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COMPONENTS OF CONFLICT RESIDENT IN THE
POSITION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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Approved by
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One does not travel through the pathways of life successfully without the helping hands of his fellow man. This is equally true of a person in pursuit of the degree doctor of philosophy. In my case, a reflection of this matter reveals many friends and relatives contributing to the successful completion of this dissertation. Although I cannot recognize them all by name, I wish to express my sincere thanks for their professional and moral support.

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Studies in Sociology. Professor Christen Jonassen.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Few would deny the presence of conflict in the position of superintendent of schools. This has always been true to some extent; however, during our nation's recent accelerated period of change the problem has been accentuated. The multiple pressures of rapid social and technological changes have severely taxed his competencies and many have fallen along the wayside.

It has been said that persons or groups must be visible to conflict. If so, perhaps this accounts in part for the predilection of the superintendent to conflict. As the titular head of the school system, and in his common role as spokesman, he receives wide visibility through the news media and public appearances. The problem is expanded by the commonly held perception of the superintendent being all things to all people. In the truest sense of the word, he is the "middle man" caught in a web of conflicting demands and expectancies. Campbell, Cunningham and McPhee illustrate the extent of this problem in opting for a more realistic definition of the job of the superintendent. According to these writers, school staffs, boards of education, and even superintendents themselves have tended to describe the superintendent as a superman. "He is supposed to be a paragon of personal"
virtue, a man of culture and charm, a professional who knows teaching and learning, an efficient manager of people and things, and finally an educational statesman of great wisdom and charisma. Few people meet the mark!"\(^1\)

These high expectations, in part, account for the vulnerability of the role of superintendent to conflict. Morphet, Johns and Reller\(^2\) do not feel that it is realistic to expect the superintendent to resolve all the inevitable conflicts that occur in the process of school operations. At the same time, they concede that this expectation will probably continue to exist.

Kahn's\(^3\) analysis of power and conflict provides another perspective of the dilemma the superintendent faces in the resolution of conflict. In essence, the existence of conflict gives rise to the exercise of power. The exercise of power in turn creates additional conflict and the parties involved begin a search for additional avenues of power to gain their ends. Thus when a superintendent uses the power and authority of his office to attempt to resolve a conflict, it often expands the conflict. This is due to the fact that it is

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not always possible to satisfy both parties involved. The party which perceives itself to be offended by the superintendent's actions turns its hostility on him and seeks both internal and external means of controlling him.

To further complicate the problem, it would appear that the legal structure within which the superintendent operates does not provide him with a solid base to resist such power plays.

Campbell, Cunningham and McPhee refer to the superintendent's position as being an ambiguous one. Among the several questions cited as yet unsolved is whether the superintendent is an official or an employee of the school district. Also in question is his exact official relationship to the board of education.

By and large, at least verbal agreement exists that the board of education makes policy and the superintendent carries it out. However, this dichotomy is not as simple as it appears. Dykes states that many boards and superintendents have stumbled over the problem of where policy making ends and administration begins. He does not believe that clear cut lines can be drawn to meet every situation. Thus the relationship of the superintendent to the board may be subject to conflict regarding the role each must play.

The solution most often advanced for the problem of superintendent-board relationships is a clear-cut set of written policies and job

4Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, op. cit., p. 194.

description. However, Van Miller warns that this alone is insufficient. He says that "if there is distrust or lack of respect, no set of procedural rules and policy statements trying to decide the domain of the board and the superintendent can be effective."\(^6\)

Still another aspect of the problem is the fluidity of the superintendent's sphere of authority. In keeping with the philosophy of lay control of public education, the ultimate authority for the operation of public schools legally resides with the local boards of education. Thus for all intents and purposes, the superintendent's authority is delegated and subject to expansion or contraction at the will of the board of education. Under these conditions, this authority base may be weakened by changes in the constituency of the board or in the thinking of incumbent members.

The foregoing serves to explain, in part, the vulnerability of the position of school superintendent. Because of this vulnerability, the superintendent often becomes the focus of conflict as competing forces impinge on him and his position. These competing forces frequently appear to be cast in power struggles for the control of public schools in the United States.\(^7\);\(^8\) Involved in this struggle are boards of education, administrators, teacher associations and unions, the lay

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\(^7\)Campbell, Cunningham, and McPhee, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-492.

public, special interest groups, and students. This is vividly illustrated by a review of recent literature, as well as commentaries of mass media regarding teacher strikes and sanctions, student demonstrations, and lay demands for local control.

Thus it would appear that superintendents are caught in a complex web of demands and expectations for and about the schools. Furthermore, since it is rarely possible to satisfy the demands and expectations of all those concerned about school problems, conflict appears to be inevitable in the position of school superintendent. Therefore, it is imperative that greater efforts be expanded to prepare him to cope with this critical aspect of his position. This need is supported by the University Council for Educational Administration in its plan for organizational activities for the next five years (1969-74). Under Goal VII, a rationale is advanced for developing and evaluating new processes of conflict management for school administrators.

Statement of the Problem

Conflict is a natural phenomenon of life. The basis for this observation is the universally accepted theory of differentiation among mankind. Since people are the basic elements of any unit of society, it is logical to assume that differences will come into play in all arenas of life. The institution of public education is one such arena.

At the center of this emotionally-charged social system is the superintendent of schools, delegated the responsibility for its effective and efficient operation. Every decision, every action of his or
other members of the school organization holds a potential for conflict. In addition, the decisions of others, outside the school system, have similar capabilities when such decisions affect the schools. The dilemma posed for the superintendent is revealed by Gamson's statement that "conflict is inherent in the nature of some political decisions. It is impossible in such cases, even if they have some collective aspects, to meet the desires and interests of all potential partisans." Since the school district is a political subdivision, this leads to some interesting questions: What is the nature of issues which initiate controversy about schools? What is the source of a given controversial issue? What part does the superintendent play in initiating the controversy? What unique conditions are evident during and after the action which initiated the conflict?

Although practically every decision or action executed within a school system holds a potential for conflict, this potential is not always realized. More often than not, a level of tolerance for disagreement is reached and maintained without serious damage to individuals or the school organization. What, then, are the conditions that cause conflict to expand in a given situation? What actions of the superintendent tend to expand the conflict? Is there a pattern evident for specific classes of conflict expansion, or are they all unique?

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Coleman points out that once conflicts are underway they resemble each other remarkably. Social controversy sets in motion its own dynamics and is carried forward in a path which has little relationship to its beginnings. Unless something happens to alter its course, it exhibits a "runaway" tendency, and ends in polarization of segments of the community. Such polarization leaves deep cleavages within the school community that require many years to heal. Since all controversy does not reach its full magnitude of intensity, it appeared appropriate to seek answers to the following questions: What course does conflict about schools follow? What actions of the superintendent serve to reduce or resolve a given conflict situation? What techniques were used? At what stage? With what success? Is there a runaway cycle in school conflicts? Who was the aggressor in given school conflict situations? Who was the defendant? What community and/or school organization characteristics contributed to expanding or reducing the conflict?

The crux of the problem is that conflict is inherent in the position of school superintendent and holds the potential for dysfunction and/or destruction of any school district. Therefore, it would appear imperative that the superintendent be provided with adequate conceptual tools to enable him to recognize conflict phenomena and deal with it in a rational manner.

In the research described herein, the researcher addressed the problem by investigating conflict situations in six school districts in

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an attempt to test a conceptual model as a tool for identifying and analyzing the components of conflict resident in the position of school superintendent. The specific objectives were:

1. To test the applicability of an adaptation of Coleman's Community Conflict Model as a conceptual tool for identification and analysis of components of conflict resident in the position of school superintendent.

2. To make generalizations about the data generated and the relationship of such data to the structural framework of the model.

**Hypotheses**

The major hypothesis was that the model would identify and accommodate data about components of conflict resident in the position of school superintendent.

Specific hypotheses which relate to the preceding are:

1. The model does include most of the vital components necessary to describe phenomena in a given conflict situation.

2. The model does include most of the vital components necessary to describe phenomena in a group of conflict situations.

3. The model does provide a vehicle to describe the unique characteristics of individual conflict phenomena, and then can differentiate among various conflict situations.
Assumptions of the Study

It was necessary that several assumptions be made relative to the conduct of this study. The assumptions were:

1. The model selected possesses inherent similarities to the subject being studied.
2. Components of conflict do reside in the position of school superintendent and such components can be identified.
3. The six school districts used as a sample are truly conflict situations.
4. Perceptions of respondents will provide salient data which must be regarded as pertinent.
5. The data generated by Ohio Education Association Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission Studies of school conflict represents an accurate portrayal of conditions existing in each given school district at the time of the study.

Limitations of the Study

Data for the study emanated from and were limited to six school districts selected by the researcher. The school districts were selected from those which have been studied or are in the process of being studied by the Ohio Education Association Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission because of conflict conditions which have disrupted or threaten to disrupt the educational program.

Most of the data obtained from the sample was subject to recall of the respondents. Due to the time lapse between the conflict situation
and the study, some of the key actors were not available to the researcher. Also, several key actors refused to discuss the conflict with the researcher. In addition, many were not open because of the fear of repercussions. In study six, several key actors were avoided at the request of the superintendent. The reason given was that a school levy was at issue at the time and he was fearful of controversy being renewed.

An additional limitation was that imposed by the researcher's degree of expertise in categorizing data for inclusion within the separate elements of the model.

The collection of data by the interview technique was limited to key actors in the individual conflict situations. Key actors were identified by referral to the appropriate P.R. & R. studies, newspaper articles, minutes of school board meetings, and the "snow-ball technique." The "snow-ball technique" involved contacting prominent people in the community and asking them to identify key actors. The persons so identified served as a starting point and in the course of the interview were asked to identify other key actors. The process of key actors identifying other key actors was continued until all were identified.

**Significance of the Study**

A major responsibility of a profession is that of generating knowledge which will be useful in solving real life problems. One of the realities of the professional life of a school superintendent is that he must find rational means to deal with conflict in and about the schools.
This study should be helpful in meeting that need. It should produce a workable model to enable school superintendents to detect, assess, and analyze conflict situations. Detection is important in that conflict reveals a progressive increase of tension over time unless something happens to reduce or resolve it. Theoretically, conflict should be easier to deal with in its earlier stages. Assessment of the state of the conflict at a given time is equally important since different stages call for different treatment. Finally, and most important, analysis should enable the superintendent to identify the causal factors and attack them in a rational manner.

The study should also generate data which could be fed into training programs for school administrators. Since conflicts emanate from decisions, and decision-making is at the heart of school administration, this study should call attention to the importance of conflict-theory and earn for it a more prominent role in professional training programs for school administrators. In addition, it should also serve to point out direction such training should take and identify appropriate course content.

The ultimate aim of school conflict research is to develop knowledge which will be helpful in conflict management, reduction and resolution. The model should, if applied with that purpose in mind, generate data to reveal the degree of success and failure achieved by specific field practices of school conflict management.

It is quite possible that conflict conditions exist over which the superintendent has little or no control. In such cases, unusual methods for dealing with such problems are indicated. If such conditions
exist the data generated from this study should reveal their nature, and give insight to their potential for dysfunction and destruction. Further study of such phenomena should point the way for needed legislation or other types of support for dealing with them.

Data generated from the application of the model should enable professional associations, state departments of education, and study commissions to assess conflict about schools in a more comprehensive manner. The model should also provide a useful format for future studies of specific school conflict situations. In addition, it should provide a vehicle for comparative analysis of groups of studies. Hopefully, this would result in a united attack on common problems.

The reduction of high level conflict in any degree would permit school superintendents, as well as other school administrators, to devote their time and energy to more fruitful endeavors. It would also have a positive effect on the staff, students, and school community. If the potential uses mentioned in the preceding statements are realized to any degree, this outcome should be at least partially realized.

**Organization of the Study**

The content of this study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I serves as an introduction. Included in the introduction is a discussion about a statement of the problem, as well as the objectives, assumptions, limitations, and significance of the study. Chapter II provides a review of research and literature which is pertinent to the study. Chapter III delineates the conceptual
framework and the research methodology upon which the study was based.
The findings of the study are described in Chapter IV and the summary of the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations revealed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RELATED RESEARCH

The review of the literature and related research contained herein is organized and presented under two major categories—conflict in the general sense and conflict about schools. The general section is concerned with conflict as it may be found in any aspect of life. It is deemed appropriate for inclusion in this study as it reveals the influence of human behavior in all conflict situations and permits transfer and application of such concepts to the study of conflict about schools.

The literature and related research reported under conflict about schools focuses specifically on that subject and its relationship to the position of superintendent of schools.

Conflict in General

Conflict Defined

Conflict is a term given many connotations. It is a generic term used to describe variance or incompatibility. One example of a modern definition of conflict is that of Getzell, Lipham, and Campbell, to wit: "Conflict may be defined most simply as the mutual interference
of parts, actions, and reactions in a social system." This definition is useful for our purpose since it does not attempt to classify conflict as either "good" or bad." It permits one to take an objective view of conflict as it exists and withhold judgment until the facts are evident.

Nature of Conflict

Conflict is an age old problem. It threads interminably through the history of mankind. From the beginning, mankind has been involved in conflict with the elements of the universe as well as with each other. This is vividly illustrated by Rose's statement that "the social process of conflict is second in importance only to socialization. Conflict is a basic social process because by engaging in conflict with each other, groups determine their relationship with each other."12

Conflict is thus a change producing vehicle and, as such, is necessary for the improvement of society. Pondy validates this concept in asserting that "Conflict is intimately tied up with the stability of the organization, not merely in the sense that it is a threat to


stability, but in a more complex sense; that is conflict is a key variable in the feedback loop that characterizes organizational behavior.\textsuperscript{13}

Etzioni brings yet another insight to the analysis of the nature of conflict in stating:

The oft repeated dichotomy between harmony and conflict is not a very useful one, for all systems contain elements of both, no system can be based solely on one or the other, and some conflict is a foundation for whatever harmony exists.\textsuperscript{14}

Caplow emphasizes the potential evil of conflict by warning us that "conflict is the central problem of human society. It has always been so, but in our time it assumes a special urgency because the survival of mankind probably depends upon better means for the resolution of conflict than are now available."\textsuperscript{15}

The foregoing leads one to the conclusion that conflict is a natural function of human interaction that serves good as well as evil purposes, that exists under different conditions, and varies in intensity. In any event, it is a force which must be managed.

\textbf{Locus of Conflict}

Another aspect of the study of conflict is its location in the framework of society. Green\textsuperscript{16} states that conflict is either corporate

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13}Louis R. Pondy, "Organizational Conflict: Concepts and Models," \textit{Administrative Science Quarterly}, September, 1967, p. 298.
\end{itemize}
or personal. Corporate conflict occurs among groups within the society or between two societies. The source of corporate conflict often results from group attempts to impose their will upon other groups because each can secure the scarce goals of wealth, power, influence, and prestige only at the expense of another group. Personal conflict involves the relationship between individuals. Each person within the various societal groupings strives for personal as well as group goals. Such private goals are comprised of one, some, or all of the following: sex, prestige, power, wealth, and leisure.

Corporate conflict ranges from warfare to competition. Although the continuum represents a broad differentiation, it is interesting to note that man has tried to contain the entire spectrum through rules; e.g., Geneva Convention, Fair Business Practices, Consumer Protection Laws. As viewed by Caplow the effect of the prestige order in society also serves to limit competition, decrease its costs, and impose order on the allocation process. Both the strong and the weak compete for the most part with others like themselves and measure their gains and losses in relation to their near neighbors.

During inter-group conflict, controls are at work to restrict intra-group conflict. Pressure is brought to bear on the group membership to focus their energies toward the defeat of the enemy.

Personal conflict would appear to be of two categories--interpersonal and psychological. In interpersonal conflict, the problem is created by individuals striving for private goals. Wealth and status are so highly prized in our society that there is constant competition

17 Caplow, op. cit., p. 207.
for them. Pondy\textsuperscript{18} states that this competition forms the basis for conflict when the aggregated demands of participants for resources exceed the resources available. Autonomy needs also form a basis for conflict when one party seeks to exercise control over some activity that another party regards as his own province. Goal divergence forms a third cause of conflict when two parties who must cooperate on a joint activity are unable to reach a consensus on concerted action.

Psychological conflict refers to conflict within an individual. Berlyne\textsuperscript{19} explains this phenomenon's being created by the presence of two or more incompatible response demands aroused simultaneously in the organism. He identifies some of the major types of conceptual conflict as doubt, perplexity, contradiction, confusion, and irrelevance.

Research by Pavlov and Freud reveal that psychological conflict produces neurosis. Perhaps this explains the human reaction to withdraw from conflict when subject to cross-pressures.

\section*{Classification of Conflict Situations}

A useful classification of conflict situations is submitted by Caplow.\textsuperscript{20} The three classes—episodic, continuous, and terminal—are grounded in time.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18}Pondy, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 300.
\item \textsuperscript{20}Caplow, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 330.
\end{itemize}
In episodic conflict, the contest for power continues over an extended period of time, the means of the conflict are determined in advance, and the object of the struggle is to secure an advantage in distribution of rewards that occur periodically and under predetermined conditions. Elections, athletic contests, and in some cases collective bargaining are examples of episodic conflict.

In continuous conflict, the object of struggle is the rewards found in the situation. They are not scheduled and the means to be used to gain them is not specified in advance. An example of this would be bureaucratic rivalry.

In terminal conflict, the object is a single redistribution of power. The outcome is conceived as permanent because it disables or dissolves one of the parties, or leads to accommodations that precludes continuation of the struggle. Examples of this type of conflict are community conflicts, feuds, and revolutions.

Conflict About Schools

There is a dearth of comprehensive literature and research about conflict in the schools. Communication on this type of interaction is usually the arena of mass media and results in piecemeal reports of incidents designed to attract the reader's attention. Among the outstanding examples of this type of reporting are the New York teacher strikes, student demonstrations, and superintendent dismissals.

One source of literature about conflict situations in the schools are the studies conducted by state teacher associations, and the National Education Association. Examples of these are the Ohio
Education Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission Studies and the N.E.A. National Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities. In addition, a series of 31 written case studies pertaining to conflict about schools is available from the University Council of Educational Administration. The latter cases focus on the role and behavior of administrator in specific conflict situations.

For other sources on conflict about schools, one must look for implications of conflict in the titles of research and literature since there are few studies or books devoted to the general subject. One notable exception is found in Coleman's study of community conflict. This work makes numerous references to school conflict.

A fertile field of conflict investigation is found in studies pertaining to the dismissal of school superintendents. Michael provides insight into this problem in citing that although the superintendent is supposed to be the educational leader and should be able to take the necessary actions to improve the educational program, that in reality he cannot. Sometimes his actions are blocked by the school board, by unreasonable demands of special interest groups, or by emotional views of the community.

The dilemma of the school superintendent is further illustrated by Lane, Corwin, and Monahan's discussion of the special nature of

21 The University Council for Educational Administration, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.


educational administration:

1. Education deals directly and intimately with people. The school does things to people as well as for them. The conflict centers partly on the services the school is to render to a community with diverse interests and high hopes. The possibility that school-men can oppose the interest of parents lays the groundwork for conflict.

2. The development of a critical attitude is a central part of most educational philosophies. Thus the possibility exists that schools will lead students to revolt against certain aspects of order which some members of the community uphold.

3. There are problems of accurate evaluation of the success of the schools. This cannot be documented as a production function.

4. Education differs in the structure of the forces which control it. School boards represent various interest groups and have almost complete legal control over the schools; school administrators have almost no legal status and their job is subject to the board's pleasure, which greatly impairs the administrative control over the organization. He must compete for the support of various interest groups which attempt to influence school action.

5. The school staff is professionally trained; many teachers having as much education as the chief administrator. Professionalism requires autonomy over work, a requirement often at variance with actual control by the administration. The traditional authority of laymen over the schools, the ensuing professionalism of teachers, and the delegated power of administrators and school boards over teachers are basic characteristics that breed conflict between laymen, the administration, and their subordinates.24

Several other pieces of recent literature and research reveal the concern about the susceptibility of the superintendent to conflict to be well founded. An example is Seeley's study25 of administrator

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contract termination. The study reveals that the number of superintendents' contracts broken is increasing annually. Significant factors identified as contributing to superintendent dismissal were rapid growth, the lack of written board policy manuals, lack of procedures for teacher participation in policy making, board interference in administrative matters, policy changes by the superintendent on patterns of operation and central office staffing, as well as personal and professional inadequacies of the superintendents who were dismissed.

Perhaps even more enlightening is the kind of information presented by Callahan concerning the strength of the business-industrial group on one hand, and the vulnerability of school administrators on the other. Callahan, as well as the professors of school administration who participated in Brause's study, believed that school administrators did and should wield more professional autonomy than they actually do in practice. Callahan's study revealed that a large number of administrators capitulated to demands made upon them as a means of appeasing their critics rather than on educational grounds. He attributes this condition to the pattern of local support and feels that as long as schoolmen have a knife posed at their financial jugular vein, autonomy is impossible. Included in his recommendations for a solution were a change in the nature and quality of graduate work in school administration and the development of ways to reduce the vulnerability of school superintendents.

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This leads one to ask "what is the power base of the school superintendent and why is he so weak and vulnerable?" A look at the legal structure of the position is very revealing. According to Dykes\(^2\) the growth in importance and broadening of functions of school superintendents has not been accomplished by legal means. Actually, the legal status of the position lags far behind practice. Although most schools are administered by full-time superintendents, state laws in general still vest most administrative and executive functions in the school board. The failure to spell out the relationship of the superintendent to the board results in many instances in no agreement at all. This condition at best is inconsistent, and ineffective, and at worst a fertile field for conflict.

In his discussion of community politics and school boards, Minar\(^2\) reveals two conditions that contribute to the problem; first, that nearly everyone in the community is caught in a network of social interaction that makes all parts of society sensitive to every other part. This has extended the responsibilities of school authorities since the number of factors to be considered in decision-making have substantially increased.

A second characteristic revealed by the study is the instability of the power base of the superintendency. Minar\(^3\) emphasizes the fact that effective and realistic relations between boards and


\(^3\) Ibid., p. 28.
superintendents exist in some places but not in others and that they are least likely to exist where they are most needed. In low conflict situations, boards tend to give the superintendent broad powers, whereas in high conflict situations the board becomes involved in details, rather than broad policy, and lets the superintendent "front" for it. At the same time, when the district moves from low to high conflict, the board tends to draw back from and restrict the superintendent.

This evidence reveals the potential for conflict is increasing due to the heightened political sensitivity of all segments of the community and that, generally speaking, when the superintendent needs freedom and support to meet this conflict, it is taken away from him.

Another interesting phenomenon is the recent tendency of society to lay the blame for our failures as a nation on the doorstep of education. As a result the schools of our nation have become central figures in our social issues. Since the superintendent is the most visible, he becomes the target for pressure groups. In many instances, failing to succeed in their attack on school policy and procedures, the emphasis of pressure groups is turned to the superintendent's person. In other cases, as indicated by Walden's study31 his position is attacked through the legally accepted method of gaining control of the school board at election time.

In his study of the factors leading to dismissal of superintendents, Walden identifies the change in community social structure as a major cause. He states that rapid growth in a community appears

to bring new people with new ideas who challenge the existing school power structure. This challenge eventually results in a change in board membership and ultimately the superintendent is dismissed. Apparently, the incumbent superintendent is identified with the old establishment and becomes a prime target in the power conflict. Seeley's study\textsuperscript{32} corroborates the significance of the population increase in superintendent dismissals. In his study sample of 37 communities where superintendents' contracts were terminated, the growth rate was two and one half times that of the state's average growth.

In addition to the economic, political, and social aspects of conflict, one must face the fact that many school superintendents do not possess the competencies required for a particular job at a particular time. The three types of personal failures revealed by superintendents in Seeley's study\textsuperscript{33} were: 1) poor personal and public relations, 2) incompetence—inability to cope with the job, and 3) lack of training for the job.

An analysis of the behavior pattern of the superintendent also helps to shed light on the problem. Again referring to the Seeley study, one finds two patterns that appeared to be significant: 1) making rules that changed existing patterns of operation, and 2) expansion of the central office staff. The five most important behavior patterns contributing to superintendent dismissal as revealed by Brauses' study\textsuperscript{34} were:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32}Seeley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 3946.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{34}Brause, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 76.
\end{itemize}
1. Failure to carry out board instructions.

2. Allowing differences on critical issues between himself and board members to become and remain personal.

3. Failure to favorably interpret and overtly support board of education policies.

4. Publicly expressing criticisms of the board of education or a member thereof.

5. Failure to create and sustain distinctions between his and the board's responsibilities.

On the surface, it would appear that the superintendent is at fault and merely needs to mend his ways to make everything right. However, it is not that simple. McCarty, in his study of School Board Membership: Why Do They Serve, revealed that 54 percent of the sample surveyed were motivated by personal goals or special interest groups, rather than community goals. Furthermore, boards comprised of a majority of self-oriented individuals tended to maintain high friction relationships.

In a further classification of boards, McCarty's study identified four types of boards and their operational characteristics. In the single-member dominated board, the superintendent had limited discretion, was accountable to the acknowledged status leader, and was essentially a servant. In the rational board, policies were formulated by the total body and the administrator had considerable discretion and was actively involved in policy-making. The log-rolling board was characterized by the adoption of a middle course of action, and the superintendent was required to deal with shifting schisms. In the

factional board, where most policies were decided by majority vote, the administrator's role was difficult since any recommendation tended to generate an internal power struggle among the board members.

