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Anderson, Gary Lee, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1988
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UMI
A LEGITIMATION ROLE FOR THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR:
A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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

By
Gary L. Anderson, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1988

Reading Committee:
Luvern L. Cunningham
Robert Donmoyer
Richard Pratte

Approved by
Robert Donmoyer, Advisor
College of Education
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Most importantly I am grateful to the Fairlawn principals, who shared their professional lives and from whom I learned much.
VITA

1971.........................B.A., English/Spanish
           University of Iowa
           Iowa City, Iowa

1971-1972....................English/Spanish teacher
           Swea City High School
           Swea City, Iowa

1972-1974....................English Instructor
           Inlingua Languages
           Buenos Aires, Argentina

1974-1975....................Spanish GED Instructor
           Bergen Community College
           Hackensack, NJ

1975-1979....................Bilingual Coordinator
           College Adaptor Program
           New York, NY

           Teachers College, Columbia U.
           New York, NY

1979-1981....................Program Director
           Board of Education, Dist. 7
           New York, NY

1981-1982....................Instructor
           S.U.N.Y., Harlem EOC Center
           New York, NY

1982-1984....................High School Principal
           Colegio Americano de Puebla
           Puebla, Mexico

           The Ohio State University
           Columbus, OH

Fall, 1988.................Assistant Professor
           The University of New Mexico
           Albuquerque, NM
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Legitimation of Social Relations

This study is the result of my longstanding interest in an empirical exploration of critical perspectives in the field of educational administration. It has always seemed to me that viewing the day-to-day lives of school administrators through the lens of critical theories of society ran the risk of filtering people and the accumulated clutter of their lives out of the analysis. In such analyses, I feared, school administrators would be led about by larger social forces as if emerging from pods from outer space. Although school administrators - especially principals - might acknowledge feeling subject to forces beyond their control, these tend to be forces which they can name - central office
administrators, school board members, special interest groups, state department evaluators, federal mandates, etc. How then can empirical research link the daily work of school administrators to theoretical work which addresses broader and less visible macro-structural forces such as, a society's division of labor and relations of production, contradictions between economic and political spheres, and the social reproduction of class-based inequality? Can empirical research apprehend the messiness and "dailiness" of administrative work at the micro level, as well as, those macro-structural forces which determine, if not the daily actions of administrators, at least, the limits within which administrators act?

These meta-theoretical questions were further highlighted in a recent ethnographic study of the ecology of administrative decision-making (Anderson, Heck, & Williams, 1988) in which I attempted to "negotiate" our research findings with the study's cultural informants. In the case of one of the informants, who was an inner-city principal, I found myself unwilling to relinquish my critical interpretation of his work, which I viewed as primarily
that of providing a veneer of legitimacy for a school which was expected to allocate students to the bottom of society's division of labor.

My insistence as researcher on adhering to a legitimization role for this principal which served to "cover up" a system of structural social inequality was I felt, grounded in the study's interview and observational data. This particular principal, who "bootstrapped" himself out of conditions of poverty and neglect at least as bad as that of many of his 1,500 high school students, viewed himself as "living proof" of the efficacy of American meritocracy and the opportunities for upward mobility for those who are willing to put forth the effort to achieve it. My field notes contain several instances in which this principal recounted his own success story to students and his belief that hard work and effort would be rewarded. In the face of this "living proof" of the efficacy of meritocracy, it seemed to me that these inner-city students must either personalize and internalize their failure or develop the tools of social analysis which would allow them to understand the structural forces that produce only a handful of
success stories in an inner-city high school of 1,500 students. Since such tools of analysis are seldom placed in the hands of high school teachers and administrators, much less students, the internalization of failure is perhaps the only realistic alternative for most inner-city youth.

This failed negotiation raised a difficult question which still plagues critical ethnographers: Who is guilty of false consciousness - the researcher or the informant? Although as an outsider I felt uneasy about attributing a legitimation role to this principal, I also became more and more convinced that legitimation was a key administrative role which required much more attention than it had received to date in the research literature. Although the legitimation concept has appeared sporadically in the educational administration literature, it has yet to be explored as an important occupational role.

This study, then, has two central concerns - one theoretical; the other, substantive. While attempting to provide a description of the ways principals enact a legitimation role, the study will also attempt to provide a theoretical model which captures both the
semi-autonomous dalliness of administrators' work and the structural forces that constrain it.

Other Forms of Legitimation

In looking back on the negotiation with Kathy, the study's suburban principal, I realized that I had not raised the legitimation issue in that negotiation. Did that mean that only inner-city principals are called upon to legitimate the social allocation of failure, or did the social allocation of success (i.e., achievement, high status, economic rewards) also require legitimation? Moreover, was the accomplishment of legitimation achieved in a fundamentally different way in the two cases? Reviewing some of the data from the suburban district, I began to wonder whether the administrator's legitimation role didn't at times merely serve to provide coherent social explanations for conflicting organizational goals. After all, I reasoned, regardless of whether one's goal was to maintain the status quo or radically change it, the organization in some form must be maintained and nurtured. In other words, I began to suspect that
legitimation was something principals did hundreds of times a day as they interpreted various organizational levels and school publics to each other. To view each instance of legitimation as a case of social class domination might produce a deterministic and one-dimensional study.

I decided, therefore, to explore the legitimation role of the school administrator through a grounded, inductive approach to the collection of data. I reasoned that this would allow me to describe the meanings principals impose on their organizational and social reality and how and to whom they communicate these meanings. The study did not set out to address how principals acquire these meanings - what sociologists call "occupational socialization" - but rather how they mediate these meanings to members of the organization, its clients, and other stakeholders.

It was my belief, however, that to limit the study to principals' meanings and inductive data analysis would be equally one-dimensional and preclude a critical perspective. This dilemma led me to the dialectical approach to data analysis which I describe at the beginning of chapter three. The dialectical
approach allowed me to view the mediatory role of principals as resulting in various forms of legitimation at various levels of analysis. Using a dialectical approach enabled me to see that school administrators were expected to legitimate much more than the school's role in sustaining relations of social inequality. Among other things, they were expected to legitimate central office policy to teachers and staff, teacher competence to the community, and building-level decisions to the central office. The principal is located at the center of the district organization and must constantly mediate messages which flow vertically and horizontally within the organization, as well as, between the organization and its environment.

In conclusion, it is an assumption of this study that the legitimation role of the principal, in order to be fully understood, must be placed in a theoretical framework which views shared organizational meanings as social constructions and takes into account the administrator's structural location within the organization and society. From this perspective the
principalship is a mediation site where various forms of legitimation take place.

Purposes of the Study

The crisis of inner-city (i.e., poor and minority) schools has yet again been highlighted by the recent Carnegie report, *An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools* (1988). Crisis reports such as this have appeared with almost ritualistic regularity since James B. Conant wrote *Slums and Suburbs* in 1961. Nevertheless, American society is more segregated and highly stratified today than it was when Conant wrote his classic book (Ehrenreich, 1984). Crisis in urban education has become the status quo.

One of the purposes of this study is to explore the role of school administrators in the persistence of unequal social relations. Although many researchers have attempted to understand how schools can be used to attack social inequalities through desegregation and various compensatory education programs, others have attempted to understand the role of schools in perpetuating unequal social relations. Although in no
way rejecting the progressive reforms which have sought to combat inequality, this study is part of the latter critical tradition in education. This critical tradition has largely sought the sources of the social reproduction of unequal relations in classroom interactions between teachers and students. The present study explores the role of school administrators in legitimating unequal social relations through an exploration of the ways administrators mediate contradictions between the school and the wider society, between conflicting roles and statuses, and among the various levels of the organizational authority structure.

A second purpose of this study is to explore legitimization as a generative concept which might contribute to a theoretical rapprochement between the critical perspective mentioned above and a more symbolic interactionist or cultural perspective. For example, the following passage advocates a cultural perspective less dependent on social structural issues.

Studies of culture have been inhibited by the assumption that culture can only be understood by relating it to social structure. This is reductionism. Instead of
treatin9 culture as an interesting phenomenon in its own right, social scientists have reduced it to some other level. Instead of attempting to understand religion, one attributes it to differences in social class. Instead of dealing with the internal characteristics of ideology, one seeks its roots in vested interests.

The inability to establish a relationship between social structure and culture which does not result in reductionism at the micro or macro end has made wholistic studies of schooling rare. The result has been a lack of meaningful communication between critical researchers who view social structures as primary and the mainstream scientific community which claims greater autonomy for human agency. The exploration of a legitimation role for school administrators has the potential to provide complex explanations of their mediatory function at more micro levels of the organization, as well as, their contribution toward creating the shared meanings which sustain social structures of inequality.

Research Questions

This study began not as a series of questions or hypotheses, but as an attempt to explore and develop a
grounded theory about a ubiquitous phenomenon — the
legitimation role of school principals — a role which
has been largely neglected in the educational
administration literature. This study will describe in
detail instances of legitimation by school
administrators, and from these descriptions develop
grounded theory and extend nascent theories of
legitimation in the field of educational
administration. Although some theoretical work exists
in this area (Kerr, 1964; Nystrand & Cunningham, 1973;
Bickel, 1982; Foster, 1980a, 1980b, 1984; Bates, 1984;
Johnston, 1985) little empirical work has been done to
ground the theory in the day-to-day work of
administrators.

Specific questions, of course, did emerge as the
study progressed. Ultimately it was the following
questions about the school administrator's legitimation
role which the study attempted to answer:

1. What is the relationship between a
principal's legitimation role and
organizational structure — particularly the
hierarchical authority structure?

2. What does the legitimation process within
and between organizational levels look like?
How do principals legitimize their schools to stakeholders (i.e. clients, community, school board, etc.)

3. How do the above legitimization roles interact with each other? How do principals resolve potential contradictions in role expectations?

4. How do contradictions which arise out of status or role conflicts affect the legitimization process?

5. Do some principals resist their legitimization role? In what ways do principals engage in de-legitimation?

Definition of Terms

Definition of Role.

This study will view role as the behaviors expected of incumbents of a social positions, as well as, the meanings these behaviors have for the incumbents as they engage in interaction in a variety of settings and with a variety of publics. Thus, the dynamism of traditional concepts of role conflict and role expectations will be utilized to capture the tension implicit in the mediation among different statuses and publics. However, that aspect of functionalism which views roles as merely inherent or
"assigned" to social actors by the statuses they occupy will be eschewed in favor of a constructivist framework in which roles are viewed as social constructions which are the product of social interaction over time. It is, in fact, the very tension between the constraints imposed by organizational structures, role expectations and intense occupational socialization and the attempt by social actors to create spaces of relative autonomy through human agency which forms a central theoretical concern of this study.

**Definition of Legitimation.**

In this study legitimation is viewed as the attribution of plausibility to a particular set of social relations or social roles. Legitimation as an administrative role involves the management of perceptions in such a way that social institutions take on a subjectively plausible and nonproblematical status. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, legitimation is viewed as part of a developmental process. If organizations and larger social formations represent the enactment of a shared reality, then such
a reality must pass through developmental stages whereby it is created, communicated, and sustained. Although, as Berger & Luckmann (1967) note, social constructions are often historical artifacts which are created over time, legitimation provides the explanations and justifications which sustain and lend coherence and plausibility to a particular social construction in the present.

Definition of Contradiction

Contradictions are viewed in this study as resulting from the process of social construction. According to Benson (1977), contradictions are generated in two ways. First, there is a contradiction in any social setting between previous constructions which have congealed into established social formations and the ongoing production of social reality. For example, Dewey (19 ) has argued that the construct of individualism which emerged from the social conditions of nineteenth century America, presents a contradiction to the needs of a modern corporate society. Many would argue that the failure to recognize this
contradiction continues to thwart efforts to build a truly egalitarian American society.

Secondly, the construction of social reality is carried out in differentiated social contexts which leads to the construction of multiple and incompatible social forms.

There is in most instances little coordination between the multiple contexts within which construction takes place. Attempts to tightly regulate the process through authoritative direction or ideological manipulation are only partly successful, whether in political empires or organizational regimes. At the societal level the production processes in separate institutional sectors are partially autonomous. Likewise at the level of organizations, the multiple levels and divisions form differentiated contexts within which social production proceeds in a partially autonomous manner. As a result, the fabric of social life is rent with contradictions growing out of the unevenness and disconnectedness of social production. (Benson, 1977, p. 5)

Contradictions are inherent in social formations and must either be recognized and struggled with (i.e. resolved) or mediated in such a way that the tensions which contradictions potentially generate are dissolved. Conflict (i.e. role conflict, status
conflict, etc.) is experienced when contradictions are insufficiently mediated.

The Foci of the Study

The Principalship.

Although it is probable that a legitimation role could be identified for superintendents, teachers, and other organizational members, the principalship was chosen as the study's focus because of the evidence for a legitimation role found in the previous principalship study (Anderson, Heck, & Williams, 1988) and because of the principal's unique central location in the organizational hierarchy. The principal is at once a street-level-bureaucrat who interfaces with students and the school community (Lipsky, 1979) and a link within the authority structure to the central office. Because of his/her location within the organization, the principal, perhaps more than other members, is called upon to manage meaning—that is, to interpret the organization to its various publics and its levels to each other.
Although the principalship was the focus of the present study and the bulk of interviews and observations involved principals, it was also necessary to gain an understanding of the school community and the organization of the school district. This required the collection of sufficient observational and interview data from other organizational and community members to provide the ethnographic context needed for an understanding of the principal's legitimation role. An account of the purposive sampling procedures for choosing informants and sites for observation is provided in chapter three.

Another focusing decision involved the choice of the eight elementary school principals as the primary focus of the study. Although there were three middle school principals and one high school principal in the district, there was relatively little communication between them and the elementary school principals. Because the eight elementary school principals spent a great deal of time interacting either over the phone, in meetings or socially, they provided many opportunities for data collection concerning administrative peer interaction.
A Suburban School District.

Initially I had intended to do a comparative case study of the legitimation role of principals in an urban and suburban school district. Because of the extent of ethnographic context required, I felt that the data collection demands and the time commitment in the field would be unrealistic for a dissertation study. Although I already had access to both a suburban and urban district, I felt that my tendency to view all instances of legitimation as examples of social class domination would be heightened in an urban district where more obvious forms of tracking and social allocation occur. On the other hand, I hypothesized that in suburban districts where success allocation is viewed as nonproblematic and where there is apparently nothing that would suggest a potential legitimation crisis, the principal's role of sustaining the legitimacy of success allocation would be more subtle and less intense, allowing me to concentrate on more "neutral", intra-organizational legitimation issues.(1)
Summary

This study explores through the use of empirical field data the legitimation role of elementary school principals. In Chapter Two the concepts of role and legitimation will be explored in greater depth and the legitimation literature from sociology and educational administration will be reviewed.

In Chapter three a description of the dialectical approach used in the study will be provided. Since one of the purposes of the study is to explore the relationship between social structure and human agency, a method which is capable of capturing both and exploring the relationship between them is required. General data collection and analysis procedures will also be described in chapter three.

In chapter four, the school district and all significant social actors will be described in order to provide the ethnographic context for the critical ethnography which will follow.

In chapter five, answers to the study's research questions will be explored through an analysis of several arenas in which the principals' legitimation
role becomes apparent. The arenas selected for analysis include district policies concerning the instruction of reading, annexation and desegregation, the district's social charter, and the district's authority structure.

In chapter six, implications for a reconceptualization of the principal's occupational role are addressed.
Footnotes

(1) It can be argued that the distinction between instances of legitimation which sustain social class domination from those which do not is a false one. For example, the attempt to legitimate a seemingly neutral innovation in the district may, in fact, turn out to sustain class relations. This is particularly true if we view all thought and action as saturated by the hegemonic ideology of the dominant class. (Gramsci, 1974) In this view, it would not be possible for a principal to think a nonideological thought or take a nonideological action.

I agree that all thought and action occurs in an ideological context and, therefore, may ultimately serve to sustain class relations. I also believe, however, that because of the differentiated and hierarchical nature of organizations, various organizational (and community) members pursue goals whose rationality is limited by their own narrow context. How the pursuit of goals which are limited and often in conflict end up sustaining class relations is at the heart of a critical ethnography which seeks to describe the complex relationship between human agency and social structure.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review which follows draws on a wide range of literature from organizational theory, role theory, legitimation theory, constructivist sociology and critical theory. In order to provide some landmarks in this theoretical sea, the review has been divided into five parts with each part building on that which precedes it.

In part I the principal's legitimation role will be placed in the context of recent, so-called "nonrational" organizational models which view organizations as the result of social interaction. In a context of multiple goals, loose coupling, and organized anarchies, the legitimation of those structures of meaning that define organizational purpose and justify their existence become increasingly important.
In part II relevant aspects of role theory will be reviewed. Rather than the looser and more atheoretical "cluster of tasks" sense of role which appears in much educational administration literature, a more dynamic conception of role which cuts across task domains of the principalship will be explored. Current research methods for exploring administrative roles will be reviewed, and a case will be made for the use of ethnographic methods.

In part III a review of legitimation theories will be provided, with special emphasis on Meyer & Rowan's theory of organizational legitimation and Habermas' exploration of the causes of a legitimation crisis within capitalist social formations. Both Meyer & Rowan and Habermas provide a theoretical link between intra-organizational legitimation issues and legitimation issues in the wider society. Legitimation is then viewed from a constructivist perspective in which it becomes one of a series of stages in the construction of social reality. Berger & Luckmann and other sociologists of knowledge are concerned with how social reality is constructed through social interaction in space and then passed down from one
generation to another in time. As we shall see, in an organizational context, the principal is the one charged with mediating knowledge through social interaction in space and time. Finally a mediation model for exploring the principal's legitimation role is proposed which includes mediation in space and time and adds a further dimension of mediation - that which occurs within ideology through the reliance on mediatory myths which resolve organizational contradictions.

In Part IV social reproduction theory is explored with an eye to how segmental views of social reality provide individuals with legitimating myths which serve to promote the persistence of social inequality. Two areas pertinent to this study are explored, urban education and the division of labor. The urban/suburban division in metropolitan areas and social class and racial segregation generally are first explored. This is followed by an exploration of social allocation theory and the implications of the current division of labor for the schools allocative role.

In part V the problem of observing power relations which are heavily legitimated and largely hidden from
view is explored. A review of several political theorists who have addressed this problem will be provided.

Part I: The Paradigm Shift in Organizational Theory

The ripples that Barnard (1938) sent out in *The Functions of the Executive* in which he explored the "informal organization" have produced a tidal wave of interest in new approaches to understanding organizations and the roles of organizational members in creating, maintaining, and/or changing them. In many new theoretical models of organizations, formal structures are the result of intersubjectivity (Greenfield, 1975), micropolitics (Ball, 1987; Hoyle, 1982), or a need to legitimate the organization to the larger community (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Many of these new models portray decision-making as occurring in a context of organized anarchy (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972) muddling through (Lindblom), loose coupling (Weick, 1976) and decision accretion (Weiss, 1980). Of particular relevance to schools has been the
empirically verified presence of multiple hierarchies of authority that attend to different purposes and the identification of large pockets of relative autonomy within the organization.

These new theoretical models have led to a greater interest in observational studies which have attempted to ascertain what it is the administrator actually does. Mintzberg's (1973) structured observation study and Wolcott's (1973) ethnographic account have spawned great interest in providing description and grounded theories of administrative actions. Gronn (1983) has more recently provided accounts of how administration is accomplished through communication or "principal talk".

These observational studies have consistently portrayed the accomplishment of administration as a relatively messy affair. School administrators, according to these images spend little time in their offices, spend the bulk of their time in personal interactions with various organizational stakeholders, and more often than not engage in ad hoc decision-making. They are constantly busy, usually interacting and always on call. And yet after
describing the exhausting work day of Ed Bell, Walcott can say,

The school principal is successful in his work to the extent that he is able to contain and constrain the forces of change with which he must contend as a matter of daily routine: whatever force he exerts on the dynamics of the school contributes to its stability, even when he wants to act, or believes he is acting, in a way that will encourage an aura of change. (p. 307)

A Mediation Model

Emerging from the image of administrators portrayed in the above literature, the present study proposes a mediation model for the study of administrator activity. It suggests that current observational studies show that given the principal's location in the hierarchical authority structure and the sheer amount of daily interactions in which he/she engages that the principal is expected above all to mediate among a variety of organizational stakeholders. Although Mintzberg (1973) inferred ten administrative roles based on what administrators actually did, a close look at these roles (liaison, monitor, disseminator,
spokesperson, negotiator, etc.) supports the idea that administrators spend most of their time in mediation activities. Although Mintzberg looked at a variety of administrators, his finding is perhaps even more true for the school administrator than the business manager because of the social tensions that are played out in the arena of education. As Walcott suggests in the above quote, the result of successful mediation by the administrator is organizational stability or maintenance, but, at least in schools, there is much more at stake than organizational maintenance. The legitimacy of the institution of schooling and its role in American society must also be maintained. Furthermore, the legitimacy of any number of other social constructions must also be accomplished (e.g. salary structures, teaching methods, community status, and teacher competence)

According to a mediation model, the principal must mediate the various subunits of the organization among themselves, as well as, to the various school publics and must perform this complex orchestration in such a way that each part appear plausible and legitimate to the others.
This mediatory aspect of the principal's job tends to be seen in political terms through theories of negotiated order (Strauss 1963, 1978; Hall 1972) and micro-politics (Hoyle 1982, Schwille 1983, Blaze 1986, Ball 1987). Building upon this political approach to administration, this study proposes viewing the mediatory work of the principal as a model which requires a legitimation role for administrators. Furthermore, unlike the above political models which view administrators as power brokers who gain influence and control over resources, through the use of elaborate political tactics, the legitimation role will emphasize those communicative and symbolic actions through which administrators manage meaning within the organization.

