
TEACHER AUTONOMY:
GENERATING THEORY FROM
THREE CASE STUDIES

Jeffrey Leiter
University of Michigan

August 1977

CRSO Working Paper #162

Copies available through:
Center for Research on
Social Organization
University of Michigan
330 Packard Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Teacher Autonomy:

Generating Theory from Three Case Studies

Jeffrey Leiter

Department of Sociology

University of Michigan

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago, Illinois, September 6, 1977.

Most sociologists have accepted the Weberian conceptualization of organizations as artificial constructs with which to marshal available means in pursuit of a set of goals. The goals are taken as given, and the problem for the organization is establishing structures through which the means or resources can be efficiently used. The organizational resources include the energy, skills, and knowledge of the people who work in the organization. These must be interrelated with tools and raw materials. In order to achieve the desired structured relationships of these factors, roles are designated to which individuals can be fitted. Individuals chosen to occupy a role are, thus, denied autonomy by virtue of the organizational need to structure the interrelationships of roles and other factors. A fundamental corollary of the Weberian conceptualization of organizations, therefore, is that organizations place limits on the behavior of individuals who work in them (Hall, 1975).

Individual autonomy means freedom to pursue the goals of one's choice by means of one's choice. As such, complete individual autonomy is incompatible with the structuring of organizational resources for the pursuit of organizational goals. In fact, as society relies increasingly on organizations, organizational constraints on individual autonomy mount. While limits on autonomy are clearly necessary in organizations, they alter the work experience in what for many people are undesirable ways. Blauner (1964) has shown that alienation results from infringements on freedom at work. Coleman (1974) has argued that power in our society rests too much with organizations at the expense of individuals. Both he and Hirschman (1970) have suggested ways in which individuals can reassert their power. Individual autonomy, thus, represents the balance between the need to structure and discipline organizational members and the success of these members in pursuing personal goals.

An organization attempts to shape individual behavior by the aspect of its structure known as the control system. The control system may include the hierarchy of authority, supervision of work, formalized rules, standardized procedures, rewards and punishments, and the analysis of production records. One component of control is the issuing of directives by superordinates to subordinates. Information about what is to be done flows "down" the hierarchy. The second component is the securing of information by superordinates about what subordinates are doing. Information about what has been done flows "up" the hierarchy. From the point of view of the superordinate, these two dimensions are integrally linked. Information about subordinate performance shapes the directives given which in turn induce behavior about which more information is gathered.

Organizational control impinges on individual autonomy in proportion to its strength, elaboration, and comprehensiveness. The more control, the less autonomy. Individuals, however, may not experience organizational control and their own autonomy just as the control system shapes them. This paper focusses on the ways individuals experience organizational control. It, therefore, takes individual perceptions of their autonomy as problematic and tries to suggest processes which help determine these perceptions in the context of different levels and modes of organizational control.

While the Weberian approach to the study of organizations takes the goals or directions of an organization as given, for many organizations this is not an accurate portrayal. An alternative to the Weberian perspective may be conceptualized in terms of a competition of claims on the organization in question, specifically on its goals or direction. Claims may be made by the manager and owners of the organization, its employees, its clients or consumers, those who supply it with important inputs or materials, and those who regulate its behavior. Where the competition of claims is intense, the design of efficient operations becomes problematic. Operations which are efficient in the pursuit of one goal may be quite counterproductive

in the pursuit of another goal. Likewise, the design and implementation of control over workers becomes problematic. Modes of control which should assure efficiency of one type may produce inefficiency of another type.

Where organizational goals are unambiguous, as in the Weberian perspective, the control system can be expected to make strong and clear demands on individuals, thus, limiting their autonomy. The implications of such limits for individual perceptions of autonomy are unclear. They may depend on the degree of congruence between organizational and individual goals. Moreover, clear organizational demands may eliminate anxiety and frustration or cause boredom and stagnation, leading to different worker perceptions of the work setting. In a parallel fashion, goal ambiguity arising from a competition of claims can reasonably be expected to weaken the effect of the control system on workers and make demands unclear. One cannot know, however, whether such weakness and lack of clarity in demands will be perceived as liberating and facilitating of individual goal pursuit or as constraining, frustrating, and anxiety producing.

