

Leadership and management in education: what's in a field?¹

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As with education as a whole, as a field of study and research, educational leadership and management has, notably in the UK but also elsewhere, experienced a period of critical and self-critical examination. The accusations claim much of it is second rate, ideologically orientated, methodologically inadequate, small-scale, non-cumulative, poorly disseminated, and lacking impact on policy and practice. I explore these claims, accepting some and challenging others, and consider how they may be addressed. Given the Special Edition's focus on, among other things, a perceived lack of clarity as to how the field is to be described and its key concepts defined, much of the article seeks to tackle these and related issues by proposing an approach to understanding knowledge and its production that is rather more comprehensive and inclusive than has been usual in recent times. In doing so I argue that the possibilities of a humanities perspective in general and of history in particular have been greatly underestimated within the field.

Introduction

As a 'discipline' educational leadership and management has had a short² if turbulent past and faces an uncertain future. Asked recently by the Editors of *Management in Education* to reflect on 35 years as a member of the British Educational Management Leadership and Administration Society (BELMAS), I concluded "I feel lucky to have been employed in the field during the period from the mid-1970s to mid-1990s which, in retrospect, may seem a golden age" (Ribbins, 2007a:3). This edition of the *South African Journal of Education* is timely. In calling for papers, the Editors warn of "confusion and lack of agreement among academics and institutions on the exact nature of Educational Leadership and Management as a discipline". Of the seven areas of "problems and challenges" listed, focusing on the field's research aspect I explore three. (1) How should we describe the 'field'? (2) How should we define its key terms? (3) What are, and what should be, its epistemological foundations? First, I will apprise a fourth issue — Why is the field in difficulty?

Constructive debate or destructive criticism?

Over the last decade there have been many special editions of journals on what we know of management and associated concepts in education, how we know it, and how far this has enabled understanding and improved practice — *Educational Administration Quarterly* (EAQ) 32(2); 35(4); 36(3); *Educational Management and Administration* (EMA) 27(2); 30(1); *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* (EMAL) 33(2); *Journal of Educational Administration* (JEA) 39(6); *Journal of Educational Administration and History* (JEAH) 38(2); *School Leadership and Management* (SLAM) 23(2); 23(3); 23(4). I have

been involved in some of these as conference organiser, editor, and author, latterly in a review of reviews of the quality of research in education in the UK and Australia produced over the last decade (Ribbins & Gunter, 2002; Ribbins, Bates & Gunter, 2003). In the UK a series of reviews from members of the research community (Hargreaves, 1996; Hillage *et al.*, 1998; Tooley & Darby, 1998)³ sponsored by various government agencies suggest too much of it was second rate, ideologically orientated, methodologically inadequate, small-scale, non-cumulative, and lacking impact on policy and practice. At the same time, similar reviews were taking place in Australia which found “compelling evidence that Australian research is respected internationally and makes a difference to the worlds of schools, and policy development” (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs, 2000:4).

Three conclusions may be drawn from these findings. First, education research is inferior in the UK. Second, assessed against the Australian case, the reviews conducted in the UK were inferior in depth and quality and, especially in approach. Third, that therefore UK research might not actually be inferior but only appears to be so because the way it has been reviewed, unlike the approach employed in Australia, has tended to produce this outcome (Ribbins *et al.*, 2003:439). This led us to the hypothesis that were

a review of educational (and educational leadership and management) research in the UK to be conducted along the lines of the latest Australian reviews it might well produce findings that are substantially similar.

In support of this view we pointed out that earlier reviews using methods and assumptions similar to those employed by the UK reviews were much less complimentary than are the latest reviews. Perhaps Australian research really did make dramatic progress in the three short years between 1997 and 2000. What seems far more likely is that much of this ‘improvement’ is to be explained as an outcome of the very different ways in which the two sets of reviews were conducted.

The ‘bad news’ of the reviews from the UK, and how this was interpreted by ministers and officials, has had damaging consequences for research and research capacity and there may be more to come. Thus there was a marked fall in the number of institutions submitting education in the Research Assessment Exercise⁴ (RAE) between the 1996 (104) and 2001 (80) rounds, and a major reduction in the numbers of staff submitted as ‘research active’ (down to 2039 in 2001) — on this there is evidence which suggests educational leadership and management has been particularly hard hit (Ribbins, 2007a:2). Furthermore changes in the way the higher education funding agencies dispersed research monies after 2001 meant that 31 of the 80 departments of education which would have been supported on the 1996 RAE criteria ceased to be so. As Gorard (2005) points out, this means that many schools of education now receive little or no funding-council money for research. I agree with this, but find his description of the funding available for educational research as amounting to “considerable public expenditure” mystifying: on this Hillage *et al.* (1989) estimate that only £65 million a year was spent on

research. If this seems substantial it should be put in perspective. As Bassey (1997) has pointed out, this amounts to 0.17% of the total education budget. No wonder Hillage *et al.* (1998) restrict their comments on this issue to stressing the need to work smarter in allocating such monies — code for disbursing it to a far smaller number of institutions, which is what happened. What of Australia? It would seem ‘good news’ has brought little benefit to the research community. Therefore whilst we observe that “politicians ... did not quite know what to do with a report bearing mainly good news about educational research ...” (Ribbins *et al.*, 2003:438), Mulford (2005:142) adds that their “response has not just been ... lack of attention, but also a reduction of resources for educational research”.

Some definitions

Discipline or field of study

Van der Westhuizen and Prew (2006) in calling for papers regret the “confusion and lack of agreement among academics and institutions on the exact nature of Educational Leadership and Management as a discipline”. In outlining the problem, they note

whereas some academics view educational leadership and management as the same activity or phenomenon, others separate the two fields, whilst a third group highlight the interrelationship between the two phenomena. This is a helpful statement on the state of the field, but their two pages on this theme illustrate the nature of the confusion. In a couple of hundred words they use a variety of words to describe educational leadership and management. *Discipline* seems their default term as in “What constitutes the discipline of Educational Leadership and Management?” It may be assumed they see this as a single activity but they also write of “*a discipline* such as educational management” and of “*the disciplines* of educational leadership, educational management, and policy”, implying three kinds of activity. They also use other terms for this purpose, including ‘*fields*’ (which suggests more than one field) and ‘*field*’ (which implies just one field).