Legitimation will be viewed as a generative construct with great potential for better understanding the ways in which organizational and societal reality is accomplished and maintained over time. Before exploring further the importance of a legitimation role for school administrators, a brief account of its place in role theory will be outlined.
Part II: The Concept of Role and the Principalship

In spite of the reported decline in the use of role theory by researchers in the field of educational administration (Griffith, 1969; Corwin, 1974; Willower, 1980), a concern with role continues to persist among researchers and practitioners. Considerable attention is currently given to the principal's instructional leadership role (Firestone & Wilson, 1985), organizational maintenance role (Crowson & Porter-Gehrle, 1981), curriculum implementation role (Hord & Hall, 1987), program improvement role (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982), etc. In much of the literature that addresses administrative roles, the term "role" refers loosely to a general domain of activities or cluster of tasks that principals are expected to perform. Such a conception of role tends to be prescriptive and views new roles as "add ons" to the current role constellation of the principal, often resulting in new demands on the principal's time.

This study will examine a role which does not add new tasks to the principal's job, but rather cuts
accross existing roles and becomes a framework for analysing them.

**Role-sets and Role Conflict.**

For Linton (1936), role represented the dynamic aspect of status. Linton observed that each person in society occupies multiple statuses and that each of these statuses has its associated role. When the individual puts the rights and duties of a socially assigned status into effect, s/he is enacting a role.

The extension of role theory, which posited the existence of role sets within a status, was developed theoretically by Merton (1957) and empirically by Gross, Mason, & McEachern (1958). Discussing role-set theory Merton (1967) writes,

> Role-set theory begins with the concept that each social status involves not a single associated role, but an array of roles. This feature of social structure gives rise to the concept of role-set; that complement of social relationships in which persons are involved simply because they occupy a particular social status. Thus,...the status of school teacher has its distinctive role-set which relates the teacher not only to the correlative status, pupil, but also to colleagues, the school principal and superintendent, the Board of Education,
professional associations and, in the United states, local patriotic organizations. (p.42)

Merton goes on to distinguish role-sets from what sociologists have traditionally termed "multiple roles", i.e., father, husband, principal, church elder, etc. According to Merton these do not represent roles at all, but rather distinct statuses and, thus, status-sets.

Gross, Mason & McEachern (1958) not only acknowledge the existence of role sets, but document, through the use of survey questionnaire data, the ways in which a superintendent's role changes depending on the expectations of the various constituencies with which s/he interacts.

**Manifest and Latent Roles**

Current research on administrative roles has also failed to address the manifest and latent functions of role enactment, that is, the distinction between the end-in-view of the social actor and the actual consequences of action. Latent functions involve - to use the Freudian meaning of latency upon which Merton (1967) draws - "processes which are below the threshold
of superficial observation" (p. 115). This is an important distinction for a legitimation role since legitimization is often not the conscious motivation of principals' legitimating behavior, and the process of legitimization often takes place in a complex matrix of organizational structures and ideology.

Methodological Issues: Observational Studies of Administrative Roles

The publication in 1973 of Henry Mintzberg's, The Nature of Managerial Work, has sparked a great deal of interest in observational studies of administration. Instead of using survey data or simply prescribing roles that managers ought to incorporate into their role-set, Mintzberg, using structured observation, identified a number of managerial roles-in-use which he clustered under the rubrics interpersonal, informational, and decisional. Mintzberg's work spawned a flurry of structured observational studies in the field of educational administration (Peterson, 1978; Duignan, 1980; Willis, 1980; Martin & Willower, 1981; Sproull, 1981). These studies were more
interested in asking, "What do administrators do?" rather than, "What should administrators do?"

Such studies were an advance over former role studies in two ways. First, they went beyond the "cluster of tasks" conception of roles and, secondly, they viewed role-sets as defined by the patterned behaviors that managers exhibit in the course of their work (i.e., resource allocator, entrepreneur, disturbance handler, etc.) rather than merely by their relationship to the statuses and expectations of those they interact with. However, partly because of the methodological limitations of structured observation, such studies have been heavily criticized by symbolic interactionists for inferring roles from observed behavior without inquiring into the meanings these behaviors have for the various social actors involved in a given interaction. Nor do these studies analyze potential latent functions of administrative behavior which might extend beyond the immediate interaction.

In more recent work Mintzberg (1979) has appeared to acknowledge the need for more of what Gilbert Ryle has called "thick description" in observational...
Theory building seems to require rich description, the richness that comes from anecdote. We uncover all kinds of relationships in our 'hard' data, but it is only through the use of 'soft' data that we are able to 'explain' them, and explanation is, of course, the purpose of research. (p. 587)

A promising development in this regard is the recent discovery of organizational culture, which has given rise to studies of role analysis that attempt to move further beyond the surface of organizational life toward the part that occupational roles play in maintaining or potentially changing the norms of organizational culture(s). Thus, for example, Mitchell, Ortiz, & Mitchell (1983) identify interpretive, representational and authenticating roles through which administrators "manage" the organization's culture.

As this section illustrates methods for exploring administrative roles have developed from the early survey studies (Gross, Mason & McEachern, 1958) through structured observational studies inspired by Mintzberg, to the current effort to provide better triangulation
and the richer contextual data that ethnographic methods provide. As part of this ethnographic tradition the present study seeks to provide not only the broader context in which administrative behavior is embedded, but also to understand how administrators impose meaning on organizational life.

**Limitations of Role Theory for the This Study.**

This study's in-depth analysis of a single administrative role risks some potential dangers. There may be a tendency to imply that the role under study - legitimation - is the dominant role of administration. This is seldom the case. Principals do much more than legitimate, although the need to legitimate is always present to some extent.

The focus on a single role may also lead to reductionism. Although an attempt will be made to explore ways in which the legitimation role interacts with other roles, it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a balanced account of the constantly changing role constellation of the administrator as s/he moves from situation to situation.
Legitimation as an Administrative Role

As previously mentioned, the legitimation role of the principal, like the organizational maintenance and stability role, to which it is functionally related, does not suggest a new role which will increase the role-set domain of the principal. Rather it attempts to explicate a role which cuts across role enactment generally. In other words, principals perform the legitimation role within the context of roles such as instructional leadership, policy implementation, and school management.

A legitimation role involves the management of those meanings perceived by social actors which lend credence to a particular set of social relations. The perceptions of individuals both within and without the organization must be managed in such a way that the organization and its policies are perceived as legitimate. The perception of legitimacy is important for the maintenance of particular professional ideologies, instructional methods, salary structures and other aspects of the status quo including the
stability of the organization, its social charter, and
the very institution of schooling.

Part III: Theories of Legitimation

Early theories of legitimation were largely concerned with the sources of authority. Weber (Gerth & Mills, 1968) and later French and Raven (1959) suggested that both characteristics of the individual and nonpersonal factors such as social institutions, offices and traditions were sources of legitimate authority. The concern with power and authority in these early legitimation theories were a response to the Hobbesian problem of order which was defined by Parsons (1949) as the ability of society to exist with some degree of stability over time in the face of the struggle of individual self-interests.

Political theorists from Hobbes and Weber onward have argued that consensus on collective social goals gives rise to legitimate social rules which are enforced and maintained through political activity. So, for example, in Parson's (1960) view politics proceeds from an agreement on social rules and is,
therefore, by definition legitimate. Parsons, and other functionalists then, treated legitimation as an unproblematic property of political behavior. (Cohen, 1979)

Giddens (1979) has criticized this consensual approach to social rules,

The effect of adopting this point of departure has been to tie Parson's own theories, in a deep-seated way, to a position in which interests are grasped primarily in terms of an individual/society opposition. The moral consensus which makes possible the unity of the social whole incorporates values 'internalized' as need-dispositions in personality, thus ensuring a fit between the individual and society. The theme of 'common values' replaces that of legitimation, in so far as the latter is understood as relating to the sectional interests of dominant groups (and hence to ideology). (pp.101-102)

Rather than view legitimacy as something that accrues to social institutions through common values and consensus on social rules, more recent theorists view legitimation as something which must be created and maintained over time.

The present study of the legitimation role of school administrators in Fairlawn suggests that although a great deal of legitimacy has accrued to current definitions of organizational and social
about through the use of Ideology which is cloaked in the language of science leading to the confusion of normative decisions with technical ones.

**Legitimation and Organizational Structure: Meyer & Rowan**

According to Meyer and Rowan (1977) the legitimacy of organizations depends on their ability to incorporate practices and procedures which correspond to institutionalized rules in the wider society. At the same time, besides lending legitimacy to the organization, such practices and procedures also represent the fundamental work activities of the organization. So, for example,

A sick worker must be treated by a doctor using accepted medical procedures; whether the worker is treated effectively is less important. A bus company must service routes whether or not there are many passengers. A university must maintain appropriate departments independently of the department's enrollments. Activity, that is, has ritual significance: it maintains appearances and validates an organization (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p.355).

An organization's practices and procedures, according to Meyer and Rowan are enforced by public opinion, by important constituents, by knowledge legitimated through the educational system, by social
current definitions of organizational and social reality, the creation and maintenance of legitimacy is itself central to district politics, and that this role generally falls most heavily on administrative levels of the school hierarchy, i.e. principals and superintendents. A legitimation role for school administrators which makes legitimacy a scarce resource rather than a taken-for-granted dimension of schooling has broad implications for current definitions of the occupational role-set of school administrators, as well as, of the schools' role in American society.

The advantage of combining critical theory with a constructivist (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Magoon,, 1977) view of social reality is that through a critical perspective the social construction of reality through human interaction stresses relations of power and sectional interests rather than the mere emergence of consensual norms.

Two recent theories of legitimation are particularly relevant to the present study. Meyer and Rowan (1977) have developed a theory of legitimation to explain how organizations use formal structures and "ritual classifications" to acquire legitimacy, and Habermas (1975) has described how legitimation comes
prestige, and by law. Such elements of formal structure are highly institutionalized and thus to some extent beyond the discretion of any individual participant or organization. "They must, therefore, be taken for granted as legitimate, apart from evaluations of their impact on work outcomes" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 344).

Unlike open systems theories which argue that organizations incorporate structural elements to cope with interdependencies with their environments, institutional theories suggest that organizations structurally reflect socially constructed reality.

According to the institutional conception...organizations tend to disappear as distinct and bounded units. Quite beyond the environmental interrelations suggested in open systems theories, institutional theories in their extreme forms define organizations as dramatic enactments of the rationalized myths pervading modern societies, rather than as units involved in exchange - no matter how complex - with their environments. (p. 346)

The authors go on to acknowledge that organizations are more than "dramatic enactments." They recognize that organizations both deal with their environments at their boundaries and imitate environmental elements in their structures. Therefore, both open systems theories and institutional theories
are operative. However, the two theories have very different implications for internal organizational processes.

These two theories - open systems and institutional - provide a bridge between the school/environment level of analysis and a more macro level in which schools reflect and participate in legitimations of broader social "myths" which uphold current constructions of social reality. While Meyer & Rowan provide a way of analyzing the ways institutions reflect broader social constructions, Habermas' critical theory provides a critical dimension to the analysis of organizations.

Legitimation and Social Structure: Habermas

Habermas (1975) argues that the basic contradiction in the reproduction of class societies is based on the privileged appropriation of socially produced wealth. The resulting class structure, according to Habermas, is the source of a basic legitimation problem: how to distribute socially produced wealth inequitably and yet legitimately - that is, how to make this process of maldistribution appear natural.
Thus, Habermas, unlike Marx, locates the crisis of capitalism and the seeds of change not immediately in the economic sphere, but rather in the sociocultural sphere. Habermas, then, concentrates on a legitimation crisis rather than an economic one. The crisis tendencies of capitalism, he states, "do not directly concern the reproduction of material conditions of life but the reproduction of reliable structures of intersubjectivity." (McCarthy, 1985, p.358)

Essential to such reproduction is a depoliticized public realm which is achieved partially by what Habermas calls civic privatism - "political abstinence combined with an orientation to career, leisure, and consumption." (Habermas, 1975, p.37) In the resulting depoliticized public realm, public policy is often the result of private decisions and the pursuit of private interests replaces the pursuit of the public good.

Since the mid-sixties, public education in the United States has been buffeted by a turbulent, politicized environment. As public education becomes increasingly politicized through the emergence of formerly disenfranchised groups, it has extended itself into many formerly private areas. As more and more formerly taken-for-granted areas of private and public
life become politicized or - to use Habermas' (1973) term - "thematized", the need to legitimate private interests becomes greater and the work of administrators more complex.

Also essential to the "reproduction of reliable structures of intersubjectivity" according to Habermas is the dominance of scientific and technical discourse in public life. Giddens (1979), discussing Habermas, elaborates,

"In the contemporary era, Habermas argues, as a result of the fusion of science and technology...the dominant ideology becomes one of 'technocratic consciousness'. The fulfillment of technical imperatives becomes the main legitimating ethos of politics. Habermas's assessment of the problem of ideology in modern society thus in one way appears almost the contrary of Mannheim's. Mannheim was worried above all by the 'babble of tongues', by the clash of multiple ideologies; Habermas, like Marcuse, sees the pre-eminent trend to be the stilling of such clamour in favor of a pervasive reduction of norms to technical decisions (p. 176).

Thus, both the de-politization of the public sphere and the dominance of scientific and technical discourse in public life has led to an inability on the part of administrators to assert leadership on normative and values issues."
Both Meyer & Rowan and Habermas, then, focus their attention on what might be called the "management of meaning." For Meyer and Rowan, socially constructed and institutionalized meanings in the wider society determine the structures, policies, and programs that organizations adopt. As we shall see in chapter five, institutionalized meanings also determine an organization's social charter (i.e., the social definitions of an organization's products). For Habermas, the maintenance of organizations and the unequal social relations which they help to sustain depends on the reproduction of reliable structures of intersubjectivity. Whether or not one adopts with Habermas a social class analysis, the implication of both theories for administrators is clear: Administrators are called upon to manage meaning both within the organization and between the organization and its constituencies. To understand how meaning is managed for purposes of legitimation is the major concern of this study.
Administrators are called upon to manage meaning both within the organization and between the organization and its constituencies. To understand how meaning is managed for purposes of legitimation is the major concern of this study.

Legitimation and Educational Administration

Although not entirely absent from theoretical work in the field of educational administration, legitimation has been addressed only marginally. Kerr (1958) defined a legitimation role for school boards, documenting how they tended to legitimate the superintendent's policies to the community. Nystrand & Cunningham (1973) have extended Kerr's conception of legitimation,

Some of the responsibilities of boards have changed: they have become less initiatory, and to some extent more remote from educational affairs - almost to the point of legitimizing educational matters symbolically.
Thus, a major function of boards has been to endorse either the recommendations or the actions of professional personnel. Most educational decisions that boards make are advanced by professionals. As a consequence the work of the boards has become the review and appraisal of proposals for action. They are legitimizers. They stand between the public (parents, students, citizens) which consumes institutional services and the professionals (teachers, administrators, counselors) who deliver services (p. 16).

The symbolic "work" then of the school board has often been to mediate policies between the school professionals and the school communities. As Nystrand & Cunningham point out, however, "the knowledge that board support must be obtained for their proposals often influences the nature of what administrators propose." The board, then, is not a mere rubber stamp, and consequently the "work" of the superintendent is to legitimate policies to the board, as well as, to those within the authority structure of the organization. The struggle over who is allowed to define organizational reality, then, is ongoing and often the result of symbolic work, i.e. successful legitimation.

Other research in the field of educational administration which addresses legitimation includes a growing body of work which attempts to document an
Increasing decline in public confidence in schooling which has led to an erosion in the legitimacy of administrative authority (Boyd, 1983). Some also see an erosion in the legitimacy of expertise and professionalism generally, citing the perceived failure of social engineering and technological fixes for solving complex social problems. They blame an epistemology of practice in the professions that relies too heavily on scientific and specialized knowledge (Lindblom & Cohen, 1979; Schon, 1983).

Legitimation as the Management of Meaning

It should again be stressed that in a mediation model the legitimation role is not necessarily the dominant role of school administrators. Legitimation is not the main thing school administrators do, but hardly a decision is made or an action taken without some sense of its implication for the legitimacy of the organization or one of its subunits.

Legitimation becomes most visible when the legitimacy of a given definition of social reality is not a foregone conclusion, that is, when the
taken-for-grantedness of a definition must be achieved or sustained. To talk of a need to legitimate implies that definitions of social reality do not simply emerge from social interaction but rather are negotiated within contexts of shifting power relations. Therefore, legitimization differs from such similar concepts as public relations, boundary spanning, and socialization in that legitimization stresses the problematic nature of current social constructions.

In its broadest usage legitimization represents an explanation and justification of a social order which makes institutional arrangements subjectively plausible. Berger and Luckmann (1967), taking a developmental approach to the sociology of knowledge, view legitimization as the primary mechanism through which socially constructed reality is maintained.

...the institutional world requires legitimation, that is, ways by which it can be 'explained' and justified. This is not because it appears less real. As we have seen, the reality of the social world gains in massivity in the course of its transmission. This reality, however, is a historical one, which comes to the new generation as a tradition rather than as a biographical memory (p. 61).
Berger and Luckmann stress that the legitimacy of social reality can seldom be taken-for-granted, but rather must be accomplished through an ongoing process of legitimation. They also emphasize the cognitive and normative significance of legitimation in emphasizing its importance as a vehicle for providing individuals with knowledge of the social world.

This same cognitive process occurs at the organizational level as well. Organizations are made up of individuals who come with norms, values, and expectations from the wider society and who must make some sense of the organizational world. Explanations and justifications are required to integrate them into the social world of the organization. Although legitimation may appear to be synonymous with the concept of socialization, its emphasis is less on a mere transmission of largely consensual social norms and values than on the maintenance of a given definition of organizational and social reality which reflects unequal relations of power. The latter implies a process filled with tension and uncertainty since the management of meaning is an ongoing accomplishment and is best done without drawing
attention to itself. To quote Greenfield's (1973) reference to Wolcott's famous cultural informant in *The Man in the Principal's Office*,

The urge to judge Ed Bell obscures what he does as a leader... Some might consider Ed's day and say nothing happens in it - at least nothing of major consequence. But nothing never happens in social reality. Something is always going on and that something must be attained, achieved. This is what Ed does as a leader. He achieves what appears to be nothing, but is in fact everything (p. 162)

From the above, it is clear that legitimation is generally seen as supporting and sustaining the status quo. Although this study seeks to explore the critical potential of the legitimation concept, it should not be assumed that legitimation is always called upon to support and sustain a status quo which is unjustifiable. Siegal (1987) proposes an important distinction in this regard,

To legitimate a belief (etc.) may mean actually to demonstrate a belief's worthiness; i.e. to show that the belief in question is deserving of belief, e.g., on the bases of evidence. But it may also mean to make a belief seem worthy when it isn't, for example, when a suspect ideology props up a belief contrary to a more perspicuous or less tainted reading of the evidence. Thus, "legitimating a belief" may mean showing that the belief is legitimately believed or that
the belief is falsely portrayed as legitimate (p. 155).

What makes the distinction between "valid" legitimation and "invalid" legitimation so difficult in the case of principals, is the constant interaction between contradictory goals among publics and levels of the organizational hierarchy. There are also disjunctions between official educational ideologies and the need by administrators to make pragmatic decisions and to make sense out of the minutiae of day-to-day events. The following sections attempt to come to grips with this process by developing a mediation model through which to view the legitimating activities of principals.

Mediation and the Legitimation Role.

The following are two definitions of mediation from Websters Third New International dictionary:

1. Intervention between conflicting parties or viewpoints to promote reconciliation, settlement, compromise, or understanding. 2. The function or activity of an intermediate means or instrumentality of transmission.
In the first definition the principal deals with overt conflicts - between a parent and a teacher, between interests of the staff and mandates from central office, etc. This is the overt political realm in which mediation involves handling a situation at a point of open contention.

The second definition requires that the principal resolve conflicts of interest at a symbolic level by interpreting the various segments of the organization to each other and the school to the community. Here the principal heads off conflicts and maintains the even-keeled stability of the organization and its nonproblematic status as a social institution. In doing so the principal is managing the ongoing social construction of the definition of the organization.

Giddens (1979) elaborates on the second definition of mediation. The most basic sense of mediation is that involved in the ‘binding’ of time and space themselves, the very essence of social reproduction. The binding of time and space...can be understood in terms of what can be called the ‘presence-availability’ of actors within social systems. All social interaction involves mediation in so far as there are always ‘vehicles’ that ‘carry’
social interchange across spacial and temporal gaps (p. 103).

This two-dimensional view of mediation provides a model within which to view legitimation. Not only are principals "carriers" of social interchange vertically (up and down the hierarchy) and horizontally (among peers and between the school and the community) in space, but they also carry social interchange across time, assuring the continuation of what Habermas calls reliable structures of intersubjectivity. Through mediation in space and time, principals help to maintain or 'reproduce' the institutionalized meanings which are incorporated in the structures, policies and practices of the organization.

Mediatory Myths and Organizational Ideology

Because principals often mediate between organizational publics and levels with contradictory goals, a legitimation role is not without its psychic costs. In order to project the almost commonsensical plausibility of organizational life, the principal must develop a coherent ideology, which requires the
production of mediatory myths which can dissolve organizational and social contradictions sufficiently for the principal to function. Following Abravanel (1983), organizational ideology can be described as,

...a set of fundamental ideas and operative consequences linked together into a dominant belief system often producing contradictions but serving to define and maintain the organization (p. 274).

