Academies to drive up the educational attainment of their pupils'. The new buildings that accompanied the creation of many of these Academies were to act not just as inspiration to the local community they served, but were a sign of New Labour's commitment to 'excellence not mediocrity' for all (Blair, cited in Hyman, 2005: 306).

Critique surrounding the Academies programme has focused to a large extent on the central role of the private sector sponsor. This stands out amongst the wider policy terrain perhaps because, as Rikowski (2005) notes, elsewhere New Labour had pursued a 'softly softly' approach to business involvement, such as was noted with regards to federations of schools. Academies thus displayed a clear attachment to the role of the private sector in the state education system and changing patterns of governance (Ball, 2009). These themes are considered further in the following chapter. Whilst it would be rash to portray private sector involvement as necessarily centred upon the incentive of profit, given the range of private sector organisations that have been involved in educational partnerships and the varying partnership types themselves, New Labour clearly set out that education was a profit-making field providing organisations with: 'business opportunities, a

steady funding stream and a good return on its investment' (DfES, cited in Ball & Youdell, 2008: 33). Partnerships were therefore a means of legitimising private sector involvement, based upon arguments dominated by features of competition and profit incentive. As further reinforcement of this performance oriented approach, school autonomy was extended in line with the 'intervention in inverse proportion to success' mantra of the previous term. Thus, proposals were made for greater flexibility with regards to elements of the National Curriculum and elements of staff pay and conditions (DfES, 2001b: 42). This being the case there were clear and explicit advantages for schools to focus on maintaining or increasing their own individual performances.

PARTNERSHIPS IN GOVERNANCE

The progression of policy relating to school governing bodies echoed many of the themes of a shift towards localism and multi-agency in governance. Much of the rhetoric surrounding these advances has surrounded the empowering of parents (as well as making clear their responsibilities (Powell, 1999: 112)) and increasing the democratic control of schools (Crozier, 2000). However, as noted above, school governing bodies have also extended opportunities for other 'stakeholders' such as community and business representatives to be involved in the management of individual institutions.

Whilst New Labour's first term policy developed a focus upon parental involvement in education beyond that of the operation of choice in marketised structures through emphasis upon the importance of parents for child learning and responsibilities for behaviour, relatively little development of policy occurred in this period to signal an expansion of parental involvement in school governance. The Education and Employment Select Committee (EESC, 1999) had highlighted limitations in the current system with regards to the under-representation of certain groups and the need for governor training, and some commitment was made to increasing the numbers of parental governors at schools as well as a representative at LEA level (DfEE, 1997: 55). A consultation paper entitled *The Way Forward - A Modernised Framework for School Governance* (DfES, 2001c) was to provide support for a larger emphasis on governance change alongside the significant expansion of school autonomy and the development of multi-agency partnerships in school management and provision. The report stated that governors were a 'powerful force' in the drive for school improvement, and proposed for four 'stakeholder' groups to be represented including parents, the LEA, the community, and school staff. The paper argued that in the light of the transformations occurring in education, particularly at secondary level, the need for greater local management had become necessary (DfES, 2001c: 15). Thus, it stated:

Governing bodies must be trusted to determine appropriate arrangements that reflect their particular circumstances...The de-regulation of governors' responsibilities and governing body constitutions has the potential to unleash energies and refresh governance arrangements, freeing the largest volunteer force in the country to focus on the key task of ensuring the school system serves the talents and aspirations of all students in our diverse society (DfES, 2001c: 2).

Proposals sought to deregulate the role of governors in an attempt to be less prescriptive on their workings. A set of guiding principles replaced legislation on issues such as governing body size and constitution. *The Way Forward* consultation document represented a strengthening of policy with regards to the role of governing bodies, reflecting their importance as a representative group with important functions in a setting of increased school autonomy. The proposal that parents should occupy at least a third of seats on the governing body built significantly, and more concretely, upon the issue of parental representation (DfES, 2002b). However, it sought to link this new devolved autonomy to the central agendas of diversity and partnership. Based upon the recommendations of this report the 2001 White Paper (DfES, 2001b) stated that transformations to governing bodies would enable them to increase co-operation with other schools, work with external partners from the voluntary, private, or faith-based sectors, and provide community services 'such as health and social care, childcare, after school study and community learning so that they are a 'dawn 'til dusk' resource for the community' (DfES, 2001d).

Whilst it is important to remember that provision for parental involvement through the governing body has been a feature of policy since the late 1980s, New Labour policy here represented a significant development of the role of governing bodies. Indeed, Ranson et al. (2003: 720) note that, 'public policy has only grasped the nettle over the last decade and New Labour has given parental participation a more prominent role in the process of improving schools and their standards of achievement'. In particular the development of governor training and community links were more established and formalised than had previously been the case (see OFSTED, 1995), signifying a shift from the unregulated styles observed during the Conservative era which reflected a system more at a stage of 'coming to terms' with the role of governing bodies in reform (OFSTED, 1995). Balarin & Lauder (2008: 2) note that:

In the shift towards the self-governance of schools, the role of governing bodies has become increasingly important. They have been given control over major aspects of school management including: strategic leadership, resourcing, the employment of professional staff and the development of key policies in areas such as the school curriculum and discipline.

Modelled on the basis of the private sector board of directors, they are expected to have an especially positive effect on the development of more strategic forms of school management.

The 'unleashing' of energy into the governance of schools was predicated on the belief that greater scope for local governance would result in increased school performance and allow for more specific attention to the needs of individual schools. Yet the work of James et al. (2011) suggests that the outcomes of this relationship are amplified, either in a positive or negative sense, by the 'governance capital' that is available for a school to draw upon. The concept of governance capital is developed in relation to the notion of social capital but refers specifically to the 'network of individuals and their capabilities, relationships and motivations that are available for the governance of any particular school' (James et al., 2011: 429). Whilst James et al. maintain that such capital is not restricted to elite groups or schools, the ability of a school to develop greater governance capital is enhanced in schools which are successful, held in esteem, viewed with affection, and exist in an area of high socio-economic status. Indeed, Dunford (2006: 36) reflects this tension arguing that there exists a difficulty in finding school governors to represent parents, noting that 'being a governor is often an onerous and complex task and it can be almost impossible to find skilled and interested people in mid-career willing to give up the necessary time'. Whilst Ranson's (2003) research reported that governors did not generally consider their workloads onerous, it should be noted that of those questioned 86% were drawn from professional and managerial middle classes with 67% holding degrees and professional qualifications.

Thus, tensions can be observed in the desire to introduce new operational relations of governance in a system that was still marked by hierarchical division. Indeed, as the following section explores, the existence, and reinforcement, of competitive structures in education are seen to pose considerable problems for the development of partnership approaches.

PARTNERSHIPS IN COMPETITION

As with New Labour's shift in emphasis in their diversity agenda, policy rhetoric surrounding the development of partnerships sought to provide a new framework for schools, drawing upon ideas of co-operation, collaboration and the sharing of resources and knowledge. However, despite the emphasis on partnerships and co-operation between schools, this did not amount to a reform of the competitive structure that existed in the education system.   Rather, it can be seen as an additional layer of relations established in the system.

Taylor et al. (2005: 66) suggest that New Labour's attempts to overcome inter-school disparities through partnerships and collaborative networks were blind to the changes that had occurred to the education system and the consumption of education since the 1970s and 'naively' ignored the place

of choice and competition. This seems a strange proposition given the extent of literature that has sought to investigate and demonstrate the explicit embracing of neo-liberalism in New Labour's project of reform, and not least in the light of New Labour's own clear acknowledgement of the benefits of choice and competition between schools as a factor driving higher performance. However, it is clear that implementing structures of co-operation alongside competition was neither as obvious, nor as straightforward, a strategy as was made out.

Bell & West (2003) brought to attention a number of these conflicts in their study of partnerships initiated by specialist and Beacon schools. The competitive relations that existed between schools were seen by Bell & West to effect the motivation to engage in partnerships especially between neighbouring secondary schools who were direct competitors for pupils. They note that whilst less practical, schools felt working with schools that were not geographically local was a benefit as they were not competing against each other. Here there was a tension between schools which were expected as part of their status as specialist or Beacon schools to share resources and expertise with other schools, yet were also to act to maintain their own achievement in order to continue receiving additional funding and maintain their advantage with regards to parental choice (Penney, 2004; Davies et al., 2002; Bell & West, 2003). Indeed, similar tensions were reflected in the types of partnerships established between secondary institutions seen prior to 2001 (Yeomans et al., 2000; West et al., 2000). Despite the growing place of the partnership agenda these difficulties had still not been resolved with several commentators arguing that the competitive context obscured the collaborative frameworks in New Labour's agenda (Penney, 2004; Hayward et al., 2006). Briggs et al. (2007: 8) suggested that the success for partnerships rested upon a 'policy-sharpened knife-edge', whilst Cardini (2006: 395) argued that even as the partnership agenda in policy has been put forward as a superior model of organisation, attention has been 'diverted away from the more complex and contradictory aspects of working partnerships', identifying three areas of tension relating to resources and aims, culture and language, and trust and power. Evidence of conflict over the resources and aims of collaborative models of working were observed by Bell & West (2003), that whilst schools shared the broad aim of improvement, there were different motivations for this. This links closely to the issue of trust and power between partners, with specialist and Beacon schools as partnership initiators and in control of the supporting funding. Indeed, the distinction of member status, such as specialist or Beacon, itself posed problems and in some cases worked to increase divisions (Bell & West, 2003). In response to this particular issue Taylor et al. (2005) argued that New Labour demonstrated an attempt to forge a more social democratic agenda through its replacement of Beacon schools with Leading Edge Partnerships: 'Instead of identifying schools of excellence and then encouraging them to share their expertise Leading Edge Partnerships are chosen because they

already work effectively in partnership. Similarly, there is no formal badging of this scheme and the resources are managed by the partnerships, not individual schools' (Taylor et al., 2005: 65). It was clear that in all models, whether through federations, specialist schools, or Leading Edge Partnerships, schools valued their own autonomy, and that successful partnerships reflected an equality of status between members as well as a sense of choice in collaboration (Ofsted, 2003; Herbert, cited in Rikowski, 2005; Lindsay et al., 2006).

PROGRESSING A THIRD WAY?

The discussion in this section has examined the development of New Labour's education policies throughout their second term in office, a period that was to bring about a modernisation of the secondary school system. At first glance the extent of reform appears limited: choice and competition are still central, the private sector of schooling is reaffirmed, and despite reiterating their 1997 rejection of the 11-plus system, Grammar schools remained in place. Further, the specialist school initiative was extended in unprecedented fashion, and the City Technology College project appeared to have been reinvented through the building of City Academies.

However, New Labour maintained a narrative of economic and social demands to argue for the need for greater educational participation and achievement. Through attention to structures, as well as standards, this radical reform of the comprehensive principle through initiatives developed in dominant central agendas concerning diversity and partnerships, was to raise achievement, encourage participation, and widen opportunities in order to meet the nation's need for skilled human capital. Instead of complete reform, the broad structures based upon choice and competition remained in place, even strengthened. Thus, a policy context dominated by these market discourses experienced the arrival of new agendas; those of co-operative and collaborative partnerships (Penney, 2004), and of an attention to teaching, learning, and organisation in individual schools. New emphases were also noted in policy during this time, for example with regards to the diversification of school types and the expansion of the specialist school project, that, although drawing on existing policy trajectories, affected a significant shift in their underlying aims. Here, increasing diversity for diversity's sake was not the goal. Rather, as Blair reflected in the 2005 White Paper: 'the government sought to re-energise comprehensive education, by encouraging every secondary school to aim for specialist status, a process that has meant their setting challenging targets for improvement and developing a clear mission' (DfES, 2005a: 2). However, in their inspection of the second round of EAZs, OFSTED (2003b: 40) observed that 'many zone secondary schools struggle to create an ethos for learning in a context in which some parents place insufficient value on educational achievement', suggesting that societal inequalities threatened the extent to which this diversity project could take effect.

A discourse of partnerships, networks, collaboration and co-operation has also received significant attention, and sought to establish a new basis for institutional and professional relationships in the education system. Partnerships were to draw on new forms of energy and innovation, as well as resources, through attempts at empowerment of individuals and groups in the system, placing them as stakeholders and partners (Blair, 2001). Similarly, partnerships represented a new mechanism by which to introduce, and legitimise, the supposed attributes of the private sector, especially business, including the incentive of profit. In this way it was hoped that effects of socio-economic background could be overcome through the spread of good practice in teaching and learning, and the inspiration and efficiency of good leadership and private involvement. The partnership agenda was progressed through a number of approaches. Structurally partnerships were developed as inter-agency projects, for example Education Action Zones; inter-institutional initiatives, such as observed in the specialist and Beacon school projects; and also in the developing public-private approach that, as noted above, has continued to evolve throughout the education system. Individual schools existed in an array of partnerships, even multiple and overlapping partnerships in the same level (see Bell & West, 2003).

This increasing focus on partnership approaches can be related to wider conceptualisations of the nature of contemporary society, and therefore informs their prominence in New Labour's wider policy approach throughout various fields (Glendinning et al., 2002). In this there is a clear reference to a Third Way understanding of the weaknesses of both market mechanisms and 'old-style' social democracy. Here the inequalities that result from a reliance upon market mechanisms are acknowledged. However, at the same time the hierarchies, bureaucracy and inflexibility of 'traditional' social democracy are recognised as outdated: 'We must recognise that what was absolutely right for a time of real austerity no longer meets the needs and the challenges in an age of growing prosperity and consumer demand' (Blair 2002: 2). Replacing a 'rigid and unfair' comprehensive system, diversity sought at an institutional level to raise standards, whilst in relation to educational content sought to promote participation through new attempts to raise the nature and status of vocational provision, thus increasing equality of opportunity. The development of partnerships as a model of organisation reaffirmed these goals by countering market relations with those based upon trust and co-operation. This Third Way concern for partnerships therefore reflected a re-organisation of the relationships between the state, civil society, and the economy (Cardini, 2006). Woods & Woods (2002: 257) went so far as to suggest that the development of inter-institutional relations through metaphors such as that of the 'family' can be seen as 'encapsulating both affective and associative aspects' of social relationships.

However, for Tomlinson (2005: 171), 'the pretence, in the face of evidence to the contrary, that a diversity of schools (including Academies) could reduce social class divisions, was more an exercise in

hypocrisy than evidence-based policy'. Hatcher (1998) similarly argued that tying equality to opportunity rather than outcome was a 'weak' position, for it failed to work to resolve social inequality. Thus, 'it was becoming more obvious in the early twenty-first century that the needs of the middle classes took precedence over social exclusion and social justice' (Tomlinson, 2005: 171). Certainly a concern with the middle class can be detected in the New Labour approach at several levels. Electorally there was a need to maintain favour with 'middle England' and to counter the 'dismay that competition for good schools and shifts in costs from the state to the individual were reducing benefits and privileges previously taken for granted' (Tomlinson, 2005: 118-9). This concern was seen to inform a growth in private sector schooling (Ranson, 2008). Thus, making the state education system attractive to the middle classes was not only an electoral issue but a wider educational concern. The goal of social cohesion, as noted previously, was important to the economic strategies of New Labour and would be threatened by a public system becoming one for the disadvantaged. The reinforcement of setting, extensive provision for gifted and talented individuals, and the protection of the 'gold standard' A-levels were to offer such reassurances to an increasingly disillusioned middle-class. Thus, whilst policy rhetoric spoke of a vision for all young people engaging in work experience that suggested a blurring of the academic/vocational divide, the reality appeared to be that the choices of the middle-classes were further legitimised and unchallenged.

A distinctive New Labour approach to policy development in this period can be observed through the prominence of partnerships and the new emphasis given to existing policy trajectories that reflected a conceptualisation of contemporary modernity and the relationship between individuals, the state, and the economy. Yet, this same conceptualisation is also evident in the strengthening of competitive processes and the widening of access to private involvement. Rather than a coherent Third Way this created a picture of policy at this time as an attempt at a complex political balancing act between the varying interests and demands of different 'stakeholders' in a system that itself tried to balance the inequalities that it was equally responsible for (re)producing.

2005 – 2007: THE FINAL ACT?

New Labour won its third term of office in May 2005. Although historic for being the first time that a Labour government had achieved a third successive term, and despite retaining a strong 66-seat majority in the House of Commons, the election reflected some breakdown of the ascendency that New Labour had achieved in the previous election campaigns such that success was 'subdued rather than celebratory' (Norris & Wleizen, 2005: 681).

In setting out their vision for the upcoming parliament, New Labour again made the contemporary nature of a globalised world the basis for the need of reform. Their chosen slogan for the election

campaign, 'Britain: forward, not back', continued the focus upon modernisation without, as Wring (2005: 718) puts it, 'actually using the now somewhat hackneyed phrase in its title'. It also repeated the 'epochal' (Cutler et al., 2007) form of argument, placing attention on the new over the old. The basis of the arguments presented in the election manifesto revealed very little that had not been heard before. The vision set out was based on the principles that had been put forward in New Labour's Third Way throughout the previous decade. Central to this was the progressive approach to reform based upon an 'understanding of the world and the great changes underway in our society' (Blair, in The Labour Party, 2005: 7). Blair, writing in the election manifesto, stated that in their third term New Labour would 'forge an even stronger bond between the goals of economic progress and social justice' (Blair, in The Labour Party, 2005: 8). Here wealth creation was to be followed not just as an individual pursuit but as a national project. Through this national strength in a globalised environment social justice itself would be strengthened. Indeed, the choice between the two was a false dichotomy belonging to the past: 'the British people never wanted to choose between wealth creation and social justice' (Blair, in The Labour Party, 2005: 9). Thus, opposition to these changes, whether from Left or Right perspectives, was presented as a failure to understand the modern world and to return to the divisions and 'false choices' of the past.