Their confusion is reflected elsewhere. Even in the UK, where the epistemic community has usually exhibited limited enthusiasm for things theoretical, there has been much debate on definition (Ribbins, 1999). As Bush (1999:2) notes there have been “differences on whether educational management should be regarded as a ‘field’ or a ‘discipline’”. Most UK founding members including Glatter, Hughes, and Baron advocate the term ‘field’. In doing so, Baron (1980:11) argues “educational administration, as a field of research, has had very ill-defined boundaries”. On this, for Hughes (1985:20) an important early landmark in the development of educational management and administration as a field of study in the UK was the publication of *Educational Administration and the Social Sciences*, edited by Baron and Taylor (1969). “The approach adopted ... was that educational management is a field of application and its study should draw widely, but with discrimination, on the social science disciplines”. For Baron (1980:17) this was

motivated by the *political* need to legitimate the study of educational administration ... at the University of London ... educational studies were regarded largely as the philosophy of education, the sociology of education, the economics of education, and the psychology of education. Difficulty ... arises in arguing the case for *fields* of study, such as ... educational administration: in this context it is necessary and appropriate to stress the contribution of the disciplines.

Whatever else may be said of Baron's argument, taken at face value the quote above seems to commit him to the notion that educational administration is a field of study in its own right which, presumably, means that it is to be distinguished from other fields such as (1) management, (2) leadership, and (3) policy? Given their use of the term 'fields' in their call for papers, it could be the editors of this special edition share this view. On this issue a paper on 'Reflections on the field of educational management studies' by Fitz (1999: 314) is illuminating. He uses "the word 'fields' ... to denote scholarly arenas, each of which has their special interest, with their own rules of access, privilege and regulation" and argues that fields "are irreducible to each other". As such a key area of enquiry on the notion of 'fields' is the "specialised interests' or discourse that distinguishes one field from any other adjacent or cognate field ...". Building on this and other arguments noted above, to summarise my position on such matters I would argue that for analytic purposes it is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of 'discipline' (or form of knowledge) and 'field' (as in field of knowledge) and that the study of educational leadership, administration, management, and policy (LAMP), like its parent field of education, is a mediated activity, or, more precisely, a field of knowledge. As such, and from a philosophical standpoint, like related fields such as curriculum studies and development studies, it is to be distinguished by its subject matter — that is by what it studies, not how. As such it borrows, as required, concepts, theories, tests of truth and the like from a variety of disciplines or forms of knowledge (Hirst 1965; 1967). In addition, fields of knowledge or study can be 'theoretical' or 'practical' — as Stenhouse (1975:1) points out "Hirst cites geography as an example of a theoretical study ... engineering as ... a practical study". In my view LAMP as a field of knowledge has far more in common with Engineering than Geography. As such, in the final analysis it is justified by the extent to which it enables practice and contributes to its betterment. Such a formulation would seem to entail that LAMP is one field, which means in turn that its constituent parts are not, or at least should not be regarded as, fields in their own right. It is possible to take this view, but there are practical and philosophical dangers in any approach which institutionalises too complete a detachment of these activities from each other. As Glatter (1987:9-10) puts it

some years ago I argued against the attempt to create two separate and distinct fields of study of educational policy and management on the ground that such a dichotomy is unjustifiable conceptually and empirically.

He went on to argue that one consequence of such a split was that educational management was risking becoming “a narrow technical activity divorced from values and purpose”. Writing almost two decades later, Fitz (2005:317) in a review of the contents of *Educational Management and Administration* between 1986 and 1997, argues that this shows the field has not escaped from this crisis of identity, concluding that “the critical mass of descriptive, technicist articles talk about ‘management’ as practices and relationships in ways that detach these from two broader contexts” — first, the policy framework and second, the other educational processes taking place. On the latter, one example is the study of management in isolation from what might be called the domain of teaching and learning”. These are weighty criticisms and I will return to them shortly. At this point I would note only that given the critique noted above, and drawing on Wittgenstein’s notion that some concepts can only be defined using webs of meaning, LAMP might best be described as a field of study made up of a set of separate but related sub-fields of study including leadership, management, administration, and policy. In addition, and building on the work of Stenhouse and Bassey (1995), I suggest that research in the field may best be defined as aiming

systematically, critically and self-critically to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and in doing so has as a key purpose the informing judgement and decision in LAMP in order to improve educational action and outcome (Ribbins 2005b:19).

However, whilst for philosophical purposes the field and to an extent its sub-fields can be regarded in the above terms they are also, as Fitz (1999:313) points out, settings within which communities of scholars operate. As such they need to be viewed, as Baron’s explanation for the political need to legitimate the field by linking it with the social sciences explicitly acknowledges, from a sociological perspective. For Fitz this means that

fields are composed of positions, objectively related to each other, and occupants who have vested interests in maintaining the boundaries of their own field. Fields are also arenas of conflict, as their occupants seek to determine what knowledge and practices are to be regarded as legitimate and in what knowledge forms and practices they are prepared to invest.

What is true of ‘fields’ may also be so for ‘disciplines’? Thus writing of the USA Falk (1980:7) argues that as higher education has grown so has the importance of the discipline-based academic department. Whilst for some this is a natural consequence of the increasing specialisation of knowledge that has characterised the last 100 years, for him the “specialisation of knowledge is not the cause of departmentalism but rather its effect” (conversely, once established) “departments actually prevent the growth of new areas of endeavour because ‘established’ faculty fear that the new ideas could threaten their control over funds and students”. Similarly Musgrove (1968:101) views school subjects as social systems

In a school and within a wider society subjects are communities of people,

competing and collaborating with one another, defining and defending their boundaries, demanding allegiances from their members and conferring a sense of identity upon them ... even innovation which appears to be essentially intellectual in character can usefully be examined as the outcome of social interaction.

Like Fitz, Gunter and I link such ideas with Bourdieu's (1990) theory of practice in which the notion of habitus is revealed through activity in a field in struggles over knowledge positions and in which knowledge production is contested over time and in space, and ideas, teaching, and journals do not float free of individual and networks of knowledge producers. It follows that the practice of those producing knowledge is embodied and integral to their lives, and the exercise of agency in making choices is in tension with the shaping of structures such as institutions and wider forces such as class and cultures (Gunter & Ribbins, 2002).

Against this background it is time to return to the critique of the field that Glatter and Fitz make: in particular, to their warning of the dangers of too great a split between policy and leadership and management. In summary whilst Glatter argues that creating such a dichotomy is unjustifiable conceptually and empirically, Fitz focuses on the harmful consequences this has had for the study of educational management in isolating it from the policy domain on the one hand and from teaching and learning on the other. Whilst others (Bates, 2006; Blackmore, 2006; Gunter, 2006) share these concerns I would also argue the first needs qualification and the second should be broadened. Thus whilst the split to which Glatter refers may be 'unjustifiable', there is good reason to believe that it exists empirically. Although a few contribute substantially to both sub-fields and others who from time to time cross over, LAMPS is for all practical purposes divided into two epistemic communities, each with its own core membership, characteristic networks, field activities, and key journals (broadly *Policy in Education* for policy and *EMA* and *SLAM* for management and leadership) between whom contact and collaboration is limited, sporadic and all too often unsatisfactory. In describing the damaging consequences that this has had, Fitz understandably focuses on what it has meant for management and leadership. But my reading of the field suggests that the study of policy has not escaped unscathed. Thus if the study of educational management and leadership has over-emphasised issues concerned with 'how to do' and 'what works', it could be argued that policy studies has focused too much on 'what should be done' and 'how far this is being achieved' and has tended to ignore the people expected to achieve the doing and how they are to go about this. It things are to improve, whilst the study of educational management and leadership will have to change, so too will the study of educational policy. So much for how LAMP is to be construed, what then are its key concepts and how do they relate to each other?