The distinction between organizations best described and analyzed under the Weberian perspective and those best treated under the competition of claims perspective is useful in examining control and perceptions of autonomy in schools. While larger and larger numbers of schools face diverse claims, the intensity of the claims varies from school to school, and some schools are undoubtedly not subject to such demands. Important claimants in the environments of many schools include parent and community groups, state legislatures, teacher organizations, district administrators, boards of education, and the courts. Their claims are represented by movements such as those for desegregation, decentralization, a return to basics, accountability, and economization.

One symptom of the unresolved competition of claims on schools for control is the dispute over the impact schools should have on students. Educators debate the relative merits of stressing academic

achievement and positive self-image. Given the lack of consensus on this question, fundamental to planning school programs, schools are hard put to measure their level of success (Lortie, 1969). This makes it difficult to distinguish "good" teachers from "bad" teachers unless criteria for good teacher performance are injected in some other way. Without such distinctions, control over teachers is likely to be attenuated, undifferentiated or arbitrary.

When teachers argue that they are professionals, they are making an important claim for control of schools. Acknowledged professionals, working in organizations, such as doctors in hospitals, have been able to negotiate severe limits on the control to which they are subject by others. This usually is based on the profession's management of entry into the occupation and its success in defining the knowledge on which professional performance is based as so esoteric that nonprofessionals cannot evaluate professional performance. Some other occupations, including teaching, nursing, and social work claim similar levels of autonomy in the organizations where they work but have not gained the same level of control. They are subject to hierarchical as well as collegial control. The individual autonomy of such semiprofessionals is an important occupational and organizational issue. This is less true for nonprofessional occupations where aspirations for autonomy are lower and for full professions where these aspirations are fulfilled.

Consistent with expectations that worker perceptions of autonomy will be influenced by levels of goal ambiguity and the consequent coherence of control, teacher perceptions of autonomy may vary with the nature of competing claims, facing their schools. Schools, therefore, provide a setting in which to examine variations in perceptions of autonomy caused by control structures of different strengths, making demands of different degrees of clarity, and operating through different modes.

The analysis of this paper is based on three intensive case studies of junior high and middle schools in Southeastern Michigan. The data, collected in each school over a two week period, are primarily observational notes on the interactions and activities of

teachers which took place largely in the teachers' lounges and lunch-rooms and on interviews with selected school personnel, including administrators, union officials, and teachers who knew a lot of the school lore and rumor. The concurrent development of teacher and administrator questionnaires for later use led to the collection of pretest questionnaire data from all willing teachers and administrators at the three schools. Teacher response rates were near 70 percent. Changes made as the instruments were refined make these questionnaire data somewhat incomparable. These questionnaire data are used to raise questions, but the observational data are relied upon for answers to these questions.

The schools are chosen to vary with regard to the socio-economic characteristics of the communities they serve because of expectations that the nature of the school environment would have a substantial effect on the type and number of claims made on the school. While this was important, many other factors seemed to influence the nature and level of teacher autonomy in these schools even more. Table 1 presents information about the socio-economic character of the communities and the school districts, and the structure of these schools.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

The information presented in Table 1 shows that the three intensive study schools vary on a number of characteristics, including their structures, socioeconomic environments, and school district types. Examining a variety of types of schools is some assurance, in the absence of prior information about control systems, that the analysis will encounter different modes of control and a range of teacher autonomy.¹

Control Imposed and Autonomy Perceived

Besides differing in the ways described in Table 1, the three schools vary with respect to the methods by which and the extent to which teachers are controlled. The methods used include both the

Table 1: Characteristics of Three Intensive Study Schools

	<u>Village School</u>	<u>Ring School</u>	<u>City School</u>
<u>School Size/Structure</u>			
students	540	985	970
teachers	32	42	38
administrators	2	2 (+ 10 department heads)	4 (including 2 unit heads)
<u>Community Type</u>			
	town and surrounding rural area	working class area on fringe of suburban ring	area of residences and light industry in central city
<u>School District</u>			
type	consolidated	consolidated	decentralized
junior high and middle schools in district	1	2	55
teacher organization	NEA	NEA	AFT

gathering of information about teacher performance and the dissemination of directives to teachers about desirable behavior.

