Chapter 8
Explaining change

Managing a faith-based community school is a complex task; changing it is even more daunting given the strong organisational and religious networks as well as the familial and personal relations among stakeholders. The broader intellectual questions emerging from this study include the following: What does the restructuring of the Jewish community schools tell us about the management of complex change? What does it tells us about new managerialism as a mode of change? What does it tell us about the effect of globalisation on community schools? What does it tell us about community as ideology? And what does it tell us about researching one's own community?

It is evident that the restructuring of the Jewish community schools was not a neutral process aimed at cutting expenses and ensuring the financial viability of the schools, but constituted a site for political and ideological struggle over the identity of the schools and, by extension, control over the community's "common sense". The managerial restructuring became a means to reconstruct a new identity for the school community and to clarify its boundaries. The zeal with which the old bureaucracy was discarded and the past invalidated, indicated an aspiration to establish a "born again" community school based on both new managerial practices and religious extremism. It seems that at the time of uncertainties and crises – political, social and financial – both market and religious fundamentalism provided the only foreseeable solution for the leaders of the community, and excluded debate on any other possibilities. While I do not intend to draw a direct correlation between globalisation and the restructuring process, it is easy to identify the local expression of two globalised processes in operation: the one force pulled the Jewish community schools towards market solutions and managerialism, while a parallel force intensified its search for identity and community. The evidence shows that the market solution provided some short-term financial relief that might not, however, have been sustainable in the long term in the context of community schools. The surge for identity, on the other hand, created divisions, polarisation and exclusion. This inquiry made it clear that both forces failed to provide the envisaged certainty and order. Both forces failed to manage a coherent educational change process. Both forces undermined the democratic rights of the stakeholders and their human worth. Their

convergence enabled the creation of an illiberal community wherein open debate was curtailed and the voices of the stakeholders were ignored. In this context, inexpensive or "religiously correct" teachers took precedence over experienced teachers; rules, procedures and contracts attempted to replace community loyalty and commitment; coercion, indoctrination and some more subtle methods of persuasion threatened the perceived broad religious base of the community by encouraging a particular religious worldview which, in the long run, might close the mind of a new generation to open reflection and critical thinking. Both forces devalued the ethos of care in the schools and democracy.

In this dissertation I argued that a community in crisis might find it difficult to escape the allure of both new managerialism and religious extremism, but in spite of the perceived inevitability of the change, the restructuring process failed because it was based on a coercive top-down mode of change, which disregarded basic features of complex educational change – such as the context, culture and agency of the stakeholders. The study suggests that new managerialism as a mode of change could only provide episodic relief while undermining the long-term goals of education. I further argue that new managerialism created synergy with religious extremism, with both dynamics acting to undermine the community and democratic values of the schools. This chapter elaborates on these arguments and suggests that the managerial restructuring facilitated the transformation of the community schools into ghetto schools. I end this chapter with a reflective passage on the research whereby I propose that researching one's own community increases one's feeling of alienation and isolation from that community.

The restructuring of the Jewish community schools in light of the literature regarding educational change

This inquiry has confirmed the limits of the technicist and rational managerial approach to educational change, specifically because it ignores the complexity of change; its embeddedness in the context and agency of the stakeholders.[1] The study also demonstrated the short sightedness of the restructuring process that implemented changes in a ruthless and autocratic manner, and revealed the importance of trust,

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[1] See Chapter 2, with special reference to Fullan, 2001; 2001a; and Hargreaves, 2003; 1997.

credibility and integrity fro a successful process of change. In the next section I will highlight a few of the reasons for its eventual failure.