Leadership, Administration, Management and Policy

The field is commonly regarded as made up of a variety of activities to which,

as noted above, various labels are attached. How are these to be distinguished? Sapre (2002:101-104) argues that “management has become one of the most persuasive phenomena of our times” (so)

it seems reasonable to ask what has brought about this obsession ... Our organisations were being run prior to the emergence of management. Were they not being managed? We did not use the term ‘management’ then; ‘administration’ was more commonly used. Is management different from administration?

For Sapre

administration, a much older term, owes its origins to the institution of the state. It reflects ... the dominant culture of government organisation. Management, a relatively newer term, has come from business and industry.

In developing these ideas he proposes an administrative (Model A) and a management (Model B) approach. Such a thesis clearly rests on the assumption that leadership and management represent *different*, and *alternative*, kinds of activities. Not all share this conception. Some, following Glatter (1972:5), believe the two terms mean more or less the same thing. Others, after Hodgkinson (1991:63-65), claim they represent two separate but complementary sets of purposes and activities. Closer examination suggests that these views may be less incompatible than they may at first seem. Thus for Glatter (1972: 5) administration and management are “the process of securing decisions about what activities the organisation ... will undertake, and mobilising the human and material resources to undertake them”. Relating them with ‘leadership’ he takes positions not easily reconcilable arguing at one point that “we see no distinction in practice between ‘administration’ and ‘management’” and at another that “we have found that sometimes ‘administration’ and sometimes ‘management’ carries the greater implication of directing or policy-making functions, with the other word implying more routine work”. This last implies that two different levels of activity are involved and entrenched in the public consciousness with the terms being used differentially if not always consistently.

For Hodgkinson management is philosophy in action activated “by means of processes which are abstract, philosophical, qualitative, strategic and humanistic in essence, and by means of managerial processes which are concrete, practical, pragmatic, quantitative and technological in nature” (1978:8-9). This is presented in an ideal type sequence, in which administration is constituted in three processes (philosophy, planning, and politics) which can be “subsumed under the rubric of policy making”. Management also includes three processes (mobilising, managing and monitoring) which taken together can be “subsumed under the rubric of policy implementation”. In his view this analysis, if it is to be justified, must have theoretical *and* practical value since if there is truth, as opposed to merely some form of aesthetic order in the ... taxonomy ... I think the major implications have to do with the preparation of administrators and the division of executive functions within the organisation ... Not to do all six things, not to have them done by the right

people, not to be aware and self-conscious of the stages, and not to articulate them is simply not to be firing on all six cylinders (Hodgkinson, 1978:16-17).

In opting for a single term for policy making and policy implementation, he settles on administration arguing

Management is subtended from and subsumed by the larger concept of administration ... because the latter systematically embraces and generates the former, and because neither set of functions can exist in practice in discrete isolation from the other (1991:51).

Furthermore “difference in usage between these terms ... is to an extent a matter of semantic convention ... there is now, for example, a tendency in Great Britain to use management as the higher function” (1991:50) whilst in North America, and in many other countries, administration is used in this way. So much for administration and management what then of leadership? On this Hodgkinson (1991:53) is clear if also somewhat confusing in arguing that “the term can be used synonymously with administration”. Would that this was the only confusion associated with the concept.

On this, Burns (1978:2) identifies one hundred plus serious definitions of leadership. For Greenfield (1993:67-68) much

influential research ... has been content to explain it in procedures that are ... restrictive and static ... a Brownie camera snapshot of a complex and obscure process (which would be) better conceived of as ... as Cohen and March see it as a man sitting at the wheel of a skidding car: what he does at the moment is of marginal importance compared to the other forces that got him into the situation in the first place and which will largely determine the outcome.

For Hodgkinson (1991:49) the concept of leadership “is not so much vacuous as protean, impenetrable, elusive and delusive ... which makes it very difficult to handle in a rigorous manner”. Even so if we are to make worthwhile progress in understanding the theory and practice of leadership “there is no escape from grappling with the conceptual difficulties involved”: this means acknowledging leadership encompasses “both administration and management ...”. As such when

leadership is identified with management it can be understood as the effecting of policy, values and philosophy through collective action. It is the moving of men towards goals through organisation and it can be done well, badly, or indifferently (1996:30).

Such a definition stresses that leadership, and being a leader, is much about what people do and much less about what they are. Even so,

its vagueness opens it to all sorts of rhetorical manipulation ... It is a truism that no educational administrator would admit to not being a leader. On the contrary, the administrator would tend to conceive of the role of leaders simply by way of definition.

Whilst I share many of the concerns discussed above, my view and work is also much influenced by Greenfield’s claim that studies of leadership have tended to focus on “the characteristics of leaders” whereas “what is important

is their character” (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993:259). Accordingly, Gunter and I have argued that too much research in the field is about *leadership* and too little on *leading* (detailed and contextualised accounts of what individual leaders do and why they do it in a variety of specific circumstances, how and why others respond as they do, and with what outcomes) and *leaders* (what leaders are, why and by whom they are shaped into what they are, how they become leaders) (Ribbins & Gunter, 2002:362).

In summary, attempts to distinguish key field terms have resulted in three conflicting positions. The first from India after Sapre, argues they are mutually exclusive. The second from the UK after Glatter, proposes they are broadly interchangeable. The third from North America after Hodgkinson suggests they are different but complementary. My position is close to Hodgkinson but I am less persuaded by his idea that administration and leadership can be conflated. Whilst I believe his account offers an illuminating agenda for what leaders must do to lead, I find it less helpful in explaining how they go about doing this. For this I turn to concepts such as influence and authority relating to the notion of power. In doing so, after Dahl (1957), French and Raven (1959), and Hemphill (1978), I define power as access to all the resources a leader can call on, whilst stressing that such access does not become significant unless it is mobilised — there is a conceptual and practical distinction between potential and realised power (‘influence’). There is a distinction to be made between accepted and unaccepted power (‘authority’). Leadership that is sustainable and defensible exists where influence and authority overlap (Ribbins, 2005a). Coming to terms with phenomena such as leadership (and management) requires an understanding of the knowledge claims involved. What then is knowledge and how is it produced in the field?

How is knowledge produced?