Village School: The Upward Flow of Information

The principal of Village School has instituted a series of information gathering techniques. These include mandatory lesson plans with the format prescribed in terms of Performance-based Objectives (PBO's), the revision and rewriting of curricula in terms of PBO's, and careful analysis of results from the state educational assessment program test. (Given annually to all fourth and seventh graders in the state, this test also is derived from PBO's.) The principal, consistent with his interest in the movement to make components of the education system more accountable for their performance, also talks of collecting samples of graded homework papers from his teachers and of unifying final examinations within each curriculum area, using PBO's as the basis for the examination questions. Moreover, he has emphasized classroom observation to an extent uncommon in the district, sometimes observing teachers throughout an entire unit of instruction. The purpose of this elaborate observation seems to be gaining acquaintance with classroom activity. Thus, substantial amounts of information flow to the principal.

There is no corresponding downward flow of directives from the principal to teachers. For example, he does not follow periods of classroom observation with unusually comprehensive formal evaluations of the teachers he has observed. Rules and procedures are not plentiful, especially in comparison to Ring School where they are an important mode of control. Rewards and punishments are not consciously manipulated to encourage certain teacher behavior.

The teachers at Village School do not dispute the validity of the principal's goals in reworking much of the instructional program in terms of learning objectives for which measures of achievement can be obtained, nor his efforts to familiarize himself with their classrooms. They feel very uneasy, however, with the collection of information

about their teaching and about the learning of their students. They are uncertain about the way in which the principal will use the information and fear that he may hold them accountable for the learning of their students. On the other hand, the principal has not yet proven himself as a staunch protector of teachers' prerogatives and a defender of their performance. He has failed to support either the teachers or the school board in a recent attack by the board on one teacher and an effort by the board to intervene in one department's instructional decisions.

Ring School: The Downward Flow of Directives

At Ring School, teachers are subject to substantial control by the administration. While control efforts do not center on the classroom in the same way as at Village School, they pervade many other areas of decision making. Rules about punctuality are strictly enforced. Teachers who arrive late to school are promptly summoned to the principal's office and reprimanded. The administrators regard the evaluation of teachers as an important process. They try hard to clarify and emphasize the school's concern with deportment and respect for authority especially to probationary teachers. Teachers who have trouble controlling their students are "worked with" to improve their performance. Teachers have been dismissed for betraying a character inconsistent with the moral values of the school, such as sexual indiscretion. Finally, teachers are differentiated explicitly on the basis of their willingness to make extra efforts for the school and students, such as by staying after school to help with activities, of which athletic activities are the most emphasized. Teachers who "go the extra mile" are often rewarded by jobs which carry extra pay, by effusive thanks over the public address system, by being less frequently observed in their classrooms, and by a special tolerance on the part of administrators for occasional violations of school rules. Beyond these specific ways in which the control system at Ring School works, conversation among teachers and administrators indicates that

the principal of the school exerts such a strong influence that the school's philosophy and practice reflect his own personal philosophy and behavior to an extraordinary degree. It is very hard to find even small pockets in the school where teaching methods and beliefs do not coincide with those of the principal.

While teachers receive extensive guidance, from rules to the principal's example, about appropriate behavior, there is little emphasis at Ring School on the collection of information. Performance-based objectives are not well developed. Classroom observation is done pro forma. Standardized test results are little analyzed. Administrators indicate that they know fairly well what is going on in classrooms without making special efforts to collect information.

City School: A Control Vacuum

At City School, control over teachers seems weak. The principal's time is allocated largely to working with students having behavior problems and with their parents. This leaves him little time for work on the curriculum, for discussing school problems and seeking solutions, and for such control activities as classroom observation. The principal is further occupied by the new demands of the federal court supervising school desegregation for the implementation of comprehensive new programs in counselling, reading, and discipline. The new programs and the attendant voluminous record keeping procedures require large time commitments by the school administration. Administrative control over teachers is further weakened by recent court-mandated changes in middle schools from departmental to unit structure. At City School this has meant replacing a structure based on seven departments with one based on two units. While department heads were only half-time administrators and unit heads are almost full-time administrators, there has been a net loss in time committed to administration at this intermediate level of the school hierarchy. Moreover, the effectiveness of the unit heads as supervisors of teachers

is somewhat problematic because the unit heads lack subject-matter expertise in the curricular areas of most of the teachers they supervise. The weakness of control at City School may be summarized by an extraordinary case where a teacher was absent for almost the entire day before it was realized and supervision for his students was arranged.

The principal and assistant principal do issue directives to teachers, but these are very general and, thus, allow teachers considerable discretion in adapting. For example, teachers were asked to write course outlines or syllabi for the courses they teach. The specifications for this task, however, were left to the individual teacher. The principal, it appeared, merely wanted some description he could show to inquisitive or complaining parents. He did not require information which he would use for control purposes. How different from Village School where the information-gathering principal has specified the exact format and coverage of such teacher reports as lesson plans. The gathering of precise information and the issuing of exact directives at City School is left to the unit heads whose number and expertise is insufficient to impose much control on the teachers.