The reasons for change were not understood

Complex change, according to Fullan (2001a), must provide meaning to those who need to initiate or implement it. In terms of the restructuring of the Jewish community schools, the financial crisis was portrayed and accepted as self-evident. There was therefore no strong resistance to the retrenchment process and to other measures to cut expenses, even though they were ruthlessly implemented with little regard to the educational and human costs. The necessity of these budget cuts were acknowledged and accepted as crisis intervention measures. However, when there was simultaneous capital expenditure despite the crisis, the process began to lose its coherence and subsequently the stakeholders' support. Moreover, there was no consensus among key stakeholders on the needs for changing the ideological and educational aspects of the schools (which does not mean that they were adequate). Once the restructuring tampered with those areas that were perceived as successful and formed the basis of the "imagined" community of the schools – such as the educational achievements and the maintenance of a broadly national-traditional ethos – it was resisted.

Lack of trust in the process or the people

Trust – as well as its counterpart, betrayal – is emerging as a vital component in sustainable school improvement (Hargreaves, 2004). The stakeholders of the Jewish community schools could not identify who was behind the process and whose interests it served. The anonymity and secrecy that surrounded the restructuring process, the fact that the CEO was envisaged to benefit financially from the restructuring as well as his association with Ultra Orthodox outreach movements, increased stakeholders' suspicion that the restructuring was devoid of integrity and that it was motivated by hidden agendas. Moreover, the restructuring was based on the principle of "divide and rule", which spread suspicion among colleagues and attempted to undermine authentic relations. Once the stakeholders lost trust in the leaders of the change, in their colleagues and in the processes that were initiated to make the schools more efficient, the restructuring began to falter. With the lack of trust even changes that were perceived as desireable were not implemented.

The change was too broad, hasty and incoherent

It is suggested that the short-term contract of the CEO, the pressure to show quick, visible changes (both religious and financial) coupled with the fundamentalist zeal to destroy the "rotten" Jewish community schools, resulted in ad-hoc, impulsive changes before any attempt was made to understand the culture of the organisation and the context of change. The CEO embarked on a comprehensive reform that would simultaneously change every aspect of the schools. How and what to do was learned "on the job". The CEO instituted, changed and withdrew policies whenever he encountered resistance or implementation problems. This resulted in the absence of a clear map of change and in a lack of coherence. Eventually teachers learned to ignore most of the rhetoric. This created a huge gap between the official rhetoric and daily reality, whereby real changes hardly occurred. It seemed that most of the policies had a symbolic rather than a substantive impact in order to signal ideological and managerial shifts. This is referred to by Jansen (2001) as political symbolism that is employed to mark the shift from an old to a new regime.

Key staff was not involved

It is clear that no change is possible at a school without the active support of the key staff members. In order to institute a comprehensive programme of change, the CEO attempted (with little success) to dismiss all those in top positions who might resist his policies and to replace them with compliant managers. The research has shown that the inability to control some of the key staff motivated the CEO to establish new structures – such as a middle school at each campus – thereby allowing for the employment of new and compliant key staff. Even though some compliance was achieved, it resulted in fabrications, bullying and further polarisation. In some instances managers who were not able to deal with the changes showed a tendency to revert to more centralised decision-making and authoritarianism, which caused further alienation of the teachers and lack of support for the process. Underestimating the power of the key staff members and the trust that existed between them and other stakeholders, eventually led to the CEO's departure.

The process ignored the emotions of change

As indicated in Chapter 2, the CEO was employed specifically because he was perceived to be able to ignore the emotions of change and because he was an outsider

to the school community, and was therefore not personally involved with the stakeholders. The perception was that the schools needed a change process that was based on a technicist, rational decision-making process, implemented by a henchman who would ruthlessly downsize the organisation and introduce proper managerial procedures mimicking business practices. This attempt to ignore the emotions of change resulted in outbursts of negative emotions. Certain feelings – such as fear, isolation and guilt – were exploited in order to gain support for the restructuring and to shame stakeholders into compliance. This impacted negatively on teachers' relations with pupils and on their teaching practices, as teachers blocked their feelings and attempted to separate themselves from their work. Holding emotions back seems to be the only aspect that teachers were able to control. The festering of negative emotions had a negative impact on the school community as stakeholders were turned against each other, creating "a community of suspicious minds" (Hargreaves, 2003). The lack of trust and the feelings of helplessness and disempowerment eventually hijacked the restructuring process and created the counterforce that brought it to an end. This supports Hargreaves's warning that:

> If educational reformers and change agents ignore the emotional dimensions of educational change, emotions and feelings will only re-enter the change process by the back door (1997:18).