Gunter and I have been trying to develop an approach to this issue which describes and understands how knowledge is produced, what is produced, who produces it, why they produce it, where it is produced, and what makes that produced authoritative (Gunter & Ribbins, 2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2005; Ribbins & Gunter, 2002; 2003). We have sought to consider its potential in studies of school principalship, middle leadership, special education, distributed leadership, teacher leadership, etc. Its essentials can be depicted as a framework of six related typologies of knowledge production, illustrated in Figure 1, with reference to middle leadership in schools (Gunter & Ribbins, 2005; Ribbins, 2007b).

We believe these typologies can be used to account for knowledge production *and* support professional and policy practice across all sites and kinds of educational activity. By *Knowledge* we mean the claims created, established and challenged over time. We believe the claims dominating our field in recent times over-focus on describing the delivery and measuring the impact of the role of the principal as generic leadership derived from theories and methods drawn largely from business and popular psychology. This privileges the instrumental and evaluative against other forms of knowing. Much

Producers	The people and their roles (e.g. school leader, middle leader, teacher, lecturer, policy maker, inspector, scholar, researcher, parent, student) who are knowers through producing and using what is known in and about middle leaders and leadership.
Positions	The places and events (e.g. classrooms, lecture theatres, tutorial rooms, meetings of staff, parent meetings) where knowers use and produce what is known about middle leaders and leadership.
Provinces	The claims to knowledge regarding the ways in which middle leaders and leadership are conceptualised and engaged with.
Practices	The practice in real time/real life contexts of all those individuals and groups who are involved in middle leaders and leadership.
Processes	The research processes used to generate and legitimate knowledge, knowing and knowers in middle leaders and leadership.
Perspectives	The understandings of those involved in middle leaders and leadership created as processes and products (e.g. teaching, books) from the inter-play of producers, positions, provinces, practices, processes.

Figure 1 Knowers and knowing in understanding middle leadership in schools

of value has come of this but far more can be expected of a comprehensive and inclusive approach (Figure 2).

In this framework, the humanistic province finds a place because of its unique ability to facilitate understanding of the settings in which leadership is experienced. Central to this is history and it is to this and its possibility for the study of our field that I will now turn.

A case for history?

I have long been uneasy on the ahistorical, even anti-historical, nature of much of the field of educational leadership and management. This reflects a wider concern about the narrowness of its knowledge base and its apparent lack of interest in how such knowledge is produced. In what follows I will explain how and why I have come to feel this way and say something about what I have tried to do about it. I will argue that greater attention should be given to the humanistic and historical. In doing so I will draw on a special edition of the *Journal of Educational Management and History* which I recently edited on *Management and Leadership in Education: a Case for History* (2006, 38(2)). Before turning to this, I will first locate this discussion in a broader historiographic context and will do so by contrasting the views of two influential modern historians.

Two views on history

Ideas on the role of history in determining our view of the world and ourselves can be represented as a continuum varying according to the merits and cen-

Activity			
Challenges	Understanding meanings <u>Conceptual:</u> What does it mean to do middle leadership <u>Descriptive:</u> What do we see when we witness middle leadership?	Understanding experiences <u>Humanistic:</u> What experiences do those involved have of middle leadership? <u>Aesthetic:</u> How can the arts illuminate the practice of middle leadership?	Provisions
	Working for change <u>Critical:</u> What happens when power is exercised as/in middle leadership? <u>Axiological:</u> What does it mean for middle leadership to support what is right and good?	Delivering change <u>Evaluative:</u> What impact does middle leadership have on organisational outcomes? <u>Instrumental:</u> What is needed to secure organisational effectiveness in middle leadership?	
Action			

Figure 2 Knowledge and middle leaders and leadership (Gunter & Ribbins, 2005)

trality of history in such a shaping. Towards one pole, for Davis (2006:1), a “historicized world is a world not just dominated by history, but dominated by history as knowledge already known ... history ... dominates the public mind” even though its key conceptualizations are “unverifiable, hypothetical, provisional, indiscriminate or ultimately unpredictable” (2006:252). As such “apprehension is the only reflex now left to alert human beings to the insecurities of the historicized world they inhabit” (2006:9) and this being so ‘historics’ must replace ‘History’. This approach shares some of the “premises of the postmodern position (the textual character of reality, the figurative fabric of texts, and scepticism towards the natural reality of true facts)” (2006:14-19), but takes us beyond postmodernism. In place of the “stale, nostalgic brew called history”, it asserts the aesthetic intentions of Historics claiming

in a historicised world, history is immediately experienced ... not primarily contemplated in a detached, ‘objective’ and academic manner ... Historics thus reflects on history ... from the standpoint of situated experience, personal sense, not at the behest of detached experience”.

Towards the other pole, Clark (2003:6-7) challenges the rejection of history at the heart of much modernist and postmodernist thinking. In its place we have ‘presentism’ in which

it is as if present society, with its passionate new affirmations, increa-

singly hates past societies for being different. Moderns ... want the past to be ... the ratification of the present; where they find it otherwise they do not ignore it but repudiate it. The intelligentsia ... characteristically does not turn away from the past with indifference; it reaches back into the past to silence its message.

This goes some way to explaining why, in so many countries, history as a subject for instruction in schools is being marginalised or re-defined. In so far as students ... study history, they do so in later and later time-frames ... the assumption has taken root that events and episodes are more 'relevant' to the present the closer they are in time.

I reject the extreme relativism of 'historics'. History is personal and social. As Clark (2003:13) states "The self ... is not born 'free' in the sense of 'timeless'. Personal identity is largely established by history, by the persistence within an individual of a set of experiences and learned ways of reacting. To lose one's memory is not emancipation but a serious mental disorder, without memory we cannot function as ourselves. If a society loses its history it has the same effect on a larger scale; that society could now have only a disembodied existence. It would have lost all those many things which made it itself". I believe the same can be said for those who would lead. They have a history, ignoring this is to risk disembodiment. Applied to LAMPS, without an understanding of our history we set aside much that makes us and our field. Recovering this requires that more attention be given to the humanities and a reassessment of the place of the social sciences. It is not that I underestimate the place of the social sciences, but rather would propose it is essential that their contribution be distinguished from that which can be expected of the humanities in general and of history in particular (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993:255-257).⁵ It is for this reason that I agreed to edit the special edition of *JEAH*.

Becoming involved in the special edition

For me the need for a historical perspective in the study and practice of our field matters for four main reasons: (1) because the study of leadership and management in education is important; (2) because enabling this study requires an understanding of what counts as knowledge and how knowledge is produced; (3) because history is a unique and vital form of knowledge, and (4) because there are good reasons to believe history has not been, and is not being, given the attention it warrants in LAMPS as a field of study.