Given these descriptions of the control to which teachers at the three schools are subject, the control at City School would appear to be weak and comparatively weaker than that at Ring and Village Schools. Since the methods of control at Ring and Village Schools are quite different, it is difficult to say at which school control is stronger. Assuming for the moment that teachers experience autonomy, that is control over decisions, in inverse relationship to the amount of control to which they are subject, the teachers at City School would be expected to report substantial and greater autonomy than those at the other two schools. Teacher reports of autonomy at Ring and Village Schools would be expected to be low absolutely and relative to the level at City School. Whether perceived autonomy will be greater at Ring or Village School cannot be predicted.

Teachers at all three schools were asked who makes the final decision in twenty-eight areas, including classroom organization and pedagogy, their personal behavior, and coordination within the school. Their responses were scored ordinally from (1) "completely by me" to (4) "completely by others." The mean reports for each school on each decision were computed as an indication of the extent of teacher autonomy at the school. The amount of autonomy differed significantly among the three schools on thirteen of the twenty-eight decisions.²

Table 2 reports the mean perceived autonomy for the three schools on these thirteen decisions. It allows assessing the absolute levels

[Insert Table 2 Here]

of reported autonomy and the relative levels comparing the schools with each other. Teachers at Village School exercise substantial autonomy (i.e., mean less than 2.00) on four of these thirteen decisions. Their reported level of autonomy exceeds that of the teachers at the other two schools on only three decisions. Their autonomy, such as it is, is concentrated in the area of their personal behavior. While teachers at none of the three schools report a high level of autonomy on coordination decisions, teachers at Village School report a relatively low level of autonomy on classroom decisions as well. These findings are consistent with expectations derived from the earlier description of the control system at Village School. The principal's efforts are concentrated on control activities typical of contemporary management techniques, such as the analysis of production records, and indeed are focussed on the control of teacher performance in the classroom.

Teachers at Ring School report substantial autonomy on eight decisions. Moreover, they report greater autonomy than do their counterparts at the other two schools on five decisions. The autonomy of these teachers, while not extending into the area of school coordination, includes both classroom and personal behavior decisions. Particularly noteworthy is the autonomy Ring School teachers feel they have with regard to their behavior or life-style outside of school.

Table 2: Mean Self-reported Autonomy on Three Types of Decisions
at Three Schools^{1,2}

	Ring ³ <u>School</u>	City ³ <u>School</u>	Village ³ <u>School</u>
<u>Decisions</u>			
Classroom decisions			
what topics to cover	2.47	1.81	2.20
what grading system to use on class assignments	1.20	1.40	2.20
when to test students on classwork	1.41	1.30	2.00
which outside speakers and materials to use (amount and kind of homework)	1.50 (1.13)	2.07 (1.47)	2.10 (1.27)
Personal behavior decisions			
whether teacher lives in the school district	1.07	1.53	1.00
whether teacher participates in student activities	1.47	1.52	2.22
whether teacher leaves school in non-class hours (what dress is appropriate for teacher)	3.71 (1.76)	3.14 (1.37)	2.50 (1.27)
[whether teacher can smoke in school]	[2.40]	[1.97]	[2.50]
[what behavior or life style is appropriate outside school]	[1.13]	[1.38]	[1.64]
Coordinating decisions			
nature of hall duties	3.52	3.03	3.60
when to file lesson plans	2.93	2.11	3.48

¹Means are reported only for those decisions where highest mean differed significantly from the lowest mean. The significance of differences was assessed by two methods: (A) Two-tailed t-test probabilities for the difference of means less than or equal to 0.05; and (B) magnitude of the difference between the means greater than or equal to 0.5, half the interval between two adjacent responses. Decisions in parentheses differ by A but not by B. Decisions in brackets differ by B but not by A. Decisions in neither parentheses nor brackets differ by both tests.

Table 2 (continued)

²The question posed with respect to each of these and fifteen other decisions for which there were not significant differences by either A or B (six classroom decisions, five personal behavior decisions, and four coordinating decisions) was:

Thinking about yourself, is the final decision in this matter made

- (1) completely by you?
- (2) mostly by you?
- (3) mostly not by you?
- (4) not at all by you?