The positive relationship between economic growth and social justice required reforms to public services that captured the individualised nature of need, as well as the active participation of citizens in the construction of their own welfare. Similarly, attention to what was new made necessary the involvement of new providers, such as the private sector, in the running of public services (Wring, 2005: 718). Social justice itself was described as equipping people with the skills to participate in an 'opportunity economy' through high employment and access to university and training. This was to be based on a social contract between the Government and each citizen that would focus upon ownership alongside responsibility. Social justice was therefore closely connected to increasing social mobility, through the empowerment of individuals as owners of services and as active citizens. This individual empowerment, and its contribution to wider national growth, was summarised by Blair as: 'People freed from barriers of class, building a better future for themselves and for the country. Self-interest and national interest together' (in The Labour Party, 2005: 9). The basis of this social contract on the Government's part would be to modernise public services through a focus on user personalisation; a combination of investment and innovation through diversity and the devolution of power to the individual parent, patient and citizen. The benefits of this new individualised provision of services, responding to the needs of each, were reinforced as belonging to those who were 'hard-working', 'law-abiding', 'those who play by the rules', and who responded to their 'individual responsibility and duty'. However, despite the familiarity of these features of the

New Labour project, and despite the seemingly worn-out rhetorical value of 'modernisation', this concept was to be given new energy in the policy agenda for this third term. For New Labour it was to be a period of increased intensification of change.

MAKING REFORM 'PERMANENT'?

New Labour's project of reform in education had so far produced 11 White and Green papers, and spending on education had risen from 4.7% of GDP in 1997 to 5.5% in 2005, which equated to an increase from £35 billion to £51 billion. As Baker (2006a) stated, 'it is hard to think of another period when so much structural change affected such a large proportion of schools so quickly'. However, *The Economist* observed that, 'after all that, education is still at the top of Labour's to-do list' (*The Economist*, 2005). This continued focus was brought about by evidence that suggested reform had not been as effective as expected by the extent of change that had taken place.

New Labour had made much of its record of raising standards and increasing achievement in education. In particular they gave great significance to the numbers of pupils achieving five A*-C grades at GCSE, reporting a drop from 616 to 131 schools in which less than a quarter of pupils achieved this benchmark, and an increase from 83 to 400 non-selective schools where the achievement rate was over 70%. Overall the rise in GCSE achievement had risen from 45% to 56% between 1997 and 2005 (DfES, 2005a). However, further investigation showed that only 41% were achieving five good GCSEs that included English and maths, despite the Government's attention on raising standards in the basics through schemes such as the Key Stage 3 strategy, as well as the significant investment at primary level, notably through the Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Indeed, only 17% of schools had improved their performance when the inclusion of English and maths was taken into account, a figure that raised serious questions over the effectiveness of reform (TES, 2005a). The perennial debate surrounding the increasing ease of exams also provided cause for doubting the significance of improvement in terms of the skills and ability of individuals that the education system was producing (Tymms, 2004; Coe, 2007). As de Waal (2008) rightly observes, New Labour's concern with 'five good GCSEs' was not merely for statistical advances, but a laudable wider desire to raise attainment across society and so narrow the gap in performance between individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds. Figures produced by the DfES (2005b) pointed to a marked increase in the overall attainment at Level 4 of those children from schools with a higher proportion of intake from disadvantaged backgrounds. The performance gap between these schools and those with more affluent populations had narrowed, although the difference remained significant. However, when considering the average increase of pupils there was much less improvement made by those in the most deprived schools in comparison to those in the least

deprived. As the DfES report (DfES, 2005b) acknowledged, the increase was equivalent to 'less than a third of a term's progress' in the years 1998-2004.

As well as pointing to the need for further school improvement, the evidence also fed into wider class and inequality issues such as the reinforcement of hierarchies of qualification and institutions, and the subsequent impact upon access to further and higher educational opportunities as schools used the equivalent status of vocational GCSEs and GNVQs to improve their performance ratings, and were focused on those pupils who were on the borderline of achievement with regards to the Government's targets (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Bragg & Boyle, 2006). As de Waal (2008: 4) puts it, 'the problem is that the scenario being generated is a narrowing of the performance gap with the simultaneous widening of the learning and opportunity – and thereby life chances – gap'. This distinction aside, the problem was further confounded by the Government's own evidence which showed that even the narrowing performance gap was occurring at an institutional rather than an individual level, such that whilst the gap between the best and worst schools had diminished children from disadvantaged backgrounds were now further distanced from their more affluent contemporaries (DfES, 2005b). This suggested that improvements in individual schools were brought about largely by the increased performance of the more affluent members of the school population.

Thus, questions were asked of the extent to which education reform had brought about any positive change in terms of equality of opportunity and social mobility. Indeed, as noted previously, was it in fact serving to entrench the limited opportunities and pathways of disadvantaged individuals as evidence emerged to show that social mobility was decreasing with the middle-classes benefitting disproportionately from educational investment (ONS, 2005; Blanden et al., 2005; Galindo-Rueda et al., 2004)? The Third Way of excellence and equity alongside each other, rather than as a fundamental choice, was therefore proving difficult to achieve. As Dyson et al. (2006) note, 'whatever else the evidence indicated, it did not suggest that New Labour policy was bringing about the sort of profound transformation that would be needed to break the established link between background and achievement'.

Indeed, in addition to 'equity', the goal of 'excellence' was also receiving criticism. Whilst the proportion of failing primary and secondary schools had dropped significantly, David Bell, head of the schools inspectorate, stated that one in ten of these schools were offering pupils 'nothing better than mediocrity' (Bell, cited in TES, 2005a). Alongside the doubts placed on the state of social equality this critically resonated with the vision of 'excellence not mediocrity' that Blair had declared of the academies programme as a reflection on New Labour's commitment to the wider education system. In a speech on the eve of the launch of the 2005 White Paper Blair (2005a) stated: 'Go to your local school. You can see the progress in the buildings, in the computers and the results. But it

is not good enough. Not for Britain; not for the modern world'. For Blair, the fact that such high level attention and investment in education reform still had not brought about this breakthrough was a sign that reform must not only continue but must be *more* radical in its nature (Blair, 2005b).

There was then a recognition that more work was to be done, and, whilst it was of course not yet known that this third term would be their final in power, the proposals for educational policy at the start of this period were presented with an air of finality. This notion was made clear by Blair who spoke of making 'complete' the project of reform that New Labour had been operating since 1997 (Blair, 2005b). As such the first two terms in office were positioned in a narrative of reform as providing the necessary building blocks for this next phase. Tackling the inherited problems of failing schools, low standards, and teacher morale had been the focus of initial reform, followed by a second term that sought to sustain this improvement, as well as develop greater attention to individual needs, through structural diversity and collaborative partnerships. Thus, they laid the basis for change where the goal was 'no less than to transform our schools system by turning it from one focused on the success of institutions into one which is shaped and driven by the success, needs and aspirations of parents and pupils' (DfES, 2005a: 17). The 'final phase' was to be 'about setting schools and teachers free to do their own thing, providing they remained accountable to parents' (Baker, 2008). As the House of Commons Special Education Committee (ESC, 2006: 3) observed, 'the Government's aspirations for the White Paper appear to be that the proposals it contains will act as a catalyst for significant, permanent improvement in the schools system'.

This significance and permanence was reinforced through descriptions of the moment being one of an 'historic turning point', and reflecting a radicalism suggested by the demand for 'courage' in putting change into effect(Blair, in DfES, 2005a: 1). Indeed, in setting out the agenda for the personalisation of learning that was to be a central feature of policy, David Miliband positioned the reforms in a 'once in a generation' frame, stating: 'I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say it is the most important time for public services since the creation of the welfare state after 1945' (Miliband, 2006: 21), echoing Blair's (2004a) affirmation of a 'fundamental recasting' of the post-war agenda, and Ruth Kelly's hope to 'cement another Labour generation' (Kelly, 2005). This narrative of reform, and the presentation of this period as reflective of the radicalism of the post-war years, posited a culmination of transformation and the desire to establish a new settlement based upon modernisation. Indeed, it was to 'ensure irreversible change for the better in schools' (Blair, in DfES 2005a: 4), and, given the prioritisation of education by New Labour, to play a major part in embedding a wider progressive consensus (Blair, in The Labour Party, 2005).

This 'end game' was put sharply into focus with increasing speculation about Blair's position as leader, arising largely from criticism in his own party, linked to the military operations in Iraq and the

undermining of trust in his leadership (Wring, 2005; Evans & Andersen, 2005). Blair had already stated in the election manifesto that this would be his last term as Party Leader and Prime Minister (The Labour Party, 2005), and after much speculation and calls for resignation from in the Labour Party itself, he announced that he would resign as Prime Minister in June of 2007. Gordon Brown, the sole candidate for his replacement, was elected in the same month. Although this date for leaving office was unexpectedly early, it served not only to frame, but to intensify, the need for reform in the time remaining with many seeing this as Blair's final opportunity to secure a legacy in the field he had made central to his government, variously described as 'one last shot' (*The Economist*, 2005) or 'one more heave' (Wring, 2005: 781) in Blair's determination to 'stamp his mark upon history' (Norris & Wlezien, 2005: 681).

<div align="center">*EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY*</div>

At the outset of this third term there were hints that New Labour recognised the weaknesses of the present education system, particularly with regards to equity. Ruth Kelly (2005), in a speech on education and social progress, again laid out the case for social justice in ensuring national economic productivity and preventing against disengagement, social unrest and community breakdown. Responding to the DfES's own figures (DfES, 2005b) Kelly acknowledged that whilst expanded opportunity had led to more people from lower class backgrounds going on to Higher Education, 'it looks as though, in relative terms, that expansion has benefited those with a middle class background more than the rest' (Kelly, 2005). Similar recognition was made with regards to gifted and talented provision: '[they] must not just be for the middle classes – they are for everyone and we may need to do more to ensure children from all backgrounds are being involved' (Kelly, 2005). Blair also expressed concerns with equality in the education system. Writing in the 2005 White Paper he stated: 'While parents can express a choice of school, there are not yet enough good schools in urban areas; such restrictions are greatest for poor and middle class families who cannot afford to opt for private education or to live next to a good school, if they are dissatisfied with what the state offers' (Blair, in DfES, 2005a: 4).

The response to these concerns was, as detailed above, filled with a sense of reinvigorated radicalism and a concern to make excellence and equity permanent features of the education system. This dual focus was to be achieved through further expansion of choice and diversity at the institutional level, notably through the new status of Trust schools, alongside a range of measures that sought to build on the limitations of this model of choice. For New Labour the role of parental choice in raising school performance was reaffirmed, with the White Paper pointing to international examples of the success of this model, alongside a vision to make parents 'true partners' in the

education system. This partnership was to be extended not just through choice but in the day-to-day process of school life, as well as an extended vision of learning.

At the centre of New Labour's vision remained the idea of individual institutional independence by which schools could develop their own ethos and mission to drive forward improvement (The Labour Party, 2005: 35). The development of foundation status, followed by the expansion of specialist schools and the introduction of Academies, was justification of the importance of school independence, created not just by increasing institutional autonomy, but by allowing new sponsors to be involved. Thus, proposals were put forward to carry on the expansion of specialist schools, including the ability to take on additional specialisms, and an expansion of the Academies programme. By 2008 92% of secondary schools in England held specialist status, accounting for 2.5 million pupils. Further, a new category of Trust school was introduced as part of a 'spectrum' of school freedom that would create a system of 'all-ability schools that retain the comprehensive principle of non-selection, but operate very differently from the traditional comprehensive' (Blair, in DfES, 2005a: 1). Underlying this shift was a new system which saw the principal funding for schools administered directly by the Dedicated Schools Grant, rather than through the Local Education Authorities as had been the case for the previous half-century (Levacic, 2008). New Labour's keenness to ensure all schools gained independence in one form or another was, according to Sir Cyril Taylor, Chairman of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, in order to avoid a 'two-tier system' between those inside the specialist and Academies family and those outside (cited in Baker, 2006a). In his speech on the eve of the publication of the White Paper Blair (2005a) stated:

> In our schools…the system will be finally opened up to real parent power. All schools will be able to have academy style freedoms. All schools will be able to take on external partners. No one will be able to veto parents starting new schools or new providers coming in, simply on the basis that there are local surplus places. The role of the LEA will change fundamentally…Where business, the voluntary sector, philanthropy, which in every other field is a part of our national life, wants to play a key role in education and schools want them to, they can.

As well as enhancing this central vision of diversity through independence, the new status of Trust school was designed to allow for greater innovation by individual schools. Such self-governing Trusts were to extend the innovation that foundation schools were free to pursue in control of assets, staff and admissions criteria, as well as the ability for headteachers and governing bodies to enter into federations and innovate with the National Curriculum, and by enabling schools to harness external support that would bring 'innovative and stronger leadership to the school, improving standards and extending choice' (DfES, 2005a: 24-5). The argument for the extension of this external leadership to

all schools was drawn from their role in the specialist and Academy programmes, where the success of specialist schools was seen to have derived from the 'enormous energy, drive and expertise' (DfES, 2005a: 24) of such sponsors, with the use of external partners also central to the performance of Academies in areas of disadvantage. As the White Paper set out, the new Trust status was seen as the means by which to 'spread these lessons through the whole school system in a way that works for parents and children in all communities across the country' (DfES, 2005a: 24). As stated by Kelly (Hansard, 2006: column 998), this was the extension of legislative forms of governance that had been developed through the specialist and Academies programmes in a form that was more widely applicable, thus ensuring Blair's goal of system-wide change.

Reinforcing this goal, Trust school status was to be available to all schools in both primary and secondary sectors. They were to be not-for-profit organisations able to appoint the majority of the governing body, and were able to operate as associations of several schools. Whilst gaining Trust status was dependent upon parental support, the Government were 'confident that parents will welcome proposals for schools to acquire Trusts which are focused on driving up standards and creating new opportunities for children' (DfES, 2005a: 26). In their ability to control the governing body, coupled with the range of freedoms and flexibilities, it was clear that New Labour envisaged Trust status as enabling external drive and leadership to have a real impact on school organisation in the pursuit of higher standards. Further to their drive and leadership it was also clear that bringing external partners more concretely into school management would offer the potential benefits of additional resources and increased efficiencies. Thus, 'where Trusts are linked to larger organisations, they could also give schools access to facilities and management expertise that might not be available in the local community' (DfES, 2005a: 27). The ability of Trusts to 'run' several schools built on the commitment to partnerships between schools and the belief that resources and best practice could be more easily shared. Interestingly, despite the focus upon developing an individual institutional ethos observed until now, the White Paper stated that Trusts would enable such groups of schools 'to operate with a common ethos and a shared identity' (DfES, 2005a: 26). This reinforced the view that school diversity was less about providing a wide choice of ethos as such, but was a means to driving school improvement.

Whilst drawing on the role of external sponsors in the Academies and specialist programmes in extending this provision system-wide, the Government stated that Trusts could also be established by local neighbourhood groups, local parents, charities, universities, and independent schools. Alternatively, schools could form their own 'bespoke' Trusts as they saw fit. However, this localised formation of Trusts was to be overseen by a Schools Commissioner who would 'champion' Trust

schools and 'hold details of organisations willing and able to establish Trusts for schools' (DfES, 2005a: 28).

This model chosen by New Labour to make high standards a feature across the school system faced criticism from several directions. Indeed, the central fixation on choice as a means of producing higher standards was, according to Whitty (2008: 410), based on evidence that remained 'weak and highly contested', and failed to acknowledge that the superior performance of certain schools might well have resulted from their intake of pupils, rather than any direct result of structural diversity or external 'drive'. In this regard the ability for Trust schools to be their own admissions authorities raised concerns over the increasing selection of pupils, which had been a continually contested feature of the education system with regards to both promoting excellence and achieving equity. The continuing presence of the 11-plus system in some local authorities had been noted as bringing about a significant 'grammar school effect' for individual pupils in comparison to comprehensive performance. Yet when considering performance between LEAs there was found to be no difference in performance between those who adopted highly selective approaches and those who did not (Schagen & Schagen, 2002; see also Atkinson & Gregg, 2004; Levacic & Marsh, 2007). The provision for specialist schools and Academies to select by aptitude, coupled with the huge expansion of the specialist programme, had brought about a rise in this form of selection with 12 per cent of schools now employing this mechanism in 2006 (Coldron et al., 2009: 257). The Education Select Committee (ESC, 2004a: 62) had previously expressed its concern over the ability to select by aptitude, stating 'we could find neither evidence of a meaningful distinction between aptitude and ability nor evidence relating to the purpose of justification for election by aptitude', and Stringer (2008: 53) argued, in the context of applications to higher education, that it was 'unfair to allocate opportunities according to qualities acquired by chance'. Evidence pointed to the use of such mechanisms by schools to select pupils from more advantaged backgrounds (Gewirtz et al., 1995) as well as the presence of more unintended consequences such as the attraction of certain specialisms to girls (Edwards, 1998). Research commissioned by the newly-formed Department for Children, Schools and Families into admissions arrangements in all secondary schools in England in 2006 reported that whilst different levels of selection operated in different local authorities, 'even the effect of smaller proportions of selective places on the intakes of other schools may still be significant' (Coldron et al., 2009: 252). In the most selective authorities the research found that only 78% of parents obtained their preferred choice of school, compared to 88% in non-selective authorities. Further, the most selective authorities also displayed more socially segregated intakes (Coldron et al., 2009: 256). Based on evidence from international comparisons of school systems a report for the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) stated that, 'the combined

impact of the school's socio-economic intake can have an appreciable effect on the student's performance, and generally has a greater effect on predicted student scores than the student's own family characteristics' (OECD/UNESCO-UIS, 2003: 223). Thus, it concluded that where countries, and their schools, displayed a high level of socio-economic segregation, those students from disadvantaged backgrounds would be worse off.

With schools now to become their own admissions authorities, and with the reconstitution of the LEA as a 'champion of choice', there were fears that there would be no cohesion in local school provision, and, coupled with the further provision for parents to set up new schools, it would remain the wealthier and better informed who were most empowered by these new measures as they exercised their resources in order to obtain their preferred choice (see Ball, 2002). Schools, such as those with community or voluntary controlled status, which had previously been restricted from using forms of selection by their local authorities, would now be able to do so. Indeed, the 2005 White Paper proposed that no new community schools should be established.

For New Labour (and also for the Conservatives at this time) the concern was not with the allocation of places at 'good' schools, but with improving the quality of schools which fell behind the most successful and were therefore the most attractive to parents. Increasing parental power over schools, alongside the use of external resources and leadership, was seen as the means to this end. However, Coldron (in ESC, 2004b: 31) argued for precisely the opposite approach: 'My view is that the aim of admissions authorities should be to help to equalise intakes, not to increase parental choice...', advocating (in urban areas) a system of banding for admissions. Mary Bousted, of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, argued that 'we are concerned that many of the very, very supportive and strong commitments to social justice...are undermined by the belief that a quasi-market will improve delivery of education' (Bousted, in ESC, 2006b: 20-21).