My involvement in the special edition originated in an invitation from Roy Lowe and his Editorial Board who were planning a series of such editions, each focusing on a single theme. Given his standing as a distinguished historian of education, it was felt the first such of this series should be edited by someone from educational administration. It is a tribute to his good nature that he readily agreed I could focus on the role (past, present, and future) of history in the study of my field. To the best of my knowledge this issue had not to date been systematically addressed. Having established a theme, I needed to identify content and contributors. The latter were all from our field;

given the themes I wished to tackle, I knew some would need to have read history at university — as had Jill Blackmore, Helen Gunter, and Eugenie Samier. This was less critical for other topics — and Richard Bates and Mike Bottery, although interested in the possibilities of history to our field, were not historians. Exceptionally, I asked Fenwick English to write on a historiographic topic knowing he had read English Literature. I began with a pre-identified set of topics and, with some negotiation, in the final text these are substantially as I had initially envisaged. Before turning to a discussion of content, I will examine the claim that our field is largely ahistorical or even anti-historical?

A case for history in the field

Reading Clark (2003), English (2006) and Samier (2006) led me to believe the historical perspective was being squeezed from two directions; by modernism and postmodernism and their relativistic assumptions and by scientism and its positivistic premises. From neither standpoint does there seem to be a place for anything that is recognisably history. Facing this bizarre alliance I asked my contributors to consider the role history may have in the study of the field and to do so having regard to substantive themes such as context (Bottery, 2006), culture (Bates, 2006) and social justice and methodological themes such as the production of intellectual histories (Gunter, 2006a) and life writing (English, 2006).

For many years after graduating, I doubted if history had a worthwhile future. At university in the 1960s, many of my friends were studying sociology. They were bullish about the virtues of their ‘discipline’, and dismissive of the merits of mine. History, I was confidently informed, was dying — or already dead. If it survived it would, at best, do so as a minor sub-field of ‘greater sociology’. This was a view that some distinguished historians seemed to accept. Stone (1965:176), writing of historical revolutions, has claimed that “Social scientists can supply a corrective to the antiquarian fact-grubbing to which historians are so prone; they can direct attention to problems of general relevance, and away from the triviality of such much historical research”. Subsequently, in a much quoted article (Stone, 1976), he claimed historical writing in the twentieth century could be described as passing through phases dominated by one social science after another. Influenced by such views I spent years trying to emancipate myself from the embrace of history, seeking to become a sociologist. So when in the late 1960s I discovered educational management I took it to be a field of knowledge largely underpinned by ideas borrowed from the social sciences. Later I found that others, and not just in our field, shared this view. As Clark (2003:33) elegantly puts it,

The influence of the social sciences on the humanities in the twentieth century hardly needs demonstration. Yet, although the humanities were everywhere born in chains, they are becoming free: in innumerable individual instances, for countless particular reasons, the stranglehold of the social sciences is weakening and history freed itself. Indeed, for Clark, the “once vain-glorious social

sciences had either moved closer to history, as with economics; or had come to be seen as self-parodic, as with anthropology; or had been exposed as unverifiable, as with psychology.

In reacting negatively to the possibilities of ideas drawn from history and of histories as a way of understanding what has happened in LAMP I was not alone. However, whilst in the late 1970s and beyond, my views moved on, those of many in the field, notably in the USA, did not. On this, of the contributors to the special edition, the North Americans are most critical. For Samier (2006:125-128)

History plays a small role in the field of educational management in the English speaking world. It is rarely taught in courses (including research courses) or included in programmes apart from simplistic and arbitrary treatment primarily for illustrative purposes.

Surveying selected influential North American texts she finds “little reference to history” which she believes is to be explained, in part, by the “persistent atemporality” of “its parent discipline, public management” within which “much more attention is paid to the history of administrative theory than actual history of management, a consequence of a continuing heavy domination by positivistic research”. English (2006:142-152) takes a similar line and in doing so challenges the dominance of positivism and the single-minded pursuit of the ‘scientific’ which characterises our field. Illustrating the seriousness of this concern he points out “the National Research Council’s *Scientific Research in Education* in the U.S. has all but relegated life writing to the near ‘fiction’ category of what the government should fund as ‘scientific research’”. This is, he argues, damaging because the ‘scientific’ approach to understanding leadership is based on assumptions that are at best partially correct and at worst invalid. So, before

we reduce educational leadership to a collection of organizational abstractions completely devoid of the human variable, we ought to pause and reflect if our quest for scientific leadership hasn’t led us to the ultimate Weberian ‘iron cage’ where ‘economic man’ works ‘without regard to the person ... without hate and therefore without love’ (Gerth & Mills, 1970:334). In this respect biography and life writing [and he may well have argued history as a whole] are not only the antidote, but the *raison d’etre* leaders and leadership still matter, not only for schools, but in human societies everywhere.

My history as an aspiring scholar reflects a growing recognition that whilst sociology was necessary, it could never be sufficient for the development of a fully realised approach to the study of LAMPs. This became clear during the 1970s and 1980s when, with Ron Best and others I researched pastoral care in education (Best *et al.*, 1983). The most productive aspect of this (quantitative and qualitative) research was an ethnographic study, the first of its kind, of a large comprehensive school. This research was important for many reasons. It helped me to understand what middle leadership could be and what it was, and why I had found it problematic as a pastoral leader. It, and Best, taught me much of the sociology I know. From it, in particular from a

study of three successive regimes of headship, came my abiding subsequent interest in the life and work of the principal, and recognition of the need for a historical approach in such studies. Since then I have been involved in producing portraits of principals and principalship in many countries, most of which have been informed by a life and career history approach (Pashiardis & Ribbins, 2003). As a result of this, and working with Thomas Greenfield, I rediscovered the merits of a humanistic approach to the study of the field (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). The special edition of *JEAH*, to the best of my knowledge the first of its kind, was intended as a ground-breaking attempt to clarify the role of history in such an enterprise.

Contributions to the special edition

Following my introduction, the special edition opens with a paper which examines the role history has played in the field and discusses what part it should play and how it must be conceptualised to do so. For Samier (2006: 126-127)

history, like all other liberal arts, advocates a critical perspective and a set of values appropriate for an exploration of the human condition wherever one finds it, including the administrative world ... It entails a perspective from which administration is viewed as humanly created emphasising individual decision and choice

and “since we are ... temporal creatures, subject to historical forces and responsible for how change unfolds” questions on the nature and purpose of administration must in part be historical. In identifying the contribution that history can make she identifies two key objectives;

one is to explore what history can bring to the field, and the other, how history needs to be conceptualised to serve this purpose, emphasising two aspects ... of particular relevance to educational administration and leadership; biography and comparative studies.

For her, then, the distinctive value of history

lies in its interpretive power, in investigating the particular through individual cases and how these are related to larger societal forces of change producing explanation, establishing causal relations, and achieving understanding as *Verstehen* in its full hermeneutic senses.