The need for congruence between "fundamental ideas" and "operative consequences" belies the fact that because organizational members must make directives and take purposive action, they cannot rely on an ambiguous belief system.

According to Abravanel (1983),

Ideology operates in two dimensions; it maintains allegiance to a purity of moral principles (the fundamental) and to practical and immediate considerations (the operative). Like the Church, ideology must be faithful both to its central beliefs and to its immediate concerns about survival. Ideology applied in action inevitably bifurcates into fundamental and operative concerns. The fundamental dimension includes principles that determine the final goals, the ends toward which the organization is working, the vision of what should be done. The operative dimension includes principles that underly
actual policies and support the means used to pursue immediate ends. (pp. 280-81)

Abravanel's definition owes much to Seliger's (1976) view of ideologies as action oriented sets of beliefs which are organized into coherent systems. The coherence of the system is threatened not only by conflict between ideology and action, but within the structure of ideology itself. According to Seliger, because contradictions and inconsistencies between the fundamental and operative dimensions of ideology are inevitable, legitimating mechanisms are needed to mediate between dimensions and restore coherence to the overall ideology which sustains the organization.

So-called "strain" theories of ideology like Seliger's have been criticized as being politically conservative, since they appear to internally "resolve" conflicts of interest. A potential for a critical perspective, however, resides in demonstrating how coherence and taken-for-grantedness is achieved by mechanisms that occur within the structure of ideology by those who do ideological work, ie. those who occupy statuses that are empowered to manage meaning and define and maintain social reality. (Thus, following
this conception, "organizational maintenance" requires ideological work.) A critical perspective can also be advanced by demonstrating in whose interests this ideological work is done.

A Mediation Model for the Study of Legitimation

The first dictionary definition of mediation cited above suggests a more overtly political sense of mediation in which definitions of organizational reality are in open contention. The second definition implies a more subtle process in which definitions of organizational reality are reinforced or contested through the hundreds of daily exchanges that take place among organizational members. These two definitions of mediation, along with the above discussion of how mediation occurs within ideology to provide a sense of congruence between the fundamental and operative dimensions, result in the following mediation model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediation involves</th>
<th>Coherence achieved by</th>
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<tr>
<td>Def. 1 - Intervention between conflicting parties or viewpoints.</td>
<td>Resolving conflicts at the point of open contention.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Def. 2 - Social interchange across spacial and temporal gaps.

Resolving social and organizational contradictions vertically, horizontally, and across time.

Def. 3 - The cognitive task of achieving congruence between conflicting dimensions within ideology.

Resolving contradictions between the fundamental and operative dimensions of ideology.

Viewing administration as mediation provides a model capable of shedding light on neglected aspects of the principal's work. A mediation model requires exploring organizational politics both in its more open conflictual manifestations and in its more subtle manifestations in which organizational meanings are managed and contradictions resolved through ongoing social interaction.

Part IV: The Critical Perspective:

Urban Education and Social Reproduction

There are many forms of legitimation which are internal to the organization and which legitimate goals and decisions both within the organization and between
the organization and its immediate environment. The study of legitimation, however, enters a more consciously critical realm when it begins to ask what the legitimation process between the school district and the wider society looks like. Suburban and inner-city principals are, in their public discourse, expected to legitimate a system in which the success-allocating charter of the suburban school and the failure-allocating charter of the inner-city school exist in relatively close proximity.

Although this state of affairs in American cities has been with us almost long enough to take on the force of natural law, the field of urban education has - since the Kerner Commission report and the discovery in the early nineteen sixties by the white middle class of poverty and segregation - attempted to propose remedies for the problem.

The discourse began promisingly with a focus on "metropolitanism" (Havighurst, 1966) and the juxtaposition of "slums and suburbs" (Conant, 1961), but quickly degenerated into a focus on the pathologies of the inner-city, thus, extracing the suburbs from the problematic. A series of readings edited by Passow
(1963 -1972), although stressing a "multiple causation" view of what were referred to as "urban" problems, ultimately focused on the cultural deficiencies of urban minorities, as well as, the deficiencies of schools and teachers. "Disadvantage" was defined largely in cultural terms rather than in economic terms or in the political terms of powerlessness. (Grace, 1984)

A series of ethnographic studies during this period attempted to critique deficit theories of the student and the home, by focusing on classroom interactions and the low expectations of teachers. (Kozol, 1967; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, Leacock, 1969; Rist, 1973). Such studies tended towards solutions at the level of organizational procedures and attitudes and interpersonal relations.

In the early 1970's, the perceived failure of integration and compensatory education led to an emphasis on decentralization and community control. (Levin, 1970; Mann, 1976; Peterson, 1976). These studies, written largely by political scientists and economists provided a counterbalance to the writing that focused on the cultural, the micro-institutional,
and the interpersonal. Nevertheless, in limiting their focus to interest group politics at the level of the educational sub-system, they tended to ignore fundamental features of class structure and the wider distributions of power and control in society. Even the work in the area of school finance, which sought a redistribution of tax monies through equalization formulae, has been limited by its focus on fiscal redistributive justice only within the school system itself. (Coons, Clune, & Sugarman, 1970; Windham, 1970; Hochman & Peterson, 1974)

**Social Reproduction Theory**

What the above studies have in common is their failure to seriously view urban contradictions as indicative of the wider class-based structural contradictions within the larger social formation. It is an assumption of this study that much (though not all) of the need for mediation and legitimation in school settings derives from contradictions between fundamental ideologies of schooling which stress equal opportunity and social mobility and the role schools
are expected to play in the reproduction of the societies division of labor.

This reproductive function of schools which is closely tied to the social division of labor is often associated with the correspondence theory of Bowles & Gintis (1977) who argue that there is a correspondence between the school's requirements and the requirements of the workplace. Much empirical research which has tried to extend correspondence theory attempts to understand the processes that link social structures to the daily realities of schools and classrooms. These studies have stressed the correspondence between the attitudes and skills which schools provide to children of different social class backgrounds and those required at different occupational levels. (Ayon, 1980)

Claiming that many social reproduction theorists fail to analyse the complex cultural level through which human agency moves, Willis (1977) offers a culturalist view in which social reproduction is closely related to processes of cultural reproduction. That is, Willis gives relative autonomy to the cultural level and suggests that social actors participate
actively in "producing" social outcomes rather than being passively reproduced. But, warns Willis, because the autonomy of cultural forms is relative, human agency is not free agency and social reproduction generally does get accomplished. In Willis's account, however, the accomplishment of social reproduction is not the result of social structure impacting directly on the individual, but rather is the result of a complex mediation process characterized by contestation, resistance, and compromise.

In the critical ethnographies of Willis and others (Sharp & Green, 1975; Bullough, Gitlin, and Goldstein, 1984; Aggleton & Whitty, 1985; Ginsberg & Newman, 1985; Goodman, 1985), one can view the complexity of the distortions, reversals, and contradictions that occur at the creative level of culture. This approach is far different from the determinism which correspondence theory employs to explain social reproduction, because it focuses on the complex ways in which social actors reflect or refute, accept or challenge, the structural conditions which inform their lives. This study is part of this recent culturalist current in social reproduction theory which attempts to understand the
complex relationship between the cultural milieux of the social actor and social structural conditions in the wider society.

**Social Structure and the Allocation of Success and Failure**

Perhaps the best statement of the effects of economic structure on how the educator views schooling is found in the work of Walter Feinberg. Stressing the allocative function of schooling, Feinberg (1983) points out that for the educational system as a whole to succeed - that is, to achieve its goal of reproducing the highly stratified division of labor in society - it is necessary that some parts of the system fall. Feinberg adds,

The failure to distinguish between the goals of schooling as related to a particular transaction between a teacher and a child in an individual school and the general goals of the school system itself functions to shield from examination the interrelationship between school and society. Yet it is important to realize that the goals that are established by individual members of the school system are done so in terms of their congruence with some aspect of the goals of the system as a whole... The recognition of this attempt to establish congruence should
lead to an examination and evaluation of the systemic goal of schooling. (p. 84)

It is this attempt to establish congruence with goals whose logic operates differently at different levels that creates dilemmas for practitioners.

That schools serve an allocative function which is tied to the structural requirements of the economic system has been recognized at least since Talcott Parsons' functional analyses of schooling. There is nothing radical in the concept of an allocative function since all societies have mechanisms for sorting its members into work roles. In most modern societies schools have come to serve this function. What is generally not stressed however, is that in class-based societies, while schools serve as allocators of success (achievement, high status, economic rewards) they also serve as allocators of failure. Because most metropolitan areas are segregated by social class, it is not uncommon to find schools in suburban communities that are almost exclusively in the business of allocating achievement and success while schools in many urban neighborhoods have become allocators of failure. This tendency
becomes even more pronounced as one moves up the grades from elementary to middle and high school. Although racial desegregation has alleviated the situation in some urban areas with regard to race, (although segregation often reemerges within schools) it has only indirectly addressed segregation based on social class. Unlike failure allocation, which is viewed as the result of deficits in clients rather than the high level of stratification of the social division of labor, success allocation in suburban schools is generally not only acknowledged, but promoted by realtors who know that when their clients with children buy a house in suburbia, they are also purchasing social capital - the services of a school whose function is to allocate success.

Although the allocation of success and failure is evident when comparing suburban to inner-city schools, not all schools are so clearly segregated along social class lines. In fact, it is quite common to find equal representation of social classes within school districts, and, particularly at the high school level, within schools. In such cases the allocation of success and failure is generally achieved through tracking and
ability grouping (Oakes, 1985). In such cases allocation is achieved within the school district at the level of the individual schools or classrooms.

Part V: The Study of Non-issues

This review has attempted to merge a cultural view of schools that stresses a symbolic, communicative, and ideological role for principals with a critical theory perspective. It is hoped that a model of administration which views the principalship as a mediation site where various forms of legitimation take place can illuminate neglected areas of practice and provide new perspectives for the study of the politics of education. Theoretically it has often been difficult to bring a critical perspective to the politics of education because relations of power are often not played out in observable political arenas. Within the field of political science, there is general disagreement over what, in fact, constitutes the exercise of power and how the phenomenon of power
should be studied. Pluralists contend that the exercise of power requires the observation of "issues that command the attention of a significant spectrum of the political stratum" (Dahl, 1961, p. 92). Bacharach & Baratz (1962, 1963), on the other hand, argue that it is important to identify potential issues which nondecision-making keeps off the political agenda. In this way, power is exercised by confining the scope of decision-making (and, I would add, of educational research) to relatively "safe" issues. Bacharach & Baratz do insist, however, that so-called nondecisions which confine the scope of decision-making are, in fact, observable decisions which may not be overt or even consciously undertaken by those with power to exclude potential challengers. Such unawareness, they argue, "does not mean, however, that the dominant group will refrain from making nondecisions that protect or promote their dominance. Simply supporting the established political process tends to have this effect" (Bacharach & Baratz, 1970 quoted in Lukes, 1974).

More recently Lukes (1974) carried Bacharach & Baratz's argument a step further in asserting that
nondecision-making still set unnecessary limits on the analysis of power relations.

In trying to assimilate all cases of exclusion of potential issues from the political agenda to the paradigm of a decision, it gives a misleading picture of the ways in which individuals and, above all, groups and institutions succeed in excluding potential issues from the political process. Decisions are choices consciously and intentionally made by individuals between alternatives, whereas the bias of the system can be mobilized, recreated and reinforced in ways that are neither consciously chosen nor the intended result of particular individuals' choices (Lukes, 1974, p. 21).

As Lukes acknowledges, such a definition of the exercise of power requires the contradiction of observing non-events. The study of the legitimation role of those who occupy positions of authority in organizations may be one way of explicating the ways in which power is exercised and the status quo maintained through the minuta of the day-to-day reinforcement of the dominant construction of organizational reality. In the school district under study, the mobilization of the bias of the system can be achieved with little effort because of the numerous legitimating myths which help to sustain it.
Conclusion: Why Study a Legitimation Role?

An exploration of a legitimation role for principals is important on a number of levels. First it can provide an alternative interpretation for administrative behaviors. A study of the legitimation role seeks to understand not only how administrators maintain the stability of their organizations, but also how the definition of the organization and its social purposes, both manifest and latent, are sustained. Secondly, it focuses attention on the symbolic and communicative aspects of principals' work.

At a theoretical and methodological level, it provides a way of seeing the macro-structural in the micro-phenomenological and the micro-phenomenological in the macro-structural. The institutional organizational theory of Meyer and Rowan and a constructivist approach to organizational reality in which mediation is required in space and time provide the groundwork for a micro-macro merger. The work of Lukes provides a rational for identifying foci for research in which power relations are latent or embedded in the manner in which system biases are
mobilized. And finally, the work of Feinberg and Habermas provide a critical perspective by exposing contradictions between the systemic goals of schooling which are tied to the social division of labor and the legitimating myths which are generated to resolve these contradiction at the level of the individual person, school, or school district.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Dialectical Analysis

Data analysis will incorporate a dialectical approach. The dialectical approach places at the center of analysis the process through which organizational arrangements are produced and maintained, and in whose interests this is done. Such a theoretical framework has also been called "conflict phenomenology" or "critical ethnography" (Thomas, 1983; Angus, 1986; Lather, 1986; Simon & Dippo, 1986). Analysis will follow Benson's (1977) description of four principles of dialectical analysis which he has extracted from Marx's work. These principles are, 1. social construction/production, 2. totality, 3. contradiction, and 4. praxis. It should be stressed that choosing to use a dialectical approach largely
developed by Marx does not mean adherence to a Marxian social analysis.

The dialectical view is a general perspective on social life which can be extracted from the Marxist analysis of economic structure and its ramifications. Marx's analysis of the capitalist economy is an application of the general perspective. The general perspective is, then expressed through Marx's analysis of capitalism but not locked into the specific categories and arguments of that analysis. (Benson, 1977, p.3)

The four principles of dialectical analysis, according to Benson are reviewed below.

1. The Organization as a Social Construction

The dialectical perspective uses a constructivist approach which views the organization and the social world in which it is embedded as always in a state of becoming. Thus, it focuses on how a specific organizational form has been produced, how it is maintained, and how it is continually reproduced. In other words, an orderly pattern of organizational life is viewed as a temporary outcome of the process of social construction whose emergence and maintenance demands explanation.
Constructivism as used in a dialectical approach is, however, tempered by the recognition that the power to define and legitimate social constructions of organizational reality is unevenly distributed. Particular individuals and groups who have interests within an established order have a number of resources at their disposal — control over selection of employees, privileged information, etc. — which others do not.

In this approach, the consciousness of social actors is viewed as semi-autonomous from the constraints imposed by social structure and environmental factors. In this regard Benson (1977) states,

They (social actors) are not in any simple sense captives of the roles, official purposes, or established procedures of the organization. The participants fill these ‘forms’ with unique ‘content’. Sometimes they may do so in an automatic, unreflective way; in other periods they may become very purposeful in trying to reach beyond the limits of their present situation, to reconstruct the organization in accord with alternative conceptions of its purposes, structures, technologies, and other features. (p. 7)
2. The Organization as Part of a Totality

To say that organizations must be viewed as part of a larger whole is, in a sense, to state the obvious. The recent history of organizational theory has been the history of just such an effort. (Perrow, 1976) Nevertheless, in spite of much effort to view organizations as open systems which interact with their environments, there is a general lack of analysis of the connections between organizations and the macro-features of society. A dialectical view attempts to understand how an organization comes to define its boundaries and why linkages to broader social contexts are not encouraged. According to Benson,

Dialectical analysis is not to be restricted to the narrow, limited, conventional reality promulgated by administrators...It analyzes the intricate ways in which the organization as a rationally articulated structure is linked to its unrationalized context; it explores and uncovers the social and political processes through which a segmental view becomes dominant and is enforced. (p. 10)

Benson distinguishes between two levels of organizational reality which he labels the organizational "morphology" and its "substructure".
The morphology refers to the officially enforced and conventionally accepted view of the organization; its formal structural arrangements, its technological and ideological commitments, its rules and regulations, and its pattern of relations with its immediate environment. According to Benson, the entire explanatory effort of studies at the morphological level "remains within the confines of an abstracted organization ripped from its historical roots and societal context and innocent of its deeper-lying power struggles and negotiations" (p. 11).

The substructure of the organization, then, includes the linkages to the larger societal system and include,

The bases of recruitment of organizational elites; the framework of interests in the larger society setting limits upon the operations of the organization, the power structure controlling the flow of resources into organizations and through interorganizational networks; the ties of the organization to social classes, racial groups, ethnic groups, sexual groups, and others in the society; the institutionalized dominance patterns of professions in their sphere of practice; and so on. (p. 12)

In viewing organizations as resting upon a broad social substructure, it is important not to fall into the deterministic base/superstructure model of orthodox
Marxism. Like the individuals within them, organizations possess relative autonomy from their societal substructure. In other words, some organizational phenomena are best explained through the analysis of forces internal to the organization or through interactions between the organization and its immediate environment. To be compelled to seek explanations in broader societal forces for all human action and structural conditions within organizations is as limiting as the failure to include such forces in one’s analysis. Furthermore, as Willis (1977) and others have illustrated, members of organizations do not simply conform passively to social forces but rather actively participate in determining their own and their organization’s futures.

3. Organizational Contradictions

As pointed out in chapter one, the unevenness of the construction of social reality, the multiple levels of organizations and the varied relations to its many publics, make contradictions a daily feature of organizational life, leading to role conflict and
tension. In fact, one of the central propositions of this study is that the constant need to mediate contradictory messages and goals emanating from various organizational levels and publics, constitutes a central occupational role of the building-level school administrator.

At a cognitive level, contradictions within the organization and in the larger society create a need for legitimating myths which serve to resolve contradictions within organizational ideology. Following Abravanel (1983) organizational ideology can be described as, "a set of fundamental ideas and operative consequences linked together into a dominant belief system often producing contradictions but serving to define and maintain the organization" (p. 274). The combination of "fundamental ideas" and "operative consequences" belies the fact that because organizational members must make directives and take purposive action, they cannot rely on an ambiguous belief system. In fact, as we shall see, it is the tension which is caused by contradictions between fundamental ideas and operative consequences that
creates the need for the mediatory myths that form the dominant belief system of the organization.

Contradictions in the wider society are also reflected in schools. Modern societies accept in principle the basic notion of human equality. In capitalist societies, however, equality is guaranteed in the political sphere, but not in the economic sphere. (The same contradiction is apparent in state socialist societies, but in reverse.) Foster (1980) expresses the dilemma inherent in this contradiction,

Equal rights are interpretable only in political, and not in economic terms. But true political equality (in terms of the equal distribution of power) demands, as a precondition, economic equality. (p.19)

It often falls to the schools to attempt to mediate tensions caused by the realization that political equality does not yield economic equality. Thus, a variety of compensatory programs are provided to make underclass youth more marketable within a system which ostensibly allocates economic resources on the basis of merit.
4. Organizational Praxis

A dialectical analysis attempts to combine rational analysis with ethical commitment. It attempts to collapse the fact/value dualism and become the study of society-with-the-goal-of-transforming-it. In the context of educational administration it rejects a view of administration as technique and views it as an inherently ideological enterprise. Foster (1980), addressing the issue of managerial praxis, argues that

The basic problems of running an organization — educational or otherwise — have been ignored in favor of attempts to find a technology of management. Administration in its most radical form involves the design of organizational structures which meet certain redoubtable human needs — equality, liberty, justice — and it lies with the study of organizations and their administration to discover how modern institutions can cope with the practical dimensions of such issues.

The above four principles — constructivity, totality, contradiction, and praxis — have determined every aspect of this study. Decisions about who to interview, what settings to observe, which issues to include and exclude, what kinds of questions to ask, all were made with these principles in mind. Data
analysis involved a constant attempt to move back and forth between the whole and its parts, between a desire to render social "facts" and a desire to promote my own ideological preferences. The dialectical approach resulted in many surprises, for I found that while principal's were more constrained that I had suspected by their mediation requirements, they were by no means content with this situation and, in fact, welcomed opportunities to share visions for their district which often showed a remarkable degree of ideological independence. This suggested to me that occupational socialization is not airtight, and that the barriers to change may not lie so much in the attitudes of principals as in certain legitimating myths that "resolve" contradictions by covering up discrepancies between what ought to be and what is.

Researcher Bias

As the above suggests, in any research which makes the researcher's values explicit, the issue of researcher bias takes on great importance. Not only does this involve the more obvious issue of validity,
but it also involves the issue of fairness toward the cultural informants who have made themselves vulnerable, both personally and professionally by sharing information in an atmosphere of trust. Therefore, both validity and fairness issues will be extensively addressed in this section.

Validity

To establish validity or "trustworthiness" in the study, a number of techniques suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were employed. These techniques aim to lend confidence that the findings of the study were collected in a consistent and credible fashion. Therefore, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation were all employed.

Prolonged Engagement

In total about 200 hours were spent in the research setting between September, 1986 and July, 1987. About 90 additional hours were spent in the research setting between September, 1985 and June, 1986
In conjunction with the previous study referred to in Chapter one (Anderson, Heck, & Williams, 1988). It is believed that the relative longevity of the study was helpful in establishing rapport with the research participants and increased the possibility of producing valid data (Becker 1980; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Erickson, 1986).