Lack of understanding of the role of a leader

There is no doubt that complex change, especially in times of crisis, needs strong leadership. The restructuring of the Jewish community schools was based on a "super-leader" notion, whereby one man, by himself, took on a complex educational change without even visiting the schools or consulting with any key members of the institution. It appears that the only tools the CEO had for leading an organisation was his seeming control of education financial systems, his coercive style, his charisma and his ability to sway people's minds. The CEO's apparent failure confirms the limits of charisma as well as the notion that strong leaders are not necessarily those who are not afraid to "burn the place down", but rather those who can be "leaders of leaders" (Fullan, 2001) and "build the place up". The dissertation exemplifies the dependency and disempowerment that were created by a charismatic and coercive leader.

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While authoritarianism is not uncommon in ethnic/religious groups (Grace, 2002; Ignatieff, 1993), it is important to distinguish between authoritative and coercive leaders. Goleman (2000) suggests that while authoritative leaders seem to be the most effective, especially in times of crisis, coercive leaders are the least effective. The coercive leader's extreme top-down decision-making process kills any new ideas and creativity. People feel disrespected; they lose their sense of ownership, pride in their work and commitment. While it might work for a short time in extreme cases, a continuous reliance on this management style once the emergency has passed, would impact negatively on an organisation.

Fullan (2001) maintains that leaders of complex change processes need to learn to think slowly (despite the need for a quick response), to learn in context and to cultivate leaders at all levels of an organisation. I believe that, above all, they need wisdom. Wisdom, as defined by Sternberg, is *'the application of tacit knowledge as mediated by values towards the goal of achieving common good'* (2001:4). In Sternberg's theory, common good refers to what is common for all, not just for those with whom one identifies. It is not enough for leaders to have practical intelligence and the ability to manipulate a situation to benefit themselves or those of a particular group at the expense of others, but rather wisdom to attend to the common good.

Lack of respect for human agency and dissenting voices
In the restructuring of the Jewish community schools, dissenting voices were silenced and resistance towards the top-down change was ignored. The CEO surrounded himself with people who agreed with him or with those he could control, and therefore did not test his ideas on stakeholders with diverse ideas and experiences. This resulted in a lack of implementation, demotivation, fabrication and a waste of human creativity and energy. While overt and covert coercive measures were employed in order to break the resistance, these were not successful. This exemplifies the limits of imposed change processes and coercive leadership – both ignore traditional patterns of collegiality and professionalism, the notion of the schools as loosely coupled organisations (Weick, 1976), as well as the agency of the stakeholders. Agency, according to Wallace and Pocklington (2002), is not narrowly determined by structures and no one has absolute control over anyone else.

Ignoring the context of change

The attempt to impose a new structure on the Jewish community schools as if it had no history and no culture obstructed the process and was instrumental in its failure. Educational reform is not only about change; it is also about continuity. History cannot be swept away (Bowe et al, 1992:141). It is not simply a matter of "off with the old and on with the new". Schools develop ethos and culture; practices become routinised; commitments, relations and emotions are embedded in the context in diverse ways, not easily revealed to an outsider. While it is often vital in times of crisis to bring into a school an outsider who is not embedded in the context, he/she can ignore the culture and the history of the institution at his/her own peril. Attention must be given to the complex interrelationship of many factors that influence the structure and the cultures of schools. Reimer and McGinn remind us that *'the defining features of education systems are their complexity and the complexity of the external environment where they operate'* (1997:43). A simple managerial solution to a complex social, ideological and cultural dilemma could therefore not be sustainable.