The next paper examines a historical form — life writing. English (2006:141-143) claims that if

biography and other forms of life writing (he discusses 12) were once considered vital sources of information on leadership ... in the establishment of the pursuit of a ‘science of leadership’ in the last quarter of the last century, they were abandoned as too subjective and unreliable.

In their place an

emphasis on observable and measurable actions in theorising leadership has led to the dominance of organizational sociological theories and approaches intertwined with behavioural research in addressing the problem of human leadership.

Contesting this, for English “understanding leadership involves more than a

simple calculus of behaviours or results of recurrent themes based on surveys” — it should be on “the lives, intentions, interactions and contexts in which leaders labour and an understanding of the objectives that they are pursuing” (and) “the primary function of ... life writing is to deal with the exceptions, the irregular — the individual ...”.

The next two papers consider issues of culture and context. Both themes have attracted much attention in educational administration and leadership, but rarely from a historical perspective. Bates (2006:155-157)(whose undergraduate studies were in the social sciences), focusing on our understanding of cultural factors, finds his discussion on two propositions that echo those advocated by Fitz; that the study of “culture in educational leadership should have begun with Willard Waller’s observations on the school as a social organism”; that the field should take seriously John Dewey’s (1902) warning of the danger of falling “into the habit of regarding the mechanics of school organisation and administration as something comparatively external and indifferent to educational ideals”. Willard and Dewey have not had the influence they merit and so the field has been “dominated ... by appeals to ... ‘the cult of efficiency’ ... and the quest for a ‘science’ of educational administration” which led to a targeting of “the observation of regularities and the deduction of law-like generalisations that would be manipulable in the search for educational improvement” rather than in a search for “the cultural and political interests of local communities and the ‘armchair theorising’ of pedagogues”. Historically this orientation produced the “disconnection between the culture of administration and the culture of teaching” which still bedevils schools. Waller’s “notion of the school as a social organisation with learning as its central focus” (2006:164-165) would provide “a starting point from which we might yet construct an education theory of leadership, one based in the cultural struggles of our time — A century of missed opportunity need not continue”.

Bottery (whose undergraduate studies were in philosophy and psychology) focuses on the implications of context, particularly globalization, for educational leaders. ‘Context’ he defines as “the circumstances relevant to something under consideration”. Drawing on Seddon’s (1993) frames — the categorical, interpretivist, and relational — he argues that moving from the first to the third of these “demands a recognition of the need to both deepen our understanding of the details of a particular context, as well as to broaden the range of factors that play into this context” (Bottery, 2006:171-173). To illustrate what this can mean he considers the nature of trust, and proposes a typology of nine forms of trust relationships with respect to educational leaders at macro-, meso- and micro-levels. He advances a historical developmental model with nine main forms of globalisation, concluding that

any specifically historical understanding (of leadership) might be approached through viewing the interrelationships between factors at the micro-, meso-, and unto the macro-levels: and (to use) these levels to examine and explain the emergence of culturally different forms of educational leadership (furthermore) given the impact of global forces

over time, it may be a valuable exercise to trace their growth and the unnoticed manner in which they have historically affected the practice of educational leadership (2006:182).

In the fifth paper Blackmore (2006:185-197), critiquing 'malestream' education and educational institutions, "deconstructs the interrelationship between the theory and practice of the troublesome notions of leadership, social justice and feminism". As with Bates and Fitz, tracking the relationship of "marginalised groups' ... to the field of educational administration and their claims on the state" lead her to conclude that "mainstream approaches have been informed by theories, practices and politics that do not focus on the core educational work of teaching and learning, sidelining social justice issues". An examination of what such issues mean for re-theorising leadership for social justice leads her to suggest that the "criteria of recognition, redistribution, democratic deliberation and agency could be the basis for socially just leadership practices". From this perspective, and quoting Connell (1995: 57), she concludes that "the issue of social justice is not an add-on: it is fundamental to good education" and, presumably, good leadership.

The final paper explores knowledge production in educational leadership and the contribution a historical approach can make to this. In this Gunter (2006a:202-205) examines the possibilities of intellectual histories for the field suggesting that it can be "a valuable aspect of the study and practice of educational leadership", not least because the field should be concerned with "professional practice as it was, is, and might be". Such an approach puts a premium on determining how field histories were written. An extensive reading of field outputs of all kinds leads her to identify six main sources: including experiences, debates, statements, reviews, contexts, and networks. Given this diversity what do field members need to do to write robust intellectual histories? She makes three claims:

first, there cannot be one intellectual history, but a range where dialogue, disagreement and development take place; second, historiographies of the field cannot be fixed in time but are the product of a time; third, historiographies are statements of power about what story particular interests want telling and why they want it to be told that way.

All this notwithstanding, the construction of a worthwhile intellectual history requires "a framework for mapping the field". In a fascinating coda, Gunter illustrates the possibilities of her approach by using it to construct a critical intellectual history of transformational leadership as theory and practice.

In search of ways forward

Has the field improved of late? Some influential members doubt if it has. For Gunter (2006b:6) the "field of educational leadership is seriously ill and it could be terminal. I say this not to be playfully dramatic but because we should not wait for the post mortem to examine the state of the field". For Gorard (2005:158-159) in so far as the field rejects the idea that "research in educational leadership and management ... has a relatively weak profile within the already weak quality profile of educational research" it is in denial.⁶

Reviewing some⁷ of the 45 sessions on leadership at the 2004 American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, he claims they represent a field (which) is very inward-looking ... Many of the papers were about the researchers' own practice, presenting little or nothing in the way of systematic evidence, and certainly not putting any of the ideas presented to any kind of test.

Gorard lists three possible responses. (1) We "could accept both the judgement and the situation" — this he, rightly, rejects as "defeatist". (2) We "could reject the judgement and so express contentment with the *status quo*". For him "this approach is largely the one adopted by the UK educational research community (who have argued that) the criticisms have been misdirected; the RAE panel was mistaken, and UK research is actually very good". This makes a number of contestable assumptions. First, that in responding to the above criticisms field members can only reject or accept them as a whole. Second, that to contest these criticisms is necessarily to be content with the *status quo*. Third, that the critical reviews on which he bases much of his case were homogeneous in the nature and virulence of their criticisms. Why, presented as it is without evidence or argument, should any of this be accepted? With regard to the third assumption, it is simply not true that the reviews presented a united front or that the educational research community respond with one voice (Ribbins *et al.*, 2005:424-435). In so far as some responses from the field to criticism were misguided, even excessive, I do not believe these were typical. For my part (Ribbins & Gunter, 2002:367) I have rejected the idea that we have "nothing to learn from Hargreaves, Hillage and Tooley. In particular ... their criticisms of the inaccessibility and lack of cumulative character of too much research ...". I have also stressed that

whilst there is no doubting the passion of those who defend educational research there is reason to question how effective they have been in persuading detractors and sceptics that they might be mistaken in their criticisms and misguided in their recommendations" (Ribbins *et al.*, 2005:434).