Stapley\(^{36}\) adds another dimension in his study of board member effectiveness. The report revealed that almost one-half of the total ineffective behaviors fall in the category where board members allow personal interest to take precedence over the needs of the schools. At the same time, almost one-fourth of the incidents resulting in unfavorable educational outcomes fall in the category of the board entering the administrator's domain. This would show that a large number of board members either do not understand or will not respect the executive function of the professional administrator.

Still another source of misunderstanding, hostility and conflict in schools is conflicting expectations. This is illustrated by Dykes in the following discourse on problems inherent in the role of school superintendents:

A common attribute accorded the role of the superintendent is that of leadership. But leadership may be defined in a number of ways. Cultural connotations of the term imply that leadership is always good or effective. However, leadership means different things to different people. To some, good leadership may mean maintaining the status quo. To others, the term "leadership" brings forth visions of an authority figure dispensing answers to his followers and showing them the way. Expectations as to the leadership functions of the superintendent thus vary widely.\(^{37}\)

\(^{36}\) Maurice E. Stapley, "Effectiveness of School Board Members," Administrator's Notebook, I (September, 1952).

\(^{37}\) Dykes, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 80.
In speaking on the same subject, Getzels, Lipham and Campbell\(^{38}\)
state that the relationships between a governing board and its chief
executive provide a perfect setting for role conflict. They cite
Bowman's study to show that the board expects the superintendent to
make decisions on minor matters. On major matters they expect the
superintendent to provide them with considerable information and make
recommendations. Although stating there is considerable agreement on
this point, they ask?

> How is the superintendent to know which are minor questions
> he needs to take up with the board? Upon what questions should
> he make definite recommendations and upon which should he
> supply information?\(^{39}\)

Gross, Mason and McEachern\(^{40}\) describe role conflict as incom­
patible expectations held for a position incumbent. Such expectations
may be classified as legitimate or illegitimate. If the expectations
are held by those whom the incumbent feels have a right to hold them,
it is considered legitimate and becomes an obligation. If, however,
the expectation is held to be illegitimate, it is perceived as a
pressure.

Another illustration of the role conflict inherent in the posi­
tion of school superintendent is vividly illustrated by board-super­
intendent differences over:

1. allocation of responsibilities between the superintendent
   and the board.
2. expectations for the superintendent's performance
3. expectations for the superintendent's attributes

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\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 350.

\(^{40}\) Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason and Alexander W. McEachern, *Role
Analysis: School Superintendency Role* (New York: John Wiley & Sons,
(4) expectations for the superintendent's participation
(5) expectations for superintendent's friendships
(6) expectations for school board member performance.

These differences were measured by administering six instruments containing a total of 150 responses to 105 superintendents and 508 school board members. The analysis of the data revealed that on 63 percent of the items there was a significant difference in the superintendent's and school board members' responses.\(^41\)

The study of conflict about the superintendent's role focused on four major problem areas: personnel hiring and promotion, time allocation, teacher salary recommendations, and budget recommendations. Role conflict in this sense was limited to superintendent's perceptions of incompatible expectations held for him by others. Incompatibility is conceived as those expectations which are different from that held by the superintendent, and also differing expectations of the superintendent's role by other individuals or groups. Seventy-one percent of the 105 superintendents perceived they had been exposed to role conflict concerning hiring and promoting teachers, eighty-eight percent about teacher salary, and ninety-one percent about budget recommendations.\(^42\)

Halpin's study revealed another aspect of differentiated expectations held by both board members and the immediately subordinate staff for the administrative behavior of the superintendent. The two factors analyzed were initiating structure and consideration. The result showed board members consistently emphasized initiating structure, whereas the subordinate staff members emphasized consideration.

\(^41\)Ibid., pp. 116-142.

\(^42\)Ibid., pp. 258-274.
"These different perceptions of the superintendent's role differentially legitimize and, therefore, differentially limit the administrative actions of the superintendent." A second finding was that the superintendent's perception of his role was more compatible with that of the staff than the board.43

Conflicting expectations about roles are not limited to superintendent-board relations. Instead they impinge upon every role in the social system. Corwin illustrates the dilemma of the teacher who faces conflicting expectations as a professional and a local citizen.

"The teacher who lives regardless of community attitude is one of the most resented of teachers in many communities, yet the teacher who does not live up to his professional principles runs the risk of the disapproval of his own colleagues and his own professional conscience."44

School boards likewise are subject to conflicting expectations. Getzels, Lipham and Campbell45 describe the board position as being in an interstitial position, part in and part out of the organization. Members are elected by the citizenry and are conceived by them as their representatives. On the other hand, these expectations do not always coincide with those of the organization.

43Andrew W. Halpin, The Leadership Behavior of School Superintendents, School-Community Development Monograph Series #4 (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1956).


45Getzels, Lipham, and Campbell, op. cit., p. 348.
Thus it would appear that the three major divisions of the school organization—the board, administration, and staff—are subject to conflicting expectations both within and outside the organizational framework. Such conflicting expectations result in pressures capable of generating conflict.

In summary the review of the literature reveals conflict in almost every instance, and deeply involved in such conflict is the superintendent of schools. Since any or all segments of the school community may be involved in conflict affecting the superintendent, it would appear that solutions must be sought in the situational context. In this way, all the forces and elements which contribute to such issues will have a chance to emerge, and the "why" as well as the "what" may be forthcoming.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to test the applicability of an adaptation of Coleman's Community Conflict Model as a conceptual tool for identification and analysis of components of conflict resident in the position of school superintendent. A second purpose of the study was to make generalizations about the data generated and the relationship of such data to the structural framework of the model.

Assumptions of the Study

At the outset of this study it was necessary that several assumptions be made. The assumptions were:

1. The model possesses elements similar to those of the subject being studied.

2. Components of conflict do reside in the position of school superintendent and such components can be identified.

3. The school districts used as a sample are valid conflict situations.

4. Perceptions of respondents provide salient data which must be regarded as pertinent.

5. Data generated by the Ohio Education Association Rights and Responsibilities Commission provide relevant data pertaining to conditions existing in each given school district at the time of the study.
Theoretical Framework for a Study of Conflict

The use of a model as an analytical framework for investigating phenomena about a given problem is widely accepted in most fields of research endeavor. According to Caplow, "the tests of a model are its internal consistency, the amount of simplification achieved, and whether it can be used to predict real events." Prediction is accomplished by translating terms of real events into the terms of the model, manipulating them, observing them for threads of causation, and translating them into generalizations applicable to real life. Therefore, the use of a model in this study would appear to be appropriate.

The model advanced for analyzing selected components of conflict in the position of school superintendent was the researcher's concept of generalizations developed by James S. Coleman's studies of community conflict. Coleman's model incorporated a series of generalizations based on numerous case studies of community conflict. It was not a precise, schematic model. The researcher used both the implied and precise statements of Coleman to generate the working model.

The model used by the researcher is an adaptation in that it does not conform to Coleman's exact pattern of content organization and that different terminology is occasionally substituted. In the following discussion of the model, such liberties are identified.


The structure of the model conforms specifically to that prescribed by Coleman. It consists of four major components: (1) initiating issues; (2) conditions for expansion; (3) course of the conflict; and (4) factors affecting the course of the conflict.

Initiating Issues

The basic premise upon which the model rests is that the conflict issue must affect the lives of people involved, must affect them in different ways, and be of such a nature that they perceive something can be done about it. Coleman states that the controlling power of a community normally resides in an uncommitted majority, generally inactive. Without an issue, a small, active group of pro-administration citizens makes decisions and provides leadership for the school district. At the same time, another group of perennial dissidents exists, generally opposed to school administrative policies and procedures. This latter group waits for an issue capable of generating conflict and uses it to try to influence the large, generally inactive group to action. Many such attempts abort, but some, especially those where there is a conflict with established values, succeed.

The two elements identified as important to the initiation of conflict were the source of the issue and the content of the issue.

The source of such issues may be internal or external. Internal, in this sense, is defined by the researcher as encompassing the people, ideas, and things which make up the educational organization. External issues are those generated outside the school organization.
and may be local, regional, state, national, or international in nature. An example of an external issue would be the furor raised over the Sputnik.

The content of the issue was viewed by Coleman as a framework for explaining what moves men to controversy. In one case, it may be an event, incident, or problem that affects an important aspect of their lives. The three areas of life within which most of the cases fall are economic, power or authority, and values and beliefs.

In a second case, people may be moved to controversy on the basis of attitudes toward groups or persons. In this instance, the hostility is dormant simply waiting for an excuse to resume open conflict. This hostility may be a result of either personality clashes or existing or historical cleavages.

**Conflict Expansion Factors**

Three elements are necessary for the expansion of controversy. They are: (1) a changing climate of opinion, (2) perceived management errors, and (3) activists to carry the controversy forward.

Not every initiating incident develops into a full blown conflict; however, for those that do expand, the following pattern is common. The content of the issue, reinforced by current events and the attendant publicity, mobilizes certain dormant values and dispositions held by the passive majority. As a result a new atmosphere of suspicion is created and formerly accepted values are subject to attack. The management, now operating in a hostile atmosphere, is perceived to have committed a series of blunders in matters important to members of
the passive majority. The majority is now ready for participation in
the conflict.

The third element, the activist, can use the hostile majority
in seeking to reach his goal. It is important to realize that his
good may or may not coincide with the group he seeks to lead. Acti-
vists are those individuals who exert vigorous political action to
gain power or to force compliance with their ideology.

**Course of Conflict**

Once the conflict is underway, it exhibits what Coleman identi-
fies as the "cyclic runaway tendency of conflict." The model describes
the course which the conflict will follow unless controlled. Obviously,
all conflicts do not travel the whole route and, therefore, communities
are spared lasting scars that influence events for many years to come.

The "cyclic runaway tendency" reveals a change in the issues
and the intensity of the conflict. As the conflict expands, the admin-
istration becomes the defendant. It is at this time that previous
grievances are revived. Those in opposition to the administration
cite real or imagined examples that serve to discredit those in power.

The next stage is the change from specific to general issues.
Instead of citing disagreement with a single action of the administra-
tion, general charges such as inefficiency, mismanagement, dishonesty,
insensitivity, or rigidity are leveled. In general this change evolves
when there is a definite community cleavage over basic values and be-
liefs. However, Coleman does not see this phenomenon occurring where
the conflict involves a power struggle.
As the conflict intensifies, new and different issues emerge, which are usually unrelated to the original ones. In some cases, these issues emerge as a result of changing relationships. A new attitude develops: "now that I am out in the open about this, I might as well say what else is on my mind." In other instances, the new issues are generated to win adherents to a cause.

The fourth stage is the shift from disagreement to antagonism. A dispute which originally began dispassionately over an issue suddenly changes to slander and rumor, with a focus of direct hostility on an individual or individuals. Once set in motion, hostility can sustain conflict unaided by disagreement over issues. The defendant may now be viewed as totally evil; one may attack him publicly without compunction.

Along with this stage, another characteristic often emerges. Relationships between individuals on opposing sides deteriorate, while those within each group solidify. If there are no existing organizations willing to support the opposition, new or informal organizations develop. As new alliances are formed, new leaders emerge. Generally these leaders have not been prominent in the community previously and thus have few inhibitions about moving the conflict forward.

The last stage of the conflict results from the social and psychological polarization of the community. As the individual relates to people who believe as he does, his original opinion is reinforced and he becomes sure that he is right. At the same time, the farther he is removed from former acquaintances who take the opposite side, the weaker the opposition's arguments become.
Factors Affecting the Course of the Conflict

The length to which this continually reinforcing cycle will go depends on the characteristics of the people and the community. Coleman identifies these factors as: (1) the structure of authority, (2) the social structure, (3) the economic structure, and (4) the mass media of communication.

According to Coleman, the conflict factors relevant to the structure of authority are: (1) the distribution of power; (2) the use of power; (3) unresponsiveness of the regime; and (4) conflicting expectations about the realm of authority. The researcher substituted the term internal-external relations for unresponsiveness to permit a distinction as to where unresponsiveness was perceived. In addition, an additional component was added—social-personal relationships. Experience of the researcher as a chief school administrator led him to believe this was an important factor in the authority structure.

Under social structure, Coleman emphasized the importance of social relations as a basis of response to conflict. Previous associations, attachments, and antagonisms were found to be key factors. Terms such as reference groups, formal and informal associations, class, size of community, identification with community, density of organizations, distribution of participation, and interlocking organizational membership were used to describe characteristics of the social structure.

In order to limit the number of subcomponents under social structure, the researcher substituted three general terms which appeared to accommodate the most important concepts. They were: (1) status of population; (2) social stratification; and (3) social cohesiveness.
The economic structure of a community was viewed by Coleman as being important in that it may determine the basis of conflict and also the course it will take. The variables he identified under economic structure include the type of community, the distribution of wealth and income, the history of community reaction to taxation, and the effects of vested economic interests. The typology used for determining the economic nature of the community is: self-contained, in the sense that men both live and work there; suburban areas, where with the exception of a few merchants and others who provide services, men live but do not work there; and service, which exist to serve non-resident groups, i.e., resort towns.

Design of the Study

Overview

The study consisted of a content analysis of conflict cases involving the school superintendent in six Ohio school districts. The sample was restricted to those districts which have recently been or are in the process of being studied by the Ohio Education Association Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission because of conditions which have or threaten to disrupt the educational program.

Each case in the sample was considered to be unique. Therefore, each was viewed in this light and analyzed on an individual basis. Upon the completion of the six individual case studies, all were compared and contrasted as to the nature of the issues that initiated school conflict, the factors that contributed to the expansion of school conflict, the dynamics of the conflict, the factors that affected
the course of the conflict, and how these factors impinged upon the roles of the school superintendents involved.

**Procedures for Data Collection**

In order to acquire data from the designated school conflict cases, the researcher prepared an instrument suitable for identifying and classifying data relative to components of conflict resident in the position of school superintendents. The questions in the instrument conformed to the components identified in the model. To best serve the function for which it was intended, the instrument relied heavily on open-end questions. It was thought that such a structure would serve to elicit responses to reveal inherent weaknesses of the model. A copy of the instrument is found in Appendix

Upon completion of the instrument, it was pilot-tested for relevancy in a current conflict situation. The school district studied was not one of the six previously designated for inclusion in the sample. In the pilot case, the instrument was not applied to a P.R.&R. study since none had been initiated. The first step required a visit to the school-community to obtain information called for by the model. Information was elicited through the interview technique, supplemented by analysis of available printed materials. The interviews were guided by the previously mentioned instrument and respondents selected by the "snow-ball technique." The type of printed material studied for additional clues included public records, school records, newspaper articles, correspondence, census data, and appropriate research reports. Since the instrument produced the data desired, only slight modifications were required.
Concurrent with the development of the instrument, the researcher sought the support of the Ohio Association of School Administrators in advancing the study. Letters of introduction and support were solicited from the O.A.S.A. to enhance the researcher's entry and access to persons and records relevant to the study. Such letters were forwarded to the appropriate superintendents and follow-up contact was made at an appropriate time prior to visiting the school-communities included in the sample.

Prior to entering a sample school district, the researcher applied the instrument to the appropriate O.E.A. P.R.& R. study. The data generated were classified under the appropriate blocks of the model. This review of the study was very helpful in identifying key persons in the conflict.

Upon entering the sample school district, the researcher met with the superintendent of schools to initiate the field portion of the study. A significant portion of time was spent in explaining the objectives of the study and the theoretical framework of the model. At this point, when possible, the entire range of questions in the instrument was used to provide basic information. In the course of the interview the names of those directly involved in the conflict were solicited.

Individuals identified by the superintendent were screened and selection of additional respondents made to assure a cross-section representation of the case. These people were then interviewed using an abbreviated form of the instrument. These interviews, along with newspaper accounts of the conflict, led to other significant persons for additional interviews. Generally the key figures in the conflict
were identified after two or three interviews. In several instances, significant persons were out of the state and unavailable for interviews. In this case, a substitute was selected who was closely associated with that person and knowledgeable about the conflict.

**Treatment of Data**

All data collected from the six school district conflict studies were classified to render them useful for analysis. The first step entailed the arrangement of the data of each study into a logical time sequence and their reduction to summary form. This was deemed essential to provide the reader a temporal overview of the conflict cases not otherwise provided for in the model. The second step consisted of classifying the data of each study within the structural framework of the model and presenting them in prose form. A third step involved the reduction of the data classified in step two to summary form and arranging it in tabular form within the structural framework established by the model. This was deemed necessary to permit further analysis of the individual studies and comparisons among the six studies.

Following the classification of the data gathered from the six studies, it was analyzed for the following purposes:

1. To identify the commonalities in the conflict pattern within and across the blocks of the model.
2. To make generalizations about the conflict pattern.
3. To account for the exceptions not provided by the model.
4. To summarize cases to show:
(a) those most congruent to the model.
(b) those least congruent to the model.
(c) the elements most generalizable.
(d) the elements least generalizable.

Descriptions of the nature of the conflict, how it affects the role of the superintendent, and the adequacy of methods used to cope with it were taken from interviews and case studies. Due to the subjective nature of the data, these data were not appropriate for statistical analysis.
CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS

The findings are reported in this chapter in two parts--individual studies of six school conflict situations and a comparison of the six studies.

Data sources for the studies emanated from personal interviews, official school board minutes, newspaper articles, the Ohio Educational Professional Rights and Responsibility Studies Commission, and Chamber of Commerce materials.

Individual School Conflict Studies

In this section the data generated by field studies of the six conflict cases are presented in two parts for each study--a summary and an analysis. The former was deemed necessary to provide a sequential background since this provision is not possible within the model. The second, the analysis, is presented in conformity with the structure of the model. This section provides a framework for analysis of the individual conflict case as well as comparisons among the cases.

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School Conflict Study 1

Summary

The scene of this school conflict is a city of 81,000 located on the shores of Lake Erie in northern Ohio. It is a well-planned city covering an area of 10.3 square miles. Practically all of the 180 manufacturing establishments are located in a general area away from the lake shore. The residential area with its tree-lined streets and well-maintained homes provides an attractive environment for its residents.

The population base of this city is predominantly a Middle European ethnic base. Approximately 67 percent are Catholic. During the middle sixties younger people were beginning to assert themselves in the leadership structure. In recent years the wealthier people have moved out of the city to nearby affluent suburbs.

The school system has long been a source of pride for this community. The system boasts fine buildings, a well-qualified staff, and a comprehensive program. The total educational curriculum is varied for the many individual needs and includes courses in Advance Placement, College Preparatory, Business, Vocational, General, and Remedial. The city has 11 elementary schools, 3 junior high schools and one comprehensive senior high school. Enrolled in these schools are 11,214 students who are taught and administered by a professional staff totaling 592. An assitional asset is the high level of pupil support which enables them to spend approximately $740 per pupil each year.

The first indication of conflict to come occurred during the 1963-64 school year. At that time, four of the board members met unofficially at the home of one of the members to discuss school matters
of mutual concern. One of the members present related that the superintendent's performance was discussed and the majority expressed dissatisfaction. At that time several members advocated the superintendent be replaced; however, no action was taken other than to send two members to advise the superintendent of the board's dissatisfaction.

Closely tied into the board's concern with the superintendent was also antagonism toward the high school principal. Several of the members did not feel the principal was the right man for the job and urged the superintendent to relieve him of his assignment. The superintendent felt the principal was doing a good job and he refused to comply with their wishes. This matter came up year after year and each time the board majority supported the superintendent's recommendation.

In 1966 the board power shifted with the election of two new members. A man who had served on the board for seven years as a minority member was made president. This person was described by school personnel as an aggressive, over-zealous man, anxious to put his philosophy into practice. It was at this stage that several board members became active in pushing for reforms in the management of the schools. They viewed their role as "running the schools." Soon individual board members became involved in operational matters and were not opposed or advised by the superintendent that they were infringing on his domain.

According to testimony given later by the superintendent and other staff members, the board president became exceedingly active—checking construction of the new high school, involving himself in personnel employment, interfering with placement of items on the agenda, refusing to let the administration discuss levies, and making unusual demands of the clerk's time.
In the fall of 1966 the subject of the high school principal's employment again arose. This time the superintendent was unofficially advised that the board would not renew the principal's contract. He then went to the principal and advised him of the situation and offered him a position in the central office which he agreed to consider.

In November 1966, an additional three mill levy was passed by the electorate and immediately the teachers association and school employees union opened negotiations with school officials for salary increases and other fringe benefits. Eventually a deadlock occurred in the negotiation process. On January 23, the employees union threatened a strike, demanding an across the board raise of $600. The board reacted by calling in their legal counsel to make plans for imposing the Ferguson Law (a state law prohibiting public employees from striking). The strike was averted by several emergency board meetings and the employees' acceptance of a 10 percent salary increase.

In the meantime salary negotiations continued between the teachers association and the administration. On January 22 the teachers association rejected the administration offer and requested a meeting with the board of education. The offer provided for an increase of $300 for the current school year with an additional $100 for the following school term. The teachers wanted an immediate $800 increase.

After approximately a month of fruitless negotiations between the teachers and the administration, the teachers association issued an ultimatum to the board. In essence they said: "Unless we can meet with the board of education by March 8, we will have to consider other action." Numerous ads were run in the local newspapers decrying the
fact that the board would not meet directly with the teachers. The board complied and a meeting was held on March 6. However, the board refused to agree to direct negotiations and the teachers reacted angrily. This conflict continued through April with the board refusing to budge and the teachers association threatening an Ohio Education Association investigation.

On April 20, under pressure, the high school principal asked the board to relieve him from his assignment and permit him to return to teaching. The request was accepted by board action. When the high school staff learned of this turn of events, they stated their support of the principal and asked the board to reject his request. The board took no action on this request.

The teachers and the board reached an agreement on negotiations on May 8 and shortly thereafter a teacher salary schedule was accepted by both parties. In the meantime, the high school principal changed his mind, retracted his resignation as principal, and hired a lawyer to defend his rights. When this action was reported in the local newspapers the board became angry and dismissed him from the school system. This, of course, raised the question of his tenure and this matter was referred to the board's legal counsel.

Early in May, the board again met unofficially to discuss the superintendency. At that time, the majority decided he should be replaced and delegated the president to present him an offer to buy up the remaining year on his contract. This agreement permitted him to retain his title and the use of his office, but he would not administer the schools. In his place an assistant superintendent would be selected
to administer the schools and officially succeed him the following year when he officially retired. The president conveyed this message to the superintendent and did not get a response.

At the May 29 board meeting the superintendent shocked the board and the community by announcing his resignation. In his statement to the press following the meeting he charged the board with interfering in school administration and preventing him from doing his job. Over two hundred people were in attendance at this meeting and speeches supporting the superintendent by the presidents of the administrators association and teachers association drew applause.

On June 3 the teachers association requested the Ohio Education Association to make a study of conditions in the school district. This request was approved and a panel of five educators was appointed to make the study. Subsequently, the study was made and its contents released to the newspaper. Among the principal findings of the report were:

1. The board was involved in functions and responsibilities reserved for the administrative and teaching staff of the school district.

2. Neither the staff nor the administration made any formal attempt to curtail these activities.

3. Several board members were accused of being over-zealous in their role.

4. Board members were acting individually rather than as a unit.

Immediately thereafter, citizens appeared at the board meeting and publicly appealed to the superintendent to change his mind. In the meantime citizen's groups were being formed to oppose the board president who was coming up for re-election in the fall. During the
summer another problem was solved when the board reached a compromise with the high school principal. A new position was created for him in the central office which he accepted, along with a raise in salary. The election in November 1967 saw an end to the conflict when two new board members were elected.

Analysis

I. Initiating Issue.

In 1966 the new board president, and to a lesser degree two other members who were dissatisfied with the performance of the superintendent, began to encroach on what is normally the realm of school administration. Interview data revealed the above board members initially put pressure on the superintendent for reports and issued many directives for him to carry out. When these demands became excessive, the superintendent began ignoring them. At this point, the president began making personal inspections of construction at the new high school and shifted his demands to the Clerk and other administrators.

Therefore, a series of events and incidents contributed to the conflict over a period of several years, rather than it being initiated by a single event or incident.

Source of the Issue

The source of the initiating issue was internal in origin and a direct result of shift in the board power structure. In 1966 two new members were elected to the board and the minority became the majority
The new majority was dissatisfied with the performance of the superintendent and decided to step into the breach to accomplish their goal.

Content of the Issue

The content of the issue centered on the distribution of power and authority and role delineation. Evidence indicated the board was divided over board-superintendent role boundaries. The new majority felt the board should act on its own initiative, whereas the minority believed the recommendation of the superintendent was tantamount to board action. The dichotomy between the two groups is illustrated by the following--the former a statement by the new majority president, the latter by a minority member:

The line of demarcation between the board and the administration is nebulous. The operation of the schools is the board's responsibility.

The board's responsibility is policy-making. I am afraid there have been many instances where the board, individually and collectively, has overstepped these bounds.

The philosophy of the majority caused them to become involved in matters normally within the realm of the school administrators, thereby antagonizing the board minority and the administrative staff.

There was also evidence that the conflict was based on previous hostility rather than a specific event, incident, or problem. This thesis has its base in the board-superintendent disagreement over the high school principal and was borne out by several knowledgeable witnesses. The disagreement over the suitability of the principal for his role began prior to 1963 and this issue threads through to the end
of the conflict. In the early stages it was a matter of disagreement between the superintendent and a faction of the board, later these members began to view the superintendent as weak and uncooperative because he would not comply with their demands for the principal's removal.