New managerialism in the context of a faith-based community school

In Chapter 2 I explored some of the main differences between managerial culture (*gesellschaft*) and community culture (*gemeinschaft*). The aim of this section is to revisit these dichotomies and to explore how they played out in the restructuring of the Jewish community schools. Throughout the dissertation I emphasised the contradictions as well as the convergence of these two cultures, and demonstrated the connections within the discourses. My main thesis is that the rhetoric of new managerialism was successful in masking religious extremist undertones because of the synergy that existed between these forces. This expands Apple's (2001:24) contention on the symbiotic relation between religion and economy. According to Apple, in the same way that the Calvinist emphasis on hard work, saving and asceticism was closely related to the needs of the capitalist society, the global market economy which allows for personal accumulation of wealth and choice is mirrored in the fundamentalist notion of "born again". The following section thus identifies the elements within the two discourses that inform and shape each other, as well as their impact on the Jewish community schools.

School as a business versus school as a public good

The global "epidemic" of market-led restructuring affected (infected) the Jewish community schools, which in a time of economic crisis followed the business route to save it from collapse. The evidence shows that stakeholders at large accepted the discourse, which confirms the dominance of the managerial discourse based on its promises of certainty, order, stability and better value for money. This hegemonic position of the discourse, especially among stakeholders who were exposed to the corporate world, blinded them to the contradictions therein, the basic one being: Whose interests should education serve? The corporate world is designed to generate profit. The danger in judging education by the monetary profit it generates and, above all, remunerating its managers in terms of this profit, is that education would be dragged into the competitive and harsh world of business. On the other hand, "public good" is a complicated concept as it requires definitions of both the public and the public good.

The restructuring of the Jewish community schools served the interests of the alliance that was forged between the business elite and the Orthodox alliance, whereby the Ultra Orthodox minority was able to shift the discourse towards an extremist direction. The public was narrowly defined as those who complied with their demands. Those who disagreed could leave the schools and, by extension, the community. Moreover, in the harsh environment that was created in order to generate monetary and religious gains, stakeholders were struggling for self-preservation. This jeopardised their loyalty to each other and increased fragmentation, distrust, alienation and the loss of community.

Parents as partners versus parents as customers

Parents' role in the context of a faith-based community school is inherently contradictory, wherein private interests need to be balanced with public interests. The emphasis on the role of parents as customers exacerbated this tension. Based on the managerial culture parents were given, at least rhetorically, more power over the education of their children, as well as choice. This increased their aspirations to have a say in the shaping of their children's education. At the same time, parents' rights challenged what was perceived to be the authority of the religious establishment. In this context parents were viewed as a congregation and not as customers. As a congregation, schools have the right to exclude or include members as part of its freedom of association (Strike, 2000).

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The notion of parents as customers was used to discipline the teachers, while the parents' voice was respected only when it echoed those of the authorities. Parents were given the choice of either accepting the product as designed by the authorities or leaving the schools. It seems that in the tension between "schools mirroring the community" and "schools shaping the community" the intentions were first to shape the product and then "to educate" the parents to fit in with the product. This process of "shaping the customer" (Robertson, 1998) would result in shaping the community's common sense, and strengthening the Orthodox hegemony.

I contend, therefore, that the managerial notion of parents as customers negated the community culture of parents as partners, but created synergy with the religious facet of the restructuring, as both religion and business tend to shape customers to believe in their product.

Accountability versus commitment

In the restructuring of the Jewish community schools, the discourse of accountability, teachers' appraisal and performance-related pay were a gloss for control and cost cutting. It was resisted, as it was perceived to undermine teachers' commitment that was based on community loyalty rather than professional accountability.

It is argued that instead of capitalising on the collaboration and the feeling of mutual fate that existed among members and to move it forward towards professional collaboration, the restructuring focused on breaking these authentic relations, thereby establishing a new organisation based on contractual relationships. This organisation, according to Strike (2000), cannot be described as community, since it is held together by contracts instead of by the cooperation between members.

It is suggested that while accountability negated the community culture, this is one of the characteristics of a fundamentalist-type group, which requires strict adherence to standards and rules of observance.