This takes me to the third of the possible responses that Gorard identifies — "Let's admit we have a problem" (2005:159). For him this is the only sensible response. I agree, although how we would define the problem and how we would seek to resolve it at best only partially overlap. But before turning to this, let me first consider how the government has defined the problem and how it has sought to resolve it. Since this is a matter which I have discussed at some length elsewhere (Ribbins *et al.*, 2003:431-435), I will be brief. Unsurprisingly, the response of ministers and the Ministry of Education was very largely structural. Initially this was summarised by the then minister, Charles Clarke (1998:9) who took the view that if things were to be improved, four policies must be implemented: (1) research funding would need to be refocused and concentrated in a few centres of excellence; (2) the funding available to specific kinds of research activity such as longitudinal studies and randomly controlled trials must be increased (and although he does not

say this, since it was not intended to increase the total pot available this would mean reducing the funding available for other kinds of activity); (3) the funding of an Information Centre along the lines pioneered by the Cochrane Collaboration (which, with some success, had been set up to improve the quality of research in the medical field and the effectiveness of communication of findings to clinicians); and, (4) a much increased user involvement in the selection, commissioning and steering process involved in the funding of research.

Subsequently the Ministry published a 13-point action plan with at its core two proposals (Sebba, 1999:18-19): (1) The setting up of “a national forum of educational research to develop a strategic framework which could assist the developing of greater coherence, co-ordination and relevance”. A couple of years later the National Educational Research Forum (NERF) launched its first strategy document. (2) The setting up of an information unit proposed by the minister which was subsequently achieved by the ministry funding “the Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre based at the University of London”. In due course several review groups were registered with the Centre including one for school leadership. After a promising start which led to the publication of one review (on the impact of school principals on student outcomes by Bell *et al.* (2003) and the sponsoring of a second), to the best of my knowledge no further reviews have by and large been sponsored or published. In addition, as noted above, after the RAE round of 2001 the numbers of schools of education receiving research funding from the Higher Education Funding agencies was significantly reduced. Gorard (2005) expresses support for many of these developments but they have not engendered similar enthusiasm across the educational research community (see Ribbins *et al.*, 2003:432). At several points in his paper Gorard (2005) asks, surely legitimately, what is the evidence for this or that proposal or claim? I would ask the same question of the reforms noted above. Many assume that significant improvement must mean greater centralisation of control in the allocation of research funding and in the determination of future research agendas along with a much greater concentration of research capacity in a much smaller number of increasingly large settings. Before going further down this track I would wish for credible answers to three questions. First, what are the potential dangers to a liberal society of increasing levels of central, especially governmental,⁸ control over research in education? Second, what is the evidence that increasing levels of such central control and greater concentration of capacity in a diminishing number of settings will improve the quality of educational research or, for that matter, training? Third, how good is the evidence that educational research in the United Kingdom has had so little impact on policy and practice in the past?

Unlike the Government-led plans discussed above, Gorard’s ideas for improving research and research capacity in educational leadership and management are substantive as well as structural. With regard to the former, he believes that if research in the field is to impact seriously on policy and practice what we need “is the creation of ... evidence based on sound and scientific

procedures (with) a greater use of randomised controlled trials and their synthesis within systematic review". (Given) "the deficits in the UK research community, such as a deeply worrying lack of quantitative skills ..., the creation of such evidence would require the creation of a new kind of educational researcher" (2005:156:158). In the USA, and increasingly in the UK, these are likely to be found in "private consultancy companies" rather than in schools of education. Seeking to quantify the seriousness of the problem, Gorard reviews the papers published in 2002 in four journals: *British Educational Research Journal* (BERJ), *British Journal of Educational Psychology* (BJEP), *School Leadership and Management* (SLAM) and *Educational Management and Administration* (EMA) — of which I was at the time in my 13th and final year as editor. In summary he argues that many of the papers in SLAM and EMA were not empirically based ('think pieces' and 'literature reviews'); of those that were the great majority were 'qualitative' in method and very few were quantitative. BERJ does better, and given that BJEP published only one non-empirical paper, whilst 96% had a "substantial quantitative methods element, and these showed considerable diversity and sophistication especially in the use of experimental methods", Gorard presumably regards it as having "shaped up" even more satisfactorily.

All this notwithstanding, it is not clear how Gorard's claims are to be interpreted. He does say there is a problem, but whether this is with the field, its journals, or a combination of both is left to the reader. In addition, whilst his approach is predicated on the belief that it is possible to evaluate the health of a field by examining its key journals, he does not explain why he takes this view or how this works. This last is an issue that Fitz (1999:316) addresses, arguing that a field's most prestigious journal

defines the field, the field defines the journal ... Journals confer identity on files, provide arena for boundary disputes and consolidate the future of fields. Journals, in the end though, assemble and disseminate what is 'out there'. In all respects *EMA* is an interesting example ... It provides a basis from which to survey and decode the field of (educational management studies) and trajectories within it and in particular the field's intellectual basis".⁹

Thoughtful as this discussion is, a paper by Waite (2005:1-2), founding editor of the *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, offers a far more comprehensive examination of this subject. In analysing "the impact of journals on their fields" he uses three lenses "an epistemological lens, a political lens, and a psychological lens". Limitations of space preclude a full discussion of this fascinating paper and its relevance to the themes I have identified in my own, but there is one finding I will refer to. This has particular relevance to Gorard's rating of *BJEP* as superior to *EMA* and *SLAM* because, among other things, the nature and quality of the papers it publishes are more likely to be grounded on evidence based on sound and scientific procedures. How far does such an approach protect it from error? Waite (2005) explores this question using as an example "the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (*JAMA*) (which) is arguably the most prestigious journal in the US, if not in the

world” and as such would, in all probability, be even more likely than even *BJEP* to fulfil the quality criteria that Gorard espouses. This is not something the editors of *JAMA* and its editorial board leave to chance. Rather they “continually undertake a survey of the journal and its contents (and) publish the results”. Even in the case of so distinguished a journal, the findings of such reviews are sometimes uncomfortable. One concludes

a scientific research paper is an exercise in rhetoric; that is, the paper is designed to persuade or at least convey to the reader a particular point of view ... for both readers and editors, the views expressed in a research paper are governed by forces that are clear to nobody, perhaps not even to the contributors themselves (Horton, 2002:2777).

Another (Tanner, 2005), in a paper published in *JAMA*

reported the results of a study that found fully one-third of all major medical studies whose results were published over the ... period 1990–2003 in the major medical journals ... were subsequently contradicted or found to be highly exaggerated (Waite, 2005:3).