The means reported in the table were computed using the numerical values shown to the left of the responses.

³N for Village School was usually about 10, for Ring about 15, and for City about 30.

This is surprising because considerable emphasis is placed by the school on behavior consistent with strict moral standards. All in all, the teachers at Ring School report much more autonomy than might have been expected given the strength and pervasiveness of the control system to which they are subject.

Finally, the teachers at City School report substantial autonomy on eight decisions and the greatest autonomy compared to the other two schools on five items. From these summary results City School resembles Ring School. Recall, however, that the control imposed on City School teachers is much weaker than that imposed on Ring School teachers. It is surprising, therefore, that teachers at City School report no more autonomy than their counterparts at Ring School. In particular, perceived classroom autonomy at City School is greater than at Ring School on only two of five decisions, even though classroom control at City School has been considerably weakened by the replacement of departmental by unit organization.

Examining these data in the context of the level of control imposed suggests several questions: Under what circumstances is strong and pervasive control not the cause of perceptions of little individual autonomy but rather the correlate of perceptions of great autonomy? In fact, can strong control cause perceptions of great autonomy? Under what circumstances is weak control not accompanied by feelings of substantial autonomy? What are the circumstances under which strong control leads as expected to perceptions of low autonomy? How do these circumstances differ from those where control and autonomy perceptions do not covary as expected? Finally, is there a perspective which makes for understanding control imposed and autonomy perceived throughout the ranges of each?

Explanatory Approaches

Possible answers to these questions will be drawn from the consideration of each of the three schools. Each school presents its own

problem for analysis and suggests a different explanatory approach. After arguing the plausibility of the three approaches, their common threads will be drawn together.

The Manufacture of Consensus

For Ring School, the problem is to explain the coexistence of effective control over teacher behavior and teacher perceptions of substantial autonomy. A large part of the explanation derives from the pervasiveness of a uniform ideology about teaching and learning at this school. This ideology defines goals for the entire school community. Standards for excellence or virtue are constructed in terms of these goals. Behavior consistent with these standards is rewarded and behavior inconsistent with them is sanctioned.

While such traditional values as discipline, respect, and loyalty are quite important at Ring School, the ideology emphasizes still more the centrality of effort for the development of one's potential. The principal points to the inculcation of the value of effort in students as the core of his philosophy of education. For teachers as well as students virtue is defined in terms of effort rather than academic or other kinds of excellence. The principal explains that he believes students can best be induced to make the effort needed to reach their own potentials by the example of the hard work of their teachers. This definition of good teaching is exemplified in the language used by administrators and teachers to describe teachers. The most common distinction is between "strong" and "weak" teachers. Strong teachers are those who work long hours, make sacrifices, such as volunteering for extra duties even when receiving no extra compensation, overcoming adversity, and in general seeking ways to serve the needs of the school and its students in ways beyond the normal requirements of their job. Strong teachers are those who "go the extra mile." Weak teachers, on the other hand, are those who work only the contractually prescribed hours, insist on minimal standards for their work, "hide" behind the contract and the union, and

do not volunteer for extra duties.

The pervasiveness of this ideology can be explained by the modes through which it is disseminated. Important among these is the model provided by competitive athletics. Great stress is placed on athletics at Ring School. The athletic teams are cited by teachers and administrators as examples of discipline, dedication, self-sacrifice, and above all effort. One administrator pointed out that student-athletes must apply themselves doubly hard because they have responsibilities both to their teams and to their studies. Coaches also are cited for the example of self-sacrifice they provide to other teachers. Many assistant coaches are volunteers in part because of interest and dedication and in part because they hope to call attention to themselves as willing to "go the extra mile." Head coaches often schedule training programs for their athletes in the off-season when they are not being paid. All coaches give extra help to athletes having academic problems. While winning is considered important, administrators and teachers all emphasize that the strength of the athletic program at Ring School above its won-lost record is in the dedication, loyalty, team work, pride, and effort it inspires in the staff and students.

A second mode by which the ideology is disseminated in the school is the example and leadership provided by the veteran teachers on the faculty. The principal stated that from the opening of the building six years ago he has relied on these teachers to convey to the rest of the faculty what the "tone" (or ideology) of the school should be. Several teachers commented that these veteran teachers could help the newcomers sense what kinds of classroom and personal teacher behavior are acceptable to the community and to the administration. One of the administrators noted the congruence between the leadership of veterans on the school's athletic teams and in the faculty.