Efficiency versus care

The evidence shows that while the Jewish community schools might have had some short-term financial relief, the drive for efficiency was not sustainable as it ignored the culture of the institution, such as its hierarchical structure, and the agency of the stakeholders. The drive for efficiency affected the schools in various ways, including: making teachers work "more for less"; the replacement of loyal employees with

cheaper ones without a visible attempt to retain necessary skills; the commodification of the schools' products and services, and in some instances, such as remedial education, shifting costs to parents; and concentrating on the measurable and devaluating functions that cannot be audited but were regarded as the added-value, such as the outreach programme, *Ulpan*, *Bat-Mitzvah* ceremony, etc. Subsequently, this impacted on teachers' commitment, motivation, cooperation and on the emotional bonds between pupils, parents and colleagues.

I argue that the efficiency drive was not neutral and that funds were shifted to advance political and ideological agendas, such as changing those in power and investing in programmes and people that would strengthen the religious base of the schools. While the various means to improve efficiency impacted negatively on the relations among the school community by increasing division and rivalry, they facilitated the ultimate shift of the schools to the "right".

Community needs versus individual needs

This is a complex terrain as it raised questions about the essence of the community and the difficulties of defining its needs. In managerial culture, community is described as a "stakeholder society" in which diverse needs are accommodated by a decentralised system. In the community culture, needs are centrally decided by the majority or by their representation in a central bureaucracy.

Despite the rhetoric of decentralisation and stakeholders, the needs of the Jewish community schools continued to be centrally defined. The elections to the Board at the Board conference clearly demonstrated that representation was manipulated to fit in with the view of the authorities rather than with the majority of the school community. The restructuring was therefore instrumental for an envisaged "cultural shift" whereby the non-observant Orthodox majority lost its dominance to the religious minority through political manipulation.

Decentralisation and the notion of stakeholder society stand in opposition to the elevation of a strong leader. This points to a paradox within the discourse of new managerialism. However, it creates affinity with the religious concept of a strong charismatic leader. This is especially relevant to fundamentalist-type communities, which are usually centred around charismatic leaders who demand respect and total obedience.

Certainty versus uncertainty

Democratic processes inherently produce uncertainties, as different needs and opinions have to be exposed, negotiated and compromised. In bureaucratic management, the notion of professional autonomy as well as democratic decision making processes, are essentially uncertain and unpredictable. Admittedly, this often results in no decision-making and in maintaining the status quo despite mounting contradictions and frictions. Certainty increases as one moves towards total community, whereby patterns of behaviour and goals are clearly defined; membership in the community requires total allegiance to its dictates. In the context of the Jewish community schools, both managerialism and religion claimed to provide the parameters and the security of being in an orderly community.

The certainty–uncertainty conflict created division between those stakeholders who were ready to accept the uncertainty of democratic processes, and other stakeholders who preferred the certainty of religiously and managerially defined goals and patterns of behaviour.

In the restructuring of the Jewish community schools, the notion of certainty based on standardisation, homogeneity, predictability and accountability systems, contradicted the liberal notions of individualism, achievement and teachers' autonomy, yet created a synergy with the notion of religiously homogenous community. The rhetoric, however, did not increase security but rather increased divisions and micro-politics within the schools. Moreover, it was clearly evident that some of these insecurities were manufactured in order to increase complexity and chaos, thereby increasing the yearning for order and certainty. This tactic is used by both religious extremism and corporatism, as both forces organise themselves on the basis of people's fears and insecurities.

Implicit versus explicit shared goals

The restructuring of the Jewish community schools was an attempt to establish clear and narrow goals that tended to focus on the short term and the quantitative, at the expense of the broader, vague and long-term goals of the organisation. The latter tends to be flexible enough to accommodate diversity. In this tension, the corporate demand for clear goals and mission create synergy with the religious "blue print".