This would infer that when the minority could not achieve their goal of the principal's dismissal directly, they sought to achieve it indirectly by attempting to remove the person who stood in their way—the superintendent.

II. Expansion Factors

The three conditions necessary for the expansion of conflict—the presence of activists working to expand the issue, perceived management errors, and a change in the climate opinion—were present in this study.

Activists

The initial activists were staff members who were: (1) motivated by either a search for power or (2) ideologically opposed to the board. The high school principal, the target of board opposition, expanded the conflict by seeking revenge against one board member and revolting against the power of another.

In one instance, he joined a faction working to prevent a board member from becoming president of a local service club. The work of this group was successful and this served to intensify the antagonism existing between the two men.
In another instance, he lost his temper during one of the board president's visits to the high school and accused him of interfering with the operation of the school. The board president stated that the principal's behavior was unwarranted and further convinced him that he was unsuitable for the principal's position.

Two employee groups, the teachers association and the school employees union, contributed significantly to the expansion of the conflict. This action involved their demands for salary increases and the negotiations which ensued (1966-67). In each instance, their demands were not met in the early phases of negotiations with the superintendent and they moved to solicit help from the board. This gave the impression that they did not trust the administration and led the new board majority to believe they had support against the superintendent. Later, their threats of sanctions and work stoppages placed them in opposition with the board. In both instances, the publicity which accompanied the drive for extra salaries served to expand the conflict. The teacher association also contributed to the expansion by bringing an outside agency, the state education association.

Perceived Management Errors

Management elements contributed to the expansion of the conflict by: 1) administration vacillation; 2) the misuse of power and authority; 3) miscalculation of staff and public sentiment; and 4) a search for power outside the school organization.
The superintendent contributed to the expansion of the conflict in several ways. Interview data indicated the failure of the superintendent to stand up to the board when they first began to interfere in school administration and his retreat into a shell at a later date led to the harassment of the school administrative staff. Secondly, his comments to the news media at the time of and following his resignation generated both staff and public support. Large groups, ranging from 140 to 200 attended subsequent board meetings. Various individuals and groups urged him to retract his resignation and others urged the board to reject his resignation. In short, he was successful in bringing social power to bear on the board of education.

The board majority contributed to the expansion of the conflict by misusing its authority. First several members antagonized the administrative staff and the clerk's office by excessive demands for reports, issuing directives, and excessive visitations. An illustration of the degree this behavior reached was when a board member called the clerk and gave him instructions on where to mount flag brackets at the schools.

Secondly, the board majority misread the degree to which the superintendent could be pushed, as well as his base of support. This was illustrated when the board met officially and decided to purchase the remaining year of the superintendent's contract. Although he was eligible for retirement, this angered him and he responded by announcing his resignation and publicly accusing the board of interfering in school administration. The result was that the administrative and teaching staff and a large segment of the population sided with the superintendent.
Change in the Climate of Opinion

A rapid change in the climate of opinion was illustrated by the involvement of the lay public in the conflict. In the days following the superintendent's resignation columns of newsprint repeated and expanded his charges of board interference in school administration. Large groups, ranging from 140-200, attended subsequent board meetings and speakers urged the superintendent to retract his resignation.

Following the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study (P.R. & R.), citizens mobilized to form organizations to oppose the reelection of the board president. This effort was successful, and, in November 1967, both incumbents were defeated in their bid for reelection.

III. Course of the Conflict

The course of the conflict was erratic in that it skipped from one issue to another expanding the base of participation as it moved; however, the major issue underlying the course of the conflict was one of distribution of authority.

Legally Constituted Authority Became the Defendant

The perceived misuse of power caused different segments of the management team to assume the role of defendant during the course of this conflict. Initially the superintendent was the defendant. This was illustrated by the dissatisfaction of a board faction with the progress of the school district. Other examples were: 1) the employees
union demanding board representation at negotiation meetings, thereby implying distrust; and 2) the request of the teachers association for direct negotiations with the board because they felt the superintendent was arbitrarily opposing their demands.

Later the board majority became the defendant. This resulted when the teachers association was unable to negotiate a satisfactory salary agreement through established procedures and demanded direct negotiations with the board. According to the president of the local teachers association, when the request was continually denied they ran ads in local newspapers in search of public support against the board. Evidence also indicated individual board members were publicly attacked when they met to hear the teachers' arguments.

Following the resignation of the superintendent, the teachers, disturbed by their recent experiences with the board and the charges being made by the superintendent and other administrators, called for a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study (P. R. & R.) by the state education association. The findings of this study substantiated the superintendent's charges and mobilized the public to oppose the board majority.

Previously Suppressed Issues

The previously suppressed issues that emerged once the conflict was out in the open were rooted in personal grievances of the misuse of authority. Primarily, these grievances were directed toward the misuse of authority by two majority board members.
The superintendent's grievances as expressed in the Cleveland Press, May 30, 1967 were:

We in the administration have been under a barrage of phone calls, memoranda and direct contacts by some board members who have by-passed the superintendent and the board itself.

The board has still not made 40 administrative reappointments submitted by the administration in April. 48

The present clerk expressed similar grievances against the board majority, particularly the president:

The administrative staff labored under a continuous threat of power and authority. The board president's attitude of divide and conquer contributed to the fact that no one was sure where they stood.

The board president became involved in personnel employment and interfered with the placement of items on the agenda. In particular, he refused to permit the administration discuss operating levies.

**Issues Shift from Specific to General**

The nature of the issues in this study were disparate in that some were general and some were specific. Initially, the board-superintendent internal conflict was general in nature--board interference in school administration. Subsequent salary issues were specific in that salaries or direct negotiation with the board were the basis of conflict. At the height of the conflict the issue again became general--interference in school administration.

New and Different Issues

New and different issues emerged throughout the course of the conflict, however, power and authority was central throughout. Initially the conflict involved a power struggle between the board majority and the superintendent. This centered on board interference in school administration.

A second new issue involved power, authority and economics. The specific issue was a salary increase for non-certified school employees. What started as an economic issue ended with power and authority when the union threatened to strike and the board threatened the use of the Ferguson Act.

A similar trend was involved in the issue which initiated over teacher salary schedules (economics) and evolved to conflict over the board's refusal to grant direct negotiations (power and authority).

The resignation of the superintendent and the P.R.& R. Study issues were involved in board interference in school administration (power and authority).

Shift from Disagreement to Antagonism

The nature of the conflict shifted from disagreement to antagonism when individuals or groups, rather than issues, came under attack. Interview data indicated that in the case of the teachers associations demand for direct negotiations, the board as a unit came under attack for "stalling." When the superintendent resigned and
made public statements about the board majority it was clearly reciprocating action for their attempts to buy up his contract. The harassment of the board president which eventually caused him to lose his position with a local industry was based on antagonism. Anonymous letters, along with clippings of the school conflict, were sent to the president of the company to hurt the board president personally.

**Shift from Antagonism to Polarization**

There was no evidence of groups polarizing within the community.

**IV. Factors Which Affected the Course of the Conflict**

**Structure of Authority**

**Distribution of Power**

A shift in the distribution of power contributed to the initiation and expansion of the conflict. Prior to 1966, the leadership of the board was able to head off conflict by serving as peacemaker. The election of two new board members resulted in new interest groups being represented and new coalitions were formed. The minority became the majority and a new president was elected. It was at this stage that several board members became involved in the administration of the schools.

A description of these two members will, in part, explain their influence on the course of the conflict. The newly-elected president was described as an impulsive and aggressive individual
suddenly thrust into a leadership position after six years as a minority bloc member. He responded overzealously in his efforts to prove himself and to remedy his dissatisfaction with the progress of the school district.

A second member was described as a politically-motivated individual who had experienced many ups and downs in his conflict-prone career. Examples cited were his struggles with the power structure of his church which led to his dismissal as minister and his conflict with city officials and fellow members of the city recreation board.

Initially, this majority felt there was a leadership void and moved to fill that void. This initiated the conflict. Later their efforts to remove the superintendent brought about an expansion of the conflict.

Use of Power

The misuse of power by the board majority contributed to the initiation and expansion of the conflict. This has been documented previously in discussing board interference in school administration.

This misuse of power was compounded by failure of the superintendent to actively oppose this intrusion and therefore it continued to expand until it damaged the morale and efficiency of the administrative staff.

The teacher association used an outside source of power to both expand and reduce the conflict. The entry of the state education association into the conflict brought about the P.R.& R. Study which
exposed the board majority and motivated the public to settle the conflict by failing to reelect two board members at the next election.

**Internal-External Relations**

Dysfunctions in internal relations led to the expansion of the conflict. When relations between the board and superintendent broke down, the superintendent could not function well in his position as negotiator. This ineffectiveness led to the teachers' demands for direct negotiations—an issue for several months.

External relations did not appear to be a factor in the conflict.

**Social-Personal Relations**

There was no evidence that family relationships or close friendships contributed to the conflict in any way.

**Conflicting Expectations**

Differing role expectations were instrumental in initiating and expanding the conflict. Several board members viewed their responsibility as being directly involved in running the schools. To them, this meant the right to direct individuals and become involved in specific areas they considered problems. This philosophy impelled them to become involved in school administration, thereby earning the antagonism of the administrative staff and minority board members.

The same board members also expected the superintendent to be a dynamic, forceful person. He, on the other hand, viewed his
role as quietly managing a good educational program. This academic orientation led to his devoting a disproportionate amount of time in this area and the board began to question the efficiency of the school operation.

There was also some evidence of differing role expectations held for the superintendent by the teachers. In this case, the teachers expected the superintendent to forcefully press for teacher salary demands. When the superintendent did not, they demanded the right to plead their own case. This led to hostility over the board's refusal to grant direct negotiations.

Social Structure

Population Distribution

The emergence of younger people into leadership roles was a factor in the election of one of the anti-administration board members in 1966.

Population Status

Population status did not appear to be a factor in the conflict.

Social Cohesion

The pattern of social cohesion of the community played a vital role in the reduction of the conflict. A majority of the population identified with the community as a whole and were concerned
about anything that reflected negatively on it. This was illustrated by the organization of citizens' groups to remove the offending board president.

**Economic Structure**

**Type of Community**

The type of community was considered an important factor in the reduction of the conflict. The fact that a majority of the patrons both live and work in the community served to centralize their interests. The high value placed on education by parents, industry, and business provided a good base of support since the community appeared to place the welfare of the schools above individuals.

**Vested Economic Interests**

The only vested economic interest involved in this conflict was the issue of school employees' salaries. Increased costs of living, plus the fact that surrounding districts were paying higher salaries, motivated the teachers and school employees to seek increases. The antagonism that built up through this process led to conflict between the board and the employees.

**Other Economic Components of the Model**

There was no evidence to indicate that either the distribution of wealth and income or taxation were overt issues in this school conflict. The basis for this conclusion was the apparent state of
homogeneity of the population relative to the income and wealth factor and the absence of school levy failures immediately preceding or during the conflict.

**Mass Media**

The local mass media served to both expand and reduce the conflict. Beginning with the controversy over salary negotiations, extensive coverage of the developing conflict was provided by local, as well as neighboring city news media. In general, the reporting appeared to be quite objective up to the time of the superintendent's resignation. From that point, two board members were singled out as the target of attacks. This mass of negative publicity motivated large numbers to become involved and eventually resulted in the defeat of the board president at the next election and the restoration of peace.
School Conflict Study 2

Summary

A distinct rural flavor characterizes the setting for conflict in this small Northeastern Ohio school district. Its population of approximately 4,000 is spread over a 72 square mile area. Two villages appear to be the centers of social activity, although the predominant pattern of population distribution appears to be one of farm homes and small housing clusters.

The community population is said to have experienced a gradual change over a period of twenty years. Formerly, the community consisted of farm born and reared residents, whereas today over 60 percent of the parents were reared in towns and cities. Similarly the occupational orientation of the community has changed from farm workers to industrial workers. Most of the district's residents work in the steel mills of nearby cities.

The school community reveals still another special characteristic—a sharp cleavage between the two townships which make up the whole. This condition resulted from a school consolidation in 1960 wherein the smaller of the two subsections lost its high school. The intense feelings generated over this event cause the two townships to act like separate entities. One outcome has been the consistent lack of support of school levies by the smaller township.

However, in spite of consolidation, the school enrollment of 1,500 is small by present standards. The students are distributed between three buildings and are taught by a staff of sixty-six teachers.
The district has experienced financial difficulties even though the local effort of 35.1 mills is among the upper ten percent in the state. This is due to the low property valuation of the district.

Conflict originated in this district with the employment of the high school principal as acting superintendent in August 1967. Following the resignation of the previous superintendent, the board interviewed fourteen candidates. Included were two members of the local staff; the high school principal and the junior high principal. Both men had served the system for 18 to 20 years. The junior high principal was certificated for the superintendency and the high school principal was not, being short by one or two courses.

When the high school principal was appointed superintendent, the junior high principal then requested consideration for the position of high school principal. However, the newly appointed superintendent did not feel he could work with him and selected another teacher on the staff. Again, the teacher selected, although highly respected in the community and the school, was not certified for the high school principalship.

These appointments left the junior high principal quite bitter and he found support from a group of teachers sympathetic to his cause. Shortly thereafter, the local education association began a movement seeking recognition as the negotiating agent of the teachers. The president and vice-president were perceived by the superintendent as being friends of the junior high principal. According to the president of the local education association the increasing activism of this group led the superintendent to view them as a threat to his power and authority and he resisted their efforts.
Early in the school year some of the members of the high school staff began to complain about the discipline in the high school. These teachers claimed the newly appointed principal would not support them and began registering their complaints with the officers of the local education association. The officers relayed these grievances to the superintendent and, when they did not feel that anything was being done, decided to present them to the board.

In October 1967 the officers of the local education association appeared at a board meeting and expressed their dissatisfaction with the way the schools were being administered. The targets of their criticism were the superintendent and the high school principal. According to their president, they were immediately advised by the board that they were out-of-line in making their criticisms public. In December, 1967 the officers again expressed their grievances to the board and again the board chastised them.

At approximately the same time the above complaints were being registered another issue developed. During the previous school year the board had agreed to recognize the local education association as the sole bargaining agent for the teachers. In order to firmly establish ground rules for such bargaining, the association prepared and submitted a negotiation instrument for board approval. The board refused to accept the instrument and a series of meetings were held over a five month period to try to resolve the matter. The principal issue was over grievance procedures—the board feeling the present organizational structure was adequate and the teachers feeling it was not.
In April, 1968 the education association had become frustrated and reacted by asking the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission of the Ohio Education Association to conduct a study of conditions existing in the school district which they felt to be detrimental to the educational program. At the same time the request was dispatched to the OEA, a copy was also sent to area newspapers. Included in the letters were a list of fifteen grievances. Needless to say, the board was angered by the fact that the association did not notify them of their intentions in advance. The OEA reviewed the request and sent a panel to conduct a preliminary study.

Following the preliminary study the local association demanded the board attend a meeting on Monday, May 13th, to discuss salary, grievances, and other issues. When the board failed to appear for the meeting, claiming they were not given sufficient notice, the association notified area newspapers of their intention to hold a "professional study day" on Thursday, May 16th. At the regular board meeting on Wednesday, May 15th, the board advised the association officers of their willingness to meet and a meeting was set for May 21st. At this time the board requested the "study day" to be postponed until after the meeting. This request was denied and the following day forty-three of the school's sixty-six member staff attended an all-day meeting at the Town Hall. School remained open, manned by substitute teachers, parents, and college students from a nearby university.

The P.R.& R. Study was conducted in June 1968 and a list of 29 recommendations was included in the report. In the report the board was accused of interfering in school administration, failing to
maintain adequate communication with the staff and community, and failing to develop adequate personnel policies and job descriptions. Several pages of the report pertained to the deficiencies perceived to exist in the office of the superintendent and the high school principal.

Early in the fall of 1968 and at various intervals thereafter, the local education association officers appeared before the board demanding that steps be taken to correct the deficiencies identified by the P.R.& R. Study. According to the association, few, if any, deficiencies were corrected.

During the same time period the above was being discussed the association was negotiating a procedural contract with the local administrators. All appeared to go well until the issue of a salary schedule came up. Following a stalemate, the teachers demanded direct negotiations with the board and were refused. Finally an agreement was reached whereby salary increases would be contingent on the passage of a levy in May 1969.

When the levy failed, the teachers voted to impose sanctions. In addition to local sanctions, statewide sanctions were requested. Board members and superintendent attributed the failure of the levy to a backlash against the teacher walk-out the previous May. As far as is known, it was the first levy failure for the school district. Be that as it may, the conflict was not ended in July 1969. Officers of the local education association were still pressing for state-wide sanctions.
Analysis

I. Initiating Issue

The initiating issue was grounded in problems emanating from administrative succession. The actual event which "triggered" the conflict was the appointment of the high school principal as acting superintendent in August, 1967. Several successive rejections experienced by the junior high school principal embittered him and led to his search for a power base outside the formal organization—the local education association. His friendship with the officers of the local association provided access to this power which was eventually used to try to discredit the newly appointed superintendent and high school principal.

Source of the Issue

The source of the issue was internal competition for personal and professional advancement. Two staff members were in competition for the same position—the school superintendency. The same men had been in competition for prestige and position in the community for seventeen years and this competition had generated hostility between them.

Content of the Issue

The content of the issue centered on power and authority. In essence, certain staff members disagreed with the board's selection of a superintendent and revolted against his authority.
Characteristic of this revolt were the efforts made to discredit the newly appointed superintendent. There was also sufficient evidence to indicate the conflict was predisposed by previous hostility between major actors in the present conflict.

Evidence of the attempt to discredit the new superintendent was revealed in the following interview data. Board members related that soon after the appointment of the new superintendent the junior high principal and an elementary principal began attending board meetings. During the course of these meetings they contradicted the superintendent and made complaints about deficiencies in the maintenance of their respective buildings. Finally a board member publicly criticized them for not supporting their superintendent.

In October and December 1967 officers of the local education association appeared at board meetings and stated their dissatisfaction with the way the schools were being administered.

There was also evidence that the actors were predisposed to conflict because of previous hostility. This was readily discernible from the comments of the superintendent. During the period when both men were teachers in the system, the then basketball coach (junior high principal) charged the then band director (superintendent) with over-emphasis of the music program. Another factor said to be a source of conflict between the two men involved the junior high principal's wife. Prior to her marriage she was a student member of the band directed by the present superintendent. In this instance he reorganized the band which resulted in her demotion. In retaliation she was alleged to have tried to incite a student strike against the director and was dismissed as a result.
According to the superintendent, the two men never hit it off well. He relates that during the period when he was high school principal and the junior high principal was basketball coach there had been disagreements over discipline responsibilities.

Other evidence of the role previous hostility played in the initiation of conflict involved the vice president of the local education association. Again the superintendent indicated that this teacher expected to be appointed to the head basketball coaching position and was so recommended by him. However, the board rejected him and this left him bitter toward the superintendent and the board. This was felt to have contributed to his militant actions.

II. Expansion Factors

The three conditions necessary for the expansion of conflict—the presence of activists working to expand the conflict, perceived management errors, and a changing climate of opinion were evident in this study. However, the effect of these conditions appeared to be confined to the school organization and therefore limited the extent of the expansion.

Activists

The individuals and groups who actively worked to expand the conflict consisted of staff personnel, lay citizens, and the state education association who were motivated by personal gain, revenge, and distrust. It was generally agreed, however, that the major thrust was provided by the junior high school principal and the
officers of the local education association.

The junior high principal was said to be motivated by revenge generated from being passed over for two promotions he sought. The board, superintendent, and high school principal identified him as the person who "made bullets while others fired them."

The officers of the local teachers association were felt to have been motivated by mutual distrust of the superintendent. The superintendent, concerned with the increasing signs of teacher militancy, responded to an offer of cooperation by the president of the local education association by stating, "I wish I could believe that."

This response generated reciprocal action from the teaching staff.

Other instances where actions of the officers of the local education association expanded the conflict are:

1. Their request to the state education association for a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study of the school district.
2. Notifying the news media of their grievances thereby further antagonizing the board and superintendent.
3. Demanding a meeting with the board on short notice.
4. Threatening to hold a professional study day and carrying out this threat.

The evidence revealed only one lay person active in expanding the conflict. This person was a close personal friend of the superintendent's ex-wife who was thought to be motivated by revenge. Interview data indicated this woman circulated rumors accusing the superintendent of immoral activities with a seventeen year old girl and questioning the legitimacy of a child born to his recent bride. Also included in her activities was an attempt to circulate a petition for the removal of the superintendent. The latter effort resulted
in failure; however, the rumors served to create doubts in the minds of some of the board members.

The role of the state education association in expanding the conflict was viewed by the researcher as being motivated by a desire for corporate gain. The goal of the association was to gain prestige and through this means gain additional members. This goal was attained through providing a field representative to advise the local association and through support from headquarters. Such support was provided even when the local organization's actions were improper or inappropriate. In addition, the P.R.& R. Study appeared to generate more conflict rather than reduce it in this case. The above analyses are based on the following evidence:

The ultimatum issued by the local education association concerning the "professional study day" was inappropriate and untimely considering the fact that the preliminary study report of the P.R.& R. Commission had not been issued. In spite of this, the Executive Secretary of the State Education Association lent his support of the teacher work stoppage in a telegram to the local association president.

The P.R.& R. Study generated strong board and superintendent reaction. First, it was not viewed as a legitimate function of the state association. Second, dissemination of the Report was considered to be inappropriate. The chief complaint was the fact that the local teachers and area news media received copies of the report before the board and superintendent. The superintendent reported that the text of the report was in the newspapers the morning he received his copy. As a result of these two conditions the board failed to implement many of the suggestions, thereby providing additional fuel for the local teachers association.

**Perceived Management Errors**

The rigid response of management to staff grievances and demands contributed significantly to the expansion of the conflict. In this respect, both the board and the superintendent were guilty.
They viewed teacher demands as a threat to their authority and either resisted or rejected them. According to the junior high principal and the president of the local education association, the superintendent contributed by rejecting the cooperation offered by the president of the education association and rejecting the complaints of high school teachers about the deterioration of discipline and the unavailability of the high school principal.

The board contributed to the expansion of the conflict by rejecting complaints about discipline in the high school and stalling on education association demands for recognition and personnel negotiations. Although the local association represented 65 of the 66 teachers in the district, it required a full year before the association was recognized as the bargaining agent. The board said they were being cautious about an important matter, while the teachers claimed they were stalling.

This rigidity created antagonism which motivated the teachers to seek other sources of power, i.e., public support, state education association support.

Change in the Climate of Opinion

A change in the climate of opinion was limited to the internal organization of the school. Evidence indicates that although lay attendance at board meetings increased slightly, the significant opposition came from the local education association. Actually lay support appeared to reside with the board. This conclusion was substantiated by the local association president's statement that
the community did not become actively involved in the conflict.

III. Course of the Conflict

Internal conflict in this school district displayed similar course characteristics to those which expanded to involve the lay community. This school community, already polarized over earlier school consolidation, did not take an active role in the conflict. It appeared the existing cleavage was so deep that laymen refused to be mobilized into camps that included some of their former opponents. Therefore, the conflict was constrained with the school organization.

However, in spite of this condition, the course of the internal struggle displayed all of the steps described by the model.

Legally Constituted Authority Became the Defendant

Initially, administrators became the defendant in this conflict. The newly appointed superintendent and the high school principal were charged by the local education association with administrative deficiencies. The content of these charges included deterioration of discipline in the high school, failure to back the teachers, and failure to act on teacher grievances. When the board refused to act on these charges, they joined the above-mentioned administrators as defendants.
Previously Suppressed Issues

Previously suppressed issues that emerged once the conflict was underway were in the nature of staff grievances concerning the perceived misuse of power, management credibility, and injudicious use of public funds. Either the board or the superintendent was the subject of charges made by the president of the local association.

The board was alleged to have changed existing salary schedules in June 1967 without notifying or consulting the teachers. This action involved the reduction of the salary index for teachers in the 5-8 year experience range and as a result some teachers received less than the $300 they anticipated. In another, they changed coaching increments from an index schedule to a flat rate thereby decreasing salaries.

The superintendent was also accused of failing to keep his promise of a $300 salary increase plus paid hospitalization. Actually, the teachers received $200 and no hospitalization.

Yet another criticism was that the board used poor judgment in initiating a football program when they could not adequately finance the educational program.

Issue Shifts from Specific to General

There was only one instance of an issue shifting from specific to general. This involved charges against the high school principal. The president of the local association indicated this in saying:
Initially the high school teachers criticized the principal for not being available when they needed him, now they say he is incompetent.

New and Different Issues

The emergence of new and different issues expanded the content base of the conflict. Initially the issue was power and authority; however, the new issues brought economics along with values and beliefs into the conflict. Personnel negotiations involved a search for power by the local association. The work stoppage was rooted in both a search for power and salary improvements. However, it brought a negative response from the community. This was illustrated by the superintendent's survey of the community following the defeat of the levy which indicated that the community rejected the levy because of the teachers' actions. In other words their values and beliefs were offended by the work stoppage.

The entry of the state association and the subsequent P.R.&R. Study also became a new issue. In this case, the teachers were forced to seek other outside sources of power when they could not gain their ends through normal avenues. The Study, however, served to expand the conflict since it antagonized the board and superintendent and did not gain public support for the teachers' cause. The superintendent stated that many of the charges were untrue. He could think of no instance where the board interfered in school administration. Furthermore, he resented the action of the state association in distributing the report to the news media and teachers before he and the board had their copies. The board also questioned the legitimacy
of the Study and therefore rejected its value.