**Persistent Observation**

While prolonged engagement is seen as providing rapport and scope, persistent observation provides depth. It involves establishing appropriate foci and sorting out what "counts". The researcher tentatively labels what is seen as a salient factor and then explores it in detail until a determination is made as to whether the initial assessment was erroneous or on target. Persistent observation guards against premature closure on developing themes and categories. Persistent observation as it relates to this study will be discussed in detail in the "Sampling Decisions" section below.
Triangulation

Major themes and organizing categories were triangulated by more than one kind of data (interview, observation, documents). Although the bulk of the data in this study were derived from interviews, observational data were especially useful in efforts to confirm/disconfirm emergent themes (Denzin, 1978). Furthermore, the data were evaluated in terms of whether they were solicited or unsolicited, directly stated or inferred, and subject to researcher influence (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Fairness

It takes months for a researcher to develop a trusting relationship with informants in the field in order to obtain reliable information. This relationship of trust continues to be important once the data has been collected. The trust which informants give to the researcher, must be repaid with scrupulous fairness to informants in the final report.

Because this paper attempts to describe a legitimization role, there may be times in which the
informants appear to be acting in contradictory ways—at times, perhaps against the best interests of their staffs or students. In fact, at a more macro level this paper suggests that some of the activities of suburban principals may serve to provide a cover of legitimacy for the continued existence of privilege and racial and class segregation in the larger society. How can one make such assertions about individuals who are talented, extremely hard-working principals who genuinely care deeply about children the well-being of teachers?

My time with Fairlawn's administrators left me with intense respect and admiration for the principals and their work. I have purposely quoted many administrators at great length precisely because I am confident that, if allowed to speak for themselves, their intelligence and caring will show through. I hope that none of the administrators appears to be one-dimensional or suffer from that notorious maladie common to many critical accounts—"false consciousness". As I have tried to show, many principals are not only aware of broader social issues and their indirect role in them, but many of them, if
given the chance, would press for changes in present policies and practices. In fact, it is possible that much of the occupational stress of the principalship, as with all middle management work in organizational hierarchies, comes from the need to legitimate policies and practices with which principals do not always feel comfortable.

If this paper, then, constitutes a critique of Fairlawn administrators, it is not aimed at the principals themselves. It is aimed rather at the ideology - both occupational and social - which makes unequal power relations in society nonproblematic, and at the requirements of their location in the district authority structure. Were I to become principal of a school in Fairlawn, the same pressures would either "socialize" me into the Fairlawn ideology or make apparent an ideological incompatibility which would label me as incompetent. (Of course, it is also possible that my incompetence could have nothing to do with my ideology. However, incompetence or "poor judgement", is occasionally confused with an unwillingness to legitimate that which requires legitimation.)
The Collection of Data

Data for the study consisted primarily of interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documents. Forty-six interviews were conducted. Besides generally "hanging around schools", twenty-six specific observations were done, and nearly 50 documents were analyzed. Below is a breakdown of data by classification.

Interviews

Interviews averaged two hours in length and were all transcribed in their entirety for analysis. The number at the right is the number of interviews conducted with each informant.

Principals:

Kathy Martin     7
Bill Ford        3
Ann Maxwell      3
Jim Harper       3
Bob Carlson      2
Helen Forbes 2
Fred Carter 1

Others:

Frank Bradley 2
Teachers 12
School Board Members 2
Parents of school-aged children 4
Community Residents 2
Multi-cultural Awareness committee 2
Former School Board Member 1

Observations

School board meetings 6
Classrooms 6
Teachers' Lounges 4
Principals' meetings 3
Lunch with principals 3
Staff meetings 2
District administrators meeting 1
Districtwide meeting (levy defeat) 1
Redistricting meeting 1
Documents

Local newspapers
District policy book
In-house memos
Budget reports
Annual reports
School board meeting reports
Curriculum guides

Focusing and Data Analysis

As the discussion in chapter one indicates, this study grew out of an earlier study of the ecology of administrative decision-making. In that study, I was impressed by the solidarity of the elementary principals in one of the districts under study. Upon completing that study, I had been interested in exploring the informal organization through an in depth study of that district's principal "grapevine" or informal network. Since I had worked closely in the previous study with one of the elementary principals (Kathy Martin), I was able to gain access for my study.
More importantly, I had already collected a great deal of data in the district which provided me with much tacit knowledge about the local culture. I began interviewing principals with the objective of explicating the various functions of the principal grapevine. After two interviews I had a rather complete taxonomy of grapevine functions and realized my focus was too narrow. In the meantime I was becoming fascinated with a particular grapevine function - that of mediating district policy. It appeared that principals mediated policy that came down from central office by reinterpreting it to fit the idiosyncratic needs of each school. It also appeared that principals used the grapevine to subvert top-down policy and to mount their own policy initiatives. After reviewing the policy process literature, I chose four policies which I intended to trace through a nine-month period. I wanted to know what the role of the principals was with respect to the development of these policies over a school year. Again, I suspected that these principals were proactively mounting policy initiatives at an informal level.
I re-entered the field with new interview questions and quickly discovered that the principals in this district were far less proactive than I had imagined. In fact, I discovered that not only did principals mediate policy moving down the hierarchy, they also mediated policy initiatives that teachers and parents were attempting to push up the hierarchy. More and more I began to focus not on the policy initiation role of principals, but rather on their policy mediation role. Such a role was consistent with the reactive stance they tended to take on policy issues and with their pivotal location in the center of the district.

Throughout these early stages of the study, I was experimenting with various coding techniques and writing extensive personal and theoretical notes. In these notes or memos, I was beginning to make theoretical linkages between the principals' mediation role, their role in maintaining the organizational and social status quo, and theories of legitimation. I suspected that as they mediated among levels and publics that they were called upon to legitimate not only policy, but many other aspects of organizational
and social reality as well. Two of the four policies that I was tracing—literature-based instruction and desegregation—provided rich accounts of the legitimation process. Further theoretical notes suggested the other arenas in which the principals’ legitimation role was observed.

**Sampling and Data Analysis**

Since data collection and data analysis proceeded simultaneously, ongoing decisions had to be made concerning not only who would be interviewed and observed, but also what would be observed. These sampling decisions were made throughout the data collection and analysis process.

As mentioned above, the discovery during data collection that central office administrators, school board members, teachers and parents were, more often than principals, the initiators of policies, led ultimately to the more reactive view of principals as mediators who were located at the crossroads of district policy which moved both up and down the hierarchy. In other words, principals did not simply
legitimate policy in a downward direction, rather their legitimization requirements were multidirectional. This shift in theoretical perspective required new sampling decisions in terms of both whom to sample and what to sample. The following inductive method, taken from Bogdan and Biklen (1982), summarizes the data collection/analysis process used in this study.

1. Early in the research you develop a rough definition and explanation of the particular phenomenon.

2. You hold the definition and explanation up to the data as it is collected.

3. You modify the definition and/or explanation as you encounter new cases that do not fit the definition and explanation as formulated.

4. You actively seek cases that you think may not fit into the formulation.

5. You redefine the phenomenon and reformulate the explanation until a universal relationship is established, using each negative case to call for a redefinition and reformulation.

This inductive approach which requires a constant attempt to seek evidence that disconfirms working hypotheses allowed me to disconfirm the view that principals were proactive in informally promoting
district policy. It would later aid in disconfirming a more deterministic view of the principals' legitimation role as evidence of principal resistance was sought.

I continued to collect data on two of the policies under study - the literature-based reading instruction policy and the desegregation/annexation policy. The former was chosen as an example of instructional policy, and the latter was chosen as an example of a de facto policy which was viewed in the district as a non-policy issue. The data on two other policies - the student retention policy and teacher evaluation policy - yielded little useful data concerning the process of legitimation and were dropped in favor of data collection in other areas.

To make the sheer volume of accumulated data more manageable, it was first chunked, using the cut and paste method, into broad categories (literature-based instruction, the policy process, interest groups, etc.). Later these categories were coded into sub-categories (e.g. legitimation of authority, resistance to role, legitimating language, etc.). Codes were revised and refined and incorporated into theoretical notes.
The early data suggested that principals were charged with legitimating more than policies, whether formal or informal (i.e. district norms). They also had to constantly legitimize their own professional competence, as well as, their schools, the school district, and, at times, the institution of schooling itself.

Furthermore, since the concepts of vertical legitimation, both down and up the hierarchy and horizontal legitimation had emerged from the initial data, I built these categories into the data collection and sought to better understand how legitimacy was achieved within and between hierarchical levels. This required collecting data on principal-teacher mediation, principal-central office mediation, principal-parent/community mediation, and principal-principal mediation. This data was acquired through attendance at principals' meetings, staff meetings, school board meetings, and interviews with principals, parents, teachers, and central office administrators.

As the study progressed it became increasingly evident that although Fairlawn was an affluent suburb, it was going through some significant changes. I had
chosen Fairlawn as a research site, in part, because it was not a stereotypical affluent suburb in which nearly all residents are highly affluent. I was not prepared, however, for the alacrity with which the district was undergoing changes in status. This turned out to be a stroke of serendipity as it provided the kind of crisis atmosphere in which issues which have remained latent become suddenly manifest. I chose to observe this changing status and its implications for principals in terms of legitimation. In this regard I chose to interview parents, community-members, and principals and to attend redistricting and school board meetings.

Through this ongoing inductive process, I selected the following foci for data collection. 1. The location of the principal with respect to the school's immediate environment (horizontally) and within the district hierarchy (vertically). 2. Two policy arenas - Reading instruction policy and desegregation/annexation policy, and 3. Changes in community status.

The dialectical approach also heavily influenced decision-making. My decision to observe the desegregation/annexation issue was an attempt to identify a policy with the potential to link the school
district to the wider society. Choosing this issue was an attempt to understand how an organization comes to define its boundaries and why linkages to broader social contexts are not encouraged. (Benson, 1977) The choice of the social charters concept was an attempt to link community status to broader issues of the schools role in social allocation and the division of labor in society.

The decision to observe instances of resistance/accommodation to the legitimation role was linked to a concern with organizational praxis in which principals transcend their technocratic orientation and make value commitments. Had I not asked questions about principals' value positions concerning their work and wider social issues, the opinions expressed by Bob Carlson and Ann Maxwell might not have emerged. The mediation model itself grew out of my concern with observing how principals managed meaning in spite of contradictions. The management of meaning and the concern with contradictions also grew out of a dialectical analysis in which organizations are viewed as social constructions rife with contradictions.
between the fundamental and the operative, the official and the pragmatic.

More specifically, the 12 teachers were chosen not for their representativeness of district teachers, but rather for their involvement with and opinions about policies under study. For example, I asked teachers and principals for names of teachers who were pro-literature based instruction, those who were anti-literature based instruction, and those who were indifferent. I then made sure that I interviewed at least one teacher from each camp. I also interviewed teachers who were on committees relevant to the study, i.e. the reading committee and the Multicultural Awareness Committee.

Many interviews and observations were suggested by ongoing data analysis. The need to interview members of the Multi-cultural Awareness Committee grew out of the desegregation data. The need to interview parents in the Grand City section of the Fairlawn district became necessary in order to understand the annexation crisis. The need to observe principals in administrative and staff meetings and in informal (i.e. lunch) settings resulted from a need to compare
self-reported interview data with actual instances of interactions among themselves and with their staffs. The long and sometimes heated discussions at principals' meetings provided an invaluable supplement to the principals' interview data.
CHAPTER IV

Fairlawn

The town of Fairlawn is more than just an affluent suburb. Unlike those suburbs that are mere subdivisions of urban sprawl or those more ostentatious ones that feature stately mansions and aging populations, Fairlawn is a young, vibrant community which was an exempted village before being partially engulfed by the neighboring metropolis. Although no longer a rural community, Fairlawn’s main street still sports a village green surrounded by red brick colonial buildings that give Fairlawn the air of a new England town transplanted to the midwest. This small town charm is deceptive though. Along the busy interstate highway that passes just north of Fairlawn are the headquarters of some of America’s most prestigious corporations, and many of the executives who work there make their homes in Fairlawn. The town has also attracted a large number of highly educated residents.
many of them professors at a nearby state university, who have been attracted to Fairlawn, in part, because of the reputation of its public schools. Schools are such a selling point in Fairlawn that it is not uncommon for realtors to take clients on a tour of the local school. In fact so popular has the suburb become for middle class families with children that Fairlawn has recently been forced to construct new elementary and middle schools, and two more elementary schools and an additional high school are presently on the drawing board. Urban sprawl has even arrived on Fairlawn's western flank where farmland is being subdivided into housing developments. Approximately 7,000 additional housing units are anticipated in the next five to ten years.

Eighty percent of Fairlawn High School's graduates are college-bound, and the competition for grades begins early. Parents follow their children's progress closely and do not hesitate to call on teachers and principals when academic problems develop. Involvement by parents in Fairlawn's schools is high. It is not uncommon to see more than one parent volunteer in a single classroom.
Because Fairlawn escaped inclusion in a bitterly contested desegregation plan in the nearby metropolis, the typical classroom is white and middle class. There are few racial and ethnic minorities among the district's teachers, even fewer among the students, and virtually none in administrative positions. With the exception of a growing number of foreign executives and professionals, few minorities make their names in Fairlawn. Morningside Elementary School is located a few blocks from the village green and is jokingly referred to by administrators as Fairlawn's "inner-city school". Although actual inner-city elementary schools are a mere half-hour's drive away, it is safe to say they bear little resemblance to Morningside.

Frank Bradley, Executive Director of Elementary Education

Frank Bradley, while technically the district elementary principals' boss, is viewed by them as a colleague and confidante. He is at the same time able to maintain credibility among central office personnel. Rather than being viewed as a "double agent" he is viewed by both principals and central office personnel
as someone capable of consistently maintaining a delicate boss/peer relationship with principals because of the trust and loyalty he inspires in them. The principals value him as an advocate for their concerns, while the central office views him as an effective administrator who through his leadership and interpersonal skills succeeds in keeping principals supportive and motivated. In fact, without exception, principals in the district admit to using Frank as a model in dealing with their own staffs.

Since Kathy Martin, the principal of Morningside Elementary School was the study's key informant, her profile will be the most extensive.

Morningside Elementary School

Morningside Elementary School, dwarfed by its neighbor, Fairlawn High School, suffers the usual architectural blandness of school buildings that were constructed during the 1950's and 1960's. The two-story, beige brick structure is lined with green tile panels under windows which extend the entire length of the school. Inside, however, classrooms are
sunny and the bright yellow walls are covered with children's artwork. Music often fills the halls, either wafting out of an open classroom door or coming from the main lobby where for lack of space the music teacher gives class.

Morningside has an enrollment of 458 students who are divided among 17 classroom teachers - 15 women and 2 men. There are an additional 16 support staff involved in the maintenance of the school plant and program. Local parents can often be found helping out in classrooms. When Kathy Martin began as principal of Morningside six years ago, there was little staff turn-over. However, several teachers have retired in the past three years, and a balance of younger teachers and seasoned veterans has been achieved.

Kathy has recently moved from her former office to a much smaller one in which her desk and a 5' x 8' conference table fit snugly. Although having the conference table in her office cramps her space, it would cramp her style even more were the table not there. Many of Kathy's interactions with parents, teachers, support staff, and even students take place across this table where the trappings of authority are
eschewed in favor of a more equal and intimate setting. On the wall above Kathy's desk are a half dozen framed certificates of recognition for various administrative achievements, along with a certificate showing membership in Phi Delta Kappan. Her desktop is uncluttered, containing current paperwork in neat piles, a tasteful brass desk lamp, and a family portrait of Kathy; her daughter, a freshman in college; and her husband, an executive with a large hotel chain. The outer office is a warm and inviting place where parents and staff can comfortably mingle with secretaries and administrators. There are no counters for parents to wait behind and Kathy keeps an open-door policy, scheduling her time so that "interruptions" become an integral part of her workday.

Kathy Martin

Kathy Martin is an attractive woman in her early forties who dresses professionally, and yet always with a flair for the unique. Like her dress, Kathy is at once entirely professional in her behavior while at the same time is open about personal idiosyncrasies and warm
and caring toward staff, parents and students. This friendly yet professional demeanor serves her well in developing community relations, a not unimportant part of a principal's job in Fairlawn. In spite of being the first female to break into a group of male principals who were both colleagues and close personal friends, she expresses great affection and respect for her peers and considers herself to be "one of the guys". The perception is largely confirmed by her male colleagues who often call her for advice and include her in informal social gatherings. Although she had self doubts in the beginning, she is proud of the progress she has made as an administrator and acknowledges that it did not come easily for her. She likes working with female administrative interns and sees herself as a trailblazer for other women with aspirations beyond the classroom. She volunteers much of her scarce free time with a local feminist group, Women Against Rape, giving and promoting seminars on child abuse prevention.

She works intensely and does not leave school until her work is done. Her dedication to her school is legendary, and people have become used to seeing her
car in the school parking lot at all hours of the day and night. Although her staff are quick to point out that they do not feel that Kathy imposes her work habits on them, they nevertheless worry about what they see as her excessive workload.

Kathy was a teacher at Howell Elementary School during the school's experiment with non-graded, open education. Having experienced non-graded, open classrooms, she is skeptical that all teachers can effectively develop a reading curriculum based on literature rather than basal readers. Her opposition to literature-based reading instruction then is less theoretical than pragmatic, and seems to reflect her experience at Howell.

Ann Maxwell, Piner Elementary School

Piner Elementary School is located in an older less affluent section of Fairlawn. It is the smallest school in the district and has the reputation of having been one of the most conservative instructionally. The year before this study, Bill Ford, who was then principal, took nearly one-third of the Piner teaching
staff with him to Riverside Elementary, the district's newest school, leaving Ann with the unique opportunity of being able to hand pick one-third of her staff.

This is Ann's first year as a principal. She was formerly a Fairlawn kindergarten teacher and was largely responsible for the current kindergarten curriculum district-wide. Her insider status, her extensive committee work, and her initiative in spearheading kindergarten curriculum effort all contributed to her being selected for the principalship.

Bill Ford, Riverside Elementary School

Opening its doors for the first time the year of this study, Riverside is the newest school in the district. Riverside, located next to Monroe Elementary, is set in the medium-income, new urban sprawl west of Fairlawn. Bill Ford, formerly principal of Plnar Elementary, was able to bring one-third of his former teaching staff with him to Riverside.
Bob Carlson, Washington Elementary School

Washington Elementary is the largest elementary school in the district and also has the largest minority enrollment. Some informants indicate that he is well-liked by the teaching staff in part for his lively sense of humor and because he defends teacher autonomy. He will be discussed at greater length in chapter five.

Helen Fowles, Howell Elementary School

Howell Elementary is located in one of the most affluent sections of the district and has had a stormy past. During the early 1970's, then principal, Fred Carter implemented with Central Office support a highly controversial "non-graded, open classroom" program. Parents rebelled and pressured the Central Office to return the school to a more conservative instructional philosophy. Howell's teaching staff is made up of highly talented, veteran teachers who still are fond on innovation.
Jim Harper, Glen Oak Elementary School

Also located in one of the district's affluent neighborhoods, Glen Oak Elementary has recently put up walls in an open classroom section of the building known as "the pod." Jim, an articulate and reflective informant, is a member of the original group of principals who are now nearing retirement.

Fred Carter, Monroe Elementary School

Formerly principal of Howell Elementary, the experimental "open classroom" school, Fred Carter headed Monroe Elementary, which along with Riverside Elementary served the less affluent development west of Fairlawn. In order to appease the Howell Elementary community who had wanted an end to the non-graded, open classroom concept, the superintendent transferred Fred to Monroe.

Dick Peterson, Montgomery Elementary School

Located in the Grand City section of the Fairlawn School District, Montgomery Elementary is advertising
for a new principal. The year of the study, Dick Peterson had decided to retire. Many of Montgomery's parents were deeply involved in the annexation issue described in chapter five.
CHAPTER V

This chapter will focus on four arenas in which the principal’s legitimization role is carried out. These four arenas are divided into two parts: Part I: 
A. the legitimation of organizational levels to each other (vertical legitimation) B. legitimation within organizational levels and between the school and the community (horizontal legitimation) Part II: A. The legitimation of district policy (specifically in the area of desegregation) and B. the legitimation of community status (in the form of social charters).

In part I data which concern the legitimation role of the principal in the context of organizational structure will will be provided. Part I then will provide a discription of the legitimation requirements of the organizational hierarchy and what many organizational theorists call "boundary spanning"
activities between the organization and its environment. This includes both mediation within the organization and between the organization and its environment. The role of language in the management of meaning will also be explored. In Part II the legitimation role will be explored in the context of more macro, social structural issues in which education is viewed as contributing to the reproduction of social relations.

Part I: Legitimation and the Mediation of Organizational Structure

The principalship is often compared to what in other organizational settings is often referred to as "middle management." This is because the principal is situated in the center of a complex web of relations among interacting (and often competing) organizational members and publics. His/her pivotal location serves to intensify the principal's legitimation role.

As our discussion of constructivism in chapter two has made clear, principals' roles are not viewed in this study as merely assigned to social actors by the
statuses they occupy, but are also the product of social interaction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Furthermore, this social interaction takes place within a context of shifting power relations (Hall, 1972). Therefore, although principals in Fairlawn are carefully screened before they are hired and are socialized on the job into the expectations of the organization and community, their support for legitimation efforts must be constantly won. This is so because, although the central office administrators are the principals' immediate superiors, the community and the teachers can exert pressure for their own legitimations. Furthermore the biographies of each principal and the values s/he brings to the job are also factors in their degree of willingness to legitimate. The following excerpt from an interview with Frank Bradley, the central office administrator in charge of the elementary program highlights the pressures from all directions which principals in Fairlawn experience.