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The debate over goals exemplifies the tension between the concepts of culture as changing and culture as a fixed entity. Religious institutions as well as corporatism advocate the latter. While some adaptation to the contemporary context is unavoidable, the constitutive elements are not negotiable. However, consensus and shared goals have the propensity to discourage critical and individual reflection and contrive to eliminate pluralism and the associated conflict of values. This negates Sennet's (1998) notion of community as a scene of conflict where people learn to negotiate diversity and difference, and privileged the notion of religious community or congregation, which focuses on like-minded people and excludes the "others".

The lay leaders of the Jewish community schools tended to emphasise unity as a source of strength and to curtail open debate on goals and mission in order not to "destabilise the community". Yet this proved to be a shortsighted practice as it obscured the power relations and allowed certain individuals to take over the community schools to further their own interests and positions. It also resulted in alienating many members of the community, depriving the community of creativity and lateral thinking. This could jeopardise the sustainability of the community and often results in it becoming more authoritative and closed-minded.

Inclusivity versus exclusivity

A central dilemma for the Jewish community schools was: How porous could the borders of the community be without it losing its identity?

Two contradictory forces were in operation. One force, the liberal/democratic voice, demanded a broadening of the borders of the community to the extent that the schools' *raison d'etre* might be compromised, by making them multicultural schools instead of Jewish schools. The opposite force demanded narrowing the borders to include only those Jews who adhered to a single interpretation of Judaism, thus combating pluralism and relativism within the religion. In the past the identity of the Jewish community was based on ethnicity rather than religion (Shimoni, 1999), thereby perpetuating some kind of ethnic democracy (Smooha, 2002). With the shifting of local and global identities, religion tended to replace ethnicity as a source of identity, bringing divisions and polarisation into the community. At the same time that religion polarised the community, its tendency for clear definitions in order to avoid confusion and doubts created synergy with the corporatist quest for cultural

homogeneity that would make the organisation more efficient and predictable and consequently, better controlled.

Community of memory versus instant communities

New managerialism creates instant communities based on contracts and rules, by defining its borders and clientele as well as its mission. Building community in the managerial culture is therefore a generic skill that can be applied irrespective of context. The same applies to fundamentalist-type "born again" groups whereby the old identity is discarded and a new, instant identity is established. In theoretical terms the *gesellschaft* is used to build a new *gemeinschaft*. While affinity between the managerial culture and religious extremism exists, it contradicts the notion of community as one that develops over time, that is, community of memory.

The process of discarding the old community and the attempt to build a new one was evident in the restructuring of the Jewish community schools. The old was described as "bad" while the new was "superb", even if the new was appropriated from the old. Yet the restructuring of the Jewish community schools also demonstrated the resilience of the narrative of the "imagined community", as stakeholders joined together to defend it. It was argued, nevertheless, that the school community, based on its authoritative history, does not seem to have the tools to negotiate diversity and to bridge its differences. Therefore, it is still a vulnerable community open to the adverse affects of global and local processes.

In sum, I have argued in this dissertation that new managerialism in the context of faith-based community schools was instrumental in intensifying the faith mission of the schools, while undermining their communal values and their fragile democracy. I have further maintained that this process was enabled by the synergies that exist between new managerialism and religious extremism. Both forces are based on dogmas that are unchallenged: there is no alternative to market; and there is only one truth and one way of practicing religion. They both claim to be just forces that would correct past inequalities and establish an instant, orderly society based on either religious fundamentalism or on the fundamentals of the market. Yet they both utilised manipulative strategies with a clear separation between means and ends. They both depend on strong, charismatic leadership and they both require "enemies" to justify their existence. For new managerialism the enemies are the old bureau-professionalism and teachers' autonomy. For religious extremism the enemies are

relativism and liberalism. Both forces define and exclude the "other" and have expectations regarding adherence in terms of performance and standards.[2] Furthermore, both new managerialism and fundamentalism flourish under certain conditions, such as transitional and insecure times, lack of knowledge and authoritarian backgrounds. Both forces are supported by a power bloc that benefits from these processes, yet the call for homogeneity obscures this power relation. Both trade on people's anxieties and fears. In both instances adherents unwittingly play an active part in their own eventual subordination.