The last issue, the imposition of local sanctions by the local association, was predicated on the levy failure. Elements of power and economics were involved. Power was exerted to force the public and board to provide additional revenue for salary increases.

Shift from Disagreement to Antagonism

The nature of the conflict shifted from disagreement to antagonism as indicated by the direct attacks on the superintendent and the principal.

Shift from Antagonism to Polarization

A shift from antagonism to polarization was evidenced by the separation of the school organization into two camps, each rejecting face-to-face interaction, and each convinced that the other side was all bad. This was evidenced by the application of local sanctions following the levy failure in May 1969. Neither side has made an effort to work out the problem. The board and superintendent are convinced that the only way to restore peace to the district is to rid themselves of the "trouble-makers" i.e., certain teacher leaders. The president of the teachers association is convinced that the board is influenced by a "hard-line" member and will not function properly until he is out of office.
IV. Factors Which Affected the Course of the Conflict

Structure of Authority

Distribution of Power

A change in the stable pattern of power relationships developed during the course and aftermath of administrator succession. The board's selection of a staff member as superintendent was opposed by a strong staff faction. This group resented the power delegated to this person and moved to strengthen the power base of the local education association and thereby neutralize the new superintendent's legal power.

A factor which served to reduce the extent of the conflict was the unified front presented by the board and superintendent. Each party of this partnership lent the other support during attacks from outsiders. This was illustrated by the board's support of the superintendent when officers of the local association publicly criticized him. The superintendent's rejection of P.R.& R. charges of board interference reduced the credibility of the charges.

Use of Power

The arbitrary use of power by both management and staff served to build hostility and extend the conflict. Previous illustrations of arbitrary actions of management verify this conclusion.

Briefly, other examples alleged by the teachers association were:

1. The change in salary schedules that resulted in lower
salaries for some of the coaches and teachers and the failure of the board and administration to notify them prior to the beginning of school.

2. The alleged remarks of the superintendent that some of the teachers were "trouble-makers" and that there would be no salary increases if they continued to make trouble.

The officers of the local education association also used their power arbitrarily. This was illustrated when the local association demanded a meeting with the board for a salary and grievance discussion on two day's notice. When the board failed to meet the demand, a "professional study day" was called. Prior to the "study day" the board and association officers did meet and agreed upon a date for discussion of the teacher grievances; however, the association officers refused to cancel the scheduled work stoppage.

Internal-External Relations

Dysfunctions in the internal relations of the school organization contributed to the initiation, expansion, and continuation of the conflict. Conflict initiated between the staff and the superintendent and was extended to include the high school principal and school board. Mutual fear and distrust closed communication and generated hostility.

External relationships were important in that the community supported the management, thereby cutting off the teachers' access to social power. This factor limited the expansion of the conflict.
Social-Personal Relations

Social and personal relationships contributed to the conflict by providing access to power and the means to attack a power figure. According to the superintendent, both the president and vice president of the local education association were friends of the junior high principal. Both had taught under him and respected him. This friendship provided the junior high principal access to power with which to attack and discredit the superintendent and high school principal. Another link in the structure was the fact that the junior high principal's wife was a teacher in the elementary school and was able to gather support for him at that level.

A personal relationship used to discredit the superintendent involved his divorce and remarriage. According to board members, they received anonymous phone calls about the superintendent "keeping" a seventeen year old girl and "getting her into trouble." Later calls were received that his new wife had a baby in Florida at the time of their marriage. Board members claimed that they were never able to get a satisfactory answer from the superintendent on the last charge; however, they did learn that the superintendent and his wife have a new baby. The foregoing was a basis for rumors circulating freely throughout the community. Strangely, the lay public did not make a big issue of them.
Conflicting Expectations

Differing role expectations were instrumental in expanding the conflict. The teachers were extremely critical of the superintendent's lack of leadership. The board, on the other hand, felt that due to the superintendent's inexperience and lack of knowledge of business affairs and the building program they should step in and assume responsibilities not normally in their realm. The superintendent, rather than resenting the board's action, appreciated its involvement. In any event, these different expectations were in conflict.

The staff and management also held different role expectations for the high school principal. The teachers expected him to be available to them at all times to assist with their problems. The management expected the principal to carry out his other assigned duties, i.e., athletic director, bus supervisor, etc. These expectations were incompatible since to do one rendered the other impossible. This was important since the principal's competency was an issue throughout the conflict.

Social Structure

Population Status and Population Distribution

The pattern of gradual growth and the absence of cleavages along the lines of race, class, ethnicity, or religion indicate these factors did not influence the course of the conflict.
Social Cohesion

The presence of a sharp cleavage appeared to reduce the scope of the conflict. All respondents in the study were of the opinion that although the two subsections were consolidated for school purposes in 1960, they act like two separate groups. Even the parent-teacher organizations refused to join together. As previously stated, laymen refused to be mobilized into groups that included the "enemy." This tended to restrict the conflict to the internal organization.

Economic Structure

Type of Community

The type of school-community did not appear to be a significant factor in influencing the course of the conflict.

Distribution of Wealth and Income

The distribution of corporate wealth and income was viewed as a significant factor in the expansion of the conflict. Although the community is fairly homogeneous as to economic status, overall the community is poor. The school tax rate is 62nd highest in the state, but does not produce sufficient operating revenues to permit adequate financing of the school system. This contributed to the conflict when salary became an issue in 1969.
Taxation

The failure of the school community to support a levy contributed to the continuation of this conflict. The levy failure in May 1969 resulted in sanctions against the local district by the local education association. Salary increases for teachers had been tied to the levy and the teachers were angered by its defeat. In effect, the sanctions were a retaliation against the community.

The levy defeat was the first the district suffered since it was formed in 1960. Although the smaller of the two subdivisions which made up the consolidation traditionally voted against school issues, the larger always carried the issue. However, in May 1969, the larger subsection also rejected the levy.

Vested Economic Interests

Vested economic interests were limited to teachers' salaries. However, this factor seemed to thread its way throughout the conflict.

Mass Media

The local mass media served to broaden the base of participation to a limited degree. This involved the publication of teachers' grievances in connection with the P.R.& R. Study and its subsequent findings. However, in this particular case, it brought a negative response from the public to the teachers' efforts and was thought to have influenced the failure of the school levy.
School Conflict Study 3

Summary

The third school conflict was found in one of Ohio's 11 large cities, a Northern Ohio community of almost 85,000. Although generally described by its residents as a "steel town," a close analysis of the city reveals its industry to be very diversified. The city has been growing rapidly, experiencing a growth of 16,000 since the 1960 Census.

The community prides itself on the "international flavor" of its population and its involvement of the different ethnic and racial groups.

The school enrollment of approximately 16,000 students is distributed over two high schools and twenty elementary schools. It is said a combination of location and attendance area planning permits an enrollment blend in each building that crosses all community lines--cultural, racial, ethnic, economic, and religious.

The most serious problem facing the school district at the time of the conflict was that of finances. School population was increasing rapidly and the tax duplicate failed to keep pace. As a result, teachers salaries were below those of surrounding cities and overcrowding of classrooms was quite common.

In December 1965 a pro-superintendent board member moved out of the community necessitating a replacement. The board selected the brother-in-law of one of the high school principals to fill the vacancy. Shortly thereafter, the board met unofficially and requested the superintendent's resignation. The superintendent refused and the
problem was publicized extensively by the local newspaper and radio station. Because of the pressure of the superintendent's friends, two of the board members were said to have changed sides and supported the superintendent. In any event, in official session, the board voted 3-2 not to renew the superintendent's contract, with one of the negative votes coming from the high school principal's brother-in-law. Immediately the board began a search for a new superintendent. One board member stated that the publicity surrounding the previous superintendent's dismissal, plus other factors, limited the number of applications. In addition, the board made demands which were not agreeable to some of the prime candidates. Finally the board decided that the local candidates were as well qualified as the outsiders and the above mentioned high school principal was appointed superintendent. The vote in this instance was 3-2, the deciding vote being cast by the principal's brother-in-law.

This event created quite a stir in the community, especially in view of the fact that the relationship of the board member and new superintendent was pointed out by the news media. It served to further antagonize those who were already angry over the firing of the previous superintendent.

During 1966-67 the local education association began negotiations with the board of education. Initially, the board negotiated directly with the teachers in closed sessions. However, the newspaper editor began attacking the executive sessions of the board and demanded that all negotiations be conducted before the public. As a result the board acceded to this demand. From this point on, full coverage of
negotiations became public knowledge and, according to the president of the teachers association, this created an even greater cleavage between the board and the teachers, and the teachers and the community.

In May 1965 the board submitted a 10 mill additional operating levy and it was defeated. Following the defeat the board reevaluated and decided to reduce the millage to 5 mills for the November 1967 election.

At this point the teachers association rebelled and refused to support the reduced levy. Their reason was a philosophic one according to their president. The teachers believed that the board should adopt one of two programs--either a full blast program until the money ran out, and then close the schools, or establish priorities and make cutbacks. The board refused to do either, feeling this type of action was a threat. As a result, some of the teachers openly opposed the 5 mill levy in P.T.A. meetings, church meetings, etc. Many people attributed the defeat of the levy to this action of the teachers. Needless to say, the action of the education association led to bitterness and hostility on the part of those citizens who worked for the passage of the levy.

Later, on November 17, 20, and 21, the local education association chose to express their dissatisfaction over low salaries by holding professional study days. At the outset, schools remained open but were finally closed due to the shortage of personnel to staff the classrooms. The issue at stake in this instance was a demand for increased salaries. Teachers felt the board should adopt deficit financing if necessary, whereas the board contended that raises were
contingent on the passage of a levy.

During this period of work stoppage, the education association's attorney brought the board and the teacher representatives together to work out a solution. A fact-finding committee was agreed upon and on December 2, hearings were conducted. The panel concurred with the board that raises should be contingent on levy passage and also recommended that future negotiations be done privately.

In November 1968 the board again attempted to pass an additional levy and again it failed. A majority of the respondents of this study attributed the failure to the antagonism of the public to the teachers. For many people in this union-oriented community the work-stoppage of the previous year was a breach of contract—a 'wildcat strike," dishonest and illegal.

Again the teachers took action by asking the state education association to impose sanctions and as a result a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study Panel was sent in to investigate and report school conditions. Among the findings of the study panel were:

1. The school system is inadequately financed resulting in overcrowded classrooms, lack of adequate facilities, lack of adequate textbooks and teaching supplies and materials, and inadequate staffing of the central office.

2. A credibility gap exists between the board and the public, and the board and the teaching staff.

3. A lack of forceful leadership in the school system.

4. The local education association acted injudiciously in holding the professional study days and failing to support a 5 mill levy. Furthermore, that poor communications on their part contributed to misunderstandings with the board and the public.

Shortly after the publication of the findings of the P.R.& R. Study, a citizen's committee was organized spontaneously by concerned
citizens. This group met with the superintendent and obtained permission to wage a campaign for the passage of a 10 mill levy. The campaign was successful, the teachers received their raises, and the conflict ended.

Analysis

I. Initiating Issue

Although there was some variance of opinion on this point, it appears the conflict initiated early in 1966 when the board asked for the resignation of the superintendent. The superintendent in question had served the community in that capacity for fifteen years and was generally recognized as a competent administrator. When the superintendent refused to resign, he was dismissed by a 3-2 vote. This action generated resistance by the board minority and lay supporters of the superintendent and resulted in immediate protest of the board's action.

Source of the Issue

The source of the initiating issue was internal in origin. A shift in the power structure of the board changed the alignment from a 3-2 pro-superintendent majority to a 3-2 anti-administration majority. This shift made possible the subsequent events which generated conflict in this school community.
Content of the Issue

The content of the issue was rooted in power and authority. The dismissal of the superintendent was viewed as a misuse of power and authority by the board majority inasmuch as there was no evidence to justify their actions. The President of the PTA council verified the degree to which local citizens disagreed with the board in stating "even the former opponents of the superintendent repudiated the board's action because of the manner in which the dismissal was handled."

There was also evidence that the dispute was based on hostile attitudes rather than a particular event, incident, or problem. One respondent stated that one of the board members wanted to get rid of the previous superintendent so he could appoint his friend, the high school principal to the post. The above mentioned board member also indicated that the possibility that previous hostility was a factor by his following statement:

Several years prior to the initiating incident, a new high school was being opened and the superintendent asked the assistant superintendent (present superintendent) to open up the building as principal and that after things were operating well he would bring him back to the central office to assume his old position. The following year, the superintendent moved the assistant high school principal into the assistant superintendent's position thus cutting off the possibility of the former assistant's return.
II. Expansion Factors

The conditions identified by the model as necessary for the expansion of conflict--activists working to expand the conflict, perceived management errors, and a change in the climate of opinion of a sizable segment of the community appeared to be present in this study.

Activists

The initial activists were laymen who were ideologically opposed to the board action. These people were friends and supporters of the superintendent who felt he had been treated unfairly. Their purpose was to generate opposition to the board majority in the hopes they could be pressured into reversing the dismissal of the superintendent. According to one of the board members, a principal figure in the conflict on the majority side, the former superintendent and his supporters worked in the background spreading rumors and dissen­sion. Included in this group was a board member who was strongly opposed to the newly appointed superintendent.

Perceived Management Errors

Management contributed significantly to the expansion of the conflict by compounding the error of misuse of power. This act involved the selection of the newly-appointed board member's brother-in-law as superintendent. This relationship was not lost on the news media and it received wide publicity. As a result ammunition was
provided for additional attacks by the ex-superintendent's adherents. In addition, others not previously involved were led to doubt the motivations of the board majority.

Change in the Climate of Opinion

The loss of credibility by the board of education led to a change in the climate of opinion. This was evidenced by increased attendance at board meetings and the development of factions to oppose the board. Some of the people attending the meetings were there to protest the board's actions; others attended to keep the board under surveillance.

III. Course of the Conflict

Generally speaking the course of the conflict followed an erratic path in that it skipped from one issue to another, expanding the base of participation as it moved.

The Legally Constituted Authority Became the Defendant

As indicated by the model, at the outset the legally constituted authority became the defendant. In this case, the blame was placed on the board majority and they came under attack by local citizens. This was illustrated when soon after the new superintendent's appointment, his brother-in-law, the board member was subjected to harassment and criticism to such a degree that he resigned from the board. This in turn led to accusations that he
had taken the position just long enough to fire the previous superintendent and get the job for his brother-in-law.

Previously Suppressed Issues

Previously suppressed issues appeared to focus on grievances involving the misuse of power. One of the old issues which re-emerged during the present conflict was a fifteen year old controversy over the purchase of a new high school site. Another charge stated that a year earlier the board asked for funds for the completion of one high school and used it to remodel another. A board member said this was untrue. Actually the board submitted a one mill bond issue for completion of the high school building in question and it was defeated and never resubmitted.

Issues Shifted from Specific to General

The issue shifted from specific to general when the nature of charges became vague. In this study such a shift was evident when members of the local teachers association, disgruntled over the levy millage reduction, accused the new superintendent of "unconcern" and a "lack of leadership."

New and Different Issues

The emergence of new and different issues served to broaden the content base of the conflict. The end result was that different people were motivated to participate in the conflict for different
reasons--power and authority, economics, and values and beliefs. The new issues included salary negotiations, failure of teachers to support a school levy, a teacher work stoppage, and the State Association Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study (P.R.& R.).

The salary negotiation issue was grounded in both economics and power and authority. The pressure exerted by the newspaper editor was based on his perception that the board abused its legal authority by holding closed meetings with the representatives of the teachers. On the other hand, the teachers were concerned with improving their incomes. The board gave in under pressure of the news media and negotiating sessions became public. Extensive news coverage of the interplay in future negotiation sessions served to mobilize the public's attitudes toward one side or the other, thereby broadening the participation.

Another issue soon evolved out of the salary negotiations. In this instance members of the Citizen's Committee were offended when the teachers refused to support a school levy. The levy reduction issue was grounded in both economics and values and beliefs. The teachers opposed the reduced levy on the grounds that it was not adequate to do what was needed. The Citizens Committee was offended that teachers would oppose a school tax issue. When the reduced levy failed in November 1967, the reaction of the teachers provided still another issue for community involvement and controversy. The teacher work stoppage expanded the dispute on the basis of economics and values and beliefs. The general public expected a more professional behavior from the teachers and were antagonized by their actions.
There was general agreement that a follow-up levy in November 1968 was defeated because of public reaction to the work stoppage.

The last issue, the P.R.& R. Study, served to reduce the level of conflict. The local association called for the study to exert pressure on the board and the public for support of an adequate school levy. Thus the motivation was viewed as involving both power and economics since salary increases were dependent upon the success of this effort. The reaction to the study produced differences in the school community as had other issues. An assistant superintendent stated that in the long run it was unimportant:

After a few days the P.R.& R. Study was forgotten by the general public. Others stated that the threat of sanctions was influential in passing a 10 mill levy in May 1968.

**Shift from Disagreement to Antagonism**

A shift from disagreement to antagonism was brought about by a focus of direct hostility on individuals rather than issues. This appeared to occur immediately following the appointment of the new superintendent. The attack on the board member who is the new superintendent's brother-in-law is evidence of this condition. However, it also occurred later in the conflict when the new superintendent was accused by the teachers of trying to please everyone. It was also stated that he did not represent the teachers and did not inform the board of the real needs of the school district. These charges were made on the heels of the board reduction of the 10 mill levy. The president of the teachers association also claimed he was attacked both in public and in the press for the actions of the teachers.
Shift from Antagonism to Polarization

The shift from antagonism to polarization was evidenced by the withdrawal of school support by a group of individuals previously active in supporting the school district. The people involved in this action were the supporters of the previous superintendent. The withdrawal took place following the appointment of the new superintendent. A leader of the citizen's group who successfully promoted the passage of a 10 mill levy in the spring of 1968 revealed the degree of polarization as follows:

The former superintendent's supporters refuse to support anything the new superintendent promotes. They claim they will not help promote school issues until the present superintendent is dismissed. We passed the levy only because the superintendent and board remained out of the campaign and let us run it.

IV. Factors Which Affected the Course of the Conflict

Structure of Authority

Distribution of Power

A change in a stable pattern of relationships within the organization led to conflict in this study. In this instance, a shift occurred in the power structure of a factional (3-2) board of education. Overnight the anti-administrator minority became the majority and soon the superintendent was dismissed. This action initiated the conflict. A second shift in the pattern of stable relationships when the teachers association became militant and began making demands on the board. This action served to expand
the conflict. A third change occurred when the composition of the board changed through the election process and resignations. This served to end the conflict.

The Use of Power

The illegitimate use of power by individuals or groups generated opposition leading to conflict, as well as the expansion and continuation of conflict already underway. In this study both the board of education and the local teachers association were viewed as using their power illegitimately. This was illustrated by:

1. Board dismissal of a respected superintendent without sufficient cause created antagonism in the school community and initiated the conflict.

2. The appointment of a board member's brother-in-law as superintendent was also viewed as illegitimate, that is improper, and served to expand the conflict.

3. The case of the teachers first withholding their support of a levy and later withholding their services through professional study days also created new issues and brought formerly inactive citizens into the conflict.

Internal-External Relations

Dysfunctions in the organization's sub-parts and in its ability to relate to the school community were major factors in the expansion of conflict in this study. First, there was evidence of
goal differentiation between the management and the professional staff. Second, there was evidence that the school district was unable to communicate the educational needs to its constituents--the lay public. These problems are illustrated by the following incidents. The defeat of the 10 mill levy, the subsequent reduction of the levy to 5 mills, and the refusal of the teachers association to support the reduced millage indicated different philosophies existed between the board and the teachers. According to the leadership of the teachers association, the board and superintendent failed to advise the community of the school problems. What public relations that existed were slanted toward the "everything is alright" theme. Therefore, the public did not really feel the school's needs were very serious.

Social-Personal Relations

Friendship and family relationship contributed to the conflict by changing power relationships. It appeared that the friendship of the board president with the then high school principal and the principal's family relationship with a second board member motivated the dismissal of the superintendent and his replacement with the high school principal. These acts led to the initiation and expansion of the conflict.
Conflicting Expectations

The different expectations held for individuals and groups were a source of misunderstanding, hostility and conflict. In this study there was ample evidence of role-personality conflict and role conflict.

Evidence of role-personality conflict was illustrated by the teachers expecting the new superintendent to publicize the deficiencies of the school system in order to pass a levy. The superintendent's personal need was to quiet down the community and bring stability to his own position.

Social Structure

In keeping with the model, three major categories of the social structure were analyzed for their contribution to the conflict. They were population, status, social stratification, and the pattern of social interaction.

Population Status

The population characteristic that appeared to be significant in this study was rapid growth. During the period of the conflict the school community grew from an estimated 79,700 to 84,857. This growth, which was not accompanied by a proportionate increase in tax valuation, created financial problems for the school district which were reflected in the conflict.
Part of the teachers resistance to the reduction of the 10 mill levy was based on the needs of the district that were not being met, i.e., classrooms overcrowded, deteriorating equipment and outdated textbooks, plus low teachers salaries.

Population Distribution

Population distribution according to race, class, and ethnicity was not considered to be a significant factor in the conflict. However, the distribution in regard to religion was viewed as a factor. In this instance a large Catholic population made up a sizable block of the total and they were in the process of building a new high school. This fact was viewed as a possible factor in the defeat of the public school levy which led to the work stoppages by the teachers.

Social Cohesion

A favorable pattern of social interaction was viewed as a significant factor in the reduction of conflict. The community is described by one lay person as the best example of democracy in action one can find. She stated that most of the community planning committees are constituted of different ethnic, racial, and religious groups. This is also characteristic of service and civic organizations. This condition served to reduce cleavages along class, ethnic, racial and religious lines and to foster identification with the community as a whole. Therefore, this variable was seen as a vehicle for permitting the rallying of the community for the solution of its problem.
Economic Structure

The variables assumed as important by the model are type of community, effect of distribution of wealth and income, taxation, and vested economic interests.

Type of Community

The type of community was considered to be a significant factor in the expansion of the conflict. The community under study is a self-contained city where people both live and work. It was described by its residents as a "steel" town where both business and industry depend on the demand for steel and the economy it produces. The P.R.& R. Study, as well as data from the Chamber of Commerce, reveal that in 1967 business conditions were not at their best. The demand for steel and its allied products was down and unemployment up.

Although it cannot be proven, it is logical that many taxpayers were influenced by the bleak business outlook and were not willing to assume additional taxes at this time. This no doubt influenced many negative votes against the school levy.

Distribution of Wealth and Income

The distribution of wealth and income was considered to be a significant factor in the expansion of the conflict. However, it was not based just on unequal distribution of income but also on overall low incomes and high unemployment levels. It was felt that low income levels coupled with deteriorating business conditions led a
substantial portion of the citizens to be unconcerned about low teachers' salaries. This no doubt contributed to school levy failures and subsequent militancy on the part of the teachers.

The average family income in the city was estimated at slightly above $8,000 in 1969. This figure is well below the national average of $9,012 for the same year, indicating a lack of overall affluency. Another indicator of low income level is the fact that 1,300 students are on Aid to Dependent Children. This represents slightly more than 8 percent of the total student body living at substandard or bare minimum levels.

Taxation

Taxation in itself was not a contributing factor in the conflict, except for the fact that school levies failed in 1967 and 1968 and thus generated conflict. Prior to the passage of the 10 mill levy in 1968, school tax rates were slightly below the state average. Thus additional taxes were not rejected because they were too high. Furthermore, the citizens were not anti-tax conscious since a levy for a new hospital and a university branch had been approved in the last several years.

Vested Economic Interests

There was no evidence that business interests were involved in the conflict, however, the vested interest of teachers for salary increases played a significant role. Their drive for higher salaries
resulted in the teacher work stoppages and the intervention by the state association. One citizen, a PTA leader, asserted this was a major factor in stating that none of the school's problems were so great that teachers could not have lived with them if salaries had been adequate. Things have not really changed much since the levy passed, but now that the teachers have received their raises things have quieted down.

Mass Media

The local news media contributed to the course of the content by expanding the base of participation and by biased use of power. Extensive coverage of the superintendent's dismissal and the hiring of his successor took the issue into every home in the community. Since most of the publicity was critical of the board, many people were inflamed by it and entered into the conflict. This was a consensus among those interviewed.

The newspaper editor used his power to defeat a bond issue in the early sixties. He was a staunch advocate of the "pay-as-you-go" plan of financing capital improvements. This defeat of the levy contributed to teacher dissatisfaction with overcrowding of the schools. In addition, this editor used the power of the press to force the board into open negotiations with the teachers. Because of this, every disagreement was front page news and a picture of turmoil was created for public consumption.
Summary

The fourth school conflict occurred in an Eastern Ohio city of 21,000. Located on the banks of the Ohio River and the hills overlooking it, the city reveals two different faces to the visitor. One is the downtown business and residential areas consisting of old, sometimes substandard, buildings located near the river's edge. The other is the newer and more attractive homes of the hill section. The social structure of the city is approximately 90 percent English ancestry, 6.3 mixed ethnic groups, and 3.7 Negro.

In the 1940's the city lost most of its pottery industries and is now primarily a residential area. Lacking employment at home the residents travel to nearby cities to work in the potteries and steel mills. Those working in the potteries number almost one third of the city's work population and are forced to exist on annual salaries of $4,000-$5,000. The steel workers are said to earn an average of approximately $8,000 per year. This combination thus tends to reflect a low overall income level. Compounding the economic problem is the low property valuation of $9,300 per pupil.