For Ranson (2008: 210) these developments meant that 'the business and private sector, in addition to the churches, would not only extend their increasing control and provision of state schooling, but also play an emergent role in a new system of local governance'. The lessening of LEA powers did not therefore lead merely to the reallocation of their responsibilities to schools and central government. Rather, it created a space for private organisations to 'mediate between policy and institutions' where 'what are being sold are the urgencies of change, a new language for organisational life and a kind of self-belief and self-efficacy – the mentalities and sensibilities of the private firm' (Ball, 2008: 195). Further still, the Education Select Committee (ESC, 2006a: 20) concluded that 'no causal link has been demonstrated between external partners and the success of a school, or between the independence of a school from local authority control and its success'. In the event, there were even concerns over finding sponsors for Trust schools, with organisations

concerned that they did not have the right educational expertise to fulfil the nature of the leadership and management role set out (TES, 2005b).

As the Education Select Committee (ESC, 2006a: 8) noted, it was in these structural aspects of reform that most concern and criticism was generated. Strong opposition to the changes from in the Labour Party, including former leader Neil Kinnock and former Education Secretary Estelle Morris, were reflected in the wider media response where the DfES's own statistics found only 11% of initial coverage was 'positive' (DfES, 2005c). John Dunford (in ESC, 2006b: 20) stated that 'if the proposal for Trust schools does not appear in the Bill, there will be no tears shed in secondary schools amongst secondary school leaders'. However, the New Labour leadership strongly defended their approach as one which would achieve both excellence and equity (Kelly, in Hansard, 2006: column 999).

In the end it took the support of Conservative MPs for the Government's Education and Inspections Bill to pass through the House of Commons after Labour Members rebelled at each of its three readings. Conservative support for this Bill was encouraged by the striking similarities of present reforms to those developed in the previous Conservative administration. Not only were Trust schools seen as a linear development of 'quasi-independent' institutions such as City Technology Colleges (Dyson et al., 2006), but the concept of a system of 'independent state schools' was one coined by Thatcher herself (Baker, 2005). Whilst unsuccessful in their attempts to introduce amendments that would ensure the use of parental ballots in order for schools to gain Trust status, Labour MPs won a number of concessions that ensured a toughened stance towards admissions including a ban on parental interviews. In this same respect the Government responded to concerns raised by the Education Select Committee over the extent to which schools were required to act according to the Code of Practice on fair admissions. In a letter to the Committee, Ruth Kelly (2006) stated that, whilst it would not legislate for the Code, schools would have to 'act in accordance' with it rather than merely 'regard' it as had previously been the case. A final act of concession was made in dropping the term 'Trust' in the final Bill. However, the features of Trust status remained in effect through the foundation and voluntary-aided categories.

New Labour's commitment to choice and diversity as the means of reform was thus unabated in this period, despite serious criticism from political and educational circles, and against the weight of research. The willingness of the Conservative Party to support the Government's proposals was, for many, a clear sign of the submission to a neo-liberal agenda by New Labour. Yet, whilst the benefits of diversity and choice were a clear focus of New Labour's rhetoric, and gathered much attention in wider debate, there were also other significant developments in the project of education reform that suggested a concern with improving equity in the system.

As noted previously, New Labour had explicitly acknowledged the limitations of a system of choice for many parents and pupils: 'The affluent can buy choice. We will ensure that choice is more widely to all in an increasingly specialist system, not just to those who can pay for it' (DfES, 2005a: 8). Thus, a number of measures were introduced to further 'soften' the edges of the school choice model. These included the extension of the right to free school transport for children from disadvantaged families to ensure access to their three closest secondary schools. Better information was to be supplied to parents including new categories of performance and school comparisons. The White Paper also noted the difficulties experienced by some parents in navigating internet and paper resources and proposed the introduction of 'choice advisers' for the least well-off parents in order to provide 'independent, unbiased advice and raise the interest, expectations and aspirations of those who may not previously have felt they had any real choice' (DfES, 2005a: 44). Schools were also able to introduce banding arrangements that would enable them to widen their intake beyond their catchment area in order to generate a 'genuinely comprehensive intake' (DfES, 2005a: 9). In 2007 a new admissions code set out national guidelines including the prohibition of admission on the basis of interests or knowledge. Whitty (2010: 410-411) described these initiatives as 'a belated recognition of the impact of structural and cultural factors on the capacity of different groups to exercise choice meaningfully in a diverse system of schooling'. However, despite their positive direction, 'it will take these provisions many years to begin to address more covert forms of selection and the way in which middle class parents learn to decipher the 'real' admissions criteria' (Whitty, 2010: 411).

Further to these measures that were concerned with the effects of a system of school choice and diversity there were also other significant developments that reflected signs of potentially new and 'tentative' directions taking hold (Dyson et al., 2006). The focus on partnerships and collaborative behaviour as a means of reorganising the role of the state in the provision and delivery of services continued through the development of Education Improvement Partnerships to provide a framework for joint action, capital investment programmes that were to encourage schools to work together, initiatives such as the Primary Strategy Learning Networks to promote improvements in teaching and learning, and expectations that partnerships would be used to tackle issues such as truancy and behaviour. Significantly the 2005 White Paper broadened the concern of *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003e) with developing 'extended' schools. Expanding upon the initial project which had created a few such schools in disadvantaged areas, New Labour targeted all schools offering extended services by 2010, with significant further investment of £680 million. These extended services, provided through partnerships with various agencies such as the local health service and the police, were to offer childcare options for parents to enable flexibility in their work

arrangements, and to act as a resource for communities and individuals in combating issues such as unemployment, health problems, and teenage pregnancy. This expansion of policy reinforced what Ranson (2008: 211) saw as 'the most significant reconstituting of education as a children's service, integrating education, health and social services to constitute a new framework of holistic care for young people'. Indeed, the Government described such transformation as long term systemic and cultural change (DfES, 2004b). For Dyson et al. (2006) this expansion of localised provision of child, family and community services was reflective of a broadening policy agenda, moving away from the narrow standards-based focus that had been the focus of New Labour's first term. Indeed, the holistic approach was reflective of Giddens's concern for community building initiatives to focus upon the multiple problems facing individuals and families, rather than a singular focus on entry into crowded labour markets (Giddens, 1998b). Evidence from Cummings et al. (2006) supported the role of such extended services in terms of improvement and performance, as well as intake. Yet, despite the significance of these shifts which had reconstituted the governance of education as a children's service, Ranson (2008: 213) argued that 'policy remains fundamentally fractured between one strategy which asserts that achievement is improved through strong independent institutions which compete effectively in the market place of parental choice, and another which proposes that only a collaborative community of practice can create the conditions for all to achieve'.

However, there was one further area of significant development that presented a potentially radical approach to school organisation and learning. Outlining this new direction Miliband (2006: 23) stated that, 'until recently, the debate in the UK has been polarised into an argument between advocates of market solutions and those who favoured a planned approach. Our purpose in Government is to provide a new choice for those who are not satisfied to rely solely on the state or the market'. This was to be brought through a turn to personalisation in public service provision and, more specifically in education, through personalised learning. This agenda sought to develop an approach that went beyond the limitations of choice in a quasi-market of institutions, and also beyond the role of representation through formal modes of governance to give parental voice a greater, and more individual, role in learning.

PERSONALISATION

Personalisation was first announced by Charles Clarke in the Five Year Strategy (DfES, 2004c: 4) as a 'system that fits to the individual rather than the individual having to fit to the system'. In 2005 Ruth Kelly (Kelly, 2005) described the personalisation of education as the means to spread excellence in schools and classrooms. This new approach represented arguably a far more radical approach to education reform than that offered by Trust schools. Miliband claimed that 'it should be what Government wants for every child' (2006: 30) drawing on Tawney to indicate the radicalism he

expected this agenda to bring to the reform of education. Indeed, Blair, in a lecture to the Sutton Trust in 2004 (Blair, 2004b), described personalised learning as 'the most socially egalitarian vision any Labour government has ever espoused'. However, despite these reference points in the Party's history, New Labour's embracing of personalisation came from a distinctly modern discourse. This was evident through the connections with the think-tank Demos who stated that 'personalisation could be this government's equivalent of privatisation' (Demos, 2004). Whilst Hartley (2009) questioned the choice of the term 'personalisation' and its relationship to the liberal educationalist theories of the 1960s and 70s, it was clear that this was not a return to the radicalism espoused by those such as John Holt, or more recently, John Gatto. Neither was it to be the end of state involvement in educational provision through an intensification of neo-liberalism of the type pursued by Tooley. Rather, as Ruano-Borbalan (2006: 77) argues, New Labour's turn to personalisation was drawn from the theories of contemporary modernity set out by Giddens, alongside Beck and Habermas.

The case for personalisation as an essential feature of the provision of modern public services had been made in 2004 through a Demos pamphlet by Charles Leadbeater (Leadbeater, 2004), with its relevance to New Labour emphasised in David Miliband's foreword. The concept of personalisation had received attention previously by New Labour with the 1997 election manifesto describing 'customised, personalised services' in terms of employment benefits to suit individual circumstances and the use of technology to improve quality and efficiency (The Labour Party, 1997). Aspects of personalisation were also seen in the Modernising Government publication (Cabinet Office, 1999) and in the formation of the Office of Public Sector Reform. However, Leadbeater (2004) argued that such attempts had not gone far enough and instead put forward a vision of 'deep personalisation'.

Personalisation was predicated on the understanding of increasing individualisation of need from public service provision where 'it is increasingly clear that the state cannot deliver collective solutions from on high' (Leadbeater, 2004: 83). This situation demanded more than a concern for better flexibility for the user in accessing provision, but for greater attention to the specific needs of individuals in the construction of services themselves. Thus, a 'cumbersome' and 'distant' government 'can only help create public goods – such as education and health – by encouraging them to emerge from in society' (Leadbeater, 2004: 83). Beyond the paternalistic conception of government there was also recognition that leaving public service provision to the markets could not ensure either the specific individualised provision necessary, nor could it protect against the inequalities of access that it created. Thus, Leadbeater (2004: 52) argued, 'we need a way for users to be treated with respect and consideration when they cannot exercise the sanction of taking their business to another supplier'. Personalisation was therefore developed around the notion that: 'a

major alternative mechanism [to competition and customer exit] can come into play either when the competitive mechanism is unavailable or as a complement to it' (Hirschman, cited in Miliband, 2006: 27). This alternative was that of 'voice', where user participation in creating more personalised solutions should '...enable society to create better collective solutions with a less coercive, intrusive state, a lower tax burden, a more responsible and engaged citizenry and stronger capacity in civil society to find and devise solutions to problems without state intervention' (Leadbeater, 2004: 88). This act of making services more personalised therefore not only responded to the needs of individual citizens, but sought to tackle the inefficiencies of state-centred provision and the inequalities of the markets by 'democratising' public services. The Policy Commission on Public Services, set up by the National Consumer Council (NCC), argued in a similar fashion that while choice could be an important driver to improve quality and make services more responsive, voice was also crucial in making sure that services really meet people's needs: 'services must now adapt to social and cultural change, shifting family structures, growing individualism and greater diversity of race and culture, or public confidence may ebb away from key sectors such as health and education' (NCC, in PASC, 2004: 16). Thus, individuals were not to be merely consumers but were to be actively engaged in shaping and producing services. Personalisation was to establish individual participation in ways which went beyond consumer choice, and that therefore worked to 'attempt to change from in, rather than escape, a particular institution' (Miliband, 2006: 27). Devolving governance in this way was seen not only to empower individuals in relation to the state and the markets, but also in their reliance upon public service professionals where users could 'question, challenge and deliberate with them' (Leadbeater, 2004: 60). Indeed, this attempt to go beyond consumerism and mere choice from predetermined packages was laid out by Leadbeater (2004: 82), stating that 'the aim of personalised public services is not to provide the self-interested, self-gratification of consumerism but to build a sense of self-actualisation, self-realisation and self-enhancement'. Such notions demonstrated the explicit attachment of Leadbeater's approach to the 'late' modernity perspective and the requirement for 'active individualism' developed by Giddens, as examined previously in this study.

The contemporary relevance of personalisation as a necessity in 'late' modernity was also enhanced through its association with the use of emergent new technologies (Buckingham, 2007; Green et al., 2005). In the technological world the shift from consumer to 'prosumer' was seen to be successful in the way it brought forward self-organisation as a mode of production (Tapscott & Williams, 2007). Indeed, Leadbeater's vision of personalisation, where professionals 'would help to create platforms and environments, peer-to-peer support networks, which allow people to devise these solutions collaboratively' (2004: 24), bore much resemblance to the developing technologies of the internet

age such as open-source software, wikis and Web 2.0, all of which positioned the user as a content-producer, in collaboration with others, making use of a common platform provided by the central service provider. As well as being distinct from the individualised learning theories of previous decades, this new framework for conceptualising personalisation suggested a significant challenge to the existing relations of power that operated between individuals, professionals, the market, and the Government, with the potential for radical new possibilities in the structure of the education system (some of this radical potential is pursued in a limited literature on 'Education 2.0' (see, for example, Araya, 2008)).

Thus, whilst it reinforced the rights and responsibilities principle that had been an important feature of New Labour's attempts to create a Third Way in modern government, the 'active individualism' in personalisation sought to do so through the increasing empowerment of individuals as they rewrote the 'script' of public service delivery (Leadbeater, 2004: 59). The potential radicalism of the personalisation agenda was therefore seen to reside in its ability to enable this participation without falling prey to the limitations of individual capital in market systems, or in the opportunity to take part in formal modes of governance. That is, ensuring an active and participative citizenry, as well as developing efficiency in provision through increasing individuation, both seen as vital to furthering social cohesion and a skilled, flexible workforce, could be achieved through an organisational theory that made participation and individuation the central activity, rather than mediated through the operation of choice mechanisms or formal governance systems. Further, this attention to individual needs worked to balance out the inequities of choice and the limitations of representational democracy, working towards the vision of social justice in an 'opportunity economy' that would maximise cohesion and economic strength. In this sense personalisation sought to go beyond not only choice, but also voice, as conceived in the model of citizenship set out by Ranson (2000) that relied upon increasing the opportunities available to engage in formal governance. Personalisation proposed a new model of governance that worked through the increasing democratisation of public services. In terms of the role for Government this now meant that:

> A state that is committed to protecting private freedom must also continuously shape how people use their freedom in the name of the wider public good. Personalisation through participation is part of the solution to this dilemma of how to rule through freedom, to allow the public good to be created in society rather than relying on the state to deliver it (Leadbeater, 2004: 90).

The vision of personalisation that was set out by Leadbeater, and endorsed on behalf of New Labour by David Miliband, was a clear attempt to modernise public service provision. It responded to the related contemporary demands of the economic world for more skilled individuals, of society for

cohesion, and of government for citizenship and individual responsibility, by seeking to draw upon new forms of relationship between the state, individuals, and the economy. This was to mean going beyond the limits of consumer choice, as well as of formal citizenship voice, in order to extend the voice and participation of individuals. These themes were reflected in the application of personalisation to education. Tom Bentley, then Director of Demos, argued that current approaches to schooling 'simply do not provide the right foundation for the twenty-first century needs of young people, or the demands and accountabilities placed on them by the rest of society' (Bentley, cited in Keamy et al., 2007). Personalisation was therefore an extension, or intensification, of the demand for education to produce skilled individuals able to take part in a modern workforce and society. New Labour, as demonstrated through their expansion of reform at the level of institutional diversity, clearly remained attached to the benefits of a quasi-market system. However, the need to go beyond the limitations of a system based upon consumer choice was clearly expressed:

> ...we know parental choice in schools can be valuable in itself and a spur to parental engagement. But we also know it is a very slow way of putting pressure on underperforming schools to improve, and in any case few parents want to choose a school more than twice – one primary, one secondary – in a pupil's career (Miliband, 2006: 23).

The commitment to personalisation demonstrated a belief in the ability to overcome these difficulties:

> Open enrolment and specialisation broaden the scope for parents to express a preference for a school that they think suits their child's needs. But the model of consumer choice is insufficient – not irrelevant but insufficient – to make it happen. The challenge is to ally choice with voice: voice for the pupil, voice for the parent. That is the new frontier for education. Personalised education aims to engage every parent and every child in the educational experience (Miliband, 2006: 26).

Thus, whilst personalisation in education was not to replace the structures that supported institutional choice, which were still to provide some support for diversified provision (although, as argued previously their main intentions centred upon driving institutional improvement), it sought to meet the limitations of the 'exit' function, either with regards to the supply of highly individuated services, or the ability of individuals to signal their protest by switching providers. In these regards personalisation was to make individual voice an active feature of the system, rather than operating by 'proxy' through the mechanisms of choice, or even formal governance systems such as school governing bodies.

With regards to the reform of education the Demos-inspired vision of personalisation called for the recasting of existing policies, such as homework and parental involvement in reading, in the new agenda. Thus, such approaches which relied upon 'active' individuals were based not so much on demanding their responsibilities as a response to given rights, but would be expected to occur as a result of individuals having much greater participation in the construction of their education 'service'. Personalisation was also to establish a much broader conceptualisation of learning, drawing, as Bentley (cited in Keamy et al., 2007) stated, 'on wider resources and influences for learning beyond the formal organisation of schooling, and for making more of the existing organisational ingredients by creating new flexibilities in tandem with new demands'. These flexibilities were seen by Ruano-Borbalan (2006: 79) to fill the gap left in 'late' modernity between 'the dominant form of authority and knowledge transmission in the school system, on the one hand, and the scope for individuals to act and reflect, on the other'. In this space Demos highlighted the role for new technologies in extending learning beyond the environs of the school and into the home and community, building on the observation that 'for many young people their digital learning landscape already affords them a high degree of personalisation which is currently unacknowledged by their formal school experiences' (Green et al., 2005: 4).

PERSONALISING EDUCATION

Personalisation was presented as a far-reaching solution for the organisation of public services in the face of contemporary demands, and thus, as noted above, in a radical and modernising rhetoric for education reform. Yet, despite this modernising agenda it was also, according to David Hopkins (2005), Chief Adviser to Ministers on School Standards, something that many schools and teachers had been doing with success for many years (a point also made by Miliband (2003)). This apparent disparity was addressed by the expressed desire to extend such provision universally (Kelly, 2005). Whereas Blair had announced personalised learning for new specialist schools and Academies in his speech to the Labour Party Conference in 2003 (Blair, 2003), the goal was now for it to be a system-wide 'philosophy' rather than a new initiative. The agenda itself was met with rather more support and optimism than had greeted the announcement of Trust schools and other structural changes. As Hargreaves (cited in Johnson, 2004b) stated, 'at the heart of the concept is an old idea that has always appealed to, and been taken seriously by, practitioners in education...can more be done to meet the learning needs of all students?'.