The question is: Could a community be resurrected in order to counteract the negative effects of new managerialism? This will be the topic of the next section.

Could community schools be a redemptive solution to the perils of globalisation?

This dissertation suggests that even faith-based community schools might not be able to withstand the perils of globalisation and that the forces of both "Jihad and McWorld" (Barber, 2001) undermined the educational as well as the community values of the schools. The search for identity has threatened the broad constitutive elements of the community, shifting it towards parochialism, exclusiveness and separatism. The managerial culture (*gesellschaft*) and its emphasis on contracts, performance, standards and accountabilities forced the community culture (*gemeinschaft*) to change by emphasising a clearly defined identity and demarcated boundaries instead of vague membership in a relatively inclusive and liberal community. The *gemeinschaft* derived from the face-to-face interaction of Tonnies's 19th century vision of community, has been reconstructed by the *gesellschaft* of managerialism as an inclusive and illiberal community. In this context, community means sameness and homogeneity and exclusion of the "other". Bauman maintains that in the search for safe community of like-minded people we create *'a bizarre mutant of voluntary ghettos'* (2001a:117). Voluntary ghettos differ from real ghettos. The latter are places from which their insiders cannot get out, while the purpose of the voluntary ghetto is to bar outsiders from going in. Yet they both have the same suffocating effect as they have the capacity to self-perpetuate their isolation: the safer one feels inside the ghetto, the less familiar and more threatening appears the world outside, and more and more courage is needed in order to venture out. Bauman

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[2] See also Hargreaves (2003) for comparison between system of performance training and sects.

therefore maintains that ghettos mean the *'impossibility of community'* (ibid:122). The suffocation felt by the residents and the feeling of "no other alternative" create social disintegration and atomisation. These processes were clearly identified in the way stakeholders of the school community turned against each other in order to ensure their safety within the "ghetto" as there was no other choice. Those who controlled the gates of the community could thus impose their rules and tighten control. Once locked into this context, the community ethos was devalued and greater adherence to religion was demanded. Moreover, the discourse of the homogenous community does not acknowledge differences in privilege or power, and is therefore a weak form of community whereby people turn against each other as the only expression of their powerlessness, disempowerment and isolation. The on-going prominence of homogeneity and unity as a source of strength contradicts the notion of community as a scene of conflict wherein people learn to live together in spite of their differences. It is thus concluded that the global surge for community in the context of the Jewish community schools in Johannesburg was expressed by the intensification of a particular interpretation of Jewish identity that undermined the community. The hegemony of the managerial discourse enabled the reconstruction of a new (global) identity which contradicted the traditional South African Jewish identity, yet was paradoxically facilitated by the unique features of the community, specifically its emphasis on unity rather than diversity and lack of intellectual enquiry and critical debate. Subsequently, identity has replaced the community. I therefore concur with Bauman that:

> Identity owes the attention it attracts and the passion it begets to being a surrogate of community: of that allegedly "natural home" which is no longer available in the rapidly privatised and individualised, fast globalising world, and which for that reason can be safely imagined as a cosy shelter of security and confidence, and as such hotly desired. The paradox, though, is that in order to offer even a modicum of security and so to perform its healing role, identity must belie its origin, must deny being just a surrogate, and best of all needs to conjure up a phantom of the self-same community which it has come to replace. Identity sprouts on the graveyard of communities, but flourishes thanks to its promise to resurrect the dead (Bauman, 2001:151).

Is there a way forward?

Apple (2001) maintains that the success of the rightist alliance is never guaranteed, as there are counter-hegemonic movements and people that have not been integrated under the hegemonic umbrella. He therefore tends to adopt a position which he calls

'optimism, but without illusions' (ibid:62) that there is a hope for a better society, where people would realise that the shift to the "right" may actually be "wrong" since it *'stifle[s] or trivialise[s] a vision of democracy that is based on the common good'* (ibid:230).

