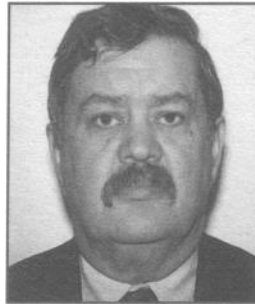


Beim ESHA- Council Meeting in Toulon (14.-16.11.2003) legte Professor John West-Burnham das folgende Diskussionspapier für ESHA vor. Diese Vorlage setzt die Diskussion des Council Meetings in Bournemouth (7.-9.3.2003) fort.

Wer sich an dieser Diskussion beteiligen möchte, schreibe bitte an [Dr.Mielke@slv-nrw.de](mailto:Dr.Mielke@slv-nrw.de)



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John worked in schools, further and adult education for fifteen years before moving into higher education. He was a part-time Open University tutor for 15 years. He has worked at Crewe and Alsager College, the University of Leicester and the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside. He was also Development Officer for Teacher Performance for Cheshire LEA. John is author of *Managing Quality in Schools*, co-author of *Effective Learning in Schools, Leadership and Professional Development in Schools* and co-editor of *Performance Management in Schools, Educational Leadership and the Community, The Handbook of Educational Leadership and Management* and 12 other books and over 30 articles and chapters.

John has worked in Australia, Estonia, Israel, New Zealand, the Republic of Ireland, Singapore, South Africa, UAE and the USA. He is coordinator of the European School Leadership Project and is a consultant to the National College for School Leadership in England. John's current research and writing interests include transformational leadership, leadership learning and development and educational leadership in the community.

## **Educational Leadership in Europe**

**Education systems are one of the most explicit and direct manifestations of national cultures, identities and social and economic priorities. Indeed almost every manifestation of school systems is subject to a wide range of variations which reflect a range of historical, cultural and economic priorities. Within Europe education systems have so far been immune from the sort of transeuropean initiatives that have influenced political, economic, financial and legal systems and structures across the European Community.**

**It is not the purpose of this think piece to speculate on the issues surrounding possible standardisation or integration of education systems. The principle of subsidiarity clearly prevents such moves with education being seen as a classic example of an area which should be the preserve of national systems. However it could be argued that there are a number of super ordinate issues which transcend national systems in that they reflect the historical, geographical, cultural, political, economic and ethical dimensions of what it means to be a European. While subsidiarity does emphasise the importance of locating authority at the lowest appropriate level it also implicitly recognises that there are some issues which are properly the concern of transnational bodies. These are recognised as certain fundamental rights which are properly the domain of supra national bodies. It might be that there are generic aspects of the educational process which fall into this category. Thus the freedom of speech has wide acceptance as a human right but is subject to a number of significant variations at national level e.g. the status of freedom of information in the USA and the UK.**

**The gradual emergence of the concept of Europe since 1945 has been in sharp contradistinction to the previous 150 years which saw the dominance of nationalism and the creation of national identity and the nation state as the key political imperative. This did not really diminish recognition of economic and political interdependency and a cultural and moral heritage that transcended national interests and preoccupations. It is this latter area that it might be possible to find a degree of consensus as to the nature of what it means to be European and so a component of education that can be identified as common to all systems and thus an appropriate area of concern for educational leaders. Until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the internal boundaries of Europe were largely linguistic with borders being shown by dots rather than lines to reflect the permeability of national identities. It may be that education is a matter of dots rather than lines.**

**Central to this debate and a pivotal assumption is the nature and role of educational leadership. For the purpose of this discussion leadership is perceived as a higher order activity which has as its primary concerns:**

- The ethical principles of the educational process**
- The creation of education for the future**

- The integrity of human relationships.

Used in this sense leadership has an over arching responsibility for matters which are concerned with fundamental educational principles compared to the responsibility for managing the implementation of national policies. Of course this is an artificial dichotomy; leadership and management are the two sides of the same coin but without the recognition of the higher order responsibilities of leadership management can become instrumental, reductionist and pragmatic. This is to argue for a view of leadership that has responsibilities over and above institutional and system concerns.

If this proposition is accepted then it becomes necessary to argue for the specific components of the ethical principles that might inform a debate about the European, common, component of educational leadership. In one sense there is already a hegemony based on the Judaeo-Christian tradition that is shared by all current members of the European Union. Even secular states have legal systems, social mores and political expectations which are explicitly derived from this common source. These principles are largely reflected in the underpinning assumptions guiding the work of the European Community:

- The primacy of the rule of law
- The centrality of democratic institutions
- The right to freedoms of speech and association
- The right to employment and economic security
- The right to education

The transversal policies of the Union provide a specific focus on issues which are perceived to be implicit to educational activities i.e.

- Promote equal opportunities between women and men
- Promote equal opportunities for disabled persons
- Contribute to the fight against racism and xenophobia
- Promote social and economic cohesion
- Promote ICT in education
- Promote language learning and teaching.

It is difficult to envisage any national education system that would not implicitly and explicitly espouse and promote these policies, but they might do so from a national perspective. There might also be a case for arguing that there are some issues which transcend European issues, i.e. those with global implications such as climate change, population growth, poverty, disease, starvation and international security.

The issue therefore is to find a common approach which is not dependent on an anodyne consensus but rather actively promotes a distinctively European perspective which is based on fundamental cultural norms. This might lead to a consideration of shared values

based on a common cultural heritage which might include such elements as:

- The shared inheritance of the ancient world, notably Rome and Greece; The fundamental influence of the Jewish and Christian traditions;**
- **Creativity in the arts;**
- **Invention and discovery in the sciences, recognising the Arab contribution;**
- **The humanistic tradition;**
- The tradition of exploration and entrepreneurship;**
- **The radical questioning of norms and beliefs; Tolerance and acceptance of diversity.**

Of course, for each of these there is a negative corollary and Europe has demonstrated its capacity for intolerance and exploitation more than most of the rest of the world. However, the emergence of the European Court of Human Rights and the positive strategies that the Union has adopted may point to the dominance of the virtues in the European cultural tradition. The creation of a model of European educational leadership may therefore be seen as a genuine educational process based on the creation of a shared understanding on a common cultural and intellectual inheritance rather than the promulgation of bureaucratic consistency. This would mean the development of a leadership 'curriculum' which is as much concerned with the development of cultural understanding as with the professional knowledge necessary to lead schools.

**John West-Burnham**

#### **Issues for discussion**

- 1. What does it mean to be a European?**
- 2. To what extent does the principle of subsidiarity compromise any moves towards a European perspective on education?**
- 3. Is there a consensus as to what constitutes educational leadership as opposed to management or policy implementation?**
- 4. Is there a meaningful shared understanding as to what it means to be an educator in modern Europe?**
- 5. What are the implications of the approach proposed in the think piece for the education of educational leaders?**
- 6. What are the barriers to any attempt at a common approach?**
- 7. What might a 'curriculum' for European educational leaders look like?**

- 8. How might the emphasis on the European dimension be mediated so that it does not diminish the significance of the global?**