Frank: I think the principals here have two kinds of pressures. One is keeping the parents happy and that's no easy task. I
would say, however, that as great a challenge
is that we basically expect in this district
for principals to keep their staff happy and
have a good climate. When there is a problem
with staff, it is expected to be solved and
to be worked out in a positive way. If it
isn't you really take a lot of criticism. A
lot of people think, well suburbia, that's
easy, but the teaching staff in this district
basically has a lot of influence and power.
Principals are really under the gun. If they
do not satisfy staff it just comes out all
over the place, and principals keep things in
line because they know they have to do that.
They feel a lot of pressure to put things out
for staff - keep staff happy. Teachers know
politically how to put the pressure on
principals. Staffs can basically run
principals right out of here.

Interviewer: Is it through the teachers'
organization?

Frank: It is the teachers' organization but
it is also our expectations. We firmly
believe that we want climate and cooperation.
It's our model and if the staff rebels
against you, you are not doing it. You are
not doing the job. I don't want you to
misunderstand that we don't back our
principals - we do. The principals
understand that, they have been through it.
Most of them were once teachers and they
know. The ones that come from the outside
are the ones that have the problems because
they are coming from a different - they don't
understand. It takes them a little while. We
always say that basically you have to be
'Fairlawnized' to really work effectively.

The "climate and cooperation" which is so
important to the organization requires that principals
successfully mediate conflicting expectations emanating
from a variety of organizational stakeholders. Much like those organizational theorists who view organizations as negotiated orders in which a political model is dominant (Strauss, 1963; Pfleffer 1981; Hall & Spencer-Hall, 1982) these competing expectations often place the principal's legitimization role in a highly political context. In attempting to resolve conflicts, however, the principal must be aware of organizational norms and policies whose legitimacy s/he is expected to uphold. If the school organization is a negotiated order, the principal must develop a keen sense of which norms and policies are negotiable and which ones are nonnegotiable, as well as, which norms and policies are vulnerable to de-legitimation and which are so sacred that they are untouchable - perhaps even unthinkable. It is this knowledge of limits which in part constitutes what Frank Bradley calls being "Fairlawnized" and which is required if principals are to be entrusted with the "management" of organizational meaning. The sections which follow in part I illustrate how different principals carry out their legitimization role through the management of meaning in their daily interactions with a multitude of
organizational stakeholders. Although inseparable in practice, vertical legitimation will be addressed in Section A and horizontal legitimation will be discussed in section B.

A. Legitimacy Between Organizational Levels (Vertical Legitimacy)

There is some irony in a discussion of legitimation as it occurs between organizational levels, because a premise of such a discussion is that organizations are characterized by a hierarchical authority structure. Although such a claim is grounded in one of the dimensions of Weber's "iron cage" of bureaucracy, the assumption of organizational levels results from a social construct and is in no way inherent to organizational life. In reifying organizational hierarchy this discussion risks engaging in a form of legitimation similar to that of the principals in this study. For example, although many principals complained about the authoritarian style of the former superintendent, no one questioned the legitimacy of his authority, grounded as it was in his
status within the authority structure. In other words hierarchical authority structures in school organizations are viewed by principals not as social constructions accomplished through social interaction over time, but rather as a natural object or "the way things are".

Few social phenomena are as thoroughly legitimated as organizational hierarchies. This is particularly true in the field of education which, in spite of efforts at depoliticization (Boyd, 1978), requires active legitimation at several levels. In the following sections, I will illustrate through case examples the principal's legitimation role as s/he mediates between levels of the organizational authority structure.

The Formal Authority Structure in Fairlawn

The formal authority structure in the Fairlawn school district consists of a hierarchy of levels of governance. At the top of the hierarchy - at least on the formal organizational chart - rests the school board. They are the ultimate arbitors of policy decisions and representatives of the lay community.
Although they seldom make formal policy, they have the final say on policies which are brought before them. Their powers are constrained by mandated policies from the state and federal levels.

The school board is followed by the superintendent. In past administrations the superintendent himself made administrative (and occasionally even policy) decisions. The current administration, however, uses a team management philosophy and decisions are made by the administrative team. For this reason I will often refer to central office decisions rather than decisions of the superintendent.

The next level of formal authority is "middle management". This level consists of two groups of principals: the group of eight elementary school principals and the group of middle and high school principals. This study will focus exclusively on the elementary school principals since their group is more cohesive and its concerns are significantly different in kind from those of the middle and secondary school principals. A few district coordinators of special programs share this middle terrain with principals.
The teachers and professional staff represent a fourth level. The only form of power this group has in the formal authority structure is the opportunity to serve on committees. However, teachers and professional staff, as well as, certified personnel have an association through which they have amassed considerable influence within the organization. Furthermore, as those who work at the service delivery level teachers also enjoy a great deal of discretionary decision-making power. Many teachers also have informal contacts at higher levels of the authority structure which they can use informally. Students are at the bottom of the hierarchy and have no formal authority, except through student councils which are essentially powerless entities. The source of their informal power is their potential recourse - which is seldom exercised - to a withdrawal of consent to play by the school's rules. The smooth functioning of the school and its legitimacy is tied to the consent of its clients to the rules of the institution.
Loose Coupling and Mediating Agents

Since Weick's (1976) seminal work, many organizational theorists are fond of viewing organizations, and schools in particular, as "loosely coupled". In Fairlawn, there are many individuals whose job it is to serve as linking or mediating agents between loosely-coupled levels of the authority structure.

The mediating agent between the school board and central office is the superintendent. (In fact, in this district that is his primary role since administrative decisions are often delegated or made in teams). Frank Bradley's role is to mediate between the central office and the elementary program. Principals at their individual schools are charged with mediating between central office and their own staffs. And teachers in their own classrooms are the link between the school administration and the students. Much has been written about loose coupling and gaps between levels of the organization. This section will look into those gaps to understand how levels are linked and what the mediation process looks like in practice.
Mediation Between and Within Levels

Limiting our focus to principals, it is important to understand that they must mediate vertically and horizontally at the same time. Most discussions of "boundary spanning" fail to pay attention to this constant dialectic of vertical and horizontal boundaries. This need for simultaneous vertical and horizontal mediation is illustrated by the contradictory metaphors principals used to characterize the district.

For example, Kathy Martin, principal of Morningside Elementary School, spoke often of tremendous stress, sleepless nights, potential lawsuits, and the need to be strategizing constantly. Her organizational environment seemed to be a battlefield sown with landmines which she had to daily negotiate with great care. At the same time she viewed her relationships in the district as generally very amicable, particularly those that involved her staff, parents and immediate boss, Frank Bradley. In fact, "family" and "team" metaphors were invoked throughout the district to describe working relationships.
Viewing these contradictory metaphors within the context of the requirements which the authority structure places on mediating agents, it became apparent that the family metaphor, although employed district-wide was most convincing at each level of the organizational hierarchy, that is, as a "family" of teachers in a particular school, the central office "team", or the "unit" of elementary principals.

These "families", with their attendant solidarity and loyalty, also represented power bases that could exert power vertically within the organizational hierarchy as well as horizontally in relation to other special interest groups in the wider community. There is, then, a pull for autonomy as a unit and a need for harmony at the level of the "family" and yet a pull for tight coupling in order for information to flow between levels. (As we shall see later this information flow is monitored and sometimes distorted by mediating agents.) The principal must keep the "family" (the school's staff) together and defend its autonomy while at the same time remain accountable to the community and other levels of the hierarchy. It is this constant balancing act which creates the sense of impending
danger for Kathy ("I know that there are things out there - right outside that door - that could knock me down in a minute. You never get cocky in this job.")}, and the sheer amount of work that maintaining stability both within her building and between competing power bases within the hierarchy and the district that add to the stress. The following is an illustration of a principal's effort to legitimate to staff the district norm of "extra effort".

Recently the district librarians, who have been working extremely long hours, got together and decided that if they didn't have their own aides, they would all work only their required hours. Kathy acknowledged that Marsha, the Morningside librarian, was very good and frequently worked overtime. In fact, on a recent Friday night, Kathy and the librarian had both been working at the school past midnight. On the other hand she comments,

The librarianship is a really important position. It's a person who touches every child and teacher in the building. That library needs to be a focal point of the school, and I have certain expectations for that job. I expect beyond the minimum from every staff member...I had said to her yesterday, 'Marsha, we need to get it worked
out for our building. If things are not
going well then we need to work it out. If
what I’ve done to help isn’t enough, let’s
talk it through’, but when we get that
mentality – that district mentality – of
we’re not going to do this or that, then
there’s a certain block that goes straight up
and down in me and I’m not going to be
responsive and I doubt that the other
principals would be either.

It seems apparent that librarians in the district
are attempting to develop an alternative power base.
In a district that prides itself on "talking things
through" and achieving consensus, such actions imply
that real conflicts of interest might exist. As with
labor/management negotiations, when the talking stops
and the conflict of interests remain, someone has to
lose. In this case it is the librarians. Kathy, then,
is charged with re-establishing the legitimacy among
staff of the norm of giving extra effort and time. In
order to achieve her goal, Kathy expresses her sense of
betrayal at the lack of solidarity. Again, employing
the family metaphor, there is nothing wrong with
networking with the other librarians in the district,
as long as one doesn’t forget where one’s loyalties
ultimately belong. When Kathy talks of getting things
worked out for "our" building, she is appealing to a
sense of familial solidarity. Having effectively
headed off a conflict with potential for ramifications
beyond the building level, Kathy welcomes the wayward
librarian back into the fold.

In Fairlawn, established norms are reinforced,
policies implemented, and hierarchical control
maintained largely through the effective management of
meaning. From the superintendent on down,
"Fairlawnization" is required before one can enact an
effective legitimation role. The librarians and Kathy
Martin were ultimately able to come to an understanding
about the lack of the availability of full-time aids.
but the real threat that the incident represented was
to the norm of "extra effort" and the norm of building
solidarity ("our building") over district solidarity
("that district mentality") In understanding this,
Kathy was careful to manage meaning in such a way as to
re-establish the legitimacy of these norms. Frank, in
continuing his discussion of "Fairlawnization"
elaborates on its importance for effective vertical
legitimation.
Frank: Until you understand what it means to be 'Fairstatized' you have trouble. Our superintendents have come in from the outside and have a terrible time until they understand that and some of them never do figure it out and they're dead. Like George Harper (the present superintendent) - he's been through the system. They think he's the greatest. He knows how to work them. He's the greatest PR person. He knows. He understands, and he knows how to make it work. They think he is the greatest superintendent in the world.

Interviewer: By "they" you mean...

Frank: The staff. And they'll support him down the line and that gets a lot of things done. You might have somebody else come in here who has more talent in some areas and maybe their educational background and all that. They have a terrible time. People road block them. And the principals - they understand - the ones that have been through it - been through the system. They understand how to do it, but there is a lot of pressure and stress to make that happen.

In the above exchange Frank is talking about a principal's ability to be a successful mediating agent within the organization. This requires many skills, among them the ability to legitimate various levels of the authority structure to each other, as well as, the task of horizontal legitimation between the organization and its environment. But perhaps most importantly Frank seems to be saying that this can only be accomplished effectively after one has been
"Fairlawnized". Although he never defines the term, it seems to correspond to a form of socialization into the norms and ideology of the school district. The socialization issue and district ideology will be addressed in greater detail in part II.

What makes vertical legitimation so difficult is that while teachers can ultimately determine a principal's fate, the principal is also ultimately answerable to the superintendent. Thus, principals must keep both the building staff and the central office administration happy since he/she is ultimately answerable to the superintendent. The following passage is from the district policy book:

Upon nomination by the superintendent, the board shall appoint the principals, who...shall be responsible to the superintendent, who makes assignments or reassignments. The principal shall coordinate his efforts with the staff of the central office...

Thus, although under the present administration, principals are often consulted before decisions are made, they do not form part of the central office decision-making team. Neither are they part of the teaching staff. Although they once belonged to the
teachers association, they now even negotiate contracts separately. Principals, then, are not alone at the top, they are alone in the middle.

B. Legitimation Within Organizational Levels and Between the School and Its Community (Horizontal Legitimation)

Not only must legitimation be accomplished between levels of the organizational hierarchy, but the definitions of social reality held by individual social actors and groups are in contention within organizational levels as well. The eight elementary school principals in no way represent a monolithic group, nor do teachers, central office administrators, and parents. Furthermore, horizontal legitimation is a process which occurs not only within these groups, but also horizontally between the school and its community.

In the community itself, interest group politics tends to be played out openly in levy and bond issue referenda and school board meetings and elections. As we shall see, however, within levels of the school
organization and between the school and its community differing definitions of social reality - although sometimes promoted through formal vehicles - are more often promoted through the more subtle processes of legitimation. Frank Bradley provides an example of how principals legitimate teacher competence to parents and how teachers enforce this cultural norm.

This community can come down on teachers pretty strongly, and this is a true measure of how a staff is going to feel about a principal. The principal that seems to make it here is one that will support that teacher and protect that teacher to the parents and to a certain extent cover up for them and try to help them in terms of the parents. But behind the scenes the principal has got to get on that teacher good. We try to keep the parents off the backs of the teachers but if there is a problem, the principals are expected to get it straightened out with that teacher. In most cases, unless it is a pretty weak teacher, in two or three years a principal learns how to deal with that kind of thing. There are some teachers that are weak, and you can’t fool the parents about that.

Some principals, however, even reported being able to legitimate weak teachers to the community by keeping disruptive kids out their classrooms and not assigning the children of aggressive parents to them.
Although horizontal legitimation occurs within teaching staffs at a local school site, within the teaching staff district-wide, within the community of school parents, within certified personnel, and within the team of central office administrators, only a general flavor of the legitimation process within these groups will be provided in this section. The main focus will be on horizontal legitimation within the principal group and how this group meets a legitimation struggle led by teachers.

With respect to the eight elementary principals where general harmony reigned, the process of legitimation went on largely behind the scenes. This does not mean that principals' meetings were not contentious. Most arguments in principals meetings were, however, over largely procedural decisions or over how to handle issues that had come up between levels of the authority structure. An example of the former was a recent disagreement - described in detail in a later section - over the best way to present teachers with the rather disappointing results of a State Education Department evaluation. An example of the latter was indignation over central office
decisions concerning the allocation of resources between the elementary and secondary levels. Most discussion tended to involve between-level issues which resulted in reinforcing a sense of solidarity among principals. Furthermore, because principals did not belong to a peer group at the building level, they tended to place great value on their status within the principals' group and the touchstone and moral support it provided them. Moreover, for the five long-time, male principals, close friendships had evolved which made serious open contention within the group even more threatening.

Regardless, then, of the apparent equanimity among the principals, it became clear early in the study that many of the principals had agendas on the back burner which they were interested in promoting when and if the time were right. As we shall see, some were more successful than others in legitimating these agendas.

Organizational Norms as a Context for Legitimation

The legitimacy struggle at the level of the principals' group must be understood against the
backdrop of the district norm of general school and program uniformity. Frank describes the district's norm of uniformity,

Frank: Basically the elementary program and what we are doing is very consistent and that was our choice. We said we wanted to do it that way. That's what I do. I try to make that happen.

Interviewer: Do you feel there is enough difference between the schools to provide the community with real variety of educational programs? I'm curious, for instance, why there aren't some alternative schools at the elementary level.

Frank: Well, those are choices that we made. We have, at times, experimented with informal education and it didn't work real well for us, and so we moved away from it.

and a Fairlawn teacher comments:

There is some expectation in the community that the kids will do similar things, and we usually hear about it when they don't. We do hear about the fact that Riverside does something and Morningside does something and Howell does something else. We do hear about that. The awareness is very much there - a built-in expectation that the kids will get pretty similar experiences.

The norm of program uniformity is partly historical and partly pragmatic. As Frank suggests in the above excerpt, several years ago the district experienced a traumatic community uprising when one of
the elementary schools implemented an open classroom program. On the pragmatic side, even if an innovative program is viewed positively by the community, if it is implemented only in one school, other parents may insist on it being implemented in theirs as well. Although elementary schools in Fairlawn do have somewhat distinctive personalities, largely because of staff, neighborhood and architectural design, the general emphasis on program uniformity among schools leaves relatively little discretionary decision-making within schools when it comes to broad policies and program priorities. Therefore, because principals and teachers are not allowed to develop program within their schools independently, they must promote program changes district-wide.

Thus, it is not enough to establish the legitimacy of many policies at the building level; their legitimacy must be perceived district-wide. The literature-based reading instruction controversy is a case in point and will serve to illustrate the complexity of the legitimation process, both among principals and between principals and teachers.
The Literature-based Instruction Controversy

Literature-based instruction is an approach to reading which stresses a more natural whole language approach to reading instruction organized around children's literature rather than basal readers. Whole language, rather than phonics is stressed. Literature-based reading instruction is often controversial because it involves a less structured approach to learning often associated with "informal" or "open" classrooms. The current accountability movement and back-to-basics climate in education has made more structured and more measurable approaches to instruction popular. Moreover, perhaps the most contentious period in Fairlawn's recent history involved massive community opposition to a non-graded, open-space school during the mid-seventies. This opposition resulted in a change of principals and teachers at the school, a reduction in open-space classrooms and eventually an end to the non-graded system. A generally conservative climate in the country coupled with a hotly contested innovation in the district's recent history, then, makes a reading
approach like literature-based instruction, which is viewed as less structured and less accountable than a basal approach, particularly difficult to legitimate. Nevertheless at a recent principal's meeting it was generally agreed that literature-based instruction was catching on in the district and that the principals would have to work hard to "get out front" of this in order to provide leadership and to exercise some control over the shape such an approach would ultimately take. The following section will attempt to provide an account of how a reading approach which has been perceived as unstructured and wholistic, and which has been associated with informal education gained legitimacy within the organizational hierarchy in a relatively short time. Most importantly, the role of the principals in this legitimation process will be explored.

The Legitimation of Literature-based Instruction

Groups of pro-literature teachers initially led the legitimation process in the district. Carol describes
the status of literature-based instruction among teachers at the beginning of the school year.

I don't think you'll find any one school that is moving toward literature-based instruction. What you'll find are two or three teachers in a building - it is really very low key at this point. It is mainly the new teachers or teachers who are doing masters work at State University where literature-based is prominent. It is those teachers.

Although this section will be limited to an analysis of the legitimation process within the district, it is clear from the above that the origins of literature-based instruction lie outside the district. The local state university - or, at least some members of its faculty - promoted this approach. Some teachers and principals even indicated that part of the popularity of literature was the recent availability of high quality children's literature. Bill Ford, a principal who suggested this approach was beginning to be a nation-wide trend, had this to say,

This literature-based approach was a grass roots thing for teachers - a need to do it - a change in focus. The [publishing] companies are doing it. It is happening across the country. It is a trend. A principal would be foolish to try to stop that. It would be like sticking your head in
the sand. So what do you do? You encourage it. You go with it, but yet you want to have some criteria - guidelines - with it too. You don't just want to give people the leeway to do anything they want with it.

Although principals generally took a reactive stance on literature-based instruction, the two new principals, Ann and Helen, were more proactive, behind-the-scenes actors, lending legitimacy to the use of literature at the building level. Both quietly put in large book orders for literature, brought in speakers to explain the literature-based philosophy, and "stacked" the reading committee with aggressive and articulate supporters of literature-based instruction. Helen Forbes, one of the two pro-literature-based principals explains,

It really helps when literature-based is supported by the principal, that you hire those people that support that. For all of the people that I hired this summer, literature was a real concern. I asked questions like: 'What is the best way to teach reading? How would you feel if you didn't have any books?'

The other new principal, Ann Maxwell, was in an even better position to put together her own staff. The principal who preceded her moved to a new elementary school in the district, taking nearly one
third of the staff with him. One of Ann's teachers describes the situation,

We lost fifty per cent of our staff when Riverside Elementary school opened. So our staff turnover - not fifty per cent, but, at least one third - so the people that were brought in basically were her choice. Not that she always made the right choice, but she was able to hand pick a staff. It is unusual for a new principal to go into a situation with that many new teachers.

However, before the two new "pro-literature" principals came on board, the literature movement among a segment of teachers was already underway. Teachers committed to a literature-based approach began to have an effect on their colleagues. Using literature in the classroom was not a particularly unusual or controversial occurrence in the district - although it tended to be used more with high reading groups - however, as one principal put it, "It seemed like all of a sudden everybody was wanting to order literature for their classrooms." Thus, factions of principals and teachers were busily working behind the scenes to legitimate literature-based instruction horizontally among their peers. Although, in the case of the two new principals, their status as the newest members of
the principal's group made a campaign of legitimation among principals a risky enterprise.

The interest in literature did not go unnoticed at central office as Frank's comments illustrate.

The only real problem we have in the reading program now is that we are trying to work out some kind of criteria for a literature-based reading approach, and what's been happening in the district is that a lot of people have been moving in that direction. Some of them really aren't qualified to deal with it and don't fully understand it. Principals have got caught in the bind, because the people want to do it and they want the funding for it, and so the principals are saying to me, hey, I don't know if this person should be in this position or not.

Thus, not only was literature widely used in the classroom, but teachers had gotten the attention of administrators, as we have seen, not so much through promoting the idea vertically up the hierarchy, but primarily through legitimating its use horizontally among other teachers, as the following Fairlawn teacher suggests,

A lot depends on how much you can get your colleagues to buy into what you want to do. You can kind of build that - 'Yeah, that's a good idea'. The sixth grade camping program started out that way. It was someone's idea and a few schools started doing it, and other people were convinced that it was a good
idea, and more did it, and more did it, and now finally it is written into the graded course of study as a science experience that all sixth graders have to have.