Given this it seems that adopting a ‘scientific’ approach and a quantitative and experimental methodology offers a field and its journals rather less protection than Fitz and Gorard may expect.

In any case, in referencing Gorard’s argument, I do find it somewhat surprising that, given his advocacy of the merits of large-scale studies, how modest is the sample upon which he relies; there is also the delightful irony that his paper is itself a think piece, which is published in a special edition of *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* devoted mainly to ‘think pieces’. However, in truth, in part for the reasons outlined in the paragraph above, I am less disconcerted than Gorard by the fact that, if this actually is the case, journals in our field publish more such pieces than other educational journals. It is, after all rather newer as a field than some of the other educational areas with which he compares it. Furthermore, perhaps the field produces so many think pieces because its members are unusually reflexive — certainly during its short history they have engaged with intensity in an unusually large number of critical reviews and debates (Ribbins, 2006b).

Such caveats notwithstanding, believing as I do that there are some things in the field of leadership and management that can only be researched using a quantitative approach, I share Gorard’s concern that substantial and sophisticated studies of this kind are so infrequently published in the journals. On this I know how very hard it has become to recruit faculty with substantial and successful experience of such research and how difficult it is to attract worthwhile journal articles of this kind — these contemporary facts of field life are surely causally linked. How is this problem to be overcome? It could be that some of the national initiatives discussed above may help insofar as they target available funds to this kind of research. It could also be that recent pressure from the Education and Social Research Council, requiring all doctoral students to have at least a ‘user’s’ understanding of a wide range of methodologies, including the quantitative even if their thesis research does not require this, will help in the longer term. Having acknow-

ledged this, I should also stress that there would be problems if the pendulum swings back too far. Quantitative research is not a panacea. There have been periods, such as the 1950s in the United States, when the field was dominated by the New Theory Movement, during which large scale and rigorous quantitative research based on very widely used versions of two instruments, the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire and others and the Organisation Climate Description Questionnaire, backed up by apparently sophisticated factor analysis techniques, was the dominating paradigm. Sadly, by the late 1960s even Halpin (1967:11), very much a leading light in pioneering these developments, was acknowledging that the results of these great efforts had been disappointing, remarking, for example, that “the blunt truth is that we do not yet know very much as to how to change climate”. More broadly, as Hughes (1985:17), whose first degree was in mathematics, reflecting upon the achievements and limitations of the New Theory Movement, warns its many

large scale, statistically sophisticated research projects ... shared a hidden paradigmatic assumption ... This was the belief that social science research is essentially concerned with random samples (the larger the better) with mean responses and standard deviations, and with the statistical significance of differences. The varying perceptions and qualified answers of particular respondents tended to be disregarded, scientific methodology having no means readily available to handle unique individual cases.

In bringing this paper to a conclusion, I would start by agreeing with Gorard that, as a field of study and research, educational leadership and management has a problem or, rather, a number of problems, although not necessarily exactly the same problem or set of problems that he, or those who produced critical reviews at the turn of the century, or the Government, identifies. Given this, whilst I would applaud some of their solutions, I have reservations about others. In summary, the arguments I have presented above lead me to a set of views that may be described as a credo. In stating this I would say that I believe passionately in the contribution that research in education and in educational leadership and management, informed by key values (Ribbins, 2005), can make to improving policy and practice. I believe that some at least of this research should be based on an agenda which is not determined centrally and which is not funded by the Government or one of its agencies. I believe that what has been achieved to date has its limitations, but that its quality and impact have been significantly greater than has sometimes been claimed in recent times and that a review of its achievements using what I have described as an ‘Australian’ approach would demonstrate this. Finally, this last notwithstanding, I believe that as a field we need a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to what counts as worthwhile knowledge and a more sophisticated approach to understanding how knowledge is produced than has been the norm. In this I believe fervently history should have a much greater part to play to date. Much of this paper has been based on the UK case, but I hope that what it has to say has relevance to South

Africa and beyond and as such can contribute to the debates which this edition of the *South African Journal of Education* will generate.

Notes

1. This is a revised version of 'Theory and practice in educational management and leadership: wither and wherefore history?' a paper given at the CCEAM conference on 'Recreating linkages between theory and praxis in educational leadership' held in Cyprus in October 2006.
2. Most field members would agree with Glatter (1980:26) that as a "subject" (he also describes it as a "field of study and research") educational administration has had a "short life in Britain (and) a much longer history in North America". Similarly, Hughes (1985:3) notes the first "sustained attempt to develop an explicit theory ... was initiated in the USA in the 1950s ...", and that it was only much deal later that "the field" began to develop in the UK and elsewhere.
3. A fourth review, conducted by the OECD but relying heavily on a Background Report produced by the Department of Education and Skills (OECD, 2002:6), reported in late 2002. Their general assessment was "positive" (2002:28), if most notably of the proposals and plans which the government was proposing to put in place to improve the quality of educational research.
4. The primary purpose of the RAE is to rate the quality of research in any eligible institution that chooses to make a submission. The exercise is conducted on behalf of the four national funding agencies using an assessment process based on expert, and peer group, review. In the latest, and fourth, round due to report in 2009 the work is conducted by 67 panels of which panel 45 is responsible for education. The outcome of the assessment is used by the funding agencies to determine their grant for research to the institutions noted above.
5. The fifth of the issues identified by the editors' claims Greenfield and I think "organisations are not 'things', for which reason they have no ontological reality, implying there is little use in studying them". I doubt if Greenfield ever believed this, I never have. What I do argue is that in all too many leadership studies "little attention is given to the people" who do the leading. A view of leadership "which emphasises the management of things in which 'people' are just another class of thing — in my work I have tried to bring the people back in" (Ribbins, 1985:13). This certainly does resonate with Greenfield's subjectivist critique, but I have also stressed that although he claimed to follow "Weber in his approach to the study of educational management, in practice (he) concerned himself almost exclusively with human agency, to the neglect of social structure, whereas Weber stressed the importance of both levels of analysis" (Gronn & Ribbins, 1996:454). With Gronn, I have argued the case for more ethnography and biography in the study of our field as a way, amongst other things, to better connect agency and structure in the understanding of leadership and management within a variety of educational contexts.
6. For a field in denial, field members worldwide, including of course Gorard and I, have over the last decade organised a remarkable number of conferences and produced an astonishingly large number of books and papers debating its limitations and exploring how these may be overcome.
7. He does not say exactly how many, or how these were selected which precludes judging how representative they were.
8. The extent of this dominance was revealed in a survey of funding for research into school leadership published by Weindling (2004). This found that two government agencies, the National College for School Leadership and the DfES

(the national Ministry of Education), had between them funded well over two-thirds of research in this field in 2003. There is little reason to suppose that this has diminished since then.

9. As noted above, the survey of EMA on which Fitz bases his findings about the field is far more substantial than that undertaken by Gorard.

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