Finally, the ideology is disseminated through the very powerful example of the principal himself.³ Almost all the teachers are great boosters of their principal and tell many stories about his attributes.

One teacher related that the principal has been known to go to the police station in the middle of the night to help former students or athletes who have gotten into trouble. Several teachers told of the principal's courage and determination in the face of serious automobile injuries which have kept him away from school all year. One week after the accident, teachers report he tried to get out of traction in order to attend the school picnic. Before his accident, the principal put in very long hours at the school, the example of which is not lost on the rest of the staff. One teacher said she feels guilty when she comes to school on time, rather than coming early. Influenced by the example of the principal, she sees anything less than total selfless dedication as insufficient.

While the ideology is disseminated by the powerful examples of the athletic program, veteran teachers, and the principal, behavior consistent with the ideology also is encouraged by rewards and sanctions for those who comply and those who do not. First, teachers who volunteer extra time to assist with extra-curricular activities, especially the athletic program, are praised and thanked effusively over the public address system. Second, the principal tries to allot jobs which carry extra pay, such as lunchroom supervision, to those who have volunteered before.⁴ Third, the administration seems to enforce rules differently for strong and weak teachers. One administrator claimed that while teachers are usually reprimanded for coming to school late, he would not think of calling one particular teacher into his office if he noticed her arriving late because he is sure from her past extraordinary efforts on behalf of students that this was a rare occurrence which would not stand in the way of her fine teaching. Finally, there is some indication the administration allows strong teachers more autonomy in the classroom than weak teachers. As noted earlier, the principal "works with" teachers who are not in firm control of their students. The assistant principal, however, points to his own experience as an exception. He is known as a strong teacher due to his extra work with the football team. A few

years ago, during a personal crisis which made it difficult to apply himself properly to his teaching, he was surprised that the administration did not observe him or talk with him about his teaching difficulties, although he was certain that they knew of these difficulties. He interprets this as latitude allowed him because of his reputation as a strong teacher.

Not all members of the teaching profession could subscribe to the ideology that pervades Ring School. Uncomfortable with the stress on extra effort, with a definition of virtue which deemphasizes academic excellence per se, or for some other reason, many teachers would not "belong in" this particular school. That Ring School is not split by dissension about the demands of the ideology means in part that dissenters against the ideology are not present in meaningful numbers. The school seems able to rid itself of those who dissent against or deviate from the ideology, but even more important in avoiding dissensus, in hiring new teachers, only candidates are selected who will behave in accord with the dominant values. The selection process can serve this filtering role because it is controlled to an extraordinary degree by the principal himself. He gains this control by securing permission to go beyond the small pool of candidates submitted to him by the district personnel office. This allows him to seek a candidate of his own choosing. The principal's desire to find teachers with certain character attributes, such as dedication and willingness "to go the extra mile," rather than a concern with certain skills or any subject-matter competence explains the principal's reluctance to use the regular selection process. He cannot easily estimate these character attributes from documents included in an application. For this reason, the principal prefers to depend on the recommendations of people he knows and trusts or to select applicants with whom he is personally familiar. Not surprisingly, then, the principal has taken the initiative to hire several graduates of the local high school where he taught and coached before becoming principal. There are now twelve such graduates on the

school's faculty.

Between the pervasiveness of the ideology and the selection of teachers whose behavior and beliefs are likely to be consistent with that ideology, Ring School can be described as the site of a manufacture of consensus. This is a consensus about goals for personal and collective action and about the proper means and behavior for pursuing those goals. Clarity about the school's mission, such as the values it should attempt to inculcate, the very low rates of dissent against the administration of the school, and the teacher reports of high satisfaction are indicators of the strength of this consensus. The consensus about means and ends makes the rather heavy downward flow of directives quite palatable for teachers. They are not upset, for example, about the paternalism or the severity with which they are reprimanded by the principal when they are late to school or class because they believe in the importance of punctuality. If they did not, they are unlikely to have become teachers at the school. For the same reason, the surveillance needs met in many organizations by the upward flow of information about member behavior are much diminished in Ring School. Surveillance is unnecessary to assure that behavior largely coincides with administration desires because individual motivating factors, such as personal goals, beliefs, and values, are known to be consistent with the desired behavior. In fact, modes of surveillance common in some schools, such as lesson plans and the analysis of standardized test scores, are not much emphasized at Ring School.