The achievement of a positive perception of the use of literature among a critical mass of teachers quietly laid a foundation from which change could occur. However, the battle over what degree of legitimacy literature-based instruction would achieve district-wide would have to be fought out within the formal structures of the organization rather than behind the classroom and teachers' lounge doors. In Fairlawn this meant forming a committee. Kathy explains how this committee came about.

Kathy: We have this cycle in the district that every five years you look at the reading texts again. But then we were having some money problems so really it was held off for seven years, because Frank was hearing from the teachers in the district, and I was one of those people who would say to him, Frank, we don't need new texts right now. These are still usable. They are right up with things. Teachers are loving them. They are not out-dated, and he was hearing that from other people too. It was in that interim period that some people were talking about, why put money into basals for us at our grade level? We would like to do literature. And they were talking to him about that. So he decided there would have to be a sub-committee to deal with just that issue of literature-based.
Interviewer: And how did the decision to form a subcommittee come about?

Kathy: I think Frank knew all along that he was going to have to do that from what he was hearing beforehand.

Interviewer: It was really Frank's decision, but it was from pressure from a certain sector of teachers to put that on the agenda?

Kathy: Sure. That's when he said, Kathy, I want you to serve on that committee because I need some balance there.

Thus, although pro literature-based teachers had succeeded in getting on the district's formal agenda, the central office had placed a principal on the committee who was committed to moderating the final proposals that would emerge. Moreover, Frank would chair the committee. Thus, although a group of teachers had succeeded in legitimating the wide-spread use of literature, to legitimate literature-based instruction was another matter.

In fact the real struggle in the district ultimately became not the legitimation of the use of literature per se, but rather the legitimation of the use of literature instead of basal readers. The principals, seeing that they could not stem the spread of literature - nor, in fairness, did most of them want to
- attempted to reframe the issue as one of a literature-based vs. literature-supplemented approach to reading. Teachers had succeeded in getting the principals' attention, but the principals were attempting to gain some control over the meaning of literature-based instruction which required not only addressing the instructional issues involved, but also the very vocabulary which formed the basis of the debate. The teachers had promoted the term "literature-based" instruction. The principals - or, at least, those, like Bill Ford, who were not wholly pro-literature - took exception.

I almost hesitate to be against literature-based. I'm not against it. I'm for it, but it does bother me a little bit, and I'm a little worried about it. It is another one of those things that come down the road that has got some great things to offer children and the teachers, and the reason I sometimes hesitate and say let's go slow with it or be careful - because it makes me sound like an old stick-in-the-mud who's all for basal readers and basal workbooks and I'm really not, I'm concerned about literature - not so much the word "literature", but the word "Based". It bothers me because I'm not sure our teachers will be trained in developing their own reading program. I think that many of them won't have the time or the expertise to do that, so I think we still need to purchase a prepared reading program, give them that and
let them teach it to the children. "Literature-supplemented" I like. In other words give them good literature so that they can get more involved in a story. I want them to read good literature, but I don't think that is all I want them to read. I think there is still some value in the traditional basal texts for word attack skills, vocabulary building, comprehension and this kind of thing. I'm all for a literature supplement to our program, but a literature-based approach, I'm a little nervous about.

As this study drew to a close, the literature-based committee seemed to be moving toward a compromise position. Four models were viewed as acceptable.

1. Basals with some literature enhancement.
2. Half basal and half literature.
3. Literature-based, but with a basal format, (ie. using comprehension questions and word attack skills with literature.)
4. Literature-based with whole language approach in which everything - writing, vocabulary, etc - is generated out of the literature.

Legitimation and the District Norm of Uniformity

Interestingly, the pluralistic outcome of the committee's decision-making seems to go against the norm of uniformity in the district. It may be that the central office felt that until they had a strategy for
legitimating literature-based instruction horizontally to the community at large, it was best to allow teachers descretionary decision-making for the time being. Moreover, the balance of power among staff was not yet apparent. In fact, basal teachers were beginning to feel threatened by the zeal of many of the literature-based teachers. For many, the legitimization of literature-based instruction was construed as the de-legitimation of basals. There was, then, a potential for the kind to intra-staff hostility which had occurred some years ago among teachers with differing philosophies at Howell Elementary, the experimental informal school.

A teacher at Piner Elementary had another explanation for the teachers’ success.

Interviewer: If, as you have indicated, what is encouraged in the district tends to be somewhat conservative instructionally, it appears that this literature-based initiative has caught higher levels of the hierarchy off guard. Or did I get that wrong?

teacher: I think if they aren’t familiar with it, if they don’t feel comfortable with it, it becomes similar to the situation in music. Nobody in administration knows what a music program is supposed to be like, so they leave those teachers alone. If they are not comfortable with it and they trust the
teacher, they let it go. Things happen without anyone stepping in. And then you get some administrators like Ann (new pro-literature principal) who will really push. I think policy at the elementary level will be shaped more and more often by somebody like that. To her liking, her tastes.

Interviewer: Because she is more involved in instructional issues?

Teacher: Yeah. The others - from principals on up - have backed off. They do their paper work, attend meetings and relay the decrees.

What this teacher suggests is born out by the work of Meyer & Rowan (1978) who suggest that principals resort to a "logic of confidence" in their mediation with teachers. Meyer & Rowan view schools as personnel-certifying agencies which depend for their legitimacy on "ritual classifications", ie. a certified math teacher, a fifth-grader, an English major. With regard to such ritual classifications, they argue, schools are very tightly coupled. Instruction, which is an ambiguous enterprise - what organizational theorists call a "weak technology" - is loosely-coupled since close supervision can uncover inconsistencies and inefficiencies which threaten the legitimacy of the institution.
Educators therefore decouple their ritual structure from institutional activities and outcomes and resort to a 'logic of confidence': Higher levels of the system organize on the assumption that what is going on at lower levels makes sense and conforms to rules, but they avoid inspecting it to discover or assume responsibility for inconsistencies and ineffectiveness. In this fashion, educational organizations work more smoothly than is commonly supposed... (Meyer & Rowan, 1978, p. 80)

**Meaning Management and the Image of Innovation**

Controversial innovations in classrooms, however, cannot be decoupled if they threaten the legitimacy of the organization as occurred at Howell Elementry. In the case of the literature-based reading instruction controversy, it is very possible that administrators viewed the existence of structured readers containing, phonics and word attack exercises and bearing the name of a well-known publishing company, as a kind of "ritual classification" which lends legitimacy to the reading program. In any case, decoupling is functional for the organization as long as its legitimacy is not threatened. It is left to mediating agents like principals to make sure that a literature-based reading program doesn't lead to a legitimacy crisis like that
which occurred at Howell. If meaning is managed well, potentially controversial innovations may not be viewed as controversial by the organization's clients.

Those teachers and administrators who had been in the district for many years, tended to view the district as generally open to trying new things. Howell Elementary School's "open concept" program was the result of this willingness to innovate. Among informants, there was some difference of opinion about how "open" Howell Elementary really was. Kathy Martin admits that she primarily used basals when she taught there and others describe a form of "individualization" in which students were merely differentially paced through reading kits with stories that were color-coded according to grade level. Nevertheless, the Howell experiment appeared to be led by professionals who, like the literature-based teachers, were attempting to implement a form of instruction in which they believed. As Frank Bradley points out, however, they had forgotten that implementation requires legitimation.

I think that in the end the parents killed it (The Howell program). That community has
maybe the highest percentage of Republicans in the county and, it is a very conservative community and we could never sell it. Just never could. They had some outstanding people there. But the thing about it was, it was all in the image. We gradually changed it over, and the way we did it was, we didn’t want to change anything other than we would replace teachers. We tried to hire teachers that we thought could relate better to parents. In the beginning when we first set that up, we hired them basically for their philosophy, but there were too many of them that couldn’t relate to parents. Like Kathy Martin is a good example. Kathy Martin taught the open concept approach. We had family grouping. We had three grade levels together. Bill Ford taught there the same way. Those were two people that could relate to parents.

Gertrude Bennett (since retired) was the principal that came in and got that straightened around. She had a whole different image. She was an older lady and she was very traditional in her ways and more authoritarian and she was in control and she just sat with those parents, and she told them, and they believed her and it was fine. We started closing the walls more and the parents said, hey it’s OK.

And one of the things I insisted on was that we had to be careful about the kinds of teachers we hired in terms of the public relations...The former principal went from there to Monroe Elementary, which was a new school. He didn’t have any trouble with that. In fact, he’s an excellent principal. He learned his lesson.

It is interesting to note that of the teachers at Howell Elementary during that time, two who were not philosophically informal teachers, but were good at
legitimating the program to the community, later became principals in the district. In the following quote Kathy describes her ambivalence and how she communicated the program to parents.

I came to the program about three years into it and so the experience that I brought was self-contained classrooms, and I really worked hard to go with it, but what I found was my foundation of self-contained provided a really good framework for my teaching there. I loved the 1, 2, 3 together. I worked through every recess period that I didn’t have a duty and I would eat real quickly and I would work with kids—if they wanted to do anything like plays and all that kind of thing. It took unbelievable organizational kinds of skills. I think—really the truthful thing of it is—some of them will say other things—but I think the teachers were burning out with it. They really were. It took an unbelievable effort and there were some who were so imbedded in that philosophy that they really alienated that community. I really didn’t feel—I felt I had a very positive experience with it and I didn’t have parent problems. As soon as there would be a question about it, I would invite them into the classroom so then they could see how a first grader could be working in the third level language and so on and they could buy right into it. They were afraid that the kids on the upper end may be suffering but the kids on the lower end were being pulled along and so on.

Since the Howell controversy the stress on preserving the school’s legitimacy in the eyes of the parents has created a "don’t rock the boat" atmosphere
in the district. When asked about Kathy and Bill's apparent ability to function well in both informal and traditional settings, Bruce expressed the central office' desire to take a middle-of-the-road approach with the community.

That's good because that keeps them somewhere in the middle. I think we have high support for our elementary program from the community, and I think it is basically because we meet the needs of kids real well. We are some place in the middle. We don't want our school way over on the other side either, and that is kind of where the community wants us too. The schools that really have it together, that is where they are.

...Maybe out of our Worthington Hills experience we have been very careful about the image and the label. We have really encouraged our teachers at times to do more literature and informal things because we felt that it could be very effective with a lot of kids, but it's a dirty word in this district.

What the above reveals is a constant dialectical tension between professional judgement (which is itself divided) and community demands (which may also be divided). In this community legitimation involves making whatever instructional approach one is using appear "middle-of-the-road". Again the management of meaning takes center stage.
Meaning Management and the Limits of Principal Influence

Research in education has pointed to the principal's lack of direct influence over teachers (Fraatz, 1987). In fact, many current studies of their relationship finds that the gap between the building principal and the teachers is one fraught with struggle (Blase, 1987). Bob Carlson describes the principal's respect for the teachers' norm of autonomy in the school.

Memos and directives don't work with teachers. I could take all my memos and directives and go out the door and nobody would miss me. When I came into this building as principal, it was really tight. The teachers turned in their lesson plan books every Friday, and the principal took them home and read them over the weekend. What a stupid waste of time! He used to stand in the parking lot and watch the teachers come in and write down their time. Well, what do you do with that? So she comes in at 8:15? What do you do with that? You can't fire her; all you can do is hassle her, and then she gets mad at you, right?

Because of this perceived inability of principals to directly control teacher behavior, legitimation struggles are often carried out at the level of instructional and curriculum policy. In other words,
at the classroom level and within certain limits teachers have autonomy. Legitimation struggles, then, often take place around the definitions of these limits. One principal explained the limits on teacher autonomy this way.

Theoretically teachers have the freedom to pretty much manage their classrooms in the manner they would like. I think our curriculum dictates a lot of that though, the types of materials we give them, the type of things we tell them that they almost have to do, the curriculum guides, the graded course of study, etcetera. If they are to get it in, move their children on, their hands are somewhat tied.

The battle then between teachers and principal is over meaning; What constitutes a legitimate curriculum, instructional method, instructional tool?

In the politics of instructional policy, pro literature-based teachers had mounted an impressive campaign of legitimation. The principals' responses were reactive and divided. They were reactive because principals were working toward a compromise position: to redefine literature-based as literature-supplemented reading instruction. They were divided because the two
new principals were supporting the legitimation effort behind the scenes.

   Principals, because of their unique position at the crossroads of central office, teachers, and community, must be acutely aware of how meaning is managed both horizontally and vertically. In all of the talk about literature-based instruction and in interviews with principals generally, two concerns are constantly reiterated - keeping the various constituencies "happy" and meeting the educational needs of children. Principals appear to be motivated by both and the two are interrelated. After Bill, in the above quote, expressed his concern about which reading approach was instructionally superior, he added,

West Grand (a nearby suburb), for example, came out with a literature-based program and some of the first and second grade parents were upset because they felt their kids weren't getting what they saw as a traditional basal foundation for reading and word attack skills and that sort of thing.

Thus, officially the primary goal of principals in Fairlawn is to provide effective instruction for children. There is no reason to believe that such a
concern is mere rhetoric. On the contrary, there is much evidence that principals in this district have a real concern for the children's educational welfare. However, as the removal of the principal and several teachers at Howell Elementary attests, principals are not evaluated primarily on how well they educate children but on how well they manage their relationships with the teachers, central office and the community. In fact, the education of children is not even specifically mentioned in the following list of principal responsibilities in the Fairlawn policy book, but the need to "promote harmonious community relations" is.

The principal's responsibilities shall include the organization, maintenance, and supervision of the entire program of the school, the promotion of harmonious community relations and other duties that the superintendent assigns.

The Language of Legitimation

Whether legitimation is viewed vertically or horizontally, as sustaining social class domination or merely a benignly effective organization, it is clear that it involves a struggle over language. Meaning is
managed symbolically and the most effective form of symbolic communication is language. The struggle to define the reading curriculum as either "literature-based" or "literature-supplemented" (sometimes also called "literature-enhanced" by informants) is an example of meaning management at a level of open political contention. Most meaning management, however, is more subtle and involves the use of metaphors, as illustrated in Kathy Martin's mediation with the school librarian. In fact, the promotion of a conflict-free vocabulary in the district is pervasive, and is the medium through which the extent of one's "Fairlawnization" is revealed.

For example, Frank Bradley, Executive director in charge of elementary principals, is proud of what he calls Fairlawn's "humanistic" philosophy and stresses the importance of selecting administrators and teachers who personify it. Staffs in Fairlawn are "teams" or "families"; arguments are "conversations" or "interactions"; problems are "challenges" or "growth experiences". Optimism, hard work, and harmonious relations are rewarded. Teachers and administrators openly use the vocabulary of psychological typing.
People are "expressives" or "amiables" (There are few "driver" or "analytic" types among Fairlawn principals). Everyone insists on "win-win" decision-making, in which people continue to work problems through with one another until both can come away feeling like winners. The win-win technique was used in recent contract negotiations. Much of this orientation is the work of Gary Buhl, Assistant Superintendent for personnel. Extensive and costly workshops and tests are given to determine personnel's leadership styles and hiring of new personnel is also done partly on this basis.

Being "Fairlawnized" requires learning the language of harmony and consensus. The objective is to project the self-perpetuating reality of a world relatively free of real conflict of interest. Whether within the district or the society at large, most principals are acutely aware that such a reality is, at best, a half-truth, at worst, an illusion. A major part of their job, however, is to maintain the legitimacy of the construction of Fairlawn's social reality and the language out of which it is constructed.
Part II: Legitimation and the Mediation of social structure

As the previous sections have illustrated, principals must simultaneous mediate vertically and horizontally since legitimation occurs between organizational levels, within organizational levels and between the school and the community. The following sections explore a different type of mediation - one which involves the legitimation not of an organizational status quo, but of a social status quo. For example, in a metropolitan area with a sizable minority population, the paucity of minorities in Fairlawn must be made to appear legitimate. Its legitimation is particularly important in the context of the bussing of students to achieve desegregation in neighboring Grand City. The success allocating social charters of schools in affluent suburban communities must also be legitimated through an appeal to meritocratic ideology.Meritocratic ideology presents particular forms of work as more valuable and deserving of greater status and economic reward. It also
presents the existing hierarchical social arrangements and discrepancies in wealth and power as normal, legitimate, and fair. In other words, it must appear fair that roughly eighty percent of Fairlawn High School graduates are college bound, whereas a few miles away, some inner-city high schools send less than ten percent of their graduates to college. (This figure does not even include drop out rates as high as forty percent). The following two sections will provide a critical analysis of two arenas in which legitimation must be sustained — the legitimation of boundaries, or the inherent right of exclusive communities to exist, and the legitimation of a success-allocating social charter.

A. The Legitimation of Boundaries: Desegregation

An attempt to study desegregation in Fairlawn is a classic example of what Lukes (1974) has referred to as the study of non-issues. In fact, segregation in Fairlawn is so tightly legitimated and nonproblemetized that when I raised the issue, almost without exception,
informants had a hard time understanding my question. Most simply asserted that they supposed blacks couldn't afford to buy homes in Fairlawn, but that otherwise there was no systematic effort to keep them out. Since I could find no evidence of realtors steering black clients out of the district, nor any indications of overt racial prejudice among residents, I concluded with Bickel (1982) that,

Desegregation is inconsistent with the broader social setting in which schooling occurs. This is true, however, not because modern American society is fundamentally racist, but because its most important organizing dimension is social class. It is the close association between social class and race which makes de facto segregation so durable. (p. 266)

The desegregation issue, however, may shed some light on the principal's legitimation role, since many principals are privately concerned about the lack of minorities in their schools, and yet, because busing would be disastrous to property values, they are charged with continuing to legitimate desegregation as a non-issue in Fairlawn. After all, everyone knows suburbs are exempt from such things.
Or are they? Precedents exist in North Carolina and Delaware of county-wide desegregation plans, and during the Grand City desegregation case a proposal was put forth for county-wide desegregation but nothing came of it. Several of the principals were aware of this proposal and some of them supported the idea. The following quote is from a discussion with Bob Carlson, principal of Washington Elementary,

Bob Carlson: It was always left to Grand City to deal with the black/white thing. Nobody ever pulled in. Nobody ever made it a county-wide problem. I don't know how or why not. If I were a leader in that movement, I suppose I would have worked for something like that...It's not good for the suburbs to be in competition with the city. I think we ought to be cooperating. Now it would be a mortal sin for me to suggest, which I was hoping might happen, that all of Franklin county might get involved in this thing, and, hell, let's divide up the county and just make pie shaped wedges, you know, and this (draws on chalk board) will be Paddingtons, and they've got the city and what goes out, and this is Fairlawn's piece, and this is Bently's piece, and so on. I think that would be super for education and teachers and sharing the wealth and the whole thing, but nobody ever asked me.

Interviewer: Why do you think that never got off the ground.

Bob Carlson: Oh, God, there would have been such a...Our parents would have gone to court
and it would have been tied up in the courts for years.

It would have been "a mortal sin" for Bob to suggest placing Fairlawn within the boundaries of desegregation, because it strikes at the very heart of a major legitimation task of principals - the legitimation of Fairlawn's separateness from Grand City and the civic responsibilities of the greater metropolitan area - in a word, its exclusiveness.

Helen Forbes, principal of Howell Elementary, takes a more pragmatic view toward the idea of county-wide desegregation.

Too many people would have to give up too much so that (the district-wide desegregation plan) wasn't given real consideration. You would have to change your tax base. That was monumental - Why would Bentley want to even consider doing that. Bentley didn't even send representatives to the meeting. Fairlawn wouldn't be willing to do that. They would be losing students and revenue and why? No, it was not even considered. It was brought up as a brainstorm idea.

These views illustrate that, as in the case of literature-based instruction, the eight elementary principals are not a monolithic group, even though formally they act as one and project a united front on most issues. Part of Frank Bradley's mediation role is
to see that principals "work through" their differences and present themselves as a unit.

The issue of Fairlawn's segregation was recently raised by a new group which has formed within the last couple of years. Led by black teachers, the Multicultural Awareness Committee was formed to address the lack of minority concerns in the district. The chairperson of the group describes the Fairlawn situation.

Far fewer than one percent of the district's students are black. When we look at teachers in the district it is infinitesimal - even smaller than our student population. At the elementary level there are six black teachers. We have three middle schools now and we have one full-time black teacher. At the main campus (high school) there is no black teacher and think of the hundreds of students.

From the looks of the community, you would think that there had to have been some kind of conscious effort for the homogenous nature of this community. This is not a natural state of being in our country. This school district is not. That was my first impression when I came here and I think that anyone coming from any other place would see that as a first impression.

As the above quotes indicate, the legitimacy of the segregated nature of the district is not totally secure. The Multicultural Awareness Group appears to
make people in the district nervous for this very reason. The group has become an issue, with its unspoken threat to bring back the racial controversies of a past era. The superintendent has accepted the group warmly, but has given it little substantial support.

Although inclusion in Grand City's desegregation plan was successfully avoided by Fairlawn, a major portion of Fairlawn school district was almost pulled into the Grand City school district. This critical event provides an opportunity to study in microcosm an example of a legitimacy crisis in the school district's boundaries.