One could argue that the stakeholders' resistance to the restructuring of the schools demonstrates that even in a small, relatively closed Jewish community, which does not encourage debate or critical thinking, there is a place for agency and resistance. It could therefore be argued that the power of both religious and market fundamentalism is not definite and there are pockets of resilience and counter-hegemonic activity. While this might be the case, I feel less optimistic than Apple (ibid) in the context of the Jewish community in Johannesburg. Despite the episodic success of the parents' movement, their resistance mostly focused on the CEO as an individual, with less engagement with the broader local, never mind national or global, concerns. The long-established emphasis on homogeneity and the absence of critical thinking was and continues to be a serious hindrance to any counter movement. This is especially so since a community of sameness has a propensity for self-perpetuation and is difficult to arrest, let alone stop (Bauman, 2001a:103). As much as the liberal-minded parents or community members may deplore this state of affairs, there seem to be no political agents in sight who are interested in or capable of breaking this vicious circle. The small group of liberal thinkers is either indifferent to communal affairs, or do not want to "rock the boat" and thus jeopardise their position within the community, or has retreated after futile attempts to affect the community's common sense. On the other hand, there is a power bloc that acts in relative unison to perpetuate the exclusivist trend and to reinforce the boundaries of the community. Furthermore, most of the communal institutions in Johannesburg are now managed by members of this "rightist alliance" and it is unlikely that they will relinquish their positions. I therefore share Michael Ignatieff's rather pessimistic view after he completed his journey through various ethnic nationalities:

> If it is a battle between liberalism and ethnicism I know which side I am on. I also know which side is winning right now. … I started my research as a liberal, I still am, but I cannot help thinking that the liberal education, tolerance, compromise, debate and reason, cannot be achieved by those who are apathetic or immobilised by fear or self interest (1993:189).

Reflections

I come to the end of a very exciting and demanding academic and personal journey, which spanned a period of three-and-a-half years. I did not choose the route. I was thrown into the research by a twist of fate and by global and local processes that I could neither identify nor define when I began this voyage. I know that I have only touched the tip of the iceberg, and even at this point I had to compromise depth for breadth. Researching the community in transitional and unstable times was an emotional endeavour imbued with conflicts, compromises and anxieties. Uncovering processes within the community, questioning its ethos and narrative, and becoming aware of the power relations, have increased my feelings of alienation from the community. Bauman (2001a) describes this process as the "agony of Tantalus". According to Greek mythology, Tantalus was guilty of acquiring/sharing knowledge which neither he nor other mortals like him should have had. He was therefore not allowed to partake in the company of the gods at Olympic feasts. The biblical story of Adam and Eve gives a similar message. Adam and Eve's penalty for eating from the tree of knowledge was their banishment from the safety of the Garden of Eden, from paradise. An "imagined" community provides a sense of paradise and is a safe haven for those who accept and submit to its narrative. However, '*loss of innocence is a point of no return'* (ibid:9), and I feel that I am now at this point. It is still to be seen whether I would be able to find a place within the community.

While I attempted to give voice to the different stakeholders in this research report, I anticipate that I will be criticised for emphasising a liberal view, some aspects of which do coincide with my own views. I accept that. This is, after all, my story and it offers a counter-discourse to the dominant Orthodox/*Mitnagdim*/Zionist/ homogenous narrative of the community. I hope that this dissertation will generate critical thinking and open debate, or at least give voice to those who have been sidelined by the narrative of the community. I am aware, as are many Jews around the world, of the unending tensions between religion and democracy, Judaism and Zionism, and Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Yet an easy managerial solution could only shift the debate towards a narrow fundamentalist interpretation of these complexities, which will increase division, polarisation and hatred. Lack of debate and open dialogue might only enable those with self-interest or religious zeal to dominant the community. I believe that the restructuring of the Jewish community schools may soon fade into relative insignificance, yet I hope that its lessons prevail.