Whilst aspects of personalisation and personalised learning had emerged through the focus on gifted and talented children, and in the proposal for 'extended projects' in the Tomlinson Report (DfES, 2004a), this period was marked by a drive to extend this 'philosophy' across all aspects of the school system. The significant development of personalisation as an organising concept for education was

also apparent in the *Five Year Strategy* (DfES, 2004c). Whilst initially presented as one of five key aims of this phase of reform, it soon came to inform and demand these other goals in and for itself. Thus, personalisation 'implies' greater diversity of provision and providers, 'demands' quality of leadership and commitment of the workforce, 'means' that schools must have greater autonomy, and is made possible through effective partnerships (DfES, 2004c: 18). The centrality of this new agenda was reinforced through the 2005 White Paper (DfES, 2005a) which devoted a whole chapter to the theme and announced funding of £500 million in 2005-6, with a further £490 million in 2006-7.

Miliband (2006) set out five key elements for the application of the personalised learning agenda. According to these the biggest driver for change was to be 'assessment for learning and the use of data and dialogue to diagnose every student's learning needs' (2006: 24), followed by matching teaching and learning styles to individuals, significant choice in the curriculum, school organisation centred around student progress, and the support of local community institutions and services in supporting progress:

> Decisive progress in educational standards occurs where every child matters; careful attention is paid to their individual learning styles, motivations, and needs; there is rigorous use of pupil target setting linked to high quality assessment; lessons are well paced and enjoyable; and pupils are supported by partnership with others well beyond the classroom (Miliband, 2004: 7).

Whilst personalised learning was to transform teaching and learning in schools through a focus on features such as assessment for learning and providing a 'repertoire of teaching strategies' (Miliband, 2006: 24), as well as to promote a wider conceptualisation of the learning environment and its provision in order to 'enrich' opportunities, it was clear that the personalisation agenda had a clear focus on raising standards as measured through the existing framework of national examinations and assessments. Thus, as much as personalised learning was presented with a 'customer' focus through the attention to individual learning styles and extension of curriculum options, it also responded to a central concern with raising standards of attainment in the basics. Indeed, there was a significant emphasis on the role of achievement in English in maths and the ability 'to overcome economic and social disadvantage and make equality of opportunity a reality' (DfES, 2005a: 50). Whilst the basics had already been a central focus at foundation and primary level since 1997, the discourse of personalisation called for a renewed focus through the provision of small group and one-to-one tuition in order for pupils to 'catch-up' if they had fallen behind in their learning. The early secondary phase was also prioritised through the Dedicated Schools Grant, and in particular schools with the largest numbers of underachieving and deprived children. The White

Paper (DfES, 2005a) stated that schools would be 'urged' to use this extra funding for literacy and numeracy support, alongside personalised provision for gifted and talented children. As well as supporting 'catch-up' provision, New Labour also further committed to supporting gifted and talented learners, although keen to make clear that 'children from disadvantaged backgrounds are just as likely to be gifted and talented as those from the middle class, and may need greater support to fulfil their potential' (DfES, 2005a: 55)

Thus, whilst developed as an agenda for the whole school system, a philosophy that was to transform teaching, learning, management and organisation of all schools from foundation level to the 14-19 sector, a clear focus was on its use as a mechanism for raising standards in the most disadvantaged areas (DfES, 2006a). However, as Baker (2006b) notes, there appeared to be a tension between the need for flexibility for personalised provision and the continuing emphasis upon national tests and assessment. This conflict had been acknowledged previously by Leadbeater (2004) stating that his radical vision could be 'disruptive', whilst Miliband responded in calling for the need for personalisation to be balanced against a continuing insistence on the 'basics' and on accountability (Miliband, 2004). In a report for the IPPR Tough & Reed (2006) called for an end to tests at primary and Key Stage 3 levels with teacher assessment taking their place in a move to rebalance a 'creative tension' between assessment, curriculum and pedagogy. Going a stage further Green et al. (2005) argued that schools should 'embrace digital technology to enable learners to study and be assessed when and how it is most appropriate for them', although it recognised the challenges to accountability and the 'currency' of assessment that this would present. The Tomlinson Report (DfES, 2004a) had also engaged the possibility of examinations being taken in this manner. Such changes were given further credibility and impetus when the Gilbert Review (DfES, 2006b) made suggestions to allow testing when pupils were ready rather than at fixed ages. Responding to Ruth Kelly's commissioning of the review Gilbert stated, 'we agree that [personalised teaching and learning] is what every parent wants, what every child deserves and what the country needs if we are to meet the global challenges of the 21st century' (in DfES, 2006b: 3). The Review reinforced the perspective on personalisation as the key to reducing the attainment gap between pupils both as a matter of 'moral purpose and social justice' and on ensuring every individual gained 'the essential knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes which children and young people require in order to thrive in a changing world' (DfES, 2006b: 8). Thus, whilst much of the focus had been placed on using assessment *for* learning, with Sebba et al. (2007) reporting that by 2007 over 70 per cent of schools were engaged in a National Strategy whole school programme to this end, changes were required in the structure of summative assessments.

Some hope for change at this level was given by Schools Minister Jim Knight, who stated that the new emphasis on personalised learning had 'implications for the curriculum, for assessment, and for the ways that we judge success' (Knight, cited in Baker, 2007a). A consultation document, *Making Good Progress*, was published by the DfES in 2007 (DfES, 2007). It sought to encourage debate over how assessment might be used to provide more information on individual pupil progress in order to develop 'a more formative approach to data and assessment' and to 'assess progress more systematically in each key stage' (DfES, 2007: 5). In order to encourage the focus upon progress the document outlined plans to financially reward schools for success in the progress of under-attaining pupils, as well as further individual tutoring, and a new system of 'shorter, more focused and more appropriate tests' (DfES, 2007: 12) that would provide the flexibility for pupils to be assessed when they were ready. In this approach teacher assessment would provide the basis for deciding when an individual was ready to take such a test to confirm their progress through National Curriculum levels. Towards the end of 2007 a pilot project of 484 primary and secondary schools was launched to trial this new system of 'single-level' tests. Whilst New Labour made clear that such new approaches to assessment were to supplement, rather than to replace, the framework of tests, targets and performance tables (DfES, 2007), there was an expectation that, if successful, some effect on the role of national tests might be felt (Lipsett, 2007). The Key Stage 3 tests (SATs) were eventually dropped in 2008, although to some extent caused by a marking fiasco in the private company contracted to administer the tests. National tests at Key Stage 2, however, remained in place.

The personalisation agenda in education was marked to a large extent by confusion over its precise meaning and application. As noted, many in education considered its core ideas to be features that they already put to effect in schools. Certainly New Labour sustained a continual commitment to the issue of equality seeing personalised teaching and learning as the means by which to close the performance gap not just between different groups of pupils, but between individuals themselves. To this end Sebba et al. (2007: 7) in their report for the DfES stated that:

> Personalised learning strategies are used by schools to target disadvantage by, for example, increasing participation in learning, bringing greater coherence to support from external services through extended schools and providing a more flexible range of curricular and work-related opportunities that encourage engagement in learning beyond 16 and potentially contribute to closing the skills gap.

However, there were concerns that this new emphasis on individualised provision would in fact lead to greater bureaucracy rather than improved standards (ATL, 2006; Baker, 2007a). Here the concern of central Government with standards and accountability conflicted with the flexibility and localised innovation inherent in the concept of personalisation. As Johnson (2004a) had noted before the

system-wide implementation of this agenda, the introduction of a 'strong' or 'deep' model raised potential problems for its relationship with the market model of the school system if examinations were to be taken on an individual basis rather than by a whole cohort at a specified time. New Labour emphasised that the quest for higher standards was 'not in order to achieve numerical targets or to deliver accountability' (DfES, 2007: 4), yet, despite supporting the role of national testing, a Children, Schools and Families Committee report in 2010 concluded that their over-emphasis was continuing to lead to a narrow focus upon skills and knowledge that denigrated wider aspects of learning and that 'the drive to meet government-set targets has too often become the goal rather than the means to the end of providing the best possible education for all children' (CSFC, 2010: 9). Here the 'high-stakes' nature of tests resulted in increased attention to borderline pupils, a narrowed curriculum, and 'teaching to the test' (see Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). The Committee also recommended that the new single-level tests should be used only for summative purposes, concerned with their intended desire to meet not only this end, but also to contribute to classroom practice as an assessment for learning as well as to act for the purposes of school accountability. This further undermined the ability for personalisation to be used as a 'catch-all' philosophy for the education system. True personalised learning was, they argued, 'incompatible with a high-stakes single-level test which focuses on academic learning and does not assess a range of other skills which children might possess' (CSFC, 2010: 12).

Although presented as part of a radical framework by those such as Leadbeater, and supported in this way by New Labour, it is not clear that personalisation lead to a similarly radical outcome in the organisation of education (Campbell et al., 2007: 153). For Hartley (2009: 423) the arrival of the personalisation agenda was another in a line of attempts to change the organisational structure of the school, with historical precedent favouring rhetoric over reality. However, it is his use of the term 'reconciliation' to describe the attempt to implement a personalised agenda alongside one of increasing diversity and choice, rather than to bring about an 'ideal' form as espoused by Leadbeater, that is more apt to the situation (Hartley, 2008: 370). For, as was clear both from New Labour's statements concerning personalised learning itself, and from its place in a wider project of reform that sought to significantly enhance the role of the quasi-market structure through the introduction of greater diversity and choice, personalisation was not envisaged to be the sole means by which public services were to be modernised.

However, it has been noted that the wider project of reform in this 'final' period was marked by some 'tentative' (Dyson et al., 2006) changes in direction. Indeed, Fielding (2006: 348) remarked that at first sight the application of personalisation to education appeared to present 'a much needed return to concerns for the wider, human purposes of schooling that give education its enduring

significance and satisfaction'. However, as demonstrated above, personalisation has occurred more as a 'phase' of the high performance model of schooling, than of a complete and coherent new model of organisation in itself. As a response to the dominant model of educational organisation the personalisation agenda sought 'to redress its worst effects and more obvious failings' (Fielding, 2006: 349). Namely it argued that this was possible through a turn to 'voice' that elided with equity (Hartley, 2009: 430) in order to overcome the limitations of the function of 'exit' in the quasi-market of school choice. In this way personalisation worked at an intra-school level in a way that reflected a New Labour concern with the engagement and participation of individuals in civic life through an 'engaged democracy' (Harris, 2006: 1). Indeed, it was argued above that this approach went further towards the goal of an engaged citizenry than had been seen in the development of opportunities to participate in aspects of school governance.

However, criticism of personalisation as applied to education has concerned the extent to which individuals are empowered by any new entitlements to participation in the 'co-production' of their learning (Arnot and Reay, 2007). As Biesta (2005: 59) argues, this perspective assumes that parents and pupils already have an understanding of what their needs are rather than the view that 'a major reason for engaging in education is precisely to find out what it is that one actually needs'. In this case the relation of power between 'co-producers' is shifted in favour of the teacher over the learner, in a context where the 're-professionalisation' (Whitty, 2006) of teaching staff has intensified their role as agents in a discourse of performativity (for example, the proposals for career development according to performance in pupil improvement (DfES, 2005a)). Not only may personalisation be 'unspeakable' by individuals, but professionals are left with the 'incapacity to hear the sounds of silence emanating from those whose cultural wherewithal sets them apart' (Hartley, 2009: 430). Further issues of equality are raised in the way that personalisation may act to privatise risk (Ferguson, 2007: 389) through its emphasis upon the role of parents and learners themselves in taking responsibility for their own progress (see Miliband, 2006). As Buckingham (2007: 23) writes, 'personalisation conceives of the individual as a self-regulating citizen who is responsible for their own welfare, yet this neglects the very real material difficulties people might face in exercising their responsibilities'. Indeed, Leadbeater (2004: 74-5) acknowledged the need to ensure that the extension of learning outside of the school was met with attention to the distribution of resources. However, the legitimisation of the home as a place of learning, alongside the extension policies such as home-school contracts and pupil homework, has led to fears over the subsequent expansion of privatisation into learning as companies see a potentially lucrative new home market, and the effect that this might have on widening existing inequalities. Describing personalised learning as a 'rubber bag' expression that 'ultimately signifies very little of consequence

or substance', Halpin (cited in Beadle, 2007) argues that it has worked merely as a diversionary tactic that has deliberately 'deflected attention away from awkward and highly ideologically inflected debate in education about which kids get what and under what circumstances'. As well as issues of equality and structural disadvantage criticism has also focused specifically on the extent to which personalisation has extended wider features of individualism in education, to the potential detriment of the goals of social cohesion and democracy. These criticisms are examined in more detail in the following chapter as part of a discussion on the extent of New Labour's radical approach to education reform.

MOVING FORWARD

This final term of New Labour's administration began with a clear, indeed intensified, call for reform that would bring 'permanent' reform to education. As Harris & Ranson (2005) note, this call was significant for the way in which the Government had rethought its original presuppositions over the emphasis on standards over structures, and the link between class and under-achievement. Whilst embarking on the most intensive extension of structural reform in order to extend choice and diversity, New Labour also explicitly acknowledged the need to do more to target the performance gap between the best and worst off in society. Not only were new attempts made to 'soften' unequal operation of the quasi-market, but a new personalisation agenda sought to use 'voice' as a means to offer opportunities for those for which 'exit' did not work. As Blair (2004c) stated in a speech on public service reform, 'through choice and personalisation our aim is ambitious and progressive; 'services fair for all, personal to each'. Public services that harness the drive of competition, and the power of choice to the public sector ethic of altruism and equity'. Both as a concept itself, and as part of a broader project of reform, personalisation represented arguably the strongest attempt to develop a Third Way for education. Responding to the perceived demands of 'late' modernity, which continued to provide the basis for a commitment to social justice, personalisation sought to go beyond the limitations of social democratic paternalism and New Right neo-liberalism, offering an organisational theory that enhanced individual freedom and democratic rights on the one hand, whilst simultaneously increasing citizen participation in public service provision through non-authoritarian means and allowing the state to govern from a distance.

Yet, as much as education policy in this period was to finally end state paternalism (Miliband, 2006; Morris, 2008) it is far from the case that personalisation provided a clear and coherent Third Way between this and privatisation. For Chitty (2009: 74) this period provided an apology for neo-liberals to extend 'the commercialisation of schools and the loss of any sense of public accountability'. Similarly Johnson (2004: 227) argued:

personalised learning is more important as a political idea than an educational plan. It can be seen as the apogee of a discourse which has been developing for a quarter of a century, but one which offers at best a partial understanding of the purposes of mass education in modern society and which speaks to a radically neo-liberal agenda.

As Cutler et al. (2007: 851) further note, the limited radicalism of personalisation was such that the 'repudiation of paternalism sits uneasily with policy statements that assume choice from a menu or even 'old fashioned' professional determination of service standards'. Rather than a Third Way, education policy continued to reflect a mixture of central control and the involvement of the private sector.

This chapter has examined in some detail the nature of education reform over a ten year period of New Labour government. The chronological structure taken has enabled the progression of policy to be followed. In this both continuities and discontinuities with the previous Conservative administration have been noted. Both of these trends have in themselves seen the introduction of new initiatives as well as the reorientation of existing projects. Throughout this decade of reform New Labour maintained a rhetoric of modernisation and radicalism as it sought to make an education fit for the needs of the 21st century. As well as the Governmental justifications for reform this chapter has also examined the nature of criticism that has emanated in the literature that has pointed to incoherence, tension and conflict in and between policies.

This study moves now to draw together the findings of this present chapter with the broader discussion that has been held throughout. The following chapter seeks to assess the extent to which New Labour's Third Way provided a modernising and radical approach to the development of a new consensus in education.

EDUCATION IN 'LATE' MODERNITY

'No one will doubt that the legislator should direct his attention above all to the education of youth; for the neglect of education does harm to the constitution. The citizen should be moulded to suit the form of government under which he lives. For each government has a peculiar character which originally formed and which continues to preserve it. The character of democracy creates democracy, and the character of oligarchy creates oligarchy; and always the better the character, the better the government'
– Aristotle, Politics - Book VIII

The previous chapter discussed in detail the development of New Labour's education policy in the period 1997-2007. Examining in the most part policy related to schools reform attention was drawn to continuity and change in policy trajectories, as well as the introduction of new initiatives to the system. This developing project of reform was positioned in the Third Way framework, discussed in Chapter Four, through which New Labour sought to encapsulate their project of modernisation. This was, as noted at the start of the study, based upon a desire to establish a new consensus in education based upon a practical rather than ideological approach to policy-making. The dichotomised ideological situation surrounding existing approaches to educational reform was outlined in Chapter Two, where it was argued that the future for education reform and the development of 'alternative strategies' required new approaches and understandings of educational issues and solutions. It was in this light that the work of Anthony Giddens was presented. Chapter Three discussed Giddens's conceptualisation of the multi-dimensional nature of 'late' modernity, using this to critique not only the outdated position of social democracy but the 'weak' response offered by the New Right, and thus the fundamental limitations of the debate that existed between them. Instead, Giddens presented the contemporary period as one of intensified globalised and localised change based upon the increasing reflexivity of knowledge. 'Late' modernity was a period in which radical social change presented itself as an immanent possibility. However, at the same time this undermined deterministic or evolutionary understandings of history which privileged particular human agents or final societal forms. Thus, whilst presenting 'late' modernity as a period of change offering hope for the future through a perspective of 'utopian realism', Giddens argued that such radical change made a modernising approach to contemporary life essential. New Labour's political project of reform presented itself as one centred upon modernisation, expressed though the label of the Third Way. As argued in Chapter Four, there was in New Labour's take-up of the Third Way a significant attachment to Giddens's thinking, in which new roles for the state, individuals, and civil society were the basis for a sociologically, rather than ideologically, informed

response to contemporary issues. For Giddens the Third Way was to inform the renewal of social democracy that was required to meet contemporary challenges and provide the radical basis for change needed to realise the utopian prospects offered by 'late' modernity, as well as cope with the risks that were simultaneously manufactured. However, the Third Way was to be a guiding principle for reform rather than providing a specific policy programme. There is therefore a need to reflect upon the nature of the development of education reform in this period. Whilst some policies were emerged more clearly as demonstrative of a Third Way approach, for example Education Action Zones, and as this study argued, personalised learning, it is important to consider the policy framework as a whole. This necessarily also requires a critical reflection on the conflicts, tensions, and limitations that arose from these reforms. It therefore remains to examine the extent to which these developments can be said to have brought about a modernising and radical approach towards a new consensus in education, placing the analysis of policy in the broader discussion that has developed throughout this study.