Annexation

The annexation issue was one of the most hotly contested political issues in Grand City since desegregation. In suburban areas the controversy was even greater because, unlike desegregation, annexation threatened to include regions in the Grand City desegregation plan which were previously exempt. These regions were part of Grand City, but belonged to
suburban school districts. Grand City was attempting to annex these regions partly because of a shrinking tax base due to declining enrollments from "white flight" to the suburbs. The loss of so many white children to the suburbs was also making it more difficult to achieve racial balance in the Grand City schools. A parent of children at Montgomery Elementary, one of the schools located in the Grand City sector of the Fairlawn school district, speculates on why Grand City was not as interested in annexation in the years previous to desegregation.

The Grand City school district at that time was full and didn't want to bother taking in new people because this meant new bond levies for building new schools and they didn't want to do that. And, of course, at that time the Grand City school district was segregated so they weren't worrying about white flight or anything else. They had schools for black students and schools for white students. They weren't anticipating busing or anything like that.

Therefore, although legally Grand City could have annexed these areas there was no desire to do so until desegregation. In the years following desegregation, when Grand City decided to exercise its right to annex, Fairlawn residents began to lobby the state legislature
to pass a moratorium on annexation. As the same parent points out, the issue was not limited to Grand City, but was occurring state-wide.

Parent: What happened was the city school districts of Grand City, Lake City, and River City started to say, 'wait a minute. We are losing all our students. We are losing our tax base. It is all going to the suburbs. We now need students and we would like the tax base. This is already in our city limits. We'll just add it to the school district' and they had a right to do that under state law. The moratorium was passed to stop school districts from doing that.

Interviewer: Was the state legislature under pressure from residents like your neighborhood to do that?

Parent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So there are people in those areas that can put political pressure on legislators.


The above suggests that the balance of political power between the cities and suburbs in the state may be heavily tipped toward the latter. Fairlawn was also interested in keeping these areas within their school district boundaries partly because they traditionally provided the margin for operating levies, but also because considerable financial spoils would go to the

Grand City was attempting to go out there and pull these areas back into the Grand City school system to pick up things like the brewery, which brings in about a million bucks a year itself. That would be a plum for them to get. It's a plum for us.

So important was the outcome of the moratorium for Grand City residents threatened with annexation that during the two year moratorium property values in these areas plummeted. Many residents were unable to sell their homes without taking a sizable financial loss until the issue was resolved.

The annexation issue illustrates the complex connections between race and social class and the de facto nature of segregation. The link of real estate values with racial and social class segregation is a complex one which is highlighted by the role of property values in the annexation controversy and the school tours on which real estate agents take prospective home owners. Local folklore has it that affluent newcomers to the Grand City area have several options for "good schools" for their children: All of these options are suburban communities.
What sets Fairlawn apart from Paddington and Bentley, two affluent suburban communities which are bounded on all sides and have settled into a cozy status quo, is its rapidly changing social class configuration. The changes which this growth will bring about could be an opportunity for Fairlawn to more nearly reflect the larger society. On the other hand, Fairlawn could end up with a two-tier school system in which the legitimation of boundaries moves from legitimating the boundaries between Fairlawn and Grand City to legitimating the redistricting of boundaries within the district to create a two-tier school system. Even without a two-tier system the option of tracking within schools creates similar legitimation issues.

Although the connection between such broad policy issues and the principal's legitimation role may seem tenuous indeed, it should be remembered that principals sit in at redistricting meetings, take prospective home owners on tours of their schools, and are asked to speak at community functions in which policy questions are addressed. Although, as we have seen, principals labor under strong role expectations both from their
mediation role within the hierarchy and their occupational and district socialization (i.e. "Fairlawnization"), they may be surprised to find that they have more latitude and more allies than they realize. A conception of "leadership" which includes advocacy and counter-legitimation might be risky, but as we have seen with the literature-based teachers, successful counter-legitimation can be achieved if support is first amassed horizontally among peers and community members.

B. The Legitimation of Social Charters

The anthropological concept of a social charter helps to bridge the distance between a principal's horizontal legitimation role vis-a-vis the immediate school community/school district and its role vis-a-vis the wider society. Institutions in society acquire social charters which confer upon its members certain social positions. Meyer (1970) defines charters as "institutionalized social definitions of an organization's products" (p. 577). These charters, however, are not inherent in social institutions and
organizations but rather must be created and maintained. Charters can be lost either because of a change in membership or a change in the perception of the organization's charter. If an organization's charter loses its legitimacy, it may lose its ability to confer social statuses on its members.

The organization's charter, then, is an attribute of its relation to its environmental context rather than its internal structure. According to Meyer (1970),

Any socializing organization has crucial features which lie largely outside its own structure and which constitute its relationship with its social setting. One such feature—perhaps the most important—is the social definition of the products of the organization. If, for example, everyone knows that a particular school or class of schools produces successful people, and if they know that others—employers, professional gatekeepers—know and accept this, then the school has acquired an invaluable social resource in transforming its products (p. 568)

Not only do elite schools have the capacity to endow students with a certain social capital created by the society's perception of the school's social charter, (i.e. they can offer their students entry into the American middle class occupation structure), but, according to Meyer, the charter has an effect on
students and their interactions within the institution which goes beyond the usual socialization effects of schooling and their resulting cultural capital.

According to Meyer

Interaction between socializers and socializees in these settings is enormously conditioned by the understanding both parties have of the wider standing of the institution in society - what social position it can guarantee its clients in society, or what future it can hold out to them... The more it is widely understood and clearly symbolized that passage through a given school will ensure entry into an elite - and the more this power is seen widely legitimated - the more power the school will have over its students. (p. 570)

Although Meyer focuses on the socializing impact a school's charter has on students, this study is concerned with the role of school administrators in legitimating a school system's social charter for the purpose of social reproduction. In other words, in order for high status parents to increase the likelihood of high status futures for their children, they will opt for a school system with a high status social charter. Therefore, particularly at the elementary level, the principal's legitimation effort is aimed more at the parent than at the child. Kamens
(1981) has also used this broader definition of social charter in his research.

While charters vary among schools, it is also useful to think of the charter as a collective property of educational systems, i.e. decisions about the officially accepted allocating and socializing capacity of institutions. For example, some schools produce elites and some produce nonelites (p. 119).

This does not mean that a school's instructional program itself is unimportant. Individual schools or school systems can lose their social charters. In Fairlawn, unlike many of the well-known private colleges to which Meyer refers, the public school charter cannot be based so heavily on reputation. After all, admissions officers in elite colleges and employers in prestigious firms require more than evidence of graduation from a school system located in an affluent community. ACT/SAT scores, writing ability, extracurricular activities, and other criteria will also be looked at. Principals must reassure parents that these criteria are obtainable in the Fairlawn school system.
The Evolution of Fairlawn's Social Charter

The manner of most gentlemen and noblemen is to house themselves (if they possibly may) in the suburbs of the city, because most commonly, the air being there somewhat at large, the place is healthy, and through the distance from the body of the town, the noise is not much; and so consequently quiet. - John Stow

The above was written at the beginning of the seventeenth century and the city Mr. Stow referred to was London. Although the reasons people move to the suburbs today have changed considerably, the result, though much less pronounced, continues to be one of geographic stratification by social class. The right to choice of residency in America seems such a fundamental right that it goes unquestioned. Unfortunately, however, in America degree of choice tends to be proportional to one's socioeconomic level and, in many cases, one's race. The effects of residential racial segregation on schools has been addressed in many metropolitan areas through busing. Busing, however, fails to address residential segregation itself. Ironically, little attention has
been paid by educators to the most logical arena within which to address the problem: housing policy. A recent New York Times article recounts a recent effort at redressing housing discrimination.

When the full story of the Reagan Administration's housing policies is written, Glastonbury (Connecticut) will be a prime example of what happens if no one is willing to tell a wealthy suburb it must build housing for the poor. In 1980, in the Carter administration, the Justice Department charged Glastonbury with housing discrimination. This upper middle-class town of 27,000, just across the river from Hartford, had rejected two low-income family projects in the late 1970's. Glastonbury is 98% white; Hartford, where the poor were likely to come from, is 60% members of minority groups.

Justice Department civil rights lawyers...had hoped to force Glastonbury to build at least as many low income units as it had rejected - 161. But before they could go to trial, President Reagan's new man, Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds, took control of civil rights in the Justice Department and ordered his lawyers to settle the case.

The settlement Mr. Reynolds approved was so watered down, even Glastonbury officials were amazed. They had expected they would be asked to do much more.

Unlike Glastonbury, Fairlawn, although containing no low-income housing within its boarders, has always had some medium income housing and in recent years has
seen a large number of medium income housing units go up on its western flank. Like Glastonbury though, its residents are concerned that the social capital they purchased along with their homes will be threatened by an influx of low and/or medium income residents.

Social capital in Fairlawn is closely related to economic capital. Because many families choose to locate in Fairlawn due to the reputation of its schools, the value of homes is directly related to the maintenance of the school's social charter. This is particularly true for many of the newer, more transient residents. One parent who lives in Barkley Highland, one of the more affluent neighborhoods, put it this way,

Homeowners are so paranoid about property values in this whole area because most of these people are here for a short time, and they are going to sell their homes and their number one concern is the property values. Virtually all their assets are tied up in their houses.

Property values are so important in Fairlawn that many believe that the failure of a recent levy initiative was defeated by a local opposition movement spearheaded by residents who were angry over the
proposed construction of a bus garage in their neighborhood. When a teacher who was present at a local neighborhood association meeting suggested that they should not let anything interfere with the passage of the levy, their response, in the words of a parent who was present, was,

We'll pull our kids from the public schools and send them to Grand City Academy. We'll send them to a better school anyway, so don't threaten us with poor school quality. Or the other response was that they are just wasting so much money, that they don't need gold plated plumbing fixtures. That is a meaningless threat to us. We have other recourses. The big concern was what it was going to do to their property values to have a bus garage so close to them.

Principal's remarked that it was also not uncommon for local realtors to bring prospective home buyers into the schools to speak with them. Although said somewhat facetiously, the following remark by Bob Carlson, principal of Washington Elementary, suggests the importance of the schools' charters in selling homes in Fairlawn,

You've got to look good. The better you look, the more houses the realtors can sell, the houses that bring in the people that pay the taxes so you can keep doing this.
Unlike its neighbor, Paddington, which was created primarily as a bedroom community, Fairlawn never was a totally exclusive suburb. It was a rural town which evolved into a bedroom community because of its nearness to Grand City. Also, unlike Paddington, which is surrounded by other municipalities, thus ensuring its continued exclusivity, Fairlawn is surrounded by farm land ripe for development. Two principals, Jim Harper and Bob Carlson provide concise summaries of Fairlawn's evolution since the 1960's,

It was an affluent, suburban, small, well-organized school system, with a lot of good people and everybody knew each other and everybody was here to get the job done and it was easy to deal with. The bigger it got the more diverse the population became, which introduced new factors that had to be dealt with.

This used to be a little suburban private school system with a lot of affluent people sending their kids here, and we dealt with them that way and it all worked. Now we're the thirty-sixth largest school district in the state and we've got clean kids and not-so-clean kids, and we've got some black kids and yellow kids and white kids and that has caused changes. Everything is constantly changing and you have to deal with it and you have to adjust to it.
Some of these new factors, such as increased transience among corporate climbers, increasing divorce rates, and broad changes in child-rearing patterns, are unrelated to the influx of medium income residents. However, as we have seen, in recent years, extensive expansion of the Fairlawn school district - although not the city limits - has brought a significant amount of medium-income housing to the district, threatening to economically stratify school's within the district.

Some of the influx came from the implementation of busing in nearby Grand City. However, although Fairlawn did become a recipient of some "white flight" from Grand City, most parents bought homes in Fairlawn school district in order to escape schools which had lost their success-allocating charters, and had either developed failure-allocating charters or some sort of internal tracking system. Parents in Grand City were afraid on two fronts - that their children would not acquire the requisite skills for college entrance and that the school's charter would influence their child's career decisions. Bob Carlson, principal of Washington Elementary School, explains the difference between the
two kinds of learning with the eloquence of the seasoned practitioner.

One of the major factors that started this growth out here is desegregation. A lot of parents wanted to get away from black kids, and then a lot of parents wanted to get away from tough Appalachian kids, so you move out here. Here parents wanted the school to do a good job because, 'I'm gonna send my kid to college and I don't know what he's gonna do or what he's gonna be, but I think it will help if he's challenged and he comes out with some thinking skills and knows how to learn and stuff like that, because learning is good for you because then you can get some jobs that aren't so dependent on'... Now learning means, you've got to learn or you're not gonna be able to make a buck, your not gonna be able to buy a car and have a nice house and a yard. Do you understand the difference?

And then I don't want that kid to learn...Maybe I don't want him to learn that being a plumber is O.K. It isn't O.K. I want my kid to be a lawyer or a doctor... Does this make sense, the difference? Really if you stop to think about it, I think it's not O.K. with a lot of people to have their kid come home in the fifth grade and say, 'Mom, I'm gonna be a carpenter.' 'Oh, my God, are you sure? Daddy wants you to be a lawyer, and then he can have a BMW and a pool. A carpenter? Get your hands dirty? Have grease under your fingernails? It's not a rational thing, but at least there was a thinking process there. I want this for my kid, and you made some judgements, and you made some choices, and that was your major influence.

Now I deal with a lot of parents that are afraid. They're just afraid. They don't know what's happening. I don't want my kid
to be a druggie, and I want my kid to go to
college, and I want him to have a good job,
and I don't have any control over this
anymore, and I'm afraid. I'm frightened.
And I hear that you guys do a nice job, so
I'm here. Now fix my kid, O.K.? And get him
going in the right direction and maybe
everything will be all right.

A Current Dilemma: A Two-Tier School
District or Creative Redistricting.

Parents are concerned about current changes in the
general socioeconomic composition of the Fairlawn
school district, much of which lies in Grand City and
another recently developed community to its west. A
school board member describes the new homes being built
in these newer areas.

Right now the areas in the district which are
growing - which are in Grand City - tend to
be more starter homes and at a little lower
value around the Riverside and Monroe
Elementary Schools area and, we think, in the
northeast area around Fifth Street, out near
the brewery, where we will be building a new
school.

The principal of Monroe Elementary School -
formerly principal at the affluent Howell Elementary
School - describes how the school district has changed.

The school community has changed a great deal
over the years. The type of student we get
now has changed. Socioeconomically and academically we have more of a spectrum of students. You know, when Fairlawn was "Fairlawn", as far as the city limits are concerned — and the school district boundaries and the city boundaries being not totally identical, but pretty much so — it was a different ballgame than now that we have pushed out in many directions and have a wider range of socioeconomic areas. You know, you can buy a seventy thousand dollar home over here. You can't touch that in Fairlawn today.

When I was at Howell, I might have had twenty-five kids involved in the reading improvement program, here I now have sixty kids involved... Howell didn't have as broad a spectrum of socioeconomic levels there, and as a matter of fact we probably even made it more that way by adding the Solarium (a new affluent housing development) to that school. I'd say the Howell elementary community is characterized by the on-the-move, young executive.

What the above reveals is an ongoing change, not only in Fairlawn's social charter, but in the social charters of individual schools as well. Twenty years ago it didn't really matter which Fairlawn elementary school a child attended. (Although Washington Elementary School has always drawn a small contingent of lower-middle class apartment dwellers from the cities eastern fringe, and Piner Elementary School, located in Fairlawn's "Little Appalachia" region has always had a few lower-middle class families from homes
left over from the town's more rural era.) All schools contained a critical mass of students from affluent families. However, as more and more housing developments containing multiple-unit dwellings and "starter homes" go up, the critical mass of affluent students in some schools is disappearing, moving Fairlawn toward a two-tier school system.

It was only well into the study, when trust and rapport had developed that principals would admit that schools were socioeconomically distinct. Although there is general acknowledgement that the district is changing socioeconomically, the fact that schools are not sharing the change equally is seldom acknowledged publicly.

Much of the battle over individual school charters goes on in redistricting meetings. Redistricting is a highly charged issue in Fairlawn because with the increase in school-aged children, many of the original Fairlawn schools with well-established charters must redistrict neighborhoods. Affected parents will have to send their children to schools whose charters are perceived to be at risk. For example, parents from the affluent Solarium development mentioned above had
lobbied at redistricting meetings for allocation to Howell Elementary. Bill Ford, principal of Glen Oak Elementary, describes the importance of redistricting in contributing to or heading off a two-tier school system.

Bill Ford: We are seeing a different type of child out in this area. The old traditional look of Fairlawn is changing. That is, our kids achieving high scores on the achievement tests and publishing those in the paper and so on and so forth. We expected a lot out of our kids and I think at one time our district was homogeneous enough in terms of values and intelligence and all kinds of different factors that we built a curriculum around that. I guess I'm beginning now, as a principal, to question whether that is really meeting our needs today.

Interviewer: Are we beginning to get a kind of two-tier system of schools in Fairlawn? I know Washington is often considered a poorer area. Are Monroe, Riverside and maybe some of the schools under construction becoming second class schools in the district?

Bill Ford: I think so, but I think we can avoid a two-tier system. It will just depend on what the community allows us. I am serving on the attendance area committee next year. There were some attendance areas that did not want those kids in their schools. They didn't want their kids tainted by those children. Now if we get creative when we build schools and change attendance areas to get a good mix of children, then that is going to help down the road. But I can't tell you the resistance we get sometimes from
parents for doing that. They don't want to see that mix of kids. I think it gives them a more realistic slice of life, but I just think there are opponents out there of doing that. They want to keep their pure neighborhood schools.

It should be noted that many of the principals support Bill Ford’s desire for a better socioeconomic mix among Fairlawn’s schools, and many of them support what Bill calls "creative" redistricting in order to achieve it. Affluent parents, however, see things differently. Rather than see the district’s social charter "watered down", they would prefer to maintain intact the social charters of a few individual schools. If the Solarium development’s allocation to Howell Elementary School is any indication, the district’s affluent parents may be getting their wish.

As we shall see, a concern with the loss of a school or district’s social charter in Fairlawn, was not unfounded. The current crisis in the district leading to the defeat of a recent levy initiative, has a great deal to do with ongoing changes in Fairlawn’s social charter.
Fairlawn's charter, then, appears to be evolving toward one in which the former guarantee of entrance into the middle class occupational structure was assured, to one in which allocation to different economic futures will have to occur within the system. This may take place through increased ability grouping and tracking within all schools, or some parents may succeed, through zoning efforts and lobbying for favorable redistricting, in maintaining their schools' charters. The principal's role in sustaining their school's charter is also crucial. Principals may have to project to the larger community the legitimating myth that all of the district's schools share a common charter. At very least, even as some principals acknowledge a changing student population, they must convince parents that the social capital that a Fairlawn school provides is still good currency. Otherwise, the kind of flight that characterized Grand City will begin in Fairlawn. Already more and more residents are thinking about private schools and some are beginning to move further out to Durban, a once sleepy little village which is fast becoming the new "Fairlawn".
Administrative Praxis: Possibilities for De-Legitimation

The previous sections have provided an image of organizational and social reality as a tension system in which structural constraints and opportunities for action are in constant dialogue. A downward exertion of control through the hierarchy co-exists with structures of opportunity which occur in the interstices and on all sides.

In spite of the hypothetical opportunities for action, there is much evidence that principals suffer greatly from not only the tight control exerted on them by the hierarchy and community expectations, but also the need to constantly keep day-to-day, pragmatic decision-making in line with larger goals and district ideologies.

The Mediation of Contradictions and Legitimating Myths

Contradictions may exist between the goals of different organizational levels, between the statuses principals occupy, or as discussed in chapter two, between the fundamental and operative levels of
ideology. For example, Bob Carlson’s objection to segregation is grounded in his own experience as a parent.

All of my kids went through the Fairlawn schools. My oldest kid, who is now in college, wasn’t in a class with a black kid till he got into middle school. I think that’s disadvantaged.

Ann Maxwell, principal of Piner Elementary had a similar experience with one of her children.

My youngest daughter who graduated this year and was in the first gifted class at Washington Elementary and was always a bright child and hit middle school and decided Fairlawn was much too cliquey of a place and she didn’t want anything to do with it. She was president of the student council at her middle school. By the time she hit ninth grade she was a school phobic and hiding in the closet and not going to school because she didn’t want to deal with everything that was there. She ended up going to Ft. Howard School of the Performing Arts in theatre and loved it because she was in downtown Grand City with kids from all over the city and she did beautifully. She left there with a 4.0 average and with the award as the best actress and best director at the theatre school and is a very talented girl who would have suffocated at Fairlawn High School. So, as far as us offering here diversity for our children, we don’t. The alternative high school is the closest we get to it and doesn’t fit everybody.

I look at what our children encounter and it’s certainly not what I would like for them to have as a view of what society is
truly like. That is just not there. My daughter got a good idea about it at Ft. Howard. She loved being downtown. She loved being with kids of all races and socio and economic levels from all kinds of homes and schools and it was great. That was as much a part of what she did as anything. But the time I spent teaching in the inner-city, and I'd look at those children, and they don't have a view of what life is really like either. Because they are so separate, and I'm not sure we're doing a good job of that at any of our schools in the nation. Very few, I would imagine. It would be wonderful to have a school where you could set an environment that would model society and children could really interact with a diversity of children, but I don't see us as a nation doing a good job of that anywhere.