In light of the overall wealth of the community, one is pleasantly surprised to find relatively new school buildings housing the district's 5,700 students. This was accomplished through a major bonding effort in the early 60's. However, that is where affluence ends since the district has been unable to keep pace with other cities in regard to teachers' salaries. Furthermore, efforts
to correct this condition through the passage of additional millage had failed three times since 1967.

The conflict became public knowledge early in November 1968. At this time, football season was over and basketball practice had begun. One evening, during basketball practice, the assistant coach sent one of the players to the equipment room to take a whirlpool treatment for an injury. The equipment manager, who also served as assistant football coach, upon finding the basketball player unattended and preparing to take a treatment, went to the gym and advised the assistant that athletic policy required supervision during whirlpool treatments and suggested that he send someone to accompany the boy. The assistant coach refused, stating that football coaches did not always follow the rule. When the equipment manager sent the boy back to the gym, the assistant basketball coach reported the incident to the head coach.

The head coach became angry saying, "This is it," dismissed the team, and notified the high school principal of his resignation as basketball coach. The principal notified the superintendent of the problem and the superintendent called the basketball coach and arranged a conference for the following day. The following day, however, the basketball coach called in sick and the conference was cancelled.

On the day following this incident the basketball coach, who was also president of the local teachers association, circulated a letter to the teachers of the district criticizing the athletic director—football coach. Among the charges levied against the athletic director were reporting late for his classes, failing to meet his
classes, and failing to perform his duties as intramural director. In addition, the basketball coach was said to have been active in trying to get the basketball team to walk out of school in support of him.

These activities had the desired effect and on November 22, some of the high school teachers failed to report to their classes. In addition, word had reached the superintendent of an impending student walk-out at the high school. To forestall this happening, the superintendent called off classes for that day.

The superintendent spent a full week talking with the two coaches in an effort to solve the dispute. Neither he nor the board of education wanted to lose either coach since both had been very successful and were highly regarded by the community. During this period of discussion the major obstacle was the basketball coach's demand that the athletic director be stripped of his authority over the basketball program. Eventually the board and superintendent acceded to his demands and by a 3-2 board vote the athletic director's authority over basketball was temporarily suspended.

Immediately following the announcement of this action, all but two assistant coaches submitted their resignations in protest. This motivated the board to rescind their previous action and the athletic director's authority over basketball was reinstated.

In the meantime, the superintendent had contacted the Executive Secretary of the Ohio Association of School Administrators and requested an impartial study be made. Early in December a panel of consultants, which included the Executive Secretary of the OASA, the Commissioner of Ohio High School Athletics, the President of the Ohio
Coaches Association, and a city superintendent conducted a study and, among other things, recommended the separation of the position of athletic director from active coaching. The superintendent followed through on this recommendation and submitted it for board approval in January, 1969. The recommendation was defeated by a 3-2 vote. This study and publicity that accompanied it helped make the conflict more visible.

When the study was completed in December, 1968, the executive officers of the teachers association expressed their dissatisfaction with it and requested an investigation by the State Education Association. One criticism of the consultant's study was that it was too administration oriented.

The State Education Association responded to the local teachers association request by conducting a preliminary study on January 10-11, 1969. The study panel verified the need for a full-scale study and on February 25-28, a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission Study was conducted. According to the report, 90 witnesses were heard.

In short, the report criticized the superintendent and high school principal for not exerting leadership at crucial stages of the conflict, criticized the board for interfering in the administration of the athletic program, recommended the position of athletic director-football coach be separated, and suggested that the teachers association put their own house in order.

The reactions to the P.R.& R. Study were varied. The basketball coach-president of the teachers association was extremely critical of the report. He felt that the P.R.& R. Study glossed over or ignored
their specific complaints. Other members of the teachers association reacted by demanding the board of education take action to implement the recommendations. Support for this action was forthcoming by the local radio station and newspaper.

The superintendent renewed his recommendation that the position of athletic director and football coach be separated at the June 2 meeting. By this time, community interest in the problem had reached its greatest height and over 150 people were present at the meeting. This time, reluctantly and by a 3-2 vote, the board accepted the recommendation.

During this meeting the superintendent was publicly attacked by a board member. The board member criticized him for not taking stronger action at the initiation of the conflict and stated that the school situation would not improve until the superintendent and assistant superintendent were out of the system.

The consensus of opinion in mid July was that the conflict was still far from settled. This was illustrated by the board president's statement that last week the football coach interjected himself into a Kiwanis program and proceeded to attack the school administration.

Analysis

I. Initiating Issue

The issue which initiated the conflict was a staff revolt against the organizational power structure. More specifically, the conflict was initiated during November 1968 when an assistant
basketball coach and the athletic equipment manager became involved in a dispute over the use of the whirlpool equipment.

**Source of the Issue**

The source of the initiating issue was internal in origin and was rooted in disagreement over the distribution and use of power. Some of the staff members, especially the basketball coach, resented what they thought was an unfair and unhealthy power relationship between the athletic director and certain board members. They felt this relationship favored the football program.

**Content of the Issue**

The content of the issue was also based on the distribution and exercise of power and authority. The real issue was not whether it was proper for a person taking a whirlpool bath to be accompanied by another person, but rather the way the rule was applied. The basketball coaches felt the rule was being enforced against them but ignored for the football team.

It was evident that the initiating issue was also based on previous hostility between the football coach-athletic director and the head basketball coach. The following interview data from the athletic director and principal illustrate this point.

Several years earlier a disagreement arose over the wrestling team practicing on the stage of the city auditorium at the same time the basketball team was on the court. The athletic director moved the wrestling team out, although there were some hard feelings.
When the new high school was occupied, a similar issue arose and this time the athletic director refused the basketball coach's request. The basketball coach then appealed to the principal and the wrestling team was moved. Shortly thereafter, the basketball coach requested the exclusive use of one of the two dressing rooms. The athletic director refused and again the principal overruled him. The athletic director then took both matters to the athletic board and this time the principal was overruled.

In yet another instance, the athletic director and basketball coach were at odds over the latter exceeding team expense allowances during tournament play.

Each of these confrontations served to intensify the hostility between the athletic director-football coach and the basketball coach.

II. Expansion Factors

The conditions necessary for conflict expansion were assumed to be activists working to expand the issue, perceived management errors, and a change in the climate of opinion of a sizable segment of the school community. All three factors appeared to be present in this conflict.

Activists

The readily available power base of the local teachers association provided a convenient vehicle for the expansion of the conflict. The basketball coach used this vehicle to place the issue in a larger context and thereby remove it from being classified as a personality
clash. In this manner, other members of the staff not directly involved in the initiating event were drawn into the conflict and used in the basketball coach's search for power. This was illustrated by the reaction of the teachers to the basketball coach's letter criticizing the athletic director-football coach.

Once the basketball coach was assured of the support of a large number of staff members he moved quickly to exercise his new power by demanding that the athletic director be stripped of his authority over the basketball program. This was his condition for returning to his coaching position.

Perceived Management Errors

The vacillation of the board and superintendent contributed to the expansion of the conflict. Their action of shifting from one position to another to avoid the greater pressure being exerted at the time resulted in new issues being generated and brought additional people into the conflict. Up to the time of the study (July 1969), the board had not stood firm on a single decision pertaining to the conflict.

The superintendent and school board contributed to the expansion of the conflict by acceding to the demands of the basketball coach. When the athletic director's authority over the basketball program was temporarily suspended, all but two assistant coaches submitted their resignation. This resulted in the reversal of that decision and the conflict was back to its original point.

The effort of the superintendent to have the problem reviewed
by an outside team met with failure also and resulted in further expansion of the conflict. Neither the basketball coach, athletic director, nor the board were satisfied with their recommendations. As a result, the local teachers association requested an investigation by the state education association. This investigation brought widespread publicity of the problem and a threat of sanctions against the local district.

Probably the most significant factor in the expansion of the conflict was the reluctance of the superintendent to take positive action on his own initiative. Both coaches were popular and successful. He did not want to lose either since this would bring a strong public reaction. A second factor controlling positive action was the possibility of teacher reaction if the basketball coach was dismissed and school board reaction if he ruled against the athletic director. Thus, positive action against either faction rendered him vulnerable.

**Change in the Climate of Opinion**

The change in the climate of opinion was generated by opposition based on personalities. Initially, uncommitted persons were mobilized to support one faction or another on the basis of existing personal relationships and loyalties.

The above analysis was supported by interview data as follows. The basketball squad was active in trying to instigate a student walk-out in support of the basketball coach. To counteract this effort, the members of the football squad rallied to support the football coach (athletic director). Close associates of the basketball coach, those
active in the teachers association, became active in support of his cause. At the same time, all but two members of the coaching staff sided with the football coach.

Although the general public was slow to react, the continuation of the conflict over an extended period of time brought a rather large group of laymen into the conflict in its later stages. This was illustrated when the number of persons attending the board meetings quickly increased from a half dozen to thirty-five, most of whom were teachers. By June 1969, the attendance had swelled to one hundred and fifty and included many lay people. Characteristic of lay participation was factional support--some for the basketball coach, others for the football coach.

III. Course of the Conflict

The distribution of power and authority was the "bone of contention" throughout the conflict even though different subjects, individuals, and groups were involved at various times. Although the conflict had not ended at the time of this study (July 1969), except for polarization, all of the elements advanced by the model were present.

Legally Constituted Authority Became the Defendant

Evidence from this study indicates that lower levels of management may be held accountable for their behavior. This point was substantiated when the athletic director became the initial defendant in this conflict. In this case, the conflict was taken immediately to the top administrative level for solution. Failure to solve the
problem at this level caused it to be carried upward to the board of education. Characteristic of this conflict was the fact that each time a new management level was involved (e.g., principal, superintendent, board) it became the defendant.

Thus blame was shifted at various stages to different levels and focused on different individuals.

Previously Suppressed Issues

The previously suppressed issues in this study appeared to be based upon personal grievances involving the misuse of power. One example of such grievances was that expressed by the basketball coach in his letter to the teaching staff. In essence, the athletic director was accused of abusing his powers.

The athletic director admitted the charge concerning his influence with the board had some substance. However, he defended himself saying:

The only response I can get from the superintendent is why things cannot be done. This board member gets these things done.

Another grievance advanced by the athletic director concerned the use of power by the officers of the teachers association. He stated that most of the coaches do not belong to the teachers association because they were not notified about meetings, secret meetings were held, and all members were not given the opportunity to vote for officers.
Issues Shift from Specific to General

Power and authority remained the central issue; however, the emphasis shifted from issues to individuals, from one individual to another, and the nature of the charges changed from specific to general. This was illustrated by the initial antagonists, the athletic director and basketball coach, leveling charges of incompetency against the superintendent.

A counter-attack on the basketball coach was illustrated by the following. Several of the board members, along with the superintendent, revealed a recent investigation of the basketball coach indicated that he had experienced similar problems in previous positions. Board members of one school where he had been employed referred to him as a "trouble-maker." Another board characterized him as an "organizer." According to the superintendent the basketball coach's contract was not renewed at either of the two previous schools where he worked. It disturbed the superintendent that he did not learn these facts from his calls prior to employing him.

New and Different Issues

New and different issues appeared as the conflict continued; however, power and authority was the content of each new issue. The new issues included the demands of the teachers association to negotiate coaches' salaries, the State Association Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study (P.R.& R.), and anti-administration attacks.

The teachers association demanded the right to negotiate coaches' salaries in their search for power as a means of controlling
was whitewashed.

The research could find no evidence that the administration
for the most part, the criticisms appeared to be valid. How-
were not changed to make athletes eligible.
the coaching staff did not encourage his authority and that grades
The principal stated that contrary to the study, members of
( by the superintendent).
problems. He also rejected the charge that board members encouraged
The study team saying they were unable to solve their own school’s
the board president was critical of some of the members of
to face his accusers.
representative, and the fact that he was not given the opportunity
the basketball coach’s friendship with the state association area
did not include an athletic director, that it was based because of
athletic director was critical because the membership of the committee
worthlessness of the administration. The football coach -
through for different reasons. The basketball coach said it was
criticism of the board, R. Study was almost unanimous, Al-
disagreed.
then because of the fear of state-wide sanctions, even though they
acted in June 1969 to separate the athletic director- football post
citation. The evidence shows this move was successful since the board
they sought to bring to bear the power of the state education asso-
association, unable to gain their objectives through other methods.
The P.R.A. study was also a search for power by the teachers
the athletic director and members of the coaching staff.
Other evidence revealed a shift toward centering the conflict on the administration. There was almost universal agreement that this was the case, including the superintendent. Illustrations of this trend were: 1) The athletic director's verbal attack on the superintendent at a July 1969 Kiwanis meeting; 2) In the July board meeting the superintendent was verbally attacked by a board member who charged him with lack of leadership and assigned the blame for the conflict to him; 3) In the interview with the basketball coach, he charged the superintendent with dishonesty and lack of courage to face problems.

**Shift from Disagreement to Antagonism**

Conflict moved from disagreement to antagonism by the focus of direct hostility toward individuals rather than on issues. This appeared to occur immediately after the conflict was initiated. The first example was the letter circulated to teachers wherein the athletic director was accused of failing to carry out his duties properly. This action brought a counter-attack against the basketball coach and from this point on, as new persons became involved they became subject to personal attack. Such attacks took the form of rumors, direct accusations, and anonymous letters and phone calls.

**Shift from Antagonism to Polarization**

There was no evidence that polarization occurred in this conflict.
III. Factors Affecting the Course of the Conflict

Structure of Authority

Distribution of Power

Shifts in the distribution of power served to expand the conflict. Initially all of the power resided in the legally constituted authority, the board of education and those to whom they delegated authority. In this distribution of power the athletic director was in firm control of the athletic program through both legal authority and informal power emanating from his relationship with board members. This was particularly important since all five board members were members of the Athletic Board and controlled it by virtue of constituting a majority.

The revolt against this authority and power, led by the basketball coach-president of the teachers association, brought to bear the informal power of the teachers association. This power was formidable enough to close off the normal avenues for dealing with such revolt and the conflict was allowed to expand. Once expanded, it was moved forward by the hostilities of the individuals involved.

In the course of the conflict, the teachers association was able to marshall additional power through support from the local news media and the state education association. The inability of both the superintendent and board to gain sufficient community support to counteract this added power rendered them vulnerable to further pressure and attack.
Use of Power

The perceived illegitimate use of authority and of power by the board of education created the conditions necessary for the initiation and continuation of the conflict. The evidence of the study reveals that the board of education usurped the authority of superintendent and principal by taking and maintaining control of the Athletic Board. Theoretically the Athletic Board is composed primarily of professional educators. The influence of the athletic director with the board enabled him to gain power over the superintendent and high school principal, as well as the basketball coach. In a sense, the basketball coach's action was a revolt against this set of circumstances.

The counterbalancing effect of the use of informal power was illustrated by the basketball coach's use of the local and state education associations. The combined power of these organizations and their threat of sanctions forced the board to actions which brought hostile reactions from other factions, i.e., coaches.

This contention for power created deep hostility among the principal adversaries and resulted in a deep cleavage within the school staff and members of the board of education.

Internal-External Relations

The inability of the school organization to solve its internal problems contributed to the expansion of the conflict. The undue emphasis on athletics and the excessive power wielded by the athletic director was a source of dissatisfaction for many staff members and made them predisposed to join the conflict.
However, there was no evidence that dysfunctional external relations contributed to the conflict.

Conflicting Expectations

Role conflict contributed significantly to the expansion of the conflict. For example, the superintendent was subjected to incompatible and inconsistent expectations by the basketball coach and football coach. When the conflict initiated and the superintendent was in conference with the two men, both expected support. When he did not evidence that support immediately, both looked on him as weak and indecisive.

It was also present in the athletic director's role. In the eyes of the administration and board he was doing a commendable job, whereas in the view of the basketball coach and his cohorts he was shirking his duty.

Probably even more significant was the role-personality conflict evident in the board of education members. The overwhelming pressures of their role told them they should separate the athletic director- football coach position to bring peace to the school district. Their own personal wishes to retain the position as it was got in the way and they resisted the pressures, thereby prolonging the conflict.

Social Structure

Population Status

The stability and homogeneity of the community indicates that population status was not a significant factor in the expansion of the
conflict. However, perhaps this stability and homogeneity limited the expansion of the conflict.

**Population Distribution**

The absence of divisiveness along the lines of race, ethnicity, class and religion indicates these factors were not significant in this conflict.

**Social Cohesion**

The pattern of social cohesion did not appear to affect the course of the conflict. This is difficult to explain since the school as well as community organizations provide linkage to tie the community together. Yet, community response to the problem was minimal.

**Economic Structure**

The type of community, distribution of wealth and income, taxation, and vested economic interests did not appear to be major factors in influencing the course of the conflict.

**Mass Media**

Local mass media contributed to the expansion and continuation of the conflict by broadening the base of participation and contributing power to those in revolt. Extensive day-to-day coverage of the dispute by radio and newspaper clearly established the lines of demarcation between the opponents and thus helped to mobilize additional participants. This expanded the conflict.
As the conflict continued, the local mass media took the side of the aggressors, the teacher association complex, and called for the separation of the athletic director-football coach position. This action served to lend credibility to the teacher association power complex and reinforced their resolve to continue the conflict.
School Conflict Study 5

Summary

The locale of the fifth school is a Southwestern Ohio school community of approximately 10,000 people. It is a rural residential area covering 11.6 square miles. The population is located in eight geographical subdivisions, the largest of which contains approximately half of the total population.

In the early 1950's this school community was envied by surrounding districts for its wealth. The presence of a large electric power plant coupled with a student population of 300-400 enabled them to pay higher salaries and provide almost any educational materials desired. Soon after World War II, the population began expanding and by 1969 the enrollment reached 2,700. This pupil growth, although it has not impoverished the district, has considerably lowered the tax base per pupil.

It is estimated that approximately 75 percent of the population have migrated from Kentucky. Since there is no industry to speak of, the majority of the population works in the industries of nearby cities.

Conflict came to this school community quite unexpectedly in February, 1966. At this time word leaked to the community of the board's intention to replace the very popular high school principal prior to the next school year. The proposed action was a surprise to everyone concerned and people immediately began demanding reasons for this decision. It was soon learned that the decision had been reached by an unofficial 3-2 vote at an executive session of the board. When
questioned by the public the minority bloc of the board disclaimed any responsibility for the decision and vocally opposed it. The majority bloc refused to comment.

The refusal of the majority bloc to give reasons for their actions angered many of the citizens and a citizens' committee was organized to oppose the principal's dismissal. Public meetings were held, petitions were circulated, and widespread publicity followed. However, it was all in vain for at the March 1966 meeting, the board voted 3-2 not to renew the principal's administrative contract. This action was taken in spite of the recommendation of both the local and county superintendents that he be reemployed.

Opposition to the board action continued. In March a petition containing over 1,900 signatures was submitted to the board requesting the principal's reinstatement. Although the petition was accepted, the board majority remained adamant and refused to reverse its decision. Shortly thereafter, approximately two-thirds of the 600 member high school student body walked out of a school assembly in protest of the board's action. This event was covered by a television station.

Later, the high school principal contacted the board and offered a compromise solution. The suggestion was that he be appointed head basketball coach. This was agreeable to the board and also served to placate the angry community.

Soon after the conflict over the principal's dismissal, one of the majority bloc became highly critical of the superintendent's behavior. In subsequent months, this veteran of 23 years was berated by the board majority for his handling of the student walkout,
expulsions, the assignment of a woman bus driver, and school business practices.

Early in January 1967, the local teachers began preparing for a professional negotiations contract with the board. Meetings were held with a representative of the state education association to gain advice on the nature and format of a negotiation instrument. An instrument was prepared and ratified by the membership on January 31, 1967. Copies were then sent to the board and administration and arrangements made for its formal presentation to the board on February 13.

In the meantime, relations between the superintendent and board continued to deteriorate and the school community was again shocked by word that the superintendent's contract would not be renewed. Anticipating this event, a large group of citizens were present at the February 13 board meeting. At this time the rumor became fact and the board, by a 3-2 vote, failed to renew the superintendent's contract in spite of the pleas of the county superintendent. Several people arose to speak in behalf of the superintendent. The speakers were called "out of order" by the president. No further discussion of the issue was permitted and tempers ran high as a result. Lost in the midst of the conflict over the superintendent's dismissal was a request of a representative of the teachers association for board ratification of the professional negotiation contract. Due to the size of the agenda, action on it was tabled until March 6.

Response to the superintendent's dismissal, although more evenly divided than in the case of the high school principal, was immediate and strong. Open antagonism was expressed toward the majority
bloc of the board. Area newspapers flooded the school community with reporters to make "man-on-the-street" type interviews. Again the majority bloc of the board refused to give reasons for its action, whereas the minority bloc blasted the majority for acting on the basis of grudge. Numerous editorials were written and published, almost all of which were highly uncomplimentary to the board majority. Public meetings were organized and large numbers attended. These meetings became quite vicious at times. Talk generally centered around the removal of the majority members at election time.

At the March 6 meeting, attendance was again large and at least ten persons spoke on the subject of the superintendent's dismissal. The board majority was challenged to give the real reasons for their action, but refused to comment. This meeting was again characterized by intense hostility. Following the discussion of the above issue, the board again tabled the professional negotiation matter until March 13.

On March 13, the board met and accepted the negotiation document by a 5-0 vote, pending certain changes. Agreement was reached that the changes were to be made and the document returned for the board president's signature. According to the secretary of the association, the changes were made immediately and the document was sent to the board president.

By April 25 the board president still had not signed the document. When contacted he requested a membership list and it was provided. At the suggestion of the state association representative a registered letter was sent to each board member establishing a deadline for the signature by 3:00 p.m., May 2. The board president responded by saying
that he could not sign without authorization from the other members and asked the association president to attend the May 8 board meeting. The meeting still did not produce the necessary signature and another meeting was scheduled on May 16 to discuss the document, salary schedule, sick leave, and other fringe benefits.

Finally, on May 16 the document was signed and the board agreed to review the budget and contact the teachers about a salary meeting. By this time, several of the more militant members of the teachers association were convinced that the board was "stalling" and advocated a strike on May 17. However, cooler heads prevailed and this action was temporarily averted. Teacher dissatisfaction continued to mount as days passed without word from the board and on May 25 a meeting of the association was called to discuss the matter. The result was the passage of a measure to ask the state education association to impose sanctions against the district. A letter was sent to the board stating the association's intentions if the board failed to meet with them by May 30 or if the results of the meeting were unsatisfactory.

Failing to receive a response, the local association proceeded to meet with state association leaders and requested a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study of the school district. The state association responded by sending a six member team to make a study of conditions in the district on July 10-12, 1967. The report was published during the summer and contained seventeen recommendations for the improvement of the school district.

In July 1967, a new superintendent came on the job and the
conflict began to quiet down. Salary adjustments were made and the majority board member up for re-election resigned. The election of a new member in November 1967 changed the alignment of the board and also helped to relieve the tension.

Analysis

I. Initiating Issue

The conflict was initiated by rumors of the impending dismissal of a popular administrator. The board's decision to dismiss the high school principal was reached unofficially at an executive meeting early in 1966. The principal under discussion had served the local community in that capacity for the past ten years and was very popular with most of the students, parents, and staff. The refusal of the majority bloc of the board to give valid reasons for its actions mobilized a large segment of the community to oppose them.

Source of the Issue

The source of the issue was internal in origin and a direct result of a shift in the board power structure. In January 1966, two new members assumed office. Both expressed dissatisfaction with the administration and their election changed the board structure from a 4-1 pro-administration to a 3-2 anti-administration alignment. This shift made possible the subsequent events which led to conflict.
Content of the Issue

The content of the issue was rooted in the distribution of power and authority. The impending dismissal of the high school principal was viewed as a misuse of power and authority by a substantial part of the community and the board minority. In essence, they did not feel the board majority had the right to arbitrarily dismiss the principal without good reasons, i.e., incompetency, immorality, inefficiency, insubordination and other legally accepted causes. The board majority, on the other hand, felt as duly elected representatives they were not required by law to justify their actions and therefore would not do so. Unable to restrain the board's proposed action through legal channels, a sizable segment of the community undertook to mobilize social power as a deterrent.

There was also evidence that the dispute was based on hostile attitudes rather than a particular event, incident. The belief most commonly accepted was that the action was based on spite or revenge by a majority bloc board member. Five or six years earlier the principal had expelled this man's son for chronic truancy. When the parents were notified of the suspension, the father was alleged to have come to the school and "cursed out" everyone involved. Later, he brought a lawyer to the board meeting to try to influence the board to remove the expulsion so his son could enter a nearby high school without a blemish on his record. The board refused this request. The board member denied this allegation, saying his only motivation was to improve the school system.
II. Expansion Factors

The conditions identified by the model as necessary for the expansion of conflict-activists working to expand the conflict, perceived management errors, and a change in the climate of opinion appeared to be present in this study.

Activists

The activists in this conflict included people who were ideologically opposed to the board's actions and at least one "radical" layman. Included in those who were instrumental in the expansion of the conflict were laymen, teachers, and students.

According to interviews, the first activist was a local woman who called for a public meeting to organize resistance to the principal's dismissal. Over 100 attended and were organized into twelve subdivisions, each with a captain. These groups advertised their cause through printed flyers and "coffee klatches."

Yet another tack was taken by a former teacher and a "radical" town councilman. Their activity consisted of circulating a petition for the retention of the principal and over 1,900 signatures were gathered. This petition was submitted to the board and received without action. (One board member said many of the signatures were in the same hand and therefore invalid.)

The teachers also contributed to the expansion of the conflict. The association sent a letter to the board demanding reasons for their actions. Individual teachers participated in the public meetings and were alleged to have contributed money to finance the "coffee klatches" and flyers.
At the height of the conflict, approximately two thirds of the 600 member high school student body walked out of school in protest. The protest had been planned in advance and was covered by a television station from a nearby city.

These activists were significant in that they influenced larger numbers of people to become involved.

**Perceived Management Errors**

Management contributed significantly to the expansion of the conflict by compounding the error of misuse of power and failing to heed the popular desires of the community.

Evidence gathered from interviews and news releases revealed the board majority refused to discuss their reasons for wanting to dismiss the high school principal. Furthermore, in spite of the public pressures and the recommendations of the local and county superintendents that the principal be reappointed, they voted 3-2 for his dismissal. When individuals present at the meeting sought recognition to protest the action, they were denied and called out of order. The basis for this action was a policy requiring those wishing to participate in a board meeting to request permission in writing a week prior to the meeting. Thus, individuals already intensely concerned were further antagonized.

The division of the board into a majority-minority bloc also was viewed as a factor which expanded the conflict. The minority bloc sided with the opposition, thus giving credence to the opposition.
Change in the Climate of Opinion

A change in the climate of opinion was motivated by personality and the loss of credibility of the board of education. The citizen's group activities reflected active opposition to the board and the entry of larger numbers of lay citizens into the conflict, i.e., public meetings called by lay citizens and petition. Attendance at the board meeting consisted of only a handful prior to the conflict; however, shortly after its initiation attendance rose to between 75-100. At its height, attendance rose to over 200.

III. Course of the Conflict

This conflict appeared to consist of three separate conflict situations, each containing most of the elements described by the model. Thus it gave the appearance of initiating, peaking, and receding on three different occasions—the dismissal of the high school principal, the dismissal of the superintendent, and the board-teacher conflict over personnel negotiations and salaries.

Legally Constituted Authority Became the Defendant

The majority bloc of the board was the defendant throughout the conflict. At the time of the dismissal of the high school principal and superintendent, they were attacked in the news media and public meetings by lay citizens, other board members, students, and parents for capricious behavior. In the case of the board-local education association conflict over personnel negotiations, the board was charged with stalling.
The refusal of the majority to discuss their actions or to justify them in any way rendered them subject to attack. This behavior closed off face-to-face communication, broadened the cleavage between the board and the community, and forced the dissenters to attack them through non-organization channels, i.e., news media, public meetings, flyers, etc.

Previously Suppressed Issues

The previously suppressed issues that emerged in this study appeared to be based upon grievances involving the misuse of power. In each case, the board or individual board members were cited as the offender by those who perceived themselves offended by the acts. Therefore, previously suppressed issues emerged soon after the initiation of each of the separate conflict situations, i.e., dismissal of principal, dismissal of superintendent, and teacher-board dispute over negotiations.

In the superintendent's case, the previously suppressed issues involved a majority board member (other than the one involved in the principal's case) and his search for power to achieve his personal goal the dismissal of the superintendent. The superintendent related the following incidents to illustrate this point.

This board member was first elected to the board in 1956. All went well until the end of the second year when he came in conflict with the superintendent over the retention of his son's kindergarten and first grade teachers. At the contract renewal meeting, he accused the kindergarten teacher of misbehavior and the first grade teacher of incompetency. When the superintendent refused to dismiss the teachers,
the board member accused him of knowing the facts about the teachers and refusing to do anything about it. The board supported the superintendent.

This same board member was then alleged to have invited teachers to his home for the purpose of soliciting charges against the superintendent. This action culminated with the board member presenting a list of 30 charges against the superintendent at a regular meeting. When he failed to substantiate the charges, they were dismissed by board action. However, as a result, two teachers who had provided much of the information were investigated by the county superintendent. One was dismissed for entering the superintendent's office at night to gather evidence and the other reprimanded. When this information became public, the member resigned and became inactive in school affairs.

In 1962, the ex-board member ran for re-election to the board and was successful. In 1964 he became politically active by appealing to two other men to run for the board. One of the two admitted he was solicited to run for office to bring about a change in the way the school district was being managed. He refused to name his solicitors, but said there was widespread dissatisfaction with the schools at the time.

During the campaigning, the anti-superintendent member's wife was alleged to have gone from door-to-door to win support for her husband's candidates. According to the superintendent, several people called to advise him she was circulating libelous stories about him.
In 1966 the anti-superintendent board member's candidates were elected and a new 3-2 anti-administration bloc was in control of the board of education.

The previously suppressed issues that emerged following the initiation of the board-teacher conflict centered on the alleged stalling tactics of the board. This was illustrated by the board president's refusal to sign the negotiation agreement, even though the board had approved it.

**Issues Shift from Specific to General**

There was no evidence in this study that the issues shifted from specific to general; instead conflict shifted among different issues and different personalities.

**New and Different Issues**

The emergence of new and different issues served to expand the content base of the conflict, as well as involving additional people. The new and different issues were grounded in economics and values and beliefs as well as power and authority.

The first new issue concerned conflicting values between the superintendent and majority board members. It involved the majority's reaction to what they believed to be acts of disloyalty and opposition by the superintendent.

Statements by the superintendent indicated the board majority was especially critical of his failure to expel the students who walked out in protest of the principal's dismissal. He said his
position was supported by the county superintendent and the staff who agreed that the temper of the community was such that violent parental reaction would have resulted.

This difference initiated a series of power clashes with one of the board members. One involved the board member's support of an expelled high school student. Another involved this board member's support of a group of parents who demanded the immediate dismissal of a woman bus driver alleging she could not drive the bus safely. Lacking evidence, the superintendent rejected the demand but was overruled by official board action.

A second issue centered on economics. In the fall of 1966 the majority bloc of the board of education began to express their dissatisfaction with the business management of the district. According to the superintendent two members of the majority bloc went to great lengths to inform the public that the district was operating at a deficit. He said it was true that the cafeteria was operating at a deficit; however, this was due to board refusal to increase school lunch prices.

Another issue centered around the operation of the clerk's office. According to the secretary of the education association the clerk's office was very efficient. However, when the clerk's secretary resigned because of home responsibilities the board refused to replace her or to raise the clerk's salary ($7,116) to compensate for his extra work. As a result, he resigned in December 1966. A new clerk and secretary were appointed at a combined salary of $14,000. Soon thereafter, the teachers began to complain about inefficiency in the clerk's office. This was followed by several citizens publicly criticizing
the board for the salaries being paid the new personnel.

The next major issue to emerge was based on misuse of power by the majority faction of the board. The "bone of contention" was whether they had the right to dismiss the superintendent without valid reasons. For a second time, the board compounded a perceived error by denying those present the right to protest the decision.

Immediately following the decision to dismiss the superintendent, a respected local minister arose to speak in behalf of the superintendent and was ruled out of order. No discussion was permitted and tempers ran high. Again the majority came under attack by lay citizens and again they refused to justify their actions. This time people were mobilized to seek the defeat of the offending board members at the polls.

Still another new issue arose over the teacher negotiation contract. After five months discussion with the board, the majority of the teachers was convinced that the board was stalling and requested a state association study of the school district. As a result the study was made and a list of seventeen recommendations made to the board. Several issues emerged as a result of the study: One, the board questioned the right of the state association to make such a study; and secondly, was critical of the investigating panel for not permitting them to answer the charges made by witnesses.

Shift from Disagreement to Antagonism

Conflict moved from disagreement to antagonism when individuals rather than issues became the focus of direct hostility. In each of
the major issues which involved power and authority, i.e., dismissal of the principal and dismissal of the superintendent, this occurred immediately following the initiation of conflict. It did not occur in the board-teacher conflict where the issue was primarily economic.

The shift from disagreement to antagonism was evidenced by the attacks on individual board members and the majority faction by statements of individuals to the press and in board meetings.

One of the majority board members indicated that he and his family received anonymous phone calls and letters containing threats. At one board meeting, a lay person called for local citizens to boycott two of the majority members' businesses in retaliation for their behavior.

**Shift from Antagonism to Polarization**

Polarization was evidenced by the rejection of face-to-face interaction by the factions involved in the conflict. Evidence of polarization was revealed following the superintendent's dismissal. At this stage many people decided it was hopeless to talk to the board majority and initiated plans to remove them by the election process as soon as possible. The teachers revealed polarization when they broke off discussions with the board and asked the state association to make a study of conditions in the district and impose sanctions.
IV. Factors Affecting the Course of the Conflict

Structure of Authority

Distribution of Power

Shifts in the distribution of organizational power and authority contributed first to the initiation and expansion of conflict and later to its reduction. During the period from 1962-65, the administration was supported by a 4-1 board majority. In the fall of 1965 two men ran on a platform that the school business affairs were not being managed properly and were elected. This changed the power alignment to a 3-2 anti-administration majority supported by social power as well as legal authority. It was from this position of strength that the board majority brought about the dismissal of the principal and superintendent. However, both of these acts were unacceptable to the community at large and the board's social power was lost.

Later, when the local education association was unable to negotiate salary increases, they moved to expand their power base by seeking help from the state education association. The forthcoming support of the state association and the subsequent Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study coupled with lay anti-board sentiment, enabled the local association to effectively attack the board's position. This action renewed and expanded the conflict initially, however, later the combined pressures brought about the resignation of a majority board member. The subsequent appointment of a new board member again
changed the board power alignment and an uneasy peace was restored to the district.

Use of Power

The key factor in the initiation and expansion of the conflict was the perceived arbitrary use of power by the board majority. Reading their election as a mandate from the public, the board majority arbitrarily removed the principal and superintendent from their positions.

A second example of the misuse of power by the board majority concerned their attempts to harass and discredit the superintendent publicly. Evidence gathered from the superintendent and laymen, along with newspaper reports, indicated one board member made this a practice in school board meetings for a year prior to the superintendent's dismissal.

As previously stated, the local association used the state education association to exert pressure on the board, thereby expanding the conflict. In this instance, the use of this outside source of power was generally viewed as legitimate since the community already opposed the majority bloc.

Internal-External Relations

Dysfunctions in internal relations affected channels of communication thereby contributing to the expansion of the conflict. The dismissal of the superintendent led to a breakdown in communications between his office and the board. This created serious problems
when the board and local education association became involved in personnel negotiations. Because of closed channels with the board, it was virtually impossible for the superintendent to work as the vital third party. During negotiations he was merely a "puppet" without authority. Several problems arose because of a lack of free-flowing information.

One such problem was illustrated by the secretary of the local education association who stated that in May 1967 the education association directed a letter to the board through the office of the superintendent. This letter demanded the board meet with them to discuss salaries and other matters or face the possibility of sanctions. Since the superintendent had not been actively involved, he assumed the letter was for his information and filed it. When the error was discovered, a second letter was directed to board members. This delay added to the frustration of some of the more militant teachers and they attempted to gain support for a strike. Although they did not achieve their goal, they influenced a later request for state sanctions.

Board policies and practices contributed significantly to dysfunctional community relations. External relations suffered a severe blow by the refusal of the board majority to discuss the previously discussed dismissals. One of the more serious criticisms of the board's relations with the public had to do with the policy requiring those who wished to speak at a board meeting to request permission a week in advance. This policy, in effect, shut out the lay public and staff from participation in the decision-making process. This was especially
critical during the dismissals and drew criticism from citizens and the news media.

A second issue was the excessive use of executive sessions by the board and the secrecy that surrounded them. At the time of this study, board members refused to discuss the substance of executive meetings held during the conflict.

Social-Personal Relations

Personal relationships contributed to the conflict by broadening the cleavage between the majority and minority factions of the board. This issue arose when the majority members criticized the superintendent publicly for employing the two minority members' children as student assistants—one in the cafeteria, the other in the school office. The minority members viewed this as a petty, personal attack and supported the superintendent.

Conflicting Expectations

Differing role expectations contributed to the initiation and expansion of the conflict. The first difference involved the superintendent and a board member, who allegedly engineered his dismissal. Previous evidence indicated this board member expected the superintendent to act on the basis of his charges of misbehavior and incompetence in the case of the kindergarten and first grade teacher. The superintendent, on the other hand, felt a professional obligation to the teachers and refused to dismiss them without sufficient evidence.
A second example involved the board majority's feeling that once they were elected they were not required to account for their actions as long as they complied with the law. The local citizens viewed them accountable at all times. Therefore, when the board refused to account for the dismissals, the public was antagonized.

**Social Structure**

**Population Status**

A significant factor in the conflict appeared to be rapid population increase without a concurrent increase in taxable wealth. Many people in the community could not understand that increased enrollments were causing the school's financial problems rather than mismanagement. This would account for the success of the anti-administration board members running on a "better business management" platform in 1966.

**Distribution of Population**

The distribution of population was not a significant factor in the conflict.

**Social Cohesion**

The pattern of social cohesion was a significant factor in that the entire community identifies with a centralized school program. All of the school buildings are located on one site permitting an overall
interaction of students and parents. Since all the interest focused on one school, all segments of the community were quickly involved in the conflict. This brought it to a high level of intensity in the early stages.

**Economic Structure**

**Vested Economic Interests**

Vested economic interests of teachers contributed to the expansion of the conflict. The failure of the board to react positively to salary demands led to the teachers' request for sanctions and culminated in a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study. This gave the conflict wider visibility and brought outside influences to bear.

**Other Economic Components of the Model**

The type of community, distribution of wealth and income, and taxation did not appear to be major factors in determining the course of the conflict.

**Mass Media**

Local mass media contributed to the expansion and continuation of the conflict by broadening the base of participation and contributing power to those in revolt. The school district did not boast a newspaper or radio station; however, those media of nearby cities took up the issue and flooded the district with reporters. Practically all of
the reports were slanted to discredit the board majority. Several newspapers openly attacked the board majority in editorials.

There was also some evidence that certain reporters worked to expand the conflict. This was illustrated by the secretary of the teachers association who said that on several occasions she attended board meetings and went home feeling things had gone all right. On reading the newspaper the following day she was surprised to see how the context of the statements were twisted to make them appear controversial.
School Conflict Study 6

Summary

The sixth school conflict took place in an Eastern Ohio city of 12,000. This community covers two square miles of hillside overlooking the peaceful Ohio River. A unique feature of the community is the multiplicity of ethnic groups represented in its citizenry.

The homes of the residents, although modest, reflect personal pride in their outward appearance. Generally speaking, both grounds and buildings are well maintained. The business section is old and outwardly little, if any, effort has been made toward modernization.

Financially, the school district is much better off than most of its neighbors. Employment is high due to the presence of a large steel mill within the city limits. The district's property valuation of approximately $40 million provides a valuation of $12,549 for each of the district's three thousand students.

The school district was the pride of the community prior to the initiation of the conflict. In addition, it was highly regarded by its neighbors as a leader in academic accomplishments, as well as athletics. However, the physical facilities of the district tell yet another story. One of the elementary schools in use was built in 1895 and three others in 1917. The high school was constructed in 1923. The newest school, an elementary acquired through annexation, was built in 1955.

The first signal of things to come occurred in 1963 when two new members were campaigning for election to the school board. Both
men ran on the "economy theme" and were viewed as anti-superintendent. Viewing their efforts as an attempt to dismiss him, the superintendent, a highly respected, able administrator with twelve years service in the district, resigned and left the community. Both men were subsequently elected and joined with a controversial board incumbent to form a new power structure. Their strong anti-union sentiments along with their desire to "run" the schools brought them into conflict with the teaching staff and three successive superintendents.

In 1964 a series of events began which led to four years of school conflict. Early in the year the local teachers association submitted a detailed proposal to improve salaries, update textbooks, and purchase new teaching supplies and materials. Both the superintendent and the board approved the recommendations and a four mill levy was placed on the ballot to accomplish the plan. However, hopes were dashed when the levy was defeated. Shortly thereafter recriminations followed and the teachers association accused some of the board of privately working to defeat the levy. They stated that this along with a news release of the board's intention to give teachers a $100 bonus whether the levy passed or not spelled the levy's doom.

Plagued by internal dissension, the superintendent resigned during the summer of 1965. He was replaced by the high school principal.

In the fall of 1965 a 1.5 mill levy was placed on the ballot and again it met defeat. Less than a month before the election the local newspaper published a report that the district would end the year with a surplus of $50,000 or more. Again the board was accused of sabotaging the levy.
In response, in February 1966 the teachers association submitted a proposal requesting a 10 percent salary increase and recommended it be financed from the announced surplus. The board countered by placing another 1.5 mill levy on the ballot for the May election. This angered the teachers and they advised the board that their action was not in keeping with the proposal and therefore they rejected it. This resulted in one of the board members placing the blame on the superintendent. The superintendent responded by stating that he had listed alternatives for the board as they had requested. Finally, on the superintendent's recommendation the issue was withdrawn from the ballot.

In March the teachers association contacted the state education association about their problems and requested a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Commission Study of the school district. After a preliminary study, announcement was made in April of the state association's intention to make a full-scale study in May.

The study was made on May 12-15 and an apprehensive community awaited the results. On June 29 the report was made public. The findings placed the blame for unsatisfactory conditions with the board of education and issued an ultimatum that either the board resolve their dispute with the teachers or face statewide sanctions against the school district.

The response to the ultimatum was mixed. Over 500 citizens met at the high school and urged the board to recognize the teachers. A committee was also appointed by the mayor to study the school problems and the result was a recommendation for an improved salary schedule and the establishment for a set of procedures for communication
between the board and the teachers. The city solicitor, the board's legal adviser, denounced the Study and publicly stated that it meant nothing. In any event, the recommendations of the Study, the mayor's committee and a citizen's group were ignored.

On the heels of the P.R.& R. Study, the superintendent announced his resignation stating that the one year contract offered him was not adequate for the tasks that faced him.

After a period during which an interim superintendent administered the district, a new superintendent was appointed in August 1966. He soon learned the nature of the problems facing him when in response to his advocating a salary increase for the teachers, he was told by the president of the teachers association that they were not interested in a raise but that they did want an index salary schedule and personnel negotiations. The board, on the other hand, was opposed to both demands. In spite of a raise granted in September, the teachers submitted a personnel negotiation instrument for board approval and it was promptly rejected on the grounds that some of the demands were illegal. In October the board countered by having the city solicitor draw up a negotiating instrument, however, this time the teachers association rejected it.

Following these unsuccessful attempts to solve their problems, the district was informed that sanctions were being invoked by the state education association. In response, the board employed a special counsel and soon an injunction was filed for the delay of the sanctions. This action was successful and a restraining order was placed on the state association and the local association.
In January 1967, a new salary schedule was approved by the board. Using funds received from the passage of a 1.5 mill operating levy in November 1966, the base salary for degree teachers was raised to $5100. However, this quieted the teachers for only a short while and early in April the teachers presented the board with an ultimatum. In essence, the ultimatum stated that either the board meet with their representatives prior to April 24 or the association would meet the following day to consider a proper course of action.

The board refused the demands for a meeting and indicated their intentions by distributing copies of the Ferguson Act (State law prohibiting public employees to strike). On April 26, 97 teachers did not report for class and the superintendent was forced to close the schools. The board and superintendent acted promptly to notify the absent teachers that they were dismissed under the terms of the Ferguson Act. The teachers association ignored the dismissals and continued to hold "professional study days."

In the meantime a Crisis Committee was formed and a public meeting scheduled on May 1. Over five hundred attended the meeting during which a resolution was passed asking the board to recognize the teachers association and take all teachers back without recriminations. The substance of this resolution was presented to the board at its May 2 meeting and no action was taken. Feelings were so intense over this issue that soon the meeting got out of control and was abruptly terminated. At this point, the judge of the common pleas court called the legal counsels of both parties together and on May 4 an agreement was reached. School reopened the following day.
Following the work stoppage the teachers who had been dismissed signed a letter of good intentions in return for reinstatement without reprisals.

However, things did not remain peaceful long since at its June meeting the board refused to reappoint two elementary principals on the grounds that they had proved to be incompetent in the recent teacher work stoppage. In spite of the superintendent's contradiction of these charges and his repeated efforts to win their reassignments, the board was adamant and the two men were reassigned to teaching positions.

In October 1967, the teachers association and the board became embroiled in a dispute over a new salary schedule. This new salary negotiation had been brought about by the passage of a school foundation bill the previous summer. Said bill provided a substantial increase in state assistance. In this case the teachers demanded a base salary of $5400 and the board rejected it. Ignoring the teachers association a motion was made to adopt the board schedule. It failed for lack of a majority. This was followed immediately by a motion to withhold salary increases for those teachers who had participated in the work stoppage in April and May of the previous school year pending a ruling from the state attorney general as to their eligibility. On the passage of this motion the teachers association representatives walked out, called the teachers to a special meeting, and voted to walk-out of school the next day.

The superintendent upon hearing of the walk-out called off school for the following day and made himself unavailable to the
board. The following noon the board met in special session and ordered the schools reopened. That evening a special meeting was held with teacher representatives and the board suggested a compromise. They offered to grant the salary increases if the teachers would sign a statement to return the money if it was later determined to be illegal. In addition, the board salary schedule of $5150 was adopted. The teachers association representatives rejected the board compromise and the walk-out continued. This work stoppage continued for eight days until ended on November 2 by a restraining order granted by the common pleas court.

In November two new members were elected to the board to replace incumbent majority members who chose not to run for re-election.

On December 5 the board was advised that the attorney-general had ruled the salary increases legal and approved payment accordingly. Announcement was also made that the motion of the state and local association for the dismissal of the November 2 restraining order had been overruled. In his letter to the board concerning this matter, the board's legal counsel stated that he had heard that the incoming board planned to ask for the dismissal of the restraining order and that some of the parents disagreed with this action. Therefore, some of these parents have been made Parties Defendant in the action and will continue it in a cross petition even if the board withdraws.

On December 25, the special legal counsel of the board submitted his resignation. At the same time, the remaining board majority incumbent submitted his resignation. The reason given for his action was that the superintendent had offered to resign if he would and he felt the school district needed a new superintendent.
(The superintendent was not present at the meeting and did not choose to resign upon his return.)

On January 1, 1968 two new board members were sworn in. In subsequent meetings during January they requested the city solicitor to seek the dismissal of the restraining order; appointed an administrative assistant due to the illness of the superintendent; and restored the ex-principals to their former positions.

At the time of this study in August 1969, the restraining order had still not been removed. In addition, the district has experienced several defeats of school operating levies. The district was described as still being split almost evenly as a result of the recent school conflict. However, board-staff relations are said to be greatly improved.

Analysis

I. Initiating Issues

School board behavior was the issue that initiated conflict in this study. As stated in the summary, the teachers reacted with bitterness to what they perceived as board action to undermine the chances for passage of the levy.

Source of the Issue

The source of the issue was internal in origin and based on goal differentiation within the school organization. The board majority (4-1) was economy oriented whereas the professional staff
was concerned with the improvement of salaries and program. This set them in direct opposition to each other as each worked toward the achievement of their goals.

Content of the Issue

The content of the issue involved power and/or authority, economics, and values and beliefs. In essence, the teachers association was motivated to revolt when they perceived the board was misusing its power to bring about the defeat of the levy. In addition, this misuse of authority violated the association's beliefs about the function of the board and also affected teachers' economic welfare, i.e., salary increases and educational program improvements hinged on the passage of the levy.

The board on the other hand was motivated by its desire to cut costs.

There was no evidence that previous conflicts between the individuals involved contributed in any way to the initiation of the conflict.

II. Expansion Factors

The conditions identified by the model as necessary for the expansion of the conflict--activists working to expand the conflict, perceived management errors, and a change in the climate of opinion--appeared to be present in this study.
Activists

The activists involved in this conflict were motivated by a search for power and ideological beliefs. The initial activists were members of the teaching staff who publicly accused the board of sabotaging the school levy.

Early in the conflict a militant leader emerged from the teaching ranks. This teacher was openly critical of the board and actively worked to unify the teachers to oppose it. He soon became the spokesman of the group and was successful in gaining the support of the teachers, both old and young.

When the board continued to make claims of a surplus, the leadership of the teachers association demanded a ten per cent salary increase and suggested it be financed from the surplus. Failing in this effort, the leadership moved to gain the support of the state education association by requesting a study of conditions in the district. The state association agreed and entered the conflict by conducting a Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study (P.R.& R.). The study, the findings, and the publicity that attended it brought the conflict into the open and motivated local lay people to become involved.

A local lawyer, retained as the board's legal counsel, also served as a catalyst for generating conflict. This lawyer advocated the "hard line" in dealing with the teachers and viewed their behavior as improper. According to all of the interviews, he was felt to have influenced the actions of the board.
Perceived Management Errors

Management contributed to the expansion of the conflict by compounding the initial error of misuse of power. Interviewers felt the board was guilty of continuous tactical errors. This was illustrated by charges of individual board members that the teachers were greedy and their leader (the superintendent) was incompetent.

In 1965 the board repeated the action of 1964 in announcing a surplus of funds just prior to the vote on an operating levy. They added to this insult by redistributing the excess funds to non-salary items to justify their refusal to grant salary increases.

Change in the Climate of Opinion

The threat of an outside agency led to a change in the climate of opinion. The P.R.& R. Report placed the blame for deteriorating educational conditions squarely on the shoulders of the board majority and threatened statewide sanctions if the problems were not corrected.

The involvement of a large number of citizens in the conflict followed the announcement of the P.R.& R. Study. A Crises Committee was hastily organized and a public meeting held to discuss the matter. Over five hundred people attended and hostility toward the board was very much in evidence. This carried over to the board meeting the following evening and when the committee's recommendations were ignored tempers flared and the meeting was abruptly terminated. The involvement of the mayor and his appointment of a study committee also involved additional community action. After three weeks of meetings and study,
the recommendations of the mayor's committee were ignored by the board. This antagonized yet another faction.

III. Course of the Conflict

Once initiated, this conflict was carried through the pattern established by the model by mutual hostility between the two factions—the board and the teachers. The intense hostility the board held for the teachers association motivated them to seek repressive methods for dealing with the teachers. At the same time, teacher hostility for the board majority led them to oppose the board categorically. Thus each hostile act by one led to reciprocating hostility from the other.

Legally Constituted Authority Became the Defendant

The majority bloc of the board was the defendant throughout the conflict. Initially, the teachers charged the board with sabotaging the levy. Later the P.R.& R. Study charged the board with creating and maintaining the conditions which kept the conflict moving. This charge was substantiated by two of the three superintendents involved, the clerk of the board, and a substantial segment of the community.

However, following the teacher work stoppages, there was evidence that a substantial segment of the community placed the blame on the teachers. This was supported by (a) evidence obtained from the teachers and the mayor, and (b) the request of certain parents for the continuance of the injunction restraining teachers from further work stoppages.
Previously Suppressed Issues

Previously suppressed issues which emerged once this conflict was initiated centered primarily on teacher grievances about board misuse of power. One such issue involved a departed superintendent.

The P.R.& R., as well as present information suggests that the issue began when the present board majority campaigned for the election in 1963 with the intention of getting rid of the superintendent, a highly respected and able administrator. Knowing their intention, the superintendent resigned and left the community. This group was alleged to have wanted to run the schools and this brought them into conflict with three successive superintendents.

A second issue was that the policies and practices of the board had brought about a deterioration in the quality of the staff and the educational program.

The board was accused of employing inexperienced and often inadequately trained teachers in order to advance their economy move. Another criticism was that of teacher turnover. Teachers pointed out that approximately 20 percent of the staff had left in 1965 and 15 had already resigned prior to the 1966-67 school year.

The board president was accused of personally obstructing a plan to initiate homogeneous grouping in the school system. He was alleged to have said, "Education is for the masses, and all students should receive the same education." Other instances of educational interference were cited as opposition to hiring a speech therapist, fighting new programs in math and science, and removing new math from the first and second grades.
Still another suppressed issue involved the purchase of athletic equipment. One of the superintendents interviewed felt this was the source of the conflict, although there was little evidence to support this contention. He stated that the majority of the board placed themselves on the athletic board so they could pursue their grudge against the local athletic supply dealer. This policy was said to have resulted in the purchase of inferior equipment and was the source of some staff dissatisfaction.

Issues Shift from Specific to General

There was no evidence that the issues shifted from specific to general, instead it centered on specific issues.

New and Different Issues

New and different issues appeared throughout the course of the conflict; however, power and authority remained central throughout. In essence, the conflict amounted to a power struggle between the board and the teachers association. The new issues were the P.R.& R. Study and personnel negotiations.

In April, May, June and July 1966 the issue centered on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study. The board and legal advisers rejected the study and its findings. Efforts to bring about a change in the board’s attitude toward the teachers were unsuccessful.

In August 1966 the new superintendent was faced with demands by the teachers for a personnel negotiations agreement. Resistance to this request resulted in statewide sanctions being imposed in
October 1966. This issue was then expanded when the board through their legal counsel sought and was awarded a court order restraining the local and state associations from use of the sanctions or other actions against the local school district.

In April 1967 another new issue surfaced. This pertained to the demands of the teachers associations for direct negotiations with the board.

On April 22 the teachers association issued an ultimatum to the board demanding a meeting on April 24. When the board refused, the teachers association voted to hold a "teacher study day" on the 25th. Upon the urging of the mayor the teachers deferred their action for one day to permit the legal counsels of both parties to work out a solution. However, the outcome of this meeting was unsatisfactory and on April 26, 97 teachers failed to report for class. The board reacted by enforcing the Ferguson Act and notified the teachers who were absent of their dismissal. The work stoppage continued in spite of the board's action and the deep concern exhibited by parents. It was eventually settled by the judge of common pleas court.

Beginning in June 1967 the board's failure to reappoint two elementary principals became an issue. Several board members felt the principals had acted injudiciously during the teacher work stoppage and, therefore, would not support their reappointment. The item became an issue between the board and the superintendent and the board and teachers.

In October 1967, still another issue arose. This involved the action of the board to hold in escrow salary increases of those
teachers who had participated in the work stoppage until the state attorney-general ruled on its legality. According to a reliable witness, several board members planned this action for revenge shortly after the new foundation bill had passed during the summer. They waited until this time to bring it up hoping to inconvenience these teachers. This antagonized the teachers association and led to a second work stoppage which lasted eight days. Again the court intervened and a restraining order brought the teachers back to the classroom.

Shift from Disagreement to Antagonism

The nature of the conflict shifted from disagreement to antagonism when a group, rather than an issue, became the focus of attack. It was apparent that teacher antagonism for the board developed immediately following the defeat of the school levy in 1964 and was maintained at varying levels until January 1968.

Shift from Antagonism to Polarization

Polarization was evidenced by a sharp cleavage in the school community. Prior to the work stoppage in the spring of 1967 public sentiment favored the teachers' cause. However, the two work stoppages alienated a substantial part of the community resulting in an almost even split. Witnesses felt that opposition to the teachers had gone underground. Some opponents disinvolved themselves and worked through word of mouth to defeat school levies.
The depth of this polarization was evidenced when a group of parents cross petitioned the court to continue the restraining order against the local teachers association, even though the new board requested its dismissal. Furthermore, individuals appeared reluctant to seek board positions. In August 1969 only two candidates were available for three vacancies.

IV. Factors Affecting the Course of the Conflict

Structure of Authority

Distribution of Power

A change in the school system's stable pattern of relationships—a shift in the distribution of board power—contributed significantly to the initiation, expansion, and continuation of the conflict. The appointment of an anti-administration board member by the probate judge and the election of two "economy-oriented" members in 1963 changed the board from a 4-1 pro-administration alignment to a 4-1 anti-administration alignment. This made possible the actions and decisions upon which the conflict flourished.

One of the first acts of the new power alignment was the establishment of standing board committees. Five committees were appointed: 1) High School Athletic Board; 2) Policy and Finance; 3) Teachers, Textbooks, Salaries, and Teaching Apparatus; 4) Buildings, Grounds, and Maintenance Personnel; and 5) Transportation and Transportation Maintenance. Three of the majority served on the first two committees, and two on the third, giving them almost complete
control of the three most critical school functions. According to
the P.R.& R. Study, as well as interviewers in this study, the new
superintendent was merely a figurehead and quite often the scapegoat.

Use of Power

The key factor in the initiation and expansion of the conflict
was the teachers' belief that the board majority was misusing its
power. This was evidenced in the teachers' reactions to the board
announcement of surpluses prior to the levies of 1964 and 1965. The
antagonism generated by these acts mobilized the teachers to oppose
the board.

A second example of misuse of power by the board majority was
the redistribution of the so-called surplus funds to avoid granting
salary increases.

The arbitrary refusal of the board to recognize the teachers
association as the bargaining agent was further evidence of perceived
misuse of power. The board rejected the recommendations of the P.R.& R.
Study, the Crises Committee, and the mayor's study committee on the
issue. This action served to antagonize a large segment of the commu-
nity.

The local teachers association also used its power to expand
the conflict. In the first instance, it expanded the power base by
using the state education association to exert pressure on the board
in an attempt to gain recognition and negotiation. This was success-
ful in that it developed strong community support. At the same time,
it broadened the cleavage between the board and the teachers inasmuch
as the board majority refused to testify at the P.R.& R. hearings and to implement the P.R.& R. recommendations.

A different reaction resulted from the teachers' use of a work stoppage to exert pressure on the board. Respondents from the staff and lay community indicated that these acts marshalled opposition to the teachers.

**Internal-External Relations**

Dysfunctions in both internal and external relationships contributed to the conflict. Internally, the refusal of the board to recognize the local teachers association effectively closed off communication and forced the teachers to exert pressure through forces outside the school organization, *i.e.*, the state education association and citizen's groups.

In addition, testimony from staff personnel indicated that the new superintendent antagonized the staff by his efforts to affect immediate change and this also contributed to closing of communication channels. At the initiation of the conflict, the board, superintendent, and staff were all at odds with each other.

External relations between the board and the community were seriously damaged by the board's refusal to accept the recommendations of the various lay committees.

**Social-Personal Relations**

The evidence did not reveal that social-personal relationships contributed to the conflict in any way.
Conflicting Expectations

Differing role expectations played a significant part in the initiation, expansion, and continuation of the conflict. The first difference involved those different expectations the board and the teachers held for the board's role. The board assumed their role to be saving money for the school district, whereas the teachers expected them to work to provide funds for improvement of the school system. When the board, as individuals, talked in opposition to the levies and published statements of surplus funds, the teachers reacted to oppose them.

Another difference pertained to the teachers' role in the system. One of the major factors in the conflict was said to be the anti-union orientation of the majority of the board members and their legal counsel. At one of the first meetings concerning negotiations one of the board members stated that "what the board does is none of the teachers' business. Our responsibility is to protect the taxpayer." On the other hand, the teachers felt that as professionals they should have some say in matters that affected them and their students.

There was also role conflict concerning the expectations held for the superintendent. Conflict occurred because he could not fulfill both board, teachers, and his own expectations. Two superintendents indicated the board members expected the superintendent to side with them and assist them in defeating this movement by the teachers. The superintendents thought their responsibility was to the whole district rather than the board. The teachers believed that the superintendent
should support their cause.

**Social Structure**

There was no evidence to indicate population status, population distribution and social cohesion contributed significantly to either the expansion or reduction of the conflict.

**Economic Structure**

Two of the components of the economic structure—type of community and distribution of wealth and income did not appear to influence the course of the conflict.

**Taxation**

The majority faction of the board was characterized as being economy-minded. Perhaps this influenced the actions of several board members in failing to support the levies in 1964 and 1965. The school district tax rate of 19.7 mills for schools is far below the average of other Ohio cities. This indicates a low level of effort and perhaps the presence of a low value for education. In any event the failure of the tax levy in 1964 appeared to "trigger" the conflict between the board and the teachers.

**Vested Economic Interests**

A vital interest in personal economic gain motivated a local businessman and the teaching staff to oppose the board of education.
The present superintendent stated that the conflict was initiated by personal antagonism between some of the board members and a local athletic equipment dealer. When the board decided to purchase on a bid basis rather than local purchasing the dispute spread into the community and the school staff. The dealer in question was involved in continuous conflict with the board over a period of time and strongly supported the teachers. He was especially vocal in attacking board members in the public meeting that followed the P.R.& R. Study.

A second vested interest which influenced the conflict was that of teacher salaries. In the early stages of the conflict the teachers were motivated to seek a salary increase. This self-interest served to cause several of the board members to view them as greedy and set them in opposition.

Mass Media

The local mass media served to broaden the base of participation in the conflict. The extensive publication of the P.R.& R. Study exposed the conflict to the entire community and because of deep concern many lay persons became actively involved in trying to solve the problem. The subsequent rejection of their efforts brought angry reactions.

In the fall of 1967, the school conflict became the special target of a young reporter on the local newspaper. According to the superintendent and staff members, he was responsible for intensifying
the conflict. The reporter became aware of the school conflict and began writing a series of interviews about it. Long articles with accompanying pictures highlighted this effort. The reporter let the "chips fall where they might" and as a result most of the publicity was uncomplimentary to the board. As a result the people who made comments incurred the enmity of certain board members.

**Comparison of the Conflict Studies**

The summary of the analysis of the six conflict studies is presented below in tabular form. In this format the reader may analyze the characteristics of an individual study by progressing down the vertical columns or analyze the commonalities and differences within the model elements by progressing horizontally across the lines.

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<td>b. Administrative contract termination</td>
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<td>e. Board behavior</td>
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</table>
A. **Source of the Issue**

1. **Internal**
   - a. Shift in board power structure  x  x  x
   - b. Competition for personal and professional advancement x
   - c. Distribution of power and authority x
   - d. Goal deflection x

2. **External**

B. **Content of the Issue**

1. **Power and/or authority**
   - a. Role delineation x
   - b. Revolt against authority x x
   - c. Misuse of power and/or authority x x x

2. **Economic**
   - a. Salaries x

3. **Values and beliefs**
   - a. Philosophical differences x

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**II. Expansion Factors**

A. **Activists**

1. School staff members motivated by
   - a. Personal gain x x x x x x
   - b. Revenge x x x
   - c. Ideological beliefs x x x x

2. Lay public motivated by
   - a. Personal gain
   - b. Revenge x
   - c. Ideological beliefs x x x x x

3. Others motivated by:
   a. Personal gain
   b. Revenge
   c. Ideological beliefs

B. Perceived Management Errors
   1. Board of education
      a. Failure to respond to popular desires
         x x x x x
      b. Misuse of power
         x x x x x
      c. Lack of success
      d. Vacillation
         x
      e. Lack of board unity
         x x x x x x
   2. Administration
      a. Failure to respond to popular desires
         x
      b. Misuse of power
      c. Lack of success
         x
      c. Vacillation
         x

C. Change in the Climate of Opinion
   1. Increased attendance at board meetings
      x x x x x x
   2. Formation of new organizations to carry on the conflict
      x x x x
   3. Response of community leaders
      x
   4. Response of school organizations
      a. P.T.A.-P.T.O., etc.
      b. Teacher association or union
         x x x x x x
      c. Non-certified assoc. or union
         x
### III. Course of the Conflict

#### A. Legally Constituted Authority Becomes the Defendant
1. Board of education (local)  
   - x x x x x x
2. Administrators (local)  
   - x x x x
3. Other  
   a. Athletic Director  
      - x

#### B. Previously Suppressed Issues Emerge
1. Misuse of power and/or authority  
   - x x x x x x
2. Credibility gaps  
   - x
3. Injudicious use of public funds  
   - x x
4. Vested economic interests  
   - x
5. Personal  
   - x x

#### C. Issues Shift from Specific to General
1. Lack of leadership  
   - x
2. Lack of communication  
3. Incompetence  
   - x x

#### D. New and Different Issues Appear
1. Issue did not change  
2. New and different issues (subject and content)
   
   **Content Code:** Power/Authority = P/A  
   - Economics = E  
   - Values/Beliefs = V/B
   a. Personnel negotiations (P/A)  
      - x x x x x x
   b. Teacher work stoppages (P/A;V/B)  
      - x x x
   c. Competency of administrators (P/A)  
      - x x x x
   d. Salary disputes (E)  
      - x x x x x
   e. Board-administrator conflict (P/A)  
      - x x x
   f. Professional Rights and Responsibilities Study (P/A)  
      - x x x x x x
   g. Sanctions (P/A)  
      - x x
E. Nature of Conflict Shifts From Disagreement to Antagonism

1. Evidence of hostility toward individuals or groups rather than issues
   a. Immediately following initiating event or events
   b. During the expansion of conflict
   c. Later stages of conflict

F. Nature of Conflict Shifts From Antagonism to Polarization

1. No evidence of sharp cleavage
2. Evidence of sharp cleavage
   a. Prior to conflict
   b. Immediately following initiating event or events
   c. During expansion of conflict
   d. Later stages of conflict

IV. Factors Affecting the Course of the Conflict

A. Structure of Authority

1. Distribution of power and/or authority
   a. Shift in power structure of board
   b. Reduction of superintendent's power and/or authority
   c. Board loss of social power
   d. Entry of outside power sources
   e. Access to informal organizational power base

2. Use of power and/or authority
   a. Arbitrary use of power and/or authority
      (1) Board
      (2) Administration
      (3) Staff
b. Misuse of power
and/or authority
(1) Board x x x x x
(2) Administration x
(3) Staff x x x x

3. Internal-external relations
a. Internal dysfunctions
(1) Goal differentiation x x
(2) Lack of communication x x x
(3) Fear and distrust x x x x x
(4) Inability to solve internal problems x x x x x x

b. External dysfunctions
(1) Lack of communication x x
(2) Rejection of popular desires x x x x
(3) Excessive use of board executive sessions x
(4) Policies restrict public participation x
(5) Existing cleavage in community x

4. Social-personal relations
a. Friendships affected the distribution and use of power
(1) Board-administrator x
(2) Board-staff x
(3) Administrator-staff x
(4) Staff-staff x
(5) Other x

b. Family relationships affected the distribution and use of power
(1) Board-administrator x
(2) Board-staff x
(3) Administrator-staff x
(4) Staff-staff x
(5) Other x

5. Conflicting expectations
a. Role conflict
(1) Board (public and staff) x x x x x
(2) Administrator (board and staff) x x x x
(3) Administrator-staff x
(4) Different publics
b. Role-personality
(1) Board x x x x
(2) Administrator x x x
(3) Staff x x x

B. Social Structure
1. Population status
   a. Change created a change in power, economic, or value structure x x
   b. Change created competition within existing structures

2. Population distribution by social strata
   a. Evidence that distribution of social strata contributed to the conflict
      (1) Racial x
      (2) Class x
      (3) Religion x
      (4) Ethnicity

3. Social Cohesion
   a. Evidence of existing cleavages in the community x
   b. Identification with the school-community
      (1) Positive identification x x x x x
      (2) Negative identification x

C. Economic Structure
1. Type of community as a factor
   a. Self-contained x
   b. Service
   c. Suburb

2. Distribution of wealth and income
   a. Unequal distribution of individual wealth and income within the community x
b. Unequal distribution of income and wealth among school districts in competition with each other

3. Taxation
   a. Failure of tax issue for schools
      (1) Anti-tax factions
      (2) Pro-tax factions

4. Vested economic interests
   a. Evidence of conflict actors who exerted pressures for economic advantage
      (1) Staff
      (2) Lay individuals

D. Mass Media
   1. The issue received nationwide publicity
   2. The local media
      a. Played up the conflict
      b. Took sides in the conflict
      c. Attempted to mediate the conflict
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to present a brief summary of the findings and to project conclusions, implications, and recommendations that are appropriate in light of the findings.

Summary of Findings

This study was conducted to test the applicability of an adaptation of Coleman's Community Conflict Model as a conceptual tool for the identification and analysis of components of conflict resident in the position of school superintendent. A second purpose of the study was to make generalizations about the data generated and the relationship of such data to the structural framework of the model. These objectives were met by field testing the model in six school districts which have recently or are currently experiencing conflict.

In order to conform to the above objectives, the summary is organized under two sections—the model and the nature of school conflict. In the former, congruency and productiveness is the central theme. In the latter, generalizations about the nature of school
conflict are discussed within the framework of the model.

The Model

In general, the model produced relevant data in all six studies. The elements that were least productive were those identified under social structure. However, this might be explained in several ways. First, the issues were such that they did not create disabilities for a specific social group or class of people; secondly, the lack of certain perceptions by the researcher and respondents may have precluded the recognition of positive effects of these elements in reducing conflict.

On the other hand, the most productive elements were found in the section under structure of authority. Since each of the conflicts involved a revolt against legally constituted authority, much data was generated in the power and/or authority elements. Also characteristic of each study, was the fact that the legal right of the authority was never questioned; instead the revolt was directed at the way power and/or authority was used.

There are several ways to measure the degree of congruency or incongruency in the studies. The method believed to be most viable is that of enumerating the number of elements in each study that did not significantly influence the conflict. Using this procedure, Studies 2 and 3 were considered to be most congruent since each had only three elements that did not influence the conflict.

Studies 5 and 6 were considered to be most incongruent to the model in that they revealed seven elements that did not contribute to
the conflict. Study 5 was also the most difficult to deal with effectively within the framework of the model since there appeared to be three separate conflict situations—the dismissal of the principal, the dismissal of the superintendent, and a board-staff dispute. Each of these conflicts was based on separate backgrounds, each ran pretty much of an independent course, and each had a separate conclusion. Although the data were presented as a single case, three separate studies could have been analyzed through the use of the model.

The most generalizable components of the model appeared to be:

1. Source of issue (Initiating Issue). In each case the source of the initiating issue was identified and was found to be internal.

2. Content of issue. (Initiating Issue) The content of the initiating issue focused on power and authority in all six studies.

3. Perceived management errors (Expansion Factors). The board of education was perceived to have committed errors that led to the expansion of conflict in all of the six studies.

4. Change in the climate of opinion (Expansion Factors). In each study this characteristic was present and was illustrated by increased attendance at board meetings and responses by the teachers' associations.

5. Legally-constituted authority becomes the defendant. (Course of Conflict) Significantly, the board of education was either the defendant or co-defendant in each study.

6. Previously suppressed issues appear (Course of Conflict). Such issues emerged as soon as a defendant was identified. The nature
of such issues was rooted in perceived misuse of power and authority by the defendant.

7. New and different issues (Course of Conflict). New and different issues emerged in all conflict studies. Those universally present were personnel negotiations and P.R.& R. Studies.

8. The distribution of power and authority (Factors affecting the course of the conflict). This appeared to be an issue in all six studies. Of particular significance was the entry of outside power sources into each conflict.

9. Internal-external relations (Factors affecting the course of the conflict). The key factor which appeared in each of the studies was the inability of the school organization to solve internal problems.

10. Mass media (Factors affecting the course of the conflict). The local mass media appeared to play a significant role in determining the course of conflict. Evidence in each study indicated the conflict was played up because of its news value.

The least generalizable components of the model appeared to be:

1. Issues shift from specific to general (Course of Conflict). In this sub-element half of the studies revealed the presence of this pattern, while the other half did not. Furthermore, there did not appear to be any explanation for its presence or absence.

2. The nature of conflict shifts from antagonism to polarization (Course of Conflict). This sub-element revealed the same split described above. Where it was present, it occurred at different time stages in the course of the conflict.
3. Social cohesion (Social structure in factors affecting the course of the conflict). This sub-element presented yet another problem for purpose of generalization. In this instance, the one study indicating a negative pattern of identification with the school community did not exhibit conflict characteristics different from others with a positive pattern.

There was also evidence of exceptions not provided for by the model. One of these had to do with the time element. As constituted, the model was not organized to reveal a time line of events from beginning to end. This was particularly true of Part IV, Factors Affecting the Course of the Conflict, where data were stored which spanned the entire period. Conflict appeared to ebb and flow, hitting a high point on each issue and then receding until another issue emerged. Often the new issues brought new factors, new personalities, and new behaviors which affected the course of the conflict. Their listing out of context of time within the elements of the model was confusing to anyone other than the researcher. This particular problem was solved by presenting a brief summary in advance of the analysis of each study.

A second exception was revealed by Study 5 wherein three separate conflicts appeared in sequence over a period of time. Each of the separate conflicts exhibited most of the characteristics described by the model, and when data from them were placed within the framework of the model, a pattern of confusion was created. This confusion was created by the emergence of three different initiating issues, three sets of activists, and three sets of previously
suppressed issues and new issues. There did appear to be some overlap and the conflicts were antecedent to each other in the sense that the first conflict created antagonisms that served to feed the subsequent conflicts.

The Nature of School Conflict

The most striking aspect of school conflict appeared to be its relationship to power and/or authority. Essentially, conflict appeared to be purely and simply a struggle for power. The following serves to substantiate this analysis.

Initiating Issues

An analysis of the data indicated commonalities in the source and content of initiating issues, even though the events, incidents, and problems were quite different on the surface. All conflict issues were internal in origin, having emanated directly or indirectly from acts or actions of the board of education. Similarly, the content appeared to be rooted in power and/or authority. In each case, individuals or groups revolted against organizational power. The superintendent was not directly involved in all initiating issues; however, because of the sampling he eventually became a central figure in each of the conflicts.
Expansion Factors

The expansion phase was considered to be the most crucial conflict factor. It appeared to be closely related to the number of people actively involved in the conflict. Expansion appeared to occur in two distinct states—one, spontaneous and one, progressive. Spontaneous expansion appeared to follow the initiating issue very closely and appeared to be based on existing loyalties. These loyalties appeared to generate the activism of individuals to move the conflict progressively forward. The second stage, progressive expansion, appeared to be contingent on the ability to marshal social power.

Activists consisted of both staff and lay persons. Although extensive activism of staff members did not always emerge immediately, at some stage it went into action. The motivation for staff activism appeared to be based on the need for personal gain, revenge, and ideological beliefs.

Perceived management errors played a major role in the expansion of conflict. Generally speaking, the errors were failure to respond to popular desires, further misuse of power, and a lack of board unity. Management action perceived as dishonesty or unfairness brought with it a loss of credibility and subsequent opposition. The absence of either the means or inclination to solve internal grievances subjected management to attack from within and without the organization. In addition, conflict appeared to expand rapidly where the board of education was factional. When board members
publicly opposed their constituents, doubts began to form in the minds of both the staff and public. In effect, their criticisms gave substance to the cause of those in revolt against board power and authority.

The change in the climate of opinion was indicated by the entry of additional participants into the conflict. This appeared to occur when community norms were challenged. This change of opinion appeared to occur at different stages in the different studies. Strangely, the lay public appeared to be little inclined to enter conflicts between staff members.

Course of the Conflict

A legally constituted school authority figure or group became the defendant once the conflict was initiated. Although the authority figure was often at a lower management level, eventually the higher authority level figures and groups became co-defendants. There was also evidence that where local teachers associations resorted to work stoppages, they assumed the role of defendant in the eyes of a significant portion of the community.

The most common characteristic of previously suppressed issues was in their nature as personal grievances expressed to gain support against their opponents. These grievances were expressed by staff members against their superiors and laymen against the board of education.

There was little evidence the nature of the issues shifted from specific to general. Instead, although the evidence was not
overwhelming, when individuals replaced issues as the focus of conflict; the nature of the charges became general rather than specific. Since individuals are visible and issues are not, the transition from issue to individuals appeared to occur quickly and easily.

The subjects of new conflict issues were different from the original ones; however, questions of power and/or authority undergirded each topic. In each instance, a faction was striving for power to gain its ends. This indicates that regardless of the issue, conflict is rooted in contention for power. It is the vehicle which makes change possible.

The studies also revealed the nature of the conflict changed from disagreement to antagonism when hostility was focused on individuals rather than issues. When an individual was personally attacked he either reciprocated with a counterattack or became rigid. The conflict then became a matter of pride. It also appeared that those in disagreement with an issue shifted the attack to individuals, seeking a scapegoat.

Polarization appeared to be associated with the length of the conflict. The inability to change the status quo and the intensity of the conflict hardened lines of cleavage to where one or both opponents disassociated himself from the other and sought to destroy the opposition through indirect means. This effectively closed communications and reduced the possibility of a solution. New conflict did not appear to thrive in this environment, unless the original
line of cleavage could be maintained. Entry across cleavage lines required association with a former enemy.

**Factors Affecting the Course of the Conflict**

Many factors appeared to affect the course of the conflict. The most important single conclusion about the distribution of power and/or authority is that legal power alone is not a viable power base. Avenues to informal organizational power, outside sources of power, and social power render any position vulnerable in an open society. Evidence in these studies reveals that such avenues were successfully exploited to bring about changes in the power structure.

In addition, people are motivated to oppose any use of power or authority which they view as illegitimate or arbitrary. The evidence indicates that both needs and values predicate revolt against school organizational power and authority. Generally, the entry of additional staff members into the conflict was based on their perception of their personal needs. On the other hand, additional lay participants were motivated by values and beliefs. It appeared that the ultimate source of legitimate power resides in the lay public (social power).

The most serious internal dysfunction contributing to the initiation, expansion, and continuation of conflict was the inability to solve internal problems. This inability generated fear and distrust, closed internal communication channels, and fostered goal deflection. Furthermore, internal weaknesses appeared to be an
invitation to outside intervention. Sooner or later, as evidenced in these studies, the conflict expands to include the lay public and outside agencies.

The most serious external relationship dysfunction of school organizations studied appeared to be the inability to adapt to popular desires. When an act was committed that initiated conflict, the power structure of the school system usually became rigid and defensive and sought to cut off avenues of opposition. This in a real sense closed off available avenues of communication and intensified the hostility.

Power gained through family or friendship ties were a source of antagonism. Such relationships often superimposed the legal authority structure and, as avenues to personal advantage, were viewed as illegitimate; therefore, subject to attack.

Conflicting expectations also affected the power relationships and brought about perceptions of illegitimacy of incompetency. One such conflict was role conflict, wherein the role incumbent was subject to differing and incompatible expectations. Thus if the role incumbent pleased one, he antagonized the other; if he displeased both factions, he was considered incompetent. The other was in role-personality conflict wherein the role incumbent's perception of his role based on his perceived needs was different from that someone else held for him. He thus faced the choice of being unhappy, or not meeting the expectations. Conflict appeared to be inherent in any responsible role since the incumbent had to act in line with his convictions, or compromise his professional values.
The elements of social structure appeared relatively unimportant in the expansion of conflict. Initially the pattern of integration was felt to be a conflict reduction factor; however, the evidence reveals polarization existing in well-integrated school communities.

Conclusions

Model

Based on the experiences of the researcher in the course of this study, the following conclusions concerning the model appear to be appropriate:

1. The model does include appropriate components to describe individual conflict situations involving the superintendent, as well as groups of such conflict situations.

2. The model is limited in that:
   a. It makes no provision for the time element.
   b. Data stored within the elements of the model are out of context and are difficult for anyone other than the researcher to reconstruct into a comprehensive whole.

3. The model as projected is a valuable analytical tool in the study of this type of school conflict.

Data

The most crucial components of conflict resident in the position of school superintendent drawn from the data generated by
this study appear to be:

1. The superintendent, directly involved in these school conflicts either as a principal figure or as an intermediary, is vulnerable to that conflict because of the nature of his position.

Data in this study revealed the superintendent was vulnerable to this type of conflict. Because of his middleman role, all unresolved conflict eventually reached his office. The very nature of his position required him to make decisions about the issue in question and rarely could he please both sides. Therefore, if the superintendent was not directly the cause of the controversy, he became a target for some criticism. This was particularly true in the early stage of personnel negotiations where he became a visible object of teacher association attacks. If satisfactory results were not forthcoming, the teachers associations often attacked him personally and sought to by-pass him for direct negotiations with the board.

2. The superintendent's inability to speak directly to conflict of this type enables it to move up to the board of education.

Data from the study indicated the superintendent was not able to contribute significantly to either the reduction or channeling of conflict. As a result, conflict expanded and became a disruptive factor.

3. The superintendent becomes the defendant when conflict reaches the appellate level, in this case the board of education.

A common characteristic of school conflict was that of aggrieved employees focusing their hostility on the superintendent
rather than on the issue. This was done in the hope of gaining support from members of the board of education to override the authority of the superintendent.

4. The use of intermediaries who are not acceptable to both parties tends to expand rather than reduce controversy.

Data gathered and analyzed in conjunction with this study indicate mediation agents who are not mutually acceptable or legally constituted are ineffective in reducing conflict. It shows conclusively that the board majority and their constituents reacted bitterly to the Ohio Education Association Professional Rights and Responsibilities Studies. At the best, the P.R.& R. Studies were viewed by the boards as biased and at the worst as untrue. The same was true of the study panels constituted by others, specifically the superintendent in one case and the mayor in another.

Board reaction to these studies was either to ignore them or seek others, hoping for a more favorable set of findings and recommendations.

5. The legal structure of the State of Ohio does not provide machinery for the adjudication of this type of school conflict.

Several facets of the study illustrate this point. In only one instance did a higher school authority interject itself into the conflict to try to resolve the difficulties. This was when a county superintendent pleaded with the local board to renew the contract of a superintendent. In spite of this, the board rejected his recommendation. Both the county offices involved and the state department of education were aware of the seriousness of the conflict, yet they did not intercede.
Implications

1. The predictive nature of the model suggests its usefulness for producing knowledge useful in the training of prospective and practicing school superintendents in the art of managing school conflict. Specifically, extensive use of the model over a large sample of this type of conflict should provide data useful for generalizations. Such generalizations could then form the course content for graduate courses, seminars, and workshops. Leadership for realizing this potential should be shared by professors of school administration and superintendents' professional associations.

2. The weaknesses found in the model indicate the need for further study and refinement. Perhaps the best method of overcoming the weaknesses would be a short summary such as that used in this study; however, there is also a possibility the items in Part IV could be interwoven into the first three parts. In any event, new ideas should be generated and tested to determine their utility. Professors of school administration should contribute to this effort, both by personal study of the problem and by guiding the efforts of student researchers in this direction. Superintendents' professional associations should help by providing financial resources to make such studies possible.
Data

1. The vulnerability of superintendents to conflict of the type studied in this work implies a serious need for both legal and professional support of the position; i.e., tenure, adjudication, support from the Buckeye Association of School Administrators. To achieve this goal, members of the BASA must urge the association to develop supporting data for their cause, make specific recommendations to friendly legislators, and provide machinery, such as legal counsel to insure their protection.

2. Data from the study imply the need for training programs for school superintendents designed to improve their skills and competencies in conflict management. Obviously all of the superintendents' problems with conflict cannot be solved by legal structure alone. The universities responsible for training school superintendents should be developing course content and programs for meeting this need, both for practicing and prospective school administrators. The BASA should also address itself to the problem of conflict management training and make provisions for seminars and workshops wherein concepts and techniques may be shared. Theoretically, more and better knowledge about school superintendent conflict will enable him to make better decisions in this area.
Recommendations

1. It is recommended that a legislative commission be empowered to analyze major cases of school superintendent conflicts and make recommendations for legal machinery necessary for its solution. Such a study should not focus on the support of authority but rather on the development of fair and equitable treatment of all concerned.

2. It is further recommended that legal machinery for adjudication of serious school superintendent conflict include a system of appeals to control arbitrary action by those in authority. Serious consideration should be given to granting intermediate or state boards of education power to overrule injudicious or arbitrary actions by local boards of education.

3. It is recommended that professional school administrators prepare the necessary legislation for the support of the superintendent's position and take what actions are necessary for its passage. Such legislation should spell out the role of the superintendent and his relationship to the board of education and staff in as clear, concise language as possible.

4. It is recommended that school administrators and their respective professional associations seek tenure status for administrators, subject to the normally accepted legal causes for dismissal, i.e., incompetency, immorality, insubordination.

5. It is recommended that conflict theory and management courses be included in the professional preparation course work of school administrators.
6. It is recommended that further study be conducted on the subject of school conflict to generate needed knowledge for field practice and instructional purposes.

7. It is recommended that the model tested in this study be subjected to further study and tests for purposes of refinement and validation. Such studies should include other types of superintendent conflict, i.e., student unrest, failure of communities to provide financial support.

8. It is further recommended that future studies on school conflict be focused on short-term conflict situations to increase knowledge about successful methods of reducing or resolving them.

9. It is recommended that a national data bank be established as a depository for knowledge on school conflict.
APPENDIX
SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONFLICT MODEL

NON-CONFLICT SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Board
Staff
Students
Public

Pro Admin.
Uncommitted
Anti-Admin.

Continuum

ISSUE

Source of Issue

Content of Issue

Internal (local)

External (region, state, national)

Events Incidents Problems

Persons or Groups

Economic

Power of Authority

Values or Beliefs

Existing Cleavages

Basis of Response

Conditions for Expansion

Activists
Change in Climate of Opinion
Perceived Management Errors

Power Seekers
Ideologists
Fear and Distrust
SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONFLICT MODEL

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONFLICT EXPANSION

Board
Staff
Students
Public

Pro-Admin.
Uncommitted
Anti-Admin.

Continuum

Factors Affecting Course of Conflict
Administration Becomes the Defendant
Course of Conflict

Previously Suppressed Issues Appear
Issues Shift from Specific to General
New and Different Issues Emerge
Disagreement to Antagonism and Polarization

Authority Structure
Social Structure
Economic Structure

Distribution of Power
Population Status
Type of Community

Use of Power
Distribution of Wealth and Income

Internal-External Relations
Social Stratification
Taxation

Social Relationships
Vested Interests

Conflicting Expectations
Social Cohesion

Type of Community
Polarization

Disagreement to Antagonism and Polarization

Issues Shift from Specific to General
New and Different Issues Emerge
STUDY INSTRUMENT

A. What issue brought the controversy into the open?
   1. What was the source of the issue?
   2. What was the content of the issue?
      a. What events, incidents, or problems initiated the conflict?
      b. What evidence is there that the dispute was based on hostile attitudes rather than a particular event, incident or problem?

B. What conditions served to expand the conflict?
   1. What individuals or groups worked to expand or reduce the conflict?
   2. What evidence is there that a substantial segment of the community became active in the conflict?
   3. What management action helped to expand or reduce the conflict?

C. What pattern did the conflict follow?
   1. Who was blamed for the conditions which created the conflict?
   2. As the issue expanded what previously suppressed issues came to light?
   3. Did the issue change following the expansion of the conflict?
   4. What actions signalled the shift from disagreement to antagonism to polarization?

D. What factors affected the course of the conflict?
   1. Structure of Authority
      a. How did the distribution of power affect the conflict?
      b. How did the use of power affect the conflict?
      c. How did the pattern of internal-external relations affect the course of the conflict?
d. How did social-personal relations affect the conflict?

e. How did conflicting expectations affect the conflict?

2. Social Structure

a. How did the population status affect the conflict?

b. How is the population distributed by class, race, ethnicity, or religion? How did this affect the conflict?

c. How did the pattern of social cohesion affect the conflict?

3. Economic Structure

a. How did the economic structure of the community affect the conflict?

b. What effect did wealth and income have on the conflict?

c. How did taxation affect the conflict?

d. How did vested economic interests affect the conflict?
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS FOR USE OF THE MODEL

The following definitions and explanations are presented to serve two main purposes: (1) to provide the reader with an understanding of the conceptual base of the model; and (2) to provide the researcher with a conceptual base for the organization and analysis of data generated in the field studies.

I. Initiating Issues
   A. Identification of initiating event, incident, or problem.

   The researcher will identify the event, incident or problem on the basis of personal expertise using the following criteria:

   1. generated intense differential feelings between two or more forces;
   2. motivated one or more forces to action against a perceived opponent;
   3. expanded to involve other persons or groups not formerly active in the conflict;
   4. initiated the chain of events that led to full-scale school conflict.

   B. Identification of differences in the events, incidents, or problems which initiate conflict in schools.

      1. Sources of initiating issue.

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Source in the sense of this study is concerned with the place of origin of initiating events, incidents, or problems. For purposes of this study, such origins shall be classified as internal or external in nature.47

a. Internal - issues which originate as a result of the actions or inaction of individuals or groups within the local school organization.

b. External - issues which originate as a result of the actions or inaction of individuals or groups outside the local school organization.

2. Content of initiating issues.

The content of the initiating issues is concerned with the area of life it affects. There are generally four bases upon which people are moved to action to oppose others. They are: power or authority, economic, cultural values or beliefs,48 and attitudes of hostility between individuals or groups.

a. Power or authority - in this study power shall be viewed as the ability to influence others or to force the compliance of others. Authority shall be viewed as legal power. Both terms imply control, a condition which mankind by nature resists.49 The variables to be considered are: (1) role delineation; (2) staff competition for power or authority; (3) staff dissent or revolt; and (4) lay dissent or revolt.

b. Economic - economic conflict is subsumed to be concerned with the distribution of society's economic product.50 Therefore, since the economic product is limited, there is competition for it. Some examples would be: Salaries, taxation, fees, expenditure of public funds, etc.

50Spinrad, op. cit., p. 224.
c. Cultural beliefs and values - the basis for identifying and analyzing the effect of cultural beliefs in the initiation of conflict shall be differentiation. Different people hold different values and beliefs about the schools. These differences are conducive for generating conflict.

d. Attitudes of hostility existing between individuals and groups. In this instance, any event holds the potential for generating conflict. For purposes of this study, previous clashes between the principal actors of the present conflict will serve as indicators of existing hostility constituting at least a part of the content of the initiating issue.

II. Condition Necessary for Conflict Expansion

As mentioned earlier, practically every decision about or involving mankind holds a potential for conflict. However, all disagreements do not become full-blown conflicts. The key question involved at this point is what conditions move from disagreement to conflict?

Coleman proposes that three elements are necessary:

1) the presence of activists who work to expand the conflict;
2) a change in the climate of opinion of a sizable segment of the school community; and 3) perceived errors by management.

A. Activists Who Work to Expand Conflict

Within the school community, activists may emerge from any segment. Activists may be members of the school staff, the board of education, or the lay community. Generally speaking the aim of activists is to discredit those in authority

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52 Coleman, op. cit., pp. 7-9.
and to gain adherents necessary for political pressure. Such activists may be motivated by the desire for personal gain, revenge, or ideological beliefs. Personal gain may be classified as economic, prestige, or preferential treatment. Revenge may be the motivation because of real or imagined treatment the activist has experienced. Ideology is based on philosophical beliefs and may be either social, economic, or political in nature.

B. Perceived Management Errors.

At the time of stress, in this case caused by the issue which initiated the conflict, opponents of management place the organization under close scrutiny. This jaundiced perusal results in the identification of real or perceived management errors. Where normally such errors would pass with minor disagreement, in times of crisis they are magnified.

The kinds of errors which bring about a loss of credit to management are:

1. Failure to adapt to popular desires.
2. Misuse of power.
3. Lack of success.

C. Changing Climate of Opinion.

A changing climate of opinion within a school community is revealed by increased participation in the conflict of formerly inactive persons and groups. Evidence of such

53 Gamson, op. cit., p. 43.
increased participation are significant increases in attendance at school board meetings, the formation of new organizations to defend or attack the defendant, behavior of community leaders in response to the conflict, and responses of established school and community organizations.\textsuperscript{54}

III. The Course of Conflict

Conflict normally exhibits a "cyclic runaway"\textsuperscript{55,56} tendency unless something happens to change its course. The pattern it exhibits is as follows:

1. Once the conflict is initiated the legally constituted authority becomes the defendant. In this light, individual board members or administrators, or the board of education or administrators as a group may be faulted for the conditions which led to the conflict. In other cases, blame may be placed on the management, referring to the board and administrators as a body.

2. Previously suppressed issues appear. Previous grievances against the defendant are resurrected to enable the aggressors to reach new people and through this means draw them into the conflict. This often results in a change in the nature of the conflict immediately following its initiation, that is a shift from disagreement to antagonism.

3. The nature of the issue shifts from specific to general. Charges are couched in terms like "incompetent, dishonest, unconcerned, lack of communication, lack of leadership," etc. This implies the initiating issue was just a small part of the underlying differences and tends to reveal the fundamental differences. Power struggles do not usually reveal this characteristic.

4. New and different issues appear, often totally unrelated to the initiating issues. This characteristic implies

\textsuperscript{54} Blau, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 302.


\textsuperscript{56} Caplow, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 361.
that new issues are brought into the conflict to solidify opinion and bring additional followers into the conflict. It also indicates the possible entry of new groups with different goals into the conflict and the use of the conflict to achieve their goals.

5. The nature of the issue shifts from disagreement to antagonism. This change is characterized by a focus of direct hostility on individuals rather than disagreement over issues.\(^{57}\)

6. The nature of the conflict shifts from antagonism to polarization. Even though individuals may become polarized, the emphasis in this study is limited to the identification of social and psychological polarization of groups, either within the school organization or community. This is illustrated by the breaking apart of the school or community into two, diametrically opposed groups who view each other as totally bad, reject face-to-face contact with the enemy, and are bent on the destruction of their opponents.\(^{58}\)

IV. Factors Affecting the Course of the Conflict

The length to which the "cyclic runaway" tendency of conflict will go depends on the characteristics of the people, the school organization, and the community. The model identifies four factors with which to analyze these characteristics: (1) the structure of authority; (2) the social structure; (3) the economic structure; and (4) the mass media of communication.

A. Structure of Authority.

The term structure of authority is a generic one. In this study it is assumed to include the formal control structure

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\(^{59}\) Coser, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
of the school district, the informal network of associations within the school organization, and the political and social control systems of the school environment. The key variables of the relationships in the structure of authority which are thought to contribute to conflict are the distribution of power, the use of power, internal-external relationships, social personal relations, and conflicting expectations.

1. Distribution of power and/or authority shall be viewed in terms of change in the stable pattern of relationships between the board of education, staff and lay public. Power in this sense is viewed as fluid and therefore is subject to competition for possession. The process of striving for power and/or authority is conducive to the generation of conflict. In addition, changes resulting from shifts of power and/or authority may serve to expand or reduce conflict.

2. Use of power and/or authority. A key factor in the use of power and authority is the effect it produces on the recipient. If it is viewed as legitimate, that is appropriate and proper, the recipient reacts favorably. If it is viewed as illegitimate, inappropriate or improper, it generates alienation and conflict. Therefore, for purposes of this study, the responses of recipients to the use of power and authority by the board of education, staff and lay public is deemed important to the reduction of expansion or conflict.

3. Internal-external relations are concerned with the state of integration of the school organization's subparts and its ability to adapt to its environment. Internal integration of the organization may be measured by its ability to solve internal problems. Evidence of

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sub-parts seeking help from outside sources would be indicative of lack of integration. The ability of the organization to adapt to its environment may be measured by its response to popular demands.63

4. Social-personal relations may be identified by analyzing friendships and family relationships of key actors in the conflict and how they influenced the power relationships involved.

5. Conflicting expectations. One of the major sources of misunderstanding, hostility, and conflict are the different expectations held for individuals and organizations in society. Getzels points to three primary sources of conflict in the administrative setting: role-personality conflict, role conflict, and personality conflict.64

a. Role-personality conflicts occur as a function of discrepancies between the pattern of expectations to a given role and the pattern of needs-dispositions characteristic of the incumbent of the role.

b. Role conflicts occur whenever a role incumbent is required to conform simultaneously to a number contradictory, exclusive or inconsistent.

c. Personality conflict occurs as a function of opposing needs and disposition within the personality of the role incumbent.

Since each of these conditions are assumed to hold a potential for conflict, the principal actors of the conflict will be analyzed to determine if any of these conditions are present and, if so, the effect they had on the conflict.


B. Social Structure.

The social structure of a school community plays an important role in conflict about schools. First, it would appear that homogeneity in the pattern of a social relationship would provide stability. On the other hand, heterogeneity or differences would provide the base for conflict.

As a first step in this discussion, it would appear appropriate to define the term. Bloch and Prince provide us with a conceptual view in defining social structure as the patterning of the component parts of a population grouping. They identify the elements as age and sex, population pyramids, class, status and power-systems, other widespread social categories and groups, and occupational and other opportunity structures. At the same time, they indicate that such structures are subject to change, and that such change created different problems for different groups.

In keeping with the model used as a basis for this study, three major categories of the social structure are treated. They are population status, social stratification, and the pattern of social interaction.

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1. Population status. The study of population status is concerned with identification of numbers of people and their distribution in space. The key conflict factor of population status is that associated with change. Hosilatz and Moore substantiate this concept by saying that rapid urban growth is accompanied by such problems as intergroup relations, arising from the composition of newcomers, the problem of providing services, and problems of local government. A change in the composition of the population may create changes in the power, economic, or value structure or bring about competition with the established structures, thereby generating conflict.

2. Social stratification is assumed to be a root cause of conflict when the issue centers on disabilities a particular group suffers as a result of such classification. Generally, people in our society are classified in a vertical rank on the basis of class, religion, ethnic, or racial membership. Since the basis of classification is difference, these differences are a source of conflict between ranks when one rank suffers a disability because of their placement. The identification of school conflict factions organized along lines of social stratification membership would indicate conflict rooted in social differences. Evidence of heterogeneity of social stratifications in conflict faction membership would indicate it is not an important factor in this instance.

3. Social Cohesion. The key variable in this factor would appear to be the degree to which the population identifies with the whole school community. The presence of a high degree of identification with the whole school community would provide a cohesiveness and motivate action toward the reduction of conflict, whereas its absence would indicate competing factions who either ignore the problem or attempt to "feed on it." Evidence of cohesiveness of lack of it within the conflict community would be the presence or absence of coordinating agencies which bind

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67 Berelson and Steiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 459, 484.
together different organizations, action by community and organizational leaders, the number of organizations that span the entire community, attitudes of the key actors in the conflict toward the school community, and the presence or absence of existing cleavages in the community.

C. Economic Structure.

Regardless of how one looks at it, economic differentiation is a factor in school-related conflict. The root problem occurs when financial demands on the local school systems are greater than the community can or are willing to afford. The variables of school district economic structure that are imputed to contribute to the course of such conflict are economic type of community, the distribution of wealth and income, taxation, and vested economic interests.

1. Economic Types of Communities. Towns with different economic structures differ in the kind of controversy they generate. The three classes of communities identified by Coleman are: self-contained, service communities and suburbs.

   a. The self-contained community is one where residents work and live. In this type of community conflict usually centers on power or direct economic interests.

   b. Service - a town whose economy is based on serving individuals or groups and depends upon this source of income for a living, i.e., prison towns, resorts, university towns, etc. Conflict is usually based on economic hostility and social barriers.

   c. Suburban towns - a school community where people live, but go elsewhere to earn their living. Conflicts in these towns usually center on values and taxation.

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69 Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 331.
2. Distribution of wealth and income. The distribution of wealth and income offers two possibilities for conflict: one, the unequal distribution of wealth and income among individuals indicates a predisposition for heterogeneity between classes; second, the distribution of wealth and income within a geographical location places different demands on the public, i.e., the unequal distribution of taxable wealth for financing public services. In the first instance, conflict factions organized along economic class lines would indicate individual income and wealth as a significant factor in the conflict. In the second, low or decreasing property valuation per pupil will be viewed as a significant factor.

3. Taxation. Conflict over taxation appears to be part of the nature of the American citizen. In a sense this resistance to taxation amounts to competition for scarce resources, in this case school revenue. This study will seek to relate the contribution taxation makes to conflict by:

a. Identifying anti-tax factions, the methods they use to control school taxes, and the results generated by their actions.

b. Identify individuals and groups who exert pressure for the passage of school levies and generate conflict by their actions.

4. Vested economic interests. This section is concerned with the identification of individuals, groups, and organizations who exert pressure on the school district for economic advantage and the effect such pressures have on school conflict. The source of such pressures may be business or employee interests.


71 Corwin, op. cit., p. 362.

72 Green, op. cit., p. 52.
D. Mass Media.

The degree to which mass media influences people is still debatable; however, the mass media does appear to both initiate and expand controversy. For purposes of this study two levels of the media will be analyzed. First, the researcher will seek evidence that the subject under debate or conflict has received recent nationwide publicity. This condition is thought to predispose people to conflict at the local level.

Second, the local media will be analyzed to determine—irresponsible reporting, whether the conflict is played up or down, and whether the news media takes sides in the controversy.
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