MODERNISING EDUCATION?

Tony Blair once quipped that under New Labour the role of Secretary of State for Education would be 'like moving to the manager's job at Newcastle United' (Blair, 1996a) – a team who, at the time, had been flying high at the top of the Premier League. Given Newcastle's turbulent history and turnover of managers since this time the comparison may have become more apt than Blair intended. However, despite political and academic debates over the nature of its progress, New Labour has been keen to highlight the centrality of its educational programme throughout its time in office, pointing to the commitment to modernising and radical reform in the unprecedented level of investment that has underpinned it, and to the development of an education system that enabled individuals to take advantage of the opportunities presented in contemporary society.

Certainly, the figures suggest that dramatic changes had taken place. Figures for the UK showed that by 2008/9 there were now 3,209 nursery schools, contributing to a rise from 21% to 63% in enrolled three and four year-olds since 1970/71, as well as a 77% increase in providers of full day childcare between 2001 and 2008. Between 1999 and 2009 there were improvements in all Key Stages for both boys and girls, although the performance of boys was generally less than that of girls. This gap in performance had narrowed from 12 percentage points at KS2 and 18 percentage points at KS3 in 1999 to 9 and 13 percentage points at KS2 and KS3 respectively in 2009. Attainment at GCSE level showed an increase of 19% for both boys and girls since 1995/96, although also reflecting a differential in gender attainment with 69% of girls achieving 'five good GCSEs' in 2007/8, compared with just 60% of boys. However, with an average of only 48% attaining five or more GCSEs that included English and mathematics, there was still concern over performance levels in the 'basics'. A-

level results at the same time showed that 41% of young men gained 2 or more A levels (or equivalent), compared with 52% of young women. There was also a significant rise in the number of vocational qualifications awarded, up from 153,000 NVQs in 1991/2 to 773,000 awarded in 2007/8. Investment in school organisation and resources had also resulted in a rise in the number of support staff operating in schools, from 88,700 in 1996 to 268,000 in 2009. Permanent exclusions were also at their lowest level since 1996/7.

At the end of compulsory education there were 3.5 million students entering Further Education in 2007/8, compared with just 1.7 million in 1970/71 (including three times as many female students, and nearly 49% more male students). For those entering Higher Education there was a similar rise in numbers, with almost 2.5 million students in 2007/8, compared with 621,000 in 1970/71. 60% of undergraduates in 2007/8 could expect to have gained employment in six months of leaving university, whilst the figure was 71% for those leaving with a postgraduate degree. Whilst 24% of undergraduate leavers went on to some form of further study (either full-time or combined with work), this figure was 38% for those who gained a foundation or other Higher Education qualification not included as a first degree. Indeed, further suggestive of the rise of a 'learning society' and the necessity of lifelong education, 44% of people of working age studying towards a qualification in 2009 were aged over 25, whilst 18% were aged over 40. Indeed, 50% of those working towards degree level qualifications were in some form of full or part-time employment. Of the 6.7 million working-age people studying for a qualification 57% were in employment. Indeed, people of working-age in the UK were more likely to be educated to at least degree level than to be without formal qualifications (Social Trends, 2010).

As noted throughout Chapter Five, there was an explicit emphasis on the need for educational reform to produce a populace capable of responding to a changing labour market in which the careers afforded by traditional industries were replaced by opportunities that required highly-skilled individuals who also possessed flexibility in their ability to retrain throughout life. It was to be the country's economic growth that would ensure the increasing availability of opportunities as well as rising prosperity levels for all. As was affirmed in each of the major White Papers of the period in question increasing educational performance and opportunities were the basis for national and personal prosperity as well as the route to social cohesion and greater equality.

However, despite this expansion of the educational infrastructure, rising performance figures, an increasing number of qualified individuals, and opportunities to enter education throughout life, significant concern has been directed at the nature of change with regards to equality of opportunity, or the 'redistribution of possibilities' (Giddens, 1998b: 100). Whilst Blair argued that 'brainpower, skills, and flexibility, not cheap manual labour' would be the key to competitiveness

and productivity (1999d), patterns of industrial change suggested that the transformation into a 'knowledge society' had been less dramatic in reality:

> What we are observing is a significant increase in managerial, professional and technical jobs requiring high-level skills being paralleled by a rise in the number of people in less well-paid personal services and sales occupations. Despite all the talk about the advent of a 'knowledge society', these 'lousy' jobs that cannot be relocated to other parts of the world will continue to exist (Reed & Delorenzi, 2006).

As these patterns limited the availability of employment requiring high-skill levels there were concerns that despite increasing educational performance and opportunity there remained limits to who had access to such jobs. Here the relationship between class and education remained a prominent fixture of debate. Data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (cited in Social Trends, 2010) showed that those from lower socio-economic groups tended to have lower levels of academic attainment at age 16. Whilst 81% of children whose parents held 'higher professional' employment attained level 2 qualifications, this was only 43% for children whose parents were categorised as in 'routine occupation'. Further, in 2008, 46% of those from the routine group were still without qualifications at this level at age 17, compared with 12 % of those from the higher professional occupation group. Such figures demonstrated that the social and economic conditions into which a child was born remained key determining factors in relation to their educational outcome and the possibilities open to them (Blanden et al., 2005; Reay et al., 2005; Brown & Lauder, 2006; Blanden & Machin, 2007; Avis, 2008). In particular, arguments pointed to the continuing advantages held by the middle-class in education. This is significant given the extent to which the nature of contemporary change was challenged the dominance of this grouping. Here the nature of the 'hour-glass' economy heightened insecurity such that 'by the turn of the century the notion of a 'safe career' for many educated middle class people was no longer guaranteed...' (Tomlinson, 2005: 209; Allen & Ainley, 2007; Avis, 2008). The importance placed upon education as a means of success in the labour market further heightened its significance as a means of reclaiming such security (Thompson & Lawson, 2006). As noted above, the importance of education for both individual and national prosperity were central concerns of New Labour's imperative for reform. Nationally there was a concern not only with the nature of economic change related to transformations in the patterns of industry, global monetary and labour markets, and technological advances that demanded new skills and continual retraining, but also with the breakdown of society caused on the one hand by changing sociological patterns that challenged traditional forms of social relations, involved individuals in ever more abstract systems, and legitimised new forms of

understanding the self, and on the other hand by an aggressive individualism offered through neo-liberal structures that rewarded the pursuit of self-interest and the atomisation of society.

From the outset New Labour established a prominent role for the state in its Third Way programme. This began with a commitment to raising standards, where Government would regain its legitimacy (Giddens, 1998b) by demonstrating its contribution to efficiency not only as a champion of excellence but through its role in target-setting, monitoring, inspection, recognising success, and, where necessary, intervening to enforce change. As Byers (Hansard, 1997a) was seen to note, this managerial contribution was not one that could be expected to occur through a reliance upon parental demand in a marketised system alone. Indeed, a burgeoning literature on New Labour's managerial approach in education has developed in this period pointing in particular to the intensification of centralised standards and performance requirements of both schools and pupils. A discourse of 'performativity' furthered the 're-professionalisation' of teachers (Whitty, 2006), transformed the nature of school leadership (Gronn, 2003; Thrupp; 2005), and contributed to the increasing importance placed upon national tests and exams as markers of educational achievement. This has pointed to the continuing tendency towards centralised control initiated in the 1980s (Briggs et al., 2007). Whilst this managerial role in relation to standards has been sustained throughout the period in question, it has also become increasingly clear that New Labour saw the need for intervention at a structural level. Despite evidence suggesting that parental demand for choice was centred upon school quality rather than educational experience (Glatter, in PASC, 2004; Walford, 1996), New Labour embarked on a dramatic expansion of institutional diversity as a means of promoting improvement through the 'pride' and 'passion' that would stem from schools working towards an individual ethos and mission. Central to this was a rapid rise in specialist schools, supported by a new range of subject specialisms and a 'working towards' category for those not yet deemed to be meeting suitable criteria. Diversity was also maintained through the retention of Grammar school status, and broadened through the introduction of Academies and Trust schools.

Thus, New Labour continued with a quasi-market form of school system, arguing that parental choice and competition between schools was essential for raising the performance of all institutions. New Labour's pursuit of school choice and competition including elements of selectivity, a central framework or testing, targets, curriculum control, and funding was, according to Tomlinson (2005: 224), promoted by key figures such as Michael Barber and Will Hutton who 'were either unaware of all the evidence demonstrating the educational advantages permanently accruing to the middle classes in state education...or were supporting a familiar class-based selective system'. Significantly, such concern points not to the establishment of a new consensus in education, but rather a return to the debates of the past. Indeed, Tomlinson's criticism of education reform in the New Labour era

directly parallels that of Ranson (1993) and Walford (1997), noted in Chapter Two, of the previous Conservative project as one based upon a return to a system and society based upon elitism. To what extent then can any progress be seen to have been made?

This study, through its assessment of policy developments detailed in the previous chapter, and its positioning of this in a broader discussion of the nature of 'late' modernity, has presented evidence that challenges the conclusion put forward above by Tomlinson. Here, the nature of change, as detailed above, informed the demand for a Third Way that went beyond both the conceptualisations of change in 'Old Left' or 'New Right' perspectives and the ideologically prescribed solutions offered by them. The transformations of 'late' modernity radically challenged the ability of the state to provide prosperity and security, undermined further as the concept of the nation-state itself was put under pressure by these same trajectories of change. For the individual such changes presented similarly radical challenges to lifestyle and security, whilst, again, also serving to undermine the extent to which they could face risk in an independent manner. Thus, both state and individuals were remained important to, and indeed reliant upon, each other. Education could not be modernised through a reduction of the state's role in favour of marketised activity, nor could the state respond as a direct provider of public or private good. Here, then, the 'enabling' role for the state presented an 'and also' attempt to improve efficiency and equity. Indeed, the demand for these outcomes was in itself another 'and also' feature of educational policy development. Whilst building significantly upon the managerial role of the state that had developed from the Conservative reform agenda, New Labour were to give significantly more attention to issues of equity.

As well as the changing role of central government the place of the individual in education also received new emphasis. Reflecting the recognition of a knowledge economy or learning society, where changing patterns of industry had brought about the end of a 'job for life' and where globalisation had produced insecurities in employment, individuals now not only needed new skills and training, but the ability to retrain throughout life as a 'reflexive' response to work opportunities. New Labour were finalised, as Dyson et al. (2006) note, a 'cradle to grave' education system that extended from birth to retirement. Initiatives such as Sure Start and free nursery places were to ensure children received a sound start to life, whilst an expansion of accessibility to courses throughout life enabled the concept of lifelong learning to be fully grounded. The introduction of Educational Maintenance Allowances and specialised diplomas strengthened compulsory education both in terms of diversity and progression, and became increasingly linked to lifelong learning pathways: 'a narrower, schools and university focused perspective on national educational policy is being replaced by a broader, more encompassing vision' (Tight, 1998: 482). The development of

'independence, initiative and enterprise for all' (Blair, 1999d) thus saw the notion of individual responsibility enhanced. This was constructed both through more authoritarian means such as the use of home-school contracts and statements on parental responsibility towards child behaviour, as well as through the enabling of more positive approaches to responsibility through active participation. Important here was the increased importance of school governing bodies with enhanced opportunities for parental representation that went beyond a 'rights-based' approach to governance where 'the task has been to reconstruct a theory of citizenship which is grounded in the experience of heterogeneity and elaborates the need for different groups to enter a discourse in which they voice claims for their identities and interests to be recognized and accommodated in the public space' (Ranson et al., 2003: 718). Further still, the introduction of personalised learning was to move beyond representation to give individual pupils and parents a direct voice in their learning. Such 'co-production' was heralded by its proponents, such as Leadbeater and Bentley, as bringing about the 'democratisation of democracy' necessary for the needs of an individualised society. As noted in Chapter Five, the parallels to Giddens expressed here were significant. Indeed, despite the absence of Third Way rhetoric in New Labour by this time, personalised learning appeared to reflect the clearest attempt to develop a new direction in education policy to this point. Its potential significance was demonstrated in the desire for it to be universal to the education system as a new 'philosophy' of approach. These 'experiments with democracy' represented the desire to extend educational opportunities beyond an individual's ability to operate in a choice-based system, offering 'voice' as well as 'choice'. This is highly significant given the polarised perspectives considered in Chapter Two. Here, then, rather than pursuing a marketised route alone, or indeed seeking to return to collective forms of democratic governance, New Labour attempted to bring both choice and voice together in order to empower individual agency. The extension of democratic participation through both the more formal modes of school governance and the individualised nature of personalised learning reflected an attempt to build a 'civil society' in which the role of both individual and state would be reaffirmed. As Leadbeater (2004) noted, it was to build governance through freedom.

Again, following Blair's own desire for greater radicalism at the start of their third term in office, the expansion of the extended schools programme, paralleling the universalising of personalised learning and of institutional diversity and autonomy through Trust schools, was heralded by Ranson (2008) as the beginnings of a transformative change in education. The development of localised community governance, and the attention to the resources found in social relations generated through multi-agency approaches to working, was seen initially in the Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities initiatives. However, Halpin (2003: 70) argued that such policies failed to connect

'systematically with any of the fundamental changes underway in contemporary society', offering no more than vague propositions of how they would contribute to educational performance. Indeed, as noted, as a contribution to social justice Education Action Zones were seen to weakly conceptualise such issues in affective and associational terms, relying more on economic forms of justice that would arise from increasing school performance and the resources provided by the multi-agency approach to governance. Further, in this 'stakeholder' approach to governance there were various conflicts of interest, particularly with regards to a dominant performance management agenda. Extended schools, however, demonstrated a more sophisticated attachment to contemporary demands, bringing together multiple agencies, families and neighbourhoods to focus on the diversity of learning needs. The focus on these issues paralleled Giddens's (1998b) concern for an attention to the variety of issues that face individuals. Developments such as these suggested neither the abandonment of individuals to systems based upon rational choice, nor an attempt to restore collective forms of provision.

This 'active individualism' was to take place in an arena of opportunity, provided through the new 'enabling' role for the state, together with the additional drive and resources of the private and voluntary sector. Indeed, Academies and Trust schools were explicit attempts by New Labour to mark the new role of the state as an 'enabling government' rather than as a direct provider itself. Thus, an increasing place was given to the involvement of the private and voluntary sector. Whilst initially directed at the involvement of local organisations in federations, or the input of extra resources, such as in EAZs, this role increasingly moved towards involvement in school leadership, and achieved a universal endorsement through the encouragement for all primary and secondary schools to acquire Trust status (DfES, 2005). Referring to Academies, Ball (2009: 100) observes that such changes have been 'indicative of and contribute to a set of more general and highly significant experimental and evolutionary policy 'moves' which involve the re-invention of public sector institutions and a reformation of the overall institutional architecture of the state and its scales of operation'. Prideaux (2005) argues that such changes are reflective of New Labour's desire to create a Third Way in the organisation of governance that transcends the limitations of traditional state-centred control and redistribution, and the market-oriented approach of the New Right: 'In sum, this is New Labour's drive for yet another public-private partnership, a partnership in which responsibility for teaching, policy direction, educational support and costs would be benignly shared by government, business and the families of the community' (Prideaux, 2005: 123).

Echoing Giddens, New Labour were to shift the focus of social justice and the modernisation of the values of fairness and equality to that of opportunity rather than outcome. In this 'opportunity economy' there was a focus on paid work and entry into the labour market as the means to secure

individual and national prosperity, as well as integration and social cohesion: 'Retraining would provide the means out of unemployment and its related conditions, while industry would be provided with a new, increasing and highly skilled workforce' (Prideaux, 2005: 116). Changing industrial patterns and the expansion of education and training pathways throughout life were to allow individuals greater opportunity to seek work and make a meaningful contribution to national and family life. Further to the expansion of Further and Higher Education, the development of more integrated educational pathways, and the attention to raising the status and diversity of vocational qualifications, New Labour also sought to increase opportunities to enter work for parents by introducing free childcare (Ball, 2003). Accepting society as hierarchical and equality of outcome as unobtainable (Prideaux, 2005; Reed & Delorenzi, 2006) the role of markets was embraced as providing both incentive and aspiration for individual effort, as well as institutional performance. Thus, a marketised system based upon choice and competition in education was not only maintained, but expanded. However, whilst New Labour stressed the important role of choice in responding to user demand and as a mechanism for driving improvements in performance, Chapter Five drew attention to increased attempts to 'soften' the edges of this quasi-market system. Initially such attempts were marginal, including the introduction of a schools adjudicator, parental rights to appeal over admissions, and new 'value-added' data. However, in the 2005 White Paper (DfES, 2005a) more substantial efforts were made to deal with issues concerning transport, the availability of information, a stronger admissions code, and the introduction of choice advisors for those parents most in need. Further still, as noted above, the introduction of a personalised learning agenda sought to respond to individualised user need, and in its attempt to bring together 'voice' and 'exit' represented an explicit attempt to reconcile the perceived advantages of a marketised system of school choice with ensuring that the inequalities of such a process were met. Such 'softening' approaches to choice systems in education responded to the isolation of the individual in the marketplace that was noted in Chapter Two. Again, New Labour's approach reflected neither a straightforward continuation of New Right market emphasis in education, nor a return to traditional social democratic policies based upon redistribution.

Similarly, an 'and also' approach can be detected at the institutional level. Gamarnikow & Green (2003) suggest that, building upon new relationships between state, society, and the economy, the partnership approach to school management was used to hold together an increasingly diverse system through social capital. Diversity here refers both to a horizontal expansion of school type, and a vertical dimension of differing school status. Thus, the emphasis on partnerships between institutions was used to ensure that 'lower status' schools had access to networks of resources, whilst horizontally, relations between schools would ensure that whilst diverse in specialism or

individual ethos there remained a current of collective purpose. The use of partnerships here was neither 'a traditional social democratic redistribution from the strong to the weak, from the rich to the poor' nor was it about 'extending unfettered neo-liberal market relations in which the weak/poor go to the wall and the strong/rich get stronger/richer' (Gamarnikow & Green, 2003: 216). Following this analysis, whilst the use of the Third Way as a label for this project of reform became less apparent throughout New Labour's time in office – perhaps as a result of it becoming as 'hackneyed' as that of modernisation, or as Giddens (2010b) admits, on the basis of its misinterpretation – this study can emphasise its continuing significance in the development of policy in this period as a guiding principle for reform that was neither Left nor Right, as had previously been experienced in education policy. Certainly, education reform in the period in question was couched in a narrative of rapid and dramatic social and economic change at both global and local levels that demanded radical transformations to education. Contemporary society presented both needs and opportunities, for which education was regarded as a primary system to equip and enable individuals for their own personal success and prosperity and for that of the nation as a whole. In this sense, 'late' modernity held possibilities for both public and private good. At the same time these possibilities also represented challenges, or risks, that could only be overcome by means that went beyond the public *or* private responses that belonged to the polarised debates of the past. For New Labour, then, it was vital to adapt to the world as it was rather than attempting to shape it according to some pre-established doctrine (Bastow & Martin, 2003). The space created through this conceptualisation of change – what Shaw (2009: 21) terms 'social narrative formation' – can thus be seen to have informed an 'and also' approach to policy (Halpin, 1999). As noted in Chapter Four, Giddens argued that any political concern with modernisation must display a sophisticated understanding of the concept, rather than a pursuit of 'more and more modernity' (Giddens, 1998: 38). Indeed, Giddens's development of a Third Way for political action drew on his analysis of the contemporary period as one which represented significant breaks with the idea of modernity as previously understood and experienced. In their attempt to bring a practical rather ideological approach to the development of education policy New Labour sought to use pragmatism rather than prescription to break with a dichotomised policy programme, and certainly this 'and also' approach reflected such attempts. The search for a new consensus reflected a concern with a stronger form of modernisation where concern was not with an attempt to form a settlement, or even an agreement, on political action across and between different political actors or parties as had been the case in the post-war era, nor with enhancing New Right ideology or restoring a traditional social democratic project in their own right. This break with 'the debates of the past' sought to create space for policy solutions that responded to actually existing change rather than dogmatic beliefs in values. As

discussed in Chapter Two, the inability to conceptualise educational issues fully was a problem for both the Left and the Right. The creation of new space for policy was achieved to some extent by what Cutler et al. (2007) have deemed an 'epochal' form of argument. This was similarly observed in Chapter Four in the distinction Labour sought to make between 'Old' and 'New'. However, it was argued that these important organisational changes to New Labour as a Party allowed for, and were representative of, a substantial attempt to modernise the Party's political project. Noting the influence of Giddens, it was argued that New Labour thinking demonstrated a significant attempt to break with the debates of the past through a conceptualisation of the features of change occurring in 'late' modernity. For both Giddens and New Labour this required recognition of the failings of both traditional social democracy and the neo-liberalism of the New Right. The search for a new consensus based upon a sophisticated understanding of modernisation therefore required appreciation of the need for reform and a means by which this could occur.

On this reading New Labour have responded to key features of social change that Giddens identified as marking the contemporary period distinct as an experience of 'late' modernity. Indeed, in education policy there is a significant focus on many of Giddens's proposals for responses to such transformations, such as experiments in direct democracy, encouraging rights and responsibilities, replacing traditional poverty programmes with community-focused, participatory initiatives, and, indeed, the creation of positive forms of welfare through the investment in education itself as a means to prevent failure rather than ameliorate it (Halpin, 2003). The modernisation of education thus depended upon a new role for the state and also new roles for private and voluntary organisations, as well as individuals themselves. These 'and also' constructs have been observed in changes to structures of governance in education, an emphasis on both economic and social ends and means, and a concern with excellence and equity. In Giddensian terms new 'codes of significance' were attached to issues of equity, community, and individual need in education on a practical rather than ideological basis. As discussed, equity was seen as significant not in terms of values alone, but for its importance in contributing to prosperity and cohesion in the face of the risks posed by 'late' modernity. Similarly, whilst a 'pre-Third Way' belief in the social nature of man has been observed in New Labour thinking, this complemented the grounding of communal need in contemporary times arising from Giddens's thesis. Further, the agency of the individual was legitimated not in the rights-based liberal ideology of the New Right, but in the sociologically informed 'new individualism' of Giddens and Beck where individual agency was essential both to individual 'self-actualisation' and to the governance of the welfare state.

New Labour's agenda of educational reform did not align itself solely with the solutions of either a 'New Right' or 'Old Left' perspective, and, as such, challenged the notion that the period in question was merely an extension of Thatcherism. Reading such change in the context of a Third Way response to 'late' modernity suggests a connection to a 'stronger' conceptualisation of modernisation as put forward by Anthony Giddens. However, as the analysis presented in Chapter Five also drew attention to, this agenda was far from establishing itself as a clear and coherent Third Way in practice. This in turn raises issues for assessing the modernising and radical nature of New Labour's reforms, or the extent to which a new consensus has been reached.

As much as these new codes of significance have arisen in the policy agenda, reading such significance is complicated by their interaction with existing codes (Ranson, 2008). Notably this has centred upon the retention of a quasi-market system of choice and competition between schools. Indeed, New Labour, through its diversity programme, expanded the range of choice available to parents, and, through increasing school autonomy as an incentive for increasing performance, significantly enhanced the powers available to individual institutions to manage their resources and mission. This was seen to be at the expense of the LEAs, whose traditional role in governance was to be replaced by one as 'champions of choice' (Tomlinson, 2005). However, whilst seeking to hold together such competitive relations between schools with the introduction of partnership relations based upon co-operation and collaboration, there were significant tensions observed in this attempt to develop a Third Way. Indeed, the notions of charity and trust between schools implicit in a moral characterisation of professional relations between schools, where institutions were not only responsible for their own performance but were to look out for and help those around them (Gamrnikow & Green, 2003), provided considerable practical difficulties in a context where the same schools were simultaneously required to pursue their own self-interests. As Gamarnikow & Green (2003: 217) observe, the generation of trust requires that partners 'identify themselves as being in some ways similar, equal, having a common problem, perhaps even a common enemy'. As the discussion in Chapter Five demonstrated, evidence on the development of partnerships between schools in a variety of structures has revealed that schools value equality of status and genuine motivation for collaboration rather than as an 'artificial' necessity for the purposes of bureaucracy (Bell & West, 2003).

Here, New Labour have made some attempts to progress the situation. Beacon schools have been replaced with Leading Edge Partnerships that place less emphasis on status. Further, the status associated with gaining a specialist title has faded as more and more schools have achieved this (aided by the 'working towards' status, and the availability of joint applications between schools). In

this way they have answered those who predicted a 'two-tier' system arising from the specialist/non-specialist divide (Hattersley, 2001). However, there still remains a hierarchy of schools structured through league tables of performance, the influence of historic status and prestige, the diversity and take-up of different qualifications by different schools, and parental knowledge at a localised level. Status also remains as a factor at the lower end of performance through classifications of 'special measures' or 'facing challenging circumstances'. In this sense the vertical dimension of diversity is still very much intact, although now less 'sponsored' through official status at the higher end. Further, this vertical 'ladder of improvement' (Gamarnikow & Green, 2003: 215) that causes schools to strive for greater performance is maintained through the incentivisation of increasing autonomy and, of course, the competitive structures based upon open enrolment and per capita funding. As Cardini (2006: 394) summarises, 'the Third Way rhetoric, governance narratives, collaborative discourses and social capital theories provided the elements to shape, define and legitimate a new concept of partnerships as a benevolent, neutral and pragmatic concept'. However, as noted above, 'particular political and historical contexts in which New Labour partnerships work make them a complex, ideological and contradictory social phenomenon' (Cardini, 2006: 394). In the attempt to transform school improvement as well as institutional and professional relations through partnerships and networks of resources it is evident that a coherent, conflict-free approach has not been reached. There is, then, further space to explore the means by which trust, as the basis for meaningful co-operative relations, can be developed in a competitive environment, and the extent to which such voluntary associations can bring about an enduring cycle of reproduced relations.

Tensions have also been observed in attempts to create a new 'civil society' in which various stakeholders are empowered. As noted in Chapter Five, these included new roles for private and voluntary organisations to participate in education. Notable examples have included the development of EAZs, EiCs, Academies, and Trust schools. However, this 'benign' (Prideaux, 2005) model of governance, much like the 'neutrality' of partnership discourse, has been brought into question. Here the increasing involvement of the private sector in educational provision and management has been seen as a challenge to education for the public good, serving to promote business interests and further narrowing of the focus of educational outcomes (Ball, 2007; 2008; 2009). In particular, Ball (2008: 192) points to the 'scale, complexity, diversity and relative invisibility of private sector involvements'. This dispersal of government is seen to decentralise power rather than to devolve it (Fairclough, cited in Ball, 2009), lessening the accountability of the central state whilst empowering privileged actors at the local level. Thus, issues concerning the development of governing structures, and the nature of power and interests encapsulated in these, pose important questions for the future development of an education system that seeks to continue a strong form

of modernisation based upon new roles and relationships for government and individuals, alongside private and voluntary organisations.

It was noted above that the ability for institutional partnerships to form in a voluntary manner based upon trust, and leading to a sustained and reproducing mode of practice, proved difficult in an environment that was also based upon competitive relations and practices. Similarly, attempts to involve individuals in networks providing various social capital resources have pointed to a fragile nature of existence. Reporting on research from a Sure Start centre Bagley (2011: 108) notes that:

> ...the local Sure Start programme successfully built on, refashioned and reframed multi-agency and partnership working. In effect and against a policy backdrop of national targets and outcome measures, the multi-agency team managed to create with local parents a contested cultural and political space for local community empowerment and the building of social capital.

Whilst displaying the possibility for such modernising practices to take place, it is clear that the agency here that sought to connect with a stronger conceptualisation of modernisation, based upon a concern for wider appreciation of individualised need, emanated from acts of resistance to dominant discourses of performance and management. Similar attempts to meet localised needs in the constraints of a centralised agenda are also observed in other such initiatives such as EAZs and EiCs (Gulson, 2007). Adding to the fragility of these new codes of significance surrounding individual need, community, and social capital, Bagley (2011) points to the *erosion* of social capital and shifting dimensions of power that emanated from New Labour's attempts to reform Sure Start projects as Children's Centres, challenging not only the immediate breakdown of social capital resources and community governance, but building potential barriers to future attempts at engagement.

Whilst embodying a clear modernising zeal and an approach to modernisation that demonstrated attempts to build a more sophisticated response to education reform, New Labour's developing policy agenda appeared less coherent and more conflicted in practice than had been apparent from the guiding principles of the Third Way. The attempt to build a new organising framework for policy is marked by tensions between codes of significance which seek to construct an 'and also' approach. This has presented a greater challenge to those newly introduced codes that have drawn upon concepts of social capital, civil society, community, and wider conceptualisations of individual need as the basis to move away from a system reliant upon marketised forms of choice and competition – both at an individual and an institutional level. The introduction of such codes has been a significant development in recent education reform, for, as this study has demonstrated, they relate to a stronger form of modernisation. However, their apparent fragility in the face of more dominant codes, such as choice, competition, privatisation, management and performance which have also

been extended under New Labour as part of their Third Way, challenges the extent to which they might form the basis of a radical shift in the balance of educational reform away from these existing trajectories of policy-making. This weakness is experienced not only in localised agency, such as was noted above from Bagley (2011), but also in their reliance upon large levels of financial investment. Questions therefore arise over the extent to which they are able not only to bring about new forms of social practice and change in education, but also the extent to which they provide a long-term, even permanent, solution to this broadened agenda. Accordingly, this chapter moves to assess the radical possibilities held by the nature of recent educational reform.

RADICAL EDUCATION?

So far this chapter has argued that New Labour's project of education reform can be read as one that displayed some intent to develop a modernising agenda in response to the issues presented by contemporary society. Policies followed neither a traditional social democratic nor neo-liberal approach. However, it is also apparent that a coherent Third Way was far from being established and, as discussed above, new codes of significance with the reform agenda had not established themselves in clear ways. In this light, whilst the search for a practical rather than ideological new consensus has resulted in new approaches to reform, these new codes of significance did not, in the period in question, become significant *enough*. That is, they have not led to new codes of legitimisation and dominance that significantly challenge existing inequalities or led to new understandings of education as a means of responding to the multi-dimensional nature of 'late' modernity.

Thus, the centrality of paid work as the basis of prosperity, inclusion and cohesion has continued to reinforce a view of public services as serving individual needs and aspirations (Lawson, 2005; Prideaux, 2005, Page, 2008). Yet, a narrow focus on training and employment not only serves to extend a competitive social environment in a limited labour market, but also limits the role of education as a site for the development of new social relations and practices that provide the resources necessary for the creation of a democratic and cosmopolitan society. An education based upon individual salvation remains to provide individuals with the means to take up their place in society, rather than to provide a challenge to it. Whilst Tomlinson's (2005) analysis, noted above, suggested a continuing conspiratorial plot to maintain an elitist society through the education system, for Prideaux (2005) it was New Labour's benign acceptance of capitalism that resulted in an emphasis on agency over structure where relationships between the individual, family and community were brought to the fore ahead of structural inequalities, stressing the need for active responsibility and participation on the part of the individual in order secure opportunity. Thus, for example, despite an increasing focus by New Labour on personalising services to meet user needs,

that Page (2007) sees as evidence of an appreciation of changing forms of self-identity, the potential for such 'experiments with democracy' and 'governing through freedom' was limited by the simultaneous concern for such initiatives to conform to discourses of management and performance – discourses which not only narrowed the conception of individual identity and need but placed their emphasis on individuals and institutions as primarily responsible for progress. Whilst extended schools were seen as an initiative with similar possibilities, as will be noted shortly, without radical intent they can only offer limited potential for the future of education as the basis for a cohesive and cosmopolitan society. Thus, whilst New Labour policy sought to equip individuals to face the challenges of contemporary society, this took place in structures that privileged, or continued to privilege, particular forms of social identity and practice.

Chapter Two drew attention to the extent of criticism of education reform in the Conservative era, and in particular to the ways in which a marketised system privileged certain individuals. The proliferation of research and criticism pointing to continuing, and indeed new forms of, such inequalities in the New Labour period of administration is difficult for any analysis of this period to ignore. Class-based analysis has remained prominent in educational research, with Reay (2006: 304) describing it as the 'zombie' that 'comes back to haunt English education again and again and again'. Ball et al. (1996) resisted using the term "class" as an accurate description of these patterns of privilege and inequality, arguing that this generalised pattern of dominance must be understood as much more locally situated than traditional Marxist perspectives would hold. Indeed, in recent decades educational research and commentary has been increasingly informed by a variety of different approaches and theoretical vantage points that have demonstrated the localised and individualised workings of education policy, contributing to what Ball (1990; 2009) continues to observe as the messy and complex reality of reform. Such work has sought to point to the broader factors that work to constrain the agency of individual agents and institutions (Ball, 1995) (a task made more difficult given the increasing 'political and ideological repositioning of the academy' itself (Ball, 1995: 256), as noted in Chapter One).

In education the continuation of policies promoting a system of parental choice and school competition have maintained the advantage held by the middles-classes in accessing the best performing schools, contributing to the continuation of a hierarchy of institutions (Ball, 2003; Bagley, 2006; Thrupp, 2007; Avis, 2008; Whitty, 2008). As noted in Chapter Five, despite attempts to enhance the diversity and appeal of vocational qualifications, new policies failed to bring about radical reform in the lower status ascribed to these (Killeen et al., 1999; Brown & Lauder, 2006). Here a hierarchy has also been maintained with regards to qualifications, pointing to the normalisation of particular qualifications and pathways, as well as types of leaner (Avis, 2008; Allen

& Ainley, 2007). Reflecting a certain irony, Avis (2008: 44) points to the 'othering' effect produced through a discourse of inclusion surrounding the disaffected, whilst an exclusionary discourse positions those for whom A-levels offer 'greater differentiation and are able to 'stretch' learners'. This 'othering' effect was similarly noted with regards to the application of a discourse of responsibility in education, with a difficulty reflected in establishing its universal ethical appeal.

Also of critical importance has been the broader political context in which New Labour sought to appeal to a new electorate as the basis to become the 'natural party of government'. The limitations to radical reform imposed by the need to respond to a dominant middle-class electorate has been well documented (see Tomlinson, 2005; Ranson, 2008; Chitty, 2008; Whitty, 2008). As Kettle (2008) argues, in a Tory-voting nation the electoral tightrope was a big issue for New Labour. In doing so it has made it harder to sustain non-market or economic valuations of individual worth and public policies (Page, 2008), especially given the pressures exerted by the 'hour-glass' economy as discussed above. In this respect New Labour's project appears to have been influenced more by a preference-accommodating strategy than one with the intent of preference-shaping. Indeed, Gewirtz (2001: 365) argues that New Labour's educational project reflects an attempt to resocialise working-class parents by universalising 'the values, attitudes and behaviour of a certain fraction of middle-class parents'.

Despite continued research and criticism pointing to such inequalities, and indeed, despite its apparent recognition by New Labour (as Chapter Five observed from both Blair and Kelly), Thrupp (2007: 77) argues that the issue of middle class advantage has presented itself as an 'inconvenient truth' where attempts to solve the working class problem have proceeded in a disconnected way: 'It it much easier to talk in a disconnected way about an underclass, than to see ourselves creating the education problems of the poor'. Thrupp's argument draws attention to the interconnected nature of agency in education, suggesting that attempts to tackle patterns of inequality and extend educational opportunity cannot proceed without acknowledgement of the ways in which such inequalities are continually made and remade. Indeed, Ball's (2003) observation that we are not all libertarians yet is an important reminder that it is not only the 'othered' for which social practice is constrained. With regards to middle class practice Ball (2003: 46) points out that 'it is not the individual choices of particular families that create social divisions and inequalities, it is the aggregate, the pattern of choices, the hidden hand of class thinking, if you like, the repetition of certain decisions, views, perspectives and actions...'. Thus, it is wrong to portray individuals in the middle class as inherently individualistic and self-serving, but that such practices, and their reproduction, result from a pattern of resolution, or dominant modes of resolution, to dilemmas faced at an individual level. For Ball (2003) the presence of these dilemmas presents the possibility

for alternative practices that challenge the pursuit of self-interest alone. The middle-class is in this sense only a majority in that it represents a model that must be conformed to. As Deleuze (1990) states, 'one might say the majority is nobody'.

Whilst space does not allow for a full discussion of these patterns of dominance in education to be undertaken, recognition of such observations is important for this study. For such direct and indirect privileging contributes to further limitations to the modernising agenda discussed above, and to the ability of such to respond to a new consensus in which education meets the multi-dimensional conceptualisation of 'late' modernity and the challenges that it presents. Indeed, the notion of privileged agency is, quite clearly, some way from Giddens's vision of the development of a cosmopolitan democracy, built upon opportunities for new identities, systems and practices, in a period of moral transition and the necessity of the search for a new global ethics (Giddens, 1994a; 1998b). As discussed in Chapter Three, the development of a cosmopolitan democracy was, for Giddens, necessary not only to promote the possibilities for new constructions of identity afforded in a period of increased reflexivity, that is, for personal freedom, but was also to provide the basis for new democratic relations that would challenge existing structures of power at both local and global levels. The 'new individualism' of 'late' modernity challenged traditional understandings and legitimisations of identity, as well as requiring an extension of 'dialogic' forms of democracy where social relations at both intimate and global levels would provide mutual acceptance and trust. A modernising agenda for reform must in this case also demonstrate a radical vision that confronts the 'inconvenience' of middle class dominance, rather than allowing, or even promoting, its reproduction. Page (2007) inadvertently echoes this disparity arguing that New Labour's project did not seek to 'engender deep-rooted public support for the socialist transformation of society; rather it has based its electoral appeal on a professed ability to help citizens come to terms with global economic and social change'. Yet, for Giddens it was precisely the opportunities afforded by increasing reflexivity, that at the same time as representing heightened insecurity and risk, were to be the basis for necessary radical social transformation.

Two observations are therefore of note. Firstly, New Labour's project, as an attempt to cope with contemporary risk without support for radical social change, divorced the modernising and radical elements of a new consensus. Secondly, in this, the role of the government as one of 'enabling' has drawn attention away from its role in challenging structural constraints and instead placed a focus upon individual agency. Prideaux (2005: 115) echoes this arguing that, 'this 'aspirational' politics acted to suppress the more radical policies and principles of the Labour movement past and present'. Yet, this study has also considered New Labour's desire that such agency go beyond the individualism of the New Right, and manifest itself in society with attention given to the roles of

family, community and nation in fostering this. New Labour appeared to seek to re-embed individual agency in social systems. However, analyses which focus on the communitarian influences in the New Labour movement here provide a relevant and important contribution. This 'pre-Third Way' belief in the individual has already been noted and, in Chapter Four, was presented as complementary to a Giddensian perspective on a pragmatic need for social relations as a basis of dialogic forms of democracy. However, as Calder (2004) observes:

> A key concern linking the various criticisms of the communitarian agenda in general is that in order to succeed, it must inevitably become an authoritarian project. That's to say, given the diversity, nuance and hybridity of contemporary social reality, any communitarian politics must impose some given model of community whose effects will be harmfully homogenizing, and - most crucially - override the rights of those individuals who fit least neatly with its demands.

Here, pointing to the limits of New Labour's concern with radical change, Driver & Martell (1999: 3) observe that, 'leading Labour modernisers like Blair and Jack Straw are far less comfortable with the social fragmentation that the new times has brought, seeing it less as a basis for new political alliances and more as a problem of social order'. Thus, New Labour appeared more concerned with responding to the aggressive egoistic individualism of the New Right than with the liberal cosmopolitan vision present in Giddens's concern with the community and social relations necessary for self-actualisation in 'late' modernity (Driver & Martell, 2000). Whilst the application of a moral authoritarianism may have been more explicit in areas of social policy such as crime (see Deacon, 2003), there is a need to consider further the extent to which a top-down implementation of social identity has worked against the cultivation of bottom-up social relations of the sort envisaged in Giddens's dialogic basis for the 'new individualism'. Here, Driver & Martell (2000) point to a divide between the 'post-traditionalism' of Giddens and the 'social moralism' of Blair:

> Blair's politics are less about quality of life issues beyond conventional economic and social policy concerns...The core of New Labour has little interest with active democratising processes for citizens in everyday life outside mainstream politics. To the disappointment of many environmentalists, feminists and others, there is little in Blair's politics which is a direct response to contemporary radical social movements or incorporates their concerns. The democratisation programmes of New Labour are *of* government not *beyond* government (Driver & Martell, 2000: 157).

Despite the apparent complementarity to Giddens's call for new forms of social solidarity, this communitarian reading helpfully draws attention to the limits of New Labour's attempt to re-

socialise the individual. Indeed, Newman (2001) describes New Labour as attempting to construct a new social settlement in which issues of class, gender and race had been already resolved. However, in the educational literature a substantive body of work has developed in recent decades, particularly around concepts of gender and race, that has challenged both inequality in the education system itself and traditional class-based theories as a means of understanding the local and individual nuances of this. New Labour's vision has thus been, according to Calder (2004):

> characteristic more of traditional conservatism's ideological concern for order, stability and the maintenance of the socio-political status quo than with a genuinely progressive agenda of increasing equality and social inclusion at the level of community relations. It will tend automatically to place respect for established or traditional values, structures and practices ahead of any call to reorientate society around new, perhaps fairer norms.

Of course, for Giddens, modernisation was tied to conservatism. Indeed, Kaspersen (2000) argues Giddens's Third Way demonstrated a more communitarian appeal than the liberal approach to issues of identity and relations developed in his earlier works. However, whilst noting that this presents itself as an unusual relationship, Giddens (1998b: 68) argued that this form of 'philosophic conservatism' related to the search to restore security in a world that had gone 'beyond tradition'. Here, then, the concern with restoration or preservation was centred upon the need for security, but could only be manifested now in new, modern forms. By means of example, despite Blair's commitment to a modernising vision for the family in contemporary society that echoed Giddens's call for the 'democratised family', concern has been raised at the continued privileging of traditional forms of familial relationships as the basis for this. Indeed, somewhat supporting Kaspersen's (2000) criticism, Giddens defends Blair's commitment to a traditional two-parent family model (although he seeks to do so on a pragmatic and empirical basis). Here a broader critique offered from a feminist perspective challenges the concepts of family, area-based communities, and nation as the dominant models of community and social relations, pointing instead to the need to consider new forms that are better able to enable a society based upon the 'new individualism' (see Weiss, 1995; Young, M., 1995). Whether centred upon the tendency to drift into traditional forms of understanding social relations, or the need to develop new forms of community, such criticisms suggest that greater attention needs to be given to a radical vision for social change. Whilst space does not allow for extensive examination, it is necessary to note the important insights that multiple analytical perspectives present to inform debate on the development of education reform in this regard.

For the purposes of this study however, positioning these observations in a Giddensian perspective, New Labour education policy, in both direct and indirect ways, privileges certain forms of ontological security and opportunities for self-actualisation that correspond, at a broad level, with a dominant

middle-class model. For the formation of a new consensus in which education responds to the multi-dimensional nature of 'late' modernity, the lack of radicalism displayed in New Labour's project is at odds with the modernising potential of their reform agenda. This is significant to note, for there is a danger that this modernising potential may instead result in an education system marked by further division. Here, as Ranson (2008: 214) argues in relation to extended schools, 'One set of strategies is designed to satisfy the possessive individualism of the advantaged, providing them with the positional goods to secure their relative advantage in the spaces of the mobile global economy', yet at the same time, 'another set of strategies that are creating an integrated and collaborative Children's Service are designed to provide 'wrap around' care and 14-19 vocational training to secure adaptation of disadvantaged children and families to the changing demands of local labour in its place'. Thus, despite an agenda which saw the introduction of new codes of significance surrounding notions of community and individual need, if the development of agency and social practice in these new systems of relations does not form part of a transformative agenda for the whole education system it is possible to see a 'bifurcation' occurring instead of the building of a cohesive, cosmopolitan society: '..if the broader compass of policy is taken into view then a different frame of class segmented education governance is revealed...Opportunity is mediated by the market for the advantaged while the integrated community of practice mediates the life chances for the disadvantaged' (Ranson, 2008: 214). Similarly Reay (2008: 645) argues that the 'thrust of Blair's educational policy has been to enable middle-class parents to 'govern' themselves, while working-class parents are much more likely to be subject to 'governance' in education'. There is, as Avis (2008) suggests, a danger that the introduction of modernising codes serves to cover over, rather than go beyond, existing inequalities. Indeed, Ranson's concerns suggest the possible formation of a new 'duality' in education.

TOWARDS A NEW CONSENSUS?

This study started out by highlighting New Labour's intention of building a new consensus in education that would be practical rather than ideological, and in doing so would go beyond the debates that had dominated education's recent past. Examining these debates this study pointed to a dichotomised argument between market-oriented or democracy-based futures for education. Further, in highlighting the polarised ideological bases from which such positions arose, these were seen to display a mutual rejection of one another. However, in exploring the work of Anthony Giddens it has become clear that such an approach to the future of reform was neither necessary nor desirable. Indeed, setting out the sociological basis for the present period as one of 'late' modernity, the contemporary world presented both risks and opportunities unique to this time. There was, therefore, an urgency to develop alternative strategies that went beyond traditional

social democratic or New Right ideologies in order to engage with a 'utopian realism' that offered hope for radical multi-dimensional change. New Labour's concern for a new consensus therefore found itself justified by Giddens's examination of 'late' modernity. In this sense their search for a new consensus was, in itself, demonstrative of a stronger conceptualisation of modernisation than had been realised by the New Right. Here, then, this study has made an important contribution to the debate on the nature of education reform under New Labour, as well as to a wider debate on the necessity for continued attention to transformation of the education system, positioning such reform in a broader conceptualisation of contemporary change.

Further, this study highlighted the importance of New Labour's use of the Third Way as a label for their project of modernisation. Although the Third Way was to provide guiding principles for reform rather than a prescribed policy agenda, its significant attachment to Giddens suggested that in its attempt to redefine the roles of government, individuals, and wider 'civil society', there was potential to realise new forms of agency and practice that would provide both the nation and individual citizens with the tools to face contemporary risk in a positive fashion that would enhance prosperity, equality, and democracy.

Building upon this outline, Chapter Five assessed the development of New Labour's project of education reform between 1997 and 2007 as a response to the challenges of the 'new times'. Despite a greater expression of urgency for 'radical' and 'permanent' change in their final term in office, the period observed in this study did not produce a radical 'moment' of reform – such as had been ascribed to the 1944 or 1988 Acts. However, throughout the period in question attention was drawn to a developing policy agenda that expressed attempts to go beyond the confines of either 'Old Left' or New Right perspectives. Here new codes of significance were introduced that were to extend individual agency in the education system beyond the operation of choice, and provide additional resources to match individual needs. Such codes were also extended at the institutional level in order that schools might benefit from shared wealth and experience.

Yet, drawing upon an extensive research literature, both the present and preceding chapters have examined the limitations that existed in the implementation of the policies surrounding these new codes. Whilst it was possible to see the contribution that such policies could make to a broadening educational agenda, displaying greater attention to the nature of individual needs, re-embedding individuals in social communities, and working towards opportunities for both representative and dialogic forms of democracy, conflicts with, or suppression by, existing policy codes limited the extent to which both a coherent modernising agenda could take shape, and the extent to which such modernising potential could offer a radical challenge to a system marked by the continuing extension of individualised, competitive, and performative discourses and practices. Education

reform in this period can be seen as representative of a Third Way, to the extent that the policy agenda reflected neither an 'Old Left' or 'New Right' approach. However the radical transformations to democracy (including dialogic forms), individual agency, equality of opportunity, the centrality of paid work as the basis of meaningful inclusion, and the recognition and development of new social relations between and across society that Giddens set out as necessary for both individual and global life in 'late' modernity are far from apparent. Further still, the fragility of many elements of the developing policy codes puts their long-term sustainability, and therefore that of an established new consensus, in doubt. In this light this final chapter has also drawn attention to arguments that suggest a lack of radicalism in New Labour's vision. The analysis contributed here would be enhanced by further attention to the influences acting upon New Labour and to a more fully understood picture of the nature of their vision, radical or otherwise. Whilst this study drew attention to the nature of Blair's exposition of the Third Way as one that engendered a complementary understanding of economic, communitarian, and anthropological perspectives, there is a need to consider in more detail not only the balance of influence of each of these in a political sense, but also the contributions that such perspectives make towards the radical vision to which Giddens's Third Way spoke. This chapter has pointed to the significance and usefulness of communitarian perspectives in this regard.

As has become clear throughout this study, although given substance by a number of theorists, in particular Anthony Giddens, and motivated by a group of key Labour Party modernisers, the modernisation of the Labour Party and the development of its attachment to Third Way principles was given particular shape, and popular appeal, in large part by Tony Blair. Indeed, as detailed in the previous chapter, Blair made significant attempts to ensure that the narrative of Third Way reform reached its completion in the lifetime of his premiership. This, alongside the analysis presented, supports the view that the period of government focused upon in this study is significant and provides sufficient scope for an understanding of New Labour's project to be take shape. However, it must be acknowledged that any longer term considerations of the possibilities for the formation of a new consensus in education reform must necessarily extend beyond these parameters. New Labour were, of course, in power until 2010 and there is, therefore, some scope for considering the continuation of this project under the influence of Gordon Brown's leadership. That the Third Way existed in practice as a complicated amalgam of positions and understandings suggests that there may indeed be possibilities for examining the effect of changing influences and emphases in.

Yet, whilst this later period is important in providing a full history of reform under New Labour, and discussions over the nature or, indeed, existence of a *Brown-ite* Third Way may provide some insight into the differences and possibilities contained in the policy agenda developed in these years, it is

argued here that such a focus may detract from the broader concerns that this study has sought to address. That is, an emphasis on ascertaining differences between the Third Ways of Blair or Brown as reflected in policy reforms risks losing sight of the need to consider Third Way politics itself as a response to a sociologically-informed demand for modernising and radical change. As will be discussed briefly below, the significance of the continuing development of education policy under the Brown administration lies in its affirmation of the limitations that this study has addressed above concerning the tensions between radical and modernising reform under New Labour, rather than in pointing to any new expressions of Third Way-*ism*. Further, it is in fact the nature of wider events occurring during this later period that are of greater significance for any consideration of the future of radical and modernising approaches to education reform.

Certainly there remained considerable attention to education reform between 2007 and 2010, with Brown promising that he would set about 'the most radical extension in the scope and scale of education for forty years' (Brown, 2007). Here, initiatives such as Sure Start were to be increased in number, education maintenance allowances were to be significantly extended, continuing attention to apprenticeships would ensure that their availability and value would be enhanced, all supported by a continued increase in spending on education. Similarly there were to be extensions in the numbers of specialist academies and trust schools, accompanied by greater freedoms for school control, as well as more opportunities for the involvement of business in school leadership. Such developments indicated a high level of continuity with the decade of reform that education had previously experienced. The trajectories of change followed those established in the Third Way vision for creating new roles for government, individuals, and the private sector in the governance of education. Other significant developments in the history of education reform continued to follow from these, including the extension of the school leaving age from 16 to 18. Indeed, the wider context for such 'radical extension' remained in the need to build a strong national position in a global economy (Brown, 2007; Baker, 2007b).

Yet, whilst a strong sense of continuity expressed through the centrality of education to wider economic and social reform remained, there were also attempts to discern changes of emphasis in this period. Particular attention has been given to the desire to raise aspirations as reflective of a stronger social justice agenda (Curtis, 2008) and a concern to advance social mobility (Ball, 2010). Certainly, Brown himself made frequent reference to his desire to see aspirations raised across all social backgrounds, at a time where, as this study has already noted, strong evidence of decreasing social mobility was being put forward. However, two points can be made on any apparent change of emphasis. Firstly, despite increasing attention placed upon it, the focus on motivating aspiration at an individual level remained firmly in the Third Way model for engendering a new form of 'active

citizenry', rather than reflecting any new basis for a project of reform. Indeed, Brown (2007) himself stated that New Labour's goal was to build 'not the old welfare state that just takes responsibility for you when you are in need, but also an empowering state where you take responsibility for yourself, for your community, for a wider world and for the next generation' – a vision with obvious similarity to Blair's 'no rights without responsibilities' agenda. Secondly, and more significantly, whatever the basis for this new level of emphasis, criticisms remained that 'the focus on 'aspirations' individualises the problem of underachievement, locating the 'problem' exclusively with working-class families, and ignoring the issues around social capital and structural aspects of the education system that mitigate against both achievement and 'aspiration'' (Perry & Francis, 2010: 2). Ball (2010: 156), although keen to note the urgency of Brown's New Labour to focus on social class issues, concludes that 'if we want to understand and explain persistent educational inequalities and do something about them through policy, then increasingly, the school is the wrong place to look and the wrong place to reform – at least in isolation from other sorts of changes in other parts of society'. Such a conclusion points to the intractable nature of the limitations of education reform in the broad model that New Labour continued to follow.

Whilst this is but a brief overview of the final years of the New Labour administration it is clear that the issues arising share a strong similarity and continuity from those observed in the period examined in more detail in this study. Despite a continuing intensity of policy reform, and some attention to a change in emphasis concerning the issue of social mobility, neither these, nor the policies associated with them, represented any significantly new project or a renewed understanding of the Third Way, nor evidence that a new consensus in education was any closer to being finalised. The nature of policy change, and the continuing criticisms resonating from it, serve to emphasise further the tensions that existed between New Labour's modernising and radical thinking that this study has already discussed. The seemingly intractable nature of these limitations amidst the continuing scale of change suggests that, as Perry & Francis (2010) argue, there remains more than ever a need for innovative thinking in education. This study has already discussed in detail how New Labour's practical, rather than ideological, approach pointed to the potential for new codes of significance to be developed in policy. Whilst these appeared fragile, especially against the further extension of existing codes, and have been shown to lack a radical vision in their application, it is possible to see the potential for these new codes of significance pursued through personalised learning, localised models of governance, extended schools that bring together a wide range of services, expanding curriculum options, banding options that allow for a more balanced intake of school admissions, and partnership and network models of school organisation, taken together, to develop new systems of relations that legitimate new forms of social practice and challenge existing

patterns of dominance. As Ranson (2008: 216) states, '...a just and democratic public sphere can constitute the material and cultural conditions for active citizens to participate in layers of local and neighbourhood governance that can mediate the learning communities needed to realise a cosmopolitan civic society'. In this way, this chapter has argued that New Labour's agenda in education went beyond the confines of traditional social democratic or New Right approaches to reform in an attempt to break with the past. Here an 'and also' approach connected new policy codes with a stronger conceptualisation of modernisation that stressed the necessity to move beyond dichotomies based upon state or market control, or the economic or social function of education. However, as has been argued, continuing patterns of inequality in education point to the persistence of an 'inconvenient truth' surrounding the advantages held by privileged agents. Although grounded in a sociological necessity to go beyond polarised perspectives and develop an 'and also' approach to educational solutions, New Labour's Third Way in education reform proceeded in a partial fashion. Its modernising potential was limited by the extent to which initiatives challenged dominant forms of social identity and practice, mediated through an apparent lack of desire for radical change, a communitarian trend that pointed to conservative conceptualisations of community and a narrow model of inclusion, as well as political concerns surrounding electoral appeal. Despite the modernising potential of elements of reform it appears that New Labour sought to ride the juggernaut of 'late' modernity without radically changing the direction of travel. This is significant not only given New Labour's commitment to a rediscovery of radicalism, noted in Chapter Four, but also in the light of Giddens's argument for the necessity of such radicalism as part of a sociologically informed approach to the challenges of 'late' modernity.

Here, then, the significance of the final years of the New Labour administration under Gordon Brown lies not so much in the continuing nature of policy reform, but in the continuing inability to bring about radical modernising change in education and wider society. Whilst Whitty (2008: 180) argued that any attempts to build a stronger social justice agenda would require both 'courage' and 'ingenuity', the intractable nature of issues in Third Way eduation reform suggests these are more significant than any scope to change emphasis in this framework might allow for. An exclusive focus on tensions resulting from the application of the Third Way in practice, and upon solutions based in the rebalancing of emphases, may in fact draw attention away from the need to reflect critically on the broader basis of the Third Way vision. In acknowledgment of this, this concluding chapter returns to present a general criticism of Giddens's thinking and the limitations of radical education reform based in its vision. However, whilst recognising such criticisms, these are juxtaposed against the nature of contemporary events which serve to reinforce and reemphasise the demands that the

juggernaut of 'late' modernity places upon society and its governance. In response to these, it is argued, a Giddensian approach continues to present a significant basis for thinking.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE POSSIBILITY OF COMPLEX HOPE

Seeking to reemphasise the concern that this study has presented for understanding contemporary approaches to education reform in a broader understanding of social change, this final section first draws attention to the need to consider in greater detail the localised and nuanced experiences of such transformations. Whilst possibilities for radical social change may still present themselves, this potential requires recognition of the limitations of the conceptualisation of change occurring in 'late' modernity not only as perceived by New Labour, but also in Giddens's own vision. As Newman (2001) argues, the search for a new consensus cannot rest on an image of modernity in which old conflicts are assumed to have been settled. Having acknowledged these criticisms, the chapter moves to conclude the study as a whole by pointing to the continued relevance and urgency of multi-dimensional and utopian thinking, as advocated by Giddens and suggested by the nature of recent events, as the basis for a modernising and radical social policy reform agenda.

On the nature of the experience of contemporary change Kaspersen (2000) argues that Gidden's portrayal is one in which 'We are all confronting the same risks and in that respect 'high modernity' has no 'other' or 'others'. Rich or poor, black or white, man or woman – everyone experiences the same problems, such as overpopulation, pollution, new diseases, or changes in climate' (Kaspersen, 2000: 170). As such, Giddens is seen to universalise 'the framework of experiences of modernity' (Kaspersen, 2000: 170). Similarly, Anthias (1999: 156) states that:

> for Giddens, late modernity is characterised by global as opposed to national forms of capital and the globalisation of culture. The self is presented as unitary in these processes, thus downplaying issues of power and subordination in globalisation and modernity. The person becomes reduced to the essentialised figure or self of high modernity, which is identified with western social forms.

Central to this criticism is the lack of attention in Giddens's vision to localised and individualised forms of social practice. Thus, whilst Giddens is keen to emphasise 'how the agent's day-to-day life has the character of repetition and routine, and it explains how the agent draws upon structures consisting of rules and resources. He does not explain, however, why people act differently, why rules and resources utilised in action are not the same for all, or why the agents have very different practices' (Kaspersen, 2000: 163). In a period marked by increased reflexivity it must also be important to examine how the search for repetition and routine, as the basis of ontological security, is structured at a localised and individualised level and how such structures can be seen to maintain

or extend patterns of inequality. Here Elliot & Lemert (2006: 15) argue for the need to 'convey something of the performative dimensions of individualism, of what is involved in *doing* identity: the emotional difficulties posed, the interpersonal and cultural issues encountered, above all the *feel* of the new individualism'. Thus, as Bowe et al. (1994: 49) noted, 'Rather than assume that class and class fractions provide an adequate characterisation of how one lives, we need to consider the varied ways in which people are embedded'. Concerns with broad categorisations of class alone can direct attention away from the existence of 'a range of exclusionary practices in society...[that are] integral to the configuration of disadvantage derived from class location' (Anthias, 1999: 166).

Clearly the multiple perspectives that have been appropriated in educational research have an important role to play in recognising the barriers that exist to the hope offered by a new consensus. Here Kaspersen (2000) points to Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' as a more sophisticated means to explore the knowledges in which individuals act and their relative levels of capital. Certainly Bourdieu has received significant attention in recent theorising of education reform. However, Avis (2008: 46) argues that attention to 'habitus' can tend to privilege explanations of social practice and reproduction that 'push explanatory accounts further and further back into an individual's biography' (see also Reay, 2004). Whilst these early experiences of social formation are important there is a need to attend to the ways in which 'class' is made and remade throughout life, including in the education system (especially in the context of 'lifelong learning'). Avis's attention to how class is both structured by existing patterns of inequality, including raced and gendered processes as well as economic and social features, and how it is actively 'made' in educational practice complements Giddens's own concern with the duality of structure and agency. Whether conceptualised as 'habitus' or 'ontological security', it is clear that attention to the reproduction of social practice and agency are essential to more fully understanding education as a technology of political and sociological control, or indeed, of radical and modernising change. Indeed, it is here that Giddens presents an important addition to such an understanding of social change. For, as this study has pursued, his exploration of 'late' modernity seeks to contextualise the experience of this duality of agency and structure. Here the reflexivity of 'late' modernity presents the opportunity to challenge existing patterns of social practice and social relations that privilege certain actors and agency. Further, that these moments of reflexivity present themselves in more and more aspects of 'life-politics' throughout the life-cycle, such that life is a continual cobbling together of one's biography, places greater emphasis on the potential for transformation to occur throughout life, rather than being set in earlier life experiences.

Whilst Giddens's sociological theory provides a sophisticated basis for exploring the potential for modernising and radical reform in education through an approach that goes beyond deterministic

structural accounts, and similarly his contextualisation of the possibilities for agency in 'late' modernity challenge the pluralist extremes of post-structural critique, it is perhaps in the political application of this approach that greater attention must be given. Awareness both of the moments of reflexivity, as well as the constraints that limit the possibilities of their uptake or outcome, would inform a more sophisticated, nuanced, and critical understanding of the political sociology of education. As Kaspersen (2000: 169) observes:

> Often [Giddens] paints a picture of a world undergoing the same changes at high pace and depth all over the world at the same time. After reading his analysis you are left breathless and with the impression that many social changes, such as the shift toward life politics, women's liberation, processes of democratisation overtaking democracy, globalisation, and an increasing social reflexivity, can be found all over the world. Obviously this is not the case.

To some extent Giddens's universalisation of experience in 'late' modernity echoes the 'homogenous global identity' (Anthias, 1999: 178) portrayed by the mass media. Here Mouzelis (2001) argues that in the contemporary period there has arisen a need for a new form of emancipation, that relating to culture (interestingly he also posits a central role for education in achieving this). Whilst we may not all be libertarians yet (Ball, 2003), the extent to which we are, or even know that we might be, democratically enabled as Giddensian agents of utopian possibility is similarly uncertain. Indeed, 'We may have global imagery but these global images are read through local eyes. Not all those eyes are self-reflexive or would recognise the risk society!' (Anthias, 1999: 175). As Giddens himself acknowledged in his earlier work on 'late' modernity (see Chapter Three), and indeed continues to do so (Giddens, 2010b), there remains a concern for emancipatory attention in a project of modernisation. Building a new consensus therefore remains a political struggle (Anderson, 1994; Anthias, 1999) in which differing interests and resources continue to create inequalities. Mestrovic (1998: 219) argues that Giddens 'betrays a certain naiveté in believing that agents, in the end, win out over constraint' pointing to the need to acknowledge that 'modernity or post-modernity enslaves human agents in mysterious ways that are still only dimly and imperfectly understood'. Whilst this study would take issue with this criticism, pointing to Giddens's affirmation that 'winning out' is no more guaranteed than a future based upon a 'dystopian realism', Mestrovic makes an important observation with regards to the need to understand the constraints that act upon reflexivity as much as the existence of reflexivity itself. It is necessary to be reflexive about reflexivity.

The educational literature examined in this study has revealed precisely such a complex picture of localised and individualised struggle in policy, particularly in the face of a dominant middle class model as a privileged basis for 'ontological security' and 'self-actualisation'. Again, whilst this study

provides a context for discussing the significance of this with regards to the radical and modernising change required for 'late' modernity, there is a need for further attention to, and investigation of, the nature of patterns of social identity and practice in the education system, as well as the means by which they are continually made and reproduced. As Perry & Francis (2010: 2) noted towards the end of the New Labour administration, 'there appears to be a need for more nuanced, structural accounts of working-class educational achievement, and further creative interventions that seek to genuinely engage with and value the unique lived experiences of working-class families'. Such insight would significantly enhance critical understanding of the development of policies that connect with a deeper desire to build a cosmopolitan democracy and widen the equality of possibilities. Similarly it would enhance thinking on the necessity and nature of the role of the state in this (Chitty, 2008; Ranson, 2008; Whitty, 2008; Choat, 2010). Here this chapter has sought to begin discussion of such awareness of these issues, reflecting critically on the universalising nature of the processes of 'late' modernity conceptualised by Giddens and the consequences of this for the development of a political project based upon benign and apolitical approaches to change.

As these observations guard against a retreat to 'traditional' models of class-based analysis, instead pointing to the complexity of the formation and reproduction of identity, agency and practice, and the need for innovative policy responses, so this serves to caution against a similar return in educational debate to the dichotomies of the past. Indeed, the nature of wider events in recent times suggests that more than ever there is a need for thinking that eschews traditional policy solutions in favour of an approach that can effectively grasp the state of change in the contemporary global order. Here this chapter argues that the type of thought presented by Giddens continues to display its relevance, although now with an urgency that was not present in his earlier accounts.

'LATE' MODERNITY OR THE 'EDGE OF HISTORY'? POSSIBLE AND IMPOSSIBLE FUTURES

This study has examined the period 1997-2007 as one in which New Labour, under Tony Blair, made a clear attempt to forge a narrative of Third Way reform, and has discussed the possibilities and limitations for modernising and radical reform as a response to a sociologcally-informed understanding of contemporary social change in this. Whilst the broad nature of this reform was continued until 2010, it has been argued that education reform in this later period is significant more for its continuing expression of these limitations than it is for providing any new understanding of how to move beyond them. The previous section discussed the need for future reforms to acknowledge and attempt to understand more clearly the nature of localised and individualised effects of 'late' modernity if a serious concern with a new consensus in education is to be maintained. However, it is also important to note how larger global events occurring in this time call for further critical appraisal of our understanding of contemporary change and political reforms

which attempt to respond to these. Again, it is argued that the understanding and analysis revealed in exploring New Labour's search for a new consensus in education reform between 1997-2007 is enhanced not so much by discussions of the relative nature of Blair-ite and Brown-ite Third Ways, but rather by acknowledging the challenges that broader events in recent times make to the commitment to modernising and radical reform expressed under the Third Way label. Observing the present global situation in which economic crisis, national and regional political instability, ecological decay, and new forms of militarisation appear to have made the impossible possible (see Zizek, 1999), being realistic and demanding an alternative utopian impossible stresses the necessity of a multi-dimensional perspective to 'late' modernity. The wider argument that has been developed throughout this study, that of exploring the need for alternative strategies based upon the nature of contemporary society in 'late' modernity, continues to provide a relevant basis for the critical analysis of education policy. This perspective is not tied to the Third Way, nor to the New Labour period (indeed, the potential for considering radical responses to contemporary issues through a Giddensian perspective may in fact become clearer when not caught-up in the political projects of national governments (see Giddens, 2010b)). However, it necessitates a commitment to the continual examination of the state of change. Indeed, given the current context of writing, an increased urgency is given to the search for 'alternative strategies'.

Clearly the global economic crisis has, since it arose in 2008, become the major focal point for national and international political debate. Under the current Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government this crisis has acted as the lens through which the narrative of policy reform has been given shape and has given rise to a discourse of 'austerity' as the country seeks to re-establish economic strength and security. Whilst recent education policy has experienced some continuity, notably the increasing number of academies and free schools, the economic context has provided the justification for a number of significant changes to the wider agenda developed under New Labour. Amongst others, these have seen the end of Education Maintenance Allowances, the termination of the Building Schools for the Future project, and reduced funding for Sure Start centres. Whilst it is beyond the remit of this study to present any detailed analysis of these most recent reforms, such observations are made to further emphasise the fragility of the modernising project that New Labour had sought to establish. Yet, if the nature of recent events and resultant policy reforms present a challenge to the desire to build a new consensus in education, it remains important that, as this study has argued throughout, such a vision should not retreat into a renewed dichotomy regarding the direction of educational reform, but must continue to justify itself on the basis of the nature of contemporary change. Here the multi-dimensional perspective offered by Giddens continues to demonstrate its relevancy in maintaining a project of reform that recognises

the varied contours of 'late' modernity. Indeed, against the dominance of the economic crisis in recent years, Giddens himself has been prominent in attempting to forward an agenda that takes the concerns of climate change seriously. Again refuting Fukuyama's conceptualisation of modern society as 'the end of history', Giddens (2012) uses the term 'the edge of history' to describe our present predicament in which the past is no longer able to provide solutions to our most pressing challenges. Yet, he is clear that the future continues to offer possibilities alongside its ever more apparent dangers.

Here, then, the need for innovative thinking presents itself again. Perhaps now more than ever 'we require precisely a *new* injection of utopianism if we are, as collective humanity, somehow to emerge unscathed from the turbulent and risky world into which modernity has launched us' (Giddens, 1990a: 21). Giddens (1990a: 21) argues that this utopian realism 'has to go beyond the dynamism already intrinsic to modernity: it has to envisage futures whose achievement is both contingent and highly risky'. In the face of such challenges there is scope to consider further, and with greater urgency, the nature of public and private good, and the role of education in providing these. There is then a need for a radical project of modernisation in education to face the contemporary risk society with a degree of 'letting go'. This is necessary with regards to letting go of the dichotomies of the past, to which New Labour's Third Way agenda has been seen as such an attempt. However, it is further vital that such reform lets go of the privileges and inequalities that the education system has continued to hold onto. This will inevitably require in itself continued attention to the 'dimly and imperfectly understood' forms of power and knowledge that Mestrovic (1998: 219) highlights, as well as to those which are already apparent in a variety of approaches to educational research.

Treating the multi-dimensional sociological basis for reform seriously means that an important role remains for considering what place education, as part of a policy whole, plays in providing solutions to these challenges, and how it can respond to the complexity of the economic, social, political and ecological risks that are faced. Policy, as a process, demonstrates localised and individualised effects in its implementation, and so a pluralistic conceptualisation remains important to analysis. Yet, rather than pointing to a post-structural optimism for agency as 'acts of resistance', a Giddensian approach attempts to demonstrate the possibility, indeed necessity, for such agency as a feature of a modernising policy reform agenda. It is therefore necessary that such agency is recognised not just at the local level, but at the national and global levels also. Local struggles are therefore the basis for globalised responses. Clearly this approach faces many challenges of its own. Individualised inequalities and struggles for resources are joined by national political struggles for power, whilst at the same time international relations also experience strain as nations battle to cope with internal

and external risks. Thus, it is important to realise the extent to which education can on its own ameliorate, let alone counter, what is often perceived as a rampant and aggressive global neo-liberal agenda (Tomlinson, 2005; Avis, 2008). Further still, experiences of 'late' modernity also differ at a global level. As the experience of radicalised Islamist terrorism demonstrates, the desire for different futures presents not just manufactured risk but dangerous conflicts. Clearly policy itself remains important as a link between ideas and practice, yet building a cosmopolitan democracy, sustaining economic growth, responding to ecological decay, and the search for peace at a global level, will necessarily extend beyond the realms of what is possible through education alone. As Lipman (2004: 182-3) argues, 'any serious effort to transform public schools ultimately can only succeed as part of a larger local and global social struggle for material redistribution and cultural recognition'.

Despite the limitations of recent experiences of reform, there remains scope for education to play a significant part in challenging deterministic accounts of change. Yet, the hope presented in such utopian possibilities cannot, to reiterate Giddens, be expected to occur of its own accord. An active response by both state and individual citizens will be necessary if a sophisticated project of modernisation is to bring about radical change. Therefore a vital role remains for practitioners at all levels of education in the building, and continuing renewal, of a new consensus in education. Giddens provides a significant and important contribution to this renewal pointing to the possibility, scope, necessity, and multi-dimensional nature of change. In doing so he demonstrates the need for a more complex form of utopian thinking. However, there is a clear need for these possibilities (and, necessarily, dangers) to be supported by critical attention to the complexities of change and agency, as well as the 'enabling' role of the state. 'Late' modernity may provide the risk/opportunity duality that acts as an incentive for revolutionary rather than fascist progress (see Lambert, 2006), however, benign, neutral, apolitical, even naive, understandings of capitalism, democracy and the influence of traditional and post-modern features of life in this contemporary period must be avoided. In parallel to Whitty and Power's (1997) observations on the Conservative reform agenda emanating from the 1988 ERA, there is hope that some of the modernising reforms observed in recent years may establish themselves as important features of a radical education system. However, to build on the thoughts of several other commentators (see Thrupp & Tomlinson, 2005; Ranson, 2008), reconciling this 'utopian imagination' with the realities of practice and the nature of contemporary change suggests that a new consensus in education will require a complex approach to hope.

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