What the above raised for Bob and Ann is a case of status conflict between their parent and principal statuses. As parents they would like to promote a more pluralistic district; As principals they feel they cannot. However, in Paul's case - for Ann it is too soon to tell - conflicts and contradictions are more acutely felt because he has resisted being totally "Fairlawnized". He refuses to fully accept the district's rationalizations that serve to legitimize social relations in the district. As Brown (1978), borrowing on Marx' concept of alienation, puts it,

Like 'primitive man' who must patch together (bricoler) accounts of what goes on around
him (Levi-Strauss, 1967), so the modern worker must make 'myths' ad hoc that reconcile the actual processes of his work with the official rhetoric of the organization.

Bob and Ann are less willing than many principals to engage in mythmaking and thus for them the connecting tissue between district ideology, there individual beliefs, and the processes of their work is tenuous indeed.

At this point it might be helpful to make a distinction between ideology and hegemony. Berlak and Berlak (1983) provide an example of ideology in the context of education.

The meritocratic ideology presents particular forms of work and human preoccupations as more valuable and deserving of greater status and economic reward, and the existing hierarchical social arrangements and enormous discrepancies in wealth and power as normal, legitimate, and fair (p. 271).

Principals, like Bob, can and often do penetrate the ideological nature of many social "facts", and their usefulness as legitimating rhetoric for groups seeking to maintain social advantages. In his above quote, in fact, he was able to turn the very notion of "advantage" on its head, recognizing that the term
"disadvantaged" might be appropriated and used to label not just segregated, inner-city black children, but also their white suburban counterparts. As long as these penetrations remain at the level of ideology or official legitimating rhetoric, they will remain partial penetrations (Willis, 1977). Furthermore, as we have seen, there is little a principal can actually do with such insights, except feel more alienated in her work.

It is at the level of hegemony or lived culture that penetrations might begin to be turned toward the largely unquestioned, socially constructed, structures of organizational life which distort communication and limit action. Williams (1977) distinguishes hegemony from ideology.

Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology,' nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipulative' or 'indoctrination'. It is a whole body of practices and expectations...It is a lived system of meanings and values...which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming.

Such a distinction is not unlike the one Willis (1977) makes between official and pragmatic levels of ideology. At the pragmatic day-to-day level of
organizational life, certain ways of doing things take on a kind of practical rationality. Or, as Brown (1978) asserts, "rationality emerges in interaction, and then is used retrospectively to legitimize what has already taken place or is being enacted." (p.369)

It is, therefore, much easier to critique ideological constructs than to seriously question those lived practices which have taken on the force of common sense. Bob, while penetrating much of the district's legitimizing ideology, defends the structures of practice which contribute to its continued legitimation. Principals, at the pragmatic level will even produce rationalizations for practices they may not feel comfortable with rather than question the rationality of certain aspects of organizational structure which appear to them as social "facts" rather than social constructions. The facticity of certain organizational norms and structures are reinforced among principals in their own informal networks. In the following passage, Bob accepts the district norm of uniformity among schools, and illustrates how principals monitor themselves.
There's got to be a strand of continuity among schools. If there's not a strand of continuity, then somebody is going to make us, O.K.? You're all going to do this alike, because you can't have eight elementary buildings going off in eight directions. You've got to have strands of continuity, because you're all in the same school system, but still you want to maintain some sort of autonomy, and you know each of the buildings is different, and you want it to be that way, and if you can't maintain those strands of continuity through mutual understanding or getting together and dealing with something that is new and that we all have to deal with.... Let's get it done, but if we can get it done basically in the same way then you don't have some supervisor saying, 'now damn it, you're going to do this, this, and this because all of you have to do it to look alike.

The Legitimation Role and Professional Competence

As we have seen, the failure to successfully legitimate Howell Elementary's open classroom approach led to the transfer of the principal and the removal of several teachers from the school.

Bob Carlson has also taken some criticism both within the hierarchy and among his peers for what were seen as "poor decisions". There appears, however, to be a fine line in the district between questioning ideological commitments and organizational goals and
perceived professional incompetence. During a recent state evaluation Frank Bradley and the principal's group had decided to have teachers go through an elaborate and time-consuming process of coding their lesson plans to the graded course of study. Bob, feeling it was making teachers "jump through hoops" had been opposed to this. The plan was implemented in spite of muted protestations by teachers within buildings and on committees. When the principals received their final report from the state department, they were disappointed with it, and a principal's meeting discussion ensued on how to present this report to teachers. Comments among principals at the meeting provide a flavor of this discussion,

Principal 1: What will teachers say after all the work we put them through.

Principal 2: I don't want my staff to read it. I'm going to make it real positive. I'll tell them there's a copy in my office.

Bob Carlson: I think the teachers have a right to have copies of the report. We can't hide it from them.

Principal 2: I'm not hiding it. I'm making it available, but I think it's really important how it's presented.
Frank Bradley: We can't have fifteen different versions here.

Bob Carlson: Why does everyone have to do the same thing? Either hand out the report or make it available.

(Several more minutes of discussion)

Frank Bradley: Bobber, (Bob Carlson) you have to be careful how you handle this. We needn't feel that we need to apologize for the big push we did. Maybe we were in overkill looking back. (After a couple more minutes of discussion) O.K. Here's what I hear us saying. (He summarizes each principal's position.) It will be each principal's decision if you want to give out the report. But stress that there's a copy available and that you don't want to use up the paper.

It should be noted that Bob's attitude toward teachers in the meeting is consistent with the following data from an interview with Bob:

Those teachers out there are professional people with a lot of blue collar responsibilities, such as you will be here at eight o'clock in the morning. You will stay on the job until 3:45. You will take those silly pictures and put the kid's name on the back of it so we can put in...you know? What has that got to do with being a professional person. Some day we're going to wake up and let them function as professional people.

Frank's admonition to Bob during the principal's meeting suggests that he cannot be trusted to present this report in a way that will not make teachers feel
justified in their opposition to coding. The exchange, however, must be seen in the context of two men who were formerly colleagues as principals and who are on friendly terms. The exchange is part of a ritual that has been played out in principal's meetings for years. Bob has, to some extent, taken on a "bad boy" role and his general sense of humor and and his obvious knowledge of the judicious limits of his resistance defuse any real possibility of confrontation. This attitude, while providing an outlet for the contradictions apparent in his job is, however, not without costs. His competence level is generally viewed as a cut below the others and promotions up the hierarchy are unlikely. Professional competence, then, appears to have much to do with how well principals are willing to legitimate the present boundaries of their occupational role.

Conclusion

The Fairlawn school district has been portrayed in this chapter as a political arena in which numerous struggles for legitimacy take place simultaneously. It
should be apparent that legitimacy is a scarce resource and must be constantly won. Principals, because of their location within the organization are at the crossroads of many of these ongoing legitimization struggles. In the words of Frank Bradley, head of the elementary program,

The principals - they understand - the ones that have been through it - been through the system. They understand how to do it, but there is a lot of pressure and stress to make that happen.

Seldom can legitimacy be taken for granted. As we have just seen, the legitimacy of the basal reading program is under attack, the legitimacy of the school organization and its social charter is threatened, and at every turn the legitimacy of the principal's authority is being tested by teachers and parents.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Principals, because of their location in the school district hierarchy and their direct community contact, have traditionally performed a complex role of legitimation among organizational stakeholders. In the last twenty-five years, with the increased politization of education, the legitimation role - and prospects for delegitimation - have taken on increased significance. Although political models are increasingly being employed in studies of school organizations, they tend to analyze strategies and tactics used by organizational members at the point of open contention.

This study, although acknowledging that conflict resolution is important, has shown that much of the principal's work involves managing organizational meaning in such a way that conflict becomes invisible or is reinterpreted. This mediation role requires

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constant attention to the legitimation of current definitions of the organization and its subunits. It also suggests linkages to social reproduction theory, in showing how principals sustain legitimating myths that mediate contradictions between the meritocratic ideology of schooling and its alleged role in sustaining social inequality.

As chapter five has made apparent, the legitimation role of the principal is complex and pervasive. It is complex because legitimation requirements are often contradictory and originate in different organizational, community, and social sectors. It is pervasive because nearly every interaction a principal has is tied up in some way with legitimation. The ethnographic data in chapter five also suggests that while principals tend to use their legitimation role in the service of organizational and social stability, under some circumstances principals may either initiate or ally themselves with efforts to delegitimate organizational policies.
The Fairlawn School District is far from a typical affluent suburb. In a period of declining enrollments in many suburban communities, Fairlawn can barely keep up with enrollments. Although there is nothing resembling poverty in Fairlawn, the district's growth includes pockets of both ostentatious affluence, and medium-income dwellings.

For this reason Fairlawn represents a challenge theoretically. A more stable and uniformly affluent suburb or a cluster of inner-city schools might have provided a more elegant fit with social reproduction theory. The danger in such neat cases, however, is the likelihood of producing a deterministic structural account of social reproduction which ignores the cultural level at which social rules emerge through the interactions of social actors pursuing diverse and often contradictory goals. In other words, it is necessary, in the words of Willis (1977), "to give the social agents involved some meaningful scope for viewing, inhabiting, and constructing their own world in a way which is recognizably human and not
theoretically reductive" (p. 172). Because Fairlawn does not represent an "ideal type" affluent community, it provides opportunities for a more subtle and perhaps less deterministic extension of social reproduction theory.

It would be a mistake, for example, to view Fairlawn's norm of uniformity in the instructional program as reflecting external structural conditions. The reasons for caution among Fairlawn's administrators are not to be found in structural explanations but rather in the district's own failure to successfully legitimate a previous experiment with non-graded, open classroom instruction. After all, similarly innovative schools have survived in other nearby suburbs for reasons unrelated to social structural considerations.

The failure to successfully legitimate the innovative instructional program at Howell Elementary had repercussions for future instructional innovations, namely literature-based reading instruction. In this way district norms are created, legitimated, and challenged by the community and organizational members. Outcomes are as much a product of social interaction as
they are of social structural constraints on human agents.

The mix of the structural and the social interactive in social reality is brought together in the mediation model (reproduced below) discussed in chapter two. Conflict and contradiction are mediated at several different levels. They are mediated cognitively, as well as, in space and time.

**Mediation Model**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediation involves</th>
<th>Coherence achieved by</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Def. 1 - Intervention between conflicting parties or viewpoints.</td>
<td>Resolving conflicts at the point of open contention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Def. 2 - Social interchange across spacial and temporal gaps.</td>
<td>Resolving social and organizational contradictions vertically, horizontally, and across time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Def. 3 - The cognitive task of achieving congruence between conflicting dimensions within ideology.</td>
<td>Resolving contradictions between the fundamental and operative dimensions of ideology.</td>
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The mediation model can be applied to specific policy areas to better understand what is involved in
the policy's legitimation. Of course, such an understanding also has implications for delegitimation or counter-legitimation. The following are examples of the model's application to legitimation issues in the study.

Literature-based Reading Instruction

Definition 1  As the literature vs. basal readers debate moved onto the committee level it came into open contention. Kathy Martin was placed on this committee by Frank Bradley, who as chair would mediate the conflict.

Definition 2  Pro-lit principals attempt to promote literature among staff. Pro-basal principals attempt to redefine literature-based as literature-supplemented.

Definition 3  Pro-basal principals attempt to reconcile the fundamental belief in the use of the more motivational, whole language approach that literature represents while requiring a reading program which is more amenable to teacher accountability. The mediatory myth which resolves these contradictions is the belief that the district doesn't "go off the deep end" on innovations and
that regardless of method effectively meets the needs of each individual child.

Community and School Social Charters

Definition #1 Principals mediate at redistricting meetings among parents who are concerned that individual schools retain their elite status.

Definition #2 Principals reassure parents that their school's social charter has not changed, while helping teachers accept and cope with a less homogeneous student population. In other words, elite charters must be legitimated to parents while a changing charter is legitimated to teachers.

Definition #3 A new slogan, "working with kids where they are," has appeared among principals and teachers. Principals are still struggling to develop a legitimating myth that mediates the need to sustain an elite charter while legitimating the lowering of grade level standards among teachers.

Desegregation and District Boundaries

Definition #1 Except for the annexation conflict (which principals did not mediate) there was no open contention.

Definition #2 The need to sustain the legitimacy of desegregation as a non-issue in Fair-
lawn, because its boundaries insulate it from participation.

Definition #3 That minorities cannot afford to live in Fairlawn mediates the desirability of pluralism and integration and the lack of pluralism and integration in most of Fairlawn's schools.

Nothing so grand as a theoretical synthesis of the macro-structural and micro levels of social analysis is suggested here. The intent of the mediation model is twofold: to help make visible to the administrator those policies that have been defined as non-issues and to provide a way for administrators to identify mediating myths in order to reflect on the social contradictions they help to dissolve.

Implications for Greater Organizational Effectiveness.

To address the organizational effectiveness concept without relating it to broader social concerns may seem to contradict the critical perspective used in this study. Nevertheless, I believe it can be shown that this study's description of the legitimation role of principals can make a valuable contribution to the strengthening of weak professional cultures in schools which ultimately result in alienated practice and are dysfunctional for organizations. In this sense, de-legitimation merges with a broader literature which addresses organizational change. As Sarason (1982) has
pointed out, certain "regularities" of schooling have become so tightly legitimated that it is difficult for educators to conceive of alternatives. A more recent literature which views schools as workplaces stresses that many of these regularies result not only in poor education, but also make it impossible to create a professional school culture in which educators can thrive (Lieberman, 1988). Critical, non-alienated practice requires a professional culture in schools conducive to reflection not only on practice, but on the social conditions within which practice is carried on.

For example, with two new principals and widespread interest among teachers in instructional innovation, Fairlawn's norm of instructional uniformity may be disfunctional. The two new principals and many teachers may feel stifled by a norm which sets limits to innovative practices. Letting schools "go their own way" may mean giving up some control and inviting controversy among parents, but it may go a long way toward providing opportunities for professional renewal for some teachers and principals without requiring everyone to go alone for the ride.
For similar reasons, mediatory myths which resolve the contradictions between fundamental and operative dimensions of ideology may or may not be disfunctional for the organization. Those organizational members who are less willing or able to mediate contradictions within ideology often become more alienated in their work. Abravanel describes the plight of these members.

For many, the work of 'ideological membership' in an organization is part of the mundane, the obvious and the assumed. Contradictions are not recognized. In such cases a myth that encompasses the fundamental and operative has effectively mediated contradictions. The individual then enacts merely practiced beliefs. He lives in a simple pre-ideological, myth-mediated, and unproblematical world. On the other hand, members who recognize contradictions...must carry on a recurring struggle... (Abravanel, 1983, p.285)

As in the case of Bob Carlson, this recurring struggle ultimately leads to subtle forms of resistance/accommodation to district policies. Instead of being rewarded for his penetrations into organizational contradictions, Bob is sometimes seen as an unenthusiastic legitimato. Few districts could tolerate total non-commitment among principals and survive. However, it is not that Bob Carlson and Ann
Maxwell are not committed to the district. They simply have a different vision of what the district could become. They embrace the district and are intensely loyal to it, but the tensions of only partially mediated contradictions are part of their professional life. For Bob, it is often expressed through sarcastic humor; for Carol, it is perhaps expressed through her silence at administrator meetings.

Implications for Practice

Current definitions of occupational role which focus the attention of school administrators on technical means rather than social ends have their origins in Taylorism and the scientific management movement (Callahan, 1962) as well as, in the parallel movement to de-politicize school administration (Boyd, 1978). Attention to a legitimation role for administrators refocuses attention on the political nature of administration and the ways in which social ends are achieved through the day-to-day work of practitioners. If the question — what am I legitimating and in whose interest? — were asked before
making decisions, administrative decision-making would have to be approached in a very different manner.

There is much interest currently in the ways practitioners reflect on practice (Schon, 1983; Argyris, 1985). Although these models stress the importance of reflecting on practitioner values and underlying assumptions (or "espoused theory" vs. "theory-in-use") there is little emphasis on how legitimating myths help to conceal the gap between theory and practice. Critical reflection on practice requires attention to occupational roles that cut across the role constellation of practitioners. The critical role analysis which the legitimation role provides leads to questions that take practitioners out of the technical, means-oriented, de-politicized, and myth-mediated world they have inherited.

Such critical reflection, however, is constrained by the organization constraints under which school practitioners labor. These constraints have been addressed at some length with regard to teachers (Lieberman, 1987). The legitimation campaign around the issue of literature-based reading instruction suggests, however, that teachers may be in a stronger
position than principals to engage in critical reflection and more proactive forms of legitimation and delegitimation. Principals appear to be more constrained than teachers because of the mediation requirements of their pivotal location in the organization, their relative isolation from the "inner circle" of both teaching staff and central office, and their lack of a large peer group. In addition, stringent screening and selection procedures demand a closer identification with district ideology.

Critical reflection raises questions like the following: Is an effective administration one which successfully maintains the social and organizational status quo or one that challenges it? What does it mean to be a leader in the Fairlawn school district? It is very possible that those who inhabit what Abravanel calls a "myth-mediated world" are least likely to provide the vision which a school district needs in order to flourish. For example, there are many examples of suburban communities that have proactively racially integrated themselves. In Oak Park, Illinois, an affluent neighborhood in Chicago, the city guaranteed to make up the difference if integration ied
to lowered property values. With this assurance people stayed, and today Oak Park is a model intergrated community.

Although largely unreported by the media, the last few years have seen the most massive redistribution of wealth in recent American history. In 1976 the wealthiest one percent of America's families owned 19.2 percent of the nation's total wealth. By 1983, those at this one percent tip of our economy owned 34.3 percent of our wealth, the same percent as before the depression. "In a historical blink, Washington has wiped out the struggles of half a century, altering the rules governing taxes, spending, and interest to move an unprecedented share of America's money up the economic ladder. Today the top one percent of Americans possess more net wealth than the bottom 90 percent (DeMarco & Hightower, 1988, p. 33).

There is no reason why in communities like Fairlawn, a commitment to excellence should necessitate a lack of commitment to equality. Although traditionally the dual concerns of equality and excellence have formed the subtext of most educational writing, in the current politically conservative
climate most research, particularly in the field of educational administration, has focused on issues of excellence. Seldom in the currently fashionable "effective schools literature", mired as it is in meritocratic ideology, is the relationship of schools to the division of labor addressed, nor is effectiveness defined as promoting social equality. With the exception of studies of the role of school administrators in desegregation and school finance, there has been little concern in the field of educational administration for the fostering of social equality. Yet it is the school administrator who must preside over social-class-based tracking systems and success and failure-allocating social charters.

The influence of university coursework on the literature-based instruction movement is a rare indication of effective research diffusion. Researchers in educational administration, in paying scant attention to issues of inequality may be sending a conservative message to practitioners in the field.
Advocacy and Excellence

As noted in chapter five, principals found that the demands of their mediation role (whether mediating open conflict, mediating contradictions in order to ward of potential conflicts, or mediating contradictions to achieve a coherent professional ideology) created stress and took time away from "working with kids and teachers." Furthermore, the struggle to maintain organizational stability and ideological coherence, impedes the development of critical thought. Thus, principals find that they must work increasingly long hours in order to comply successfully with the dual demands of providing children with a sound educational experience and achieving organizational stability through successful mediation.

What would happen if principals viewed themselves less as public servants who serve a specific population, than as public servants who serve the broader public interest. What if Bob Carlson were to "go public" with his views concerning desegregation and teacher autonomy, and what if he were to link these
concerns with educational excellence? Would he bring down upon him the wrath of the community and the central office? Would he be tolerated as an outspoken, but likable iconoclast? These questions raise a larger one concerning the occupational role of principals: How can principals promote the best education possible for children within the constraints of structural inequality, while at the same time reorient their professional role toward one of advocacy of policies that seek to change it?

Conclusion: Contradictions Within Ideology and Possibilities for Social Change.

Principals are not the only ones who employ mediatory myths to mediate the tension between fundamental and operative ideologies. Parents, too, must make sense of the coexistence of the fundamental American belief in social equality and pluralism with the elitist and segregated reality of their schools and community. There is a need in future studies to ascertain just how much tension exists within parent
ideology. Although not a focus of the study, many of Fairlawn's parents' attitudes seemed to reveal that the elitism of the district was not a result of ideological preference on the part of the parents, but rather the result of pragmatic considerations linked to society's division of labor. Good schools meant schools with success-allocation social charters. Moving to Grand City meant buying a home in the suburbs where property values are most likely to remain stable or appreciate. A vicious circle of pragmatic considerations force affluent and middle class parents with school-aged children into exclusive communities where the likelihood of passing their advantages to their children is greatest. In this way schooling forms only a single strand - albeit an important one - in the web of social reproduction.

The same exclusivity can be achieved within schools through ability grouping and tracking. Such is the case in many schools in Grand City. These sorting mechanisms are, however, coming under increasing attack as it becomes strikingly clear which ethnic, racial, and social class groups are moving along success-allocation tracks (see Oakes, 1985). It is
becoming more difficult for the schools to legitimate forms of tracking within schools and classrooms, and pressure is being applied both by educators and parent groups to eliminate it. Because research on the pedagogical merits of ability grouping remains inconclusive (Slavin, 1987), the pressure comes from a normative desire to bring the fundamental and operative levels of the American ideal of social equality closer together.

It is, of course, much more difficult for administrators to delegitimate tracking when it occurs between communities than when it occurs within schools. However this study provides evidence that there is sufficient tension among both parents and administrators between fundamental and operative levels of ideology to create the conditions for change. Many parents who internalized the rhetoric of equality during the 1960’s and 1970’s are frustrated by their lack of good options. This study suggests that a challenge by school principals to those legitimating myths which sustain unequal social relations may run the risk of undermining their own legitimacy within the district’s authority structure, but might ultimately provide the
kind of leadership that parents who desire more democratic educational options are seeking.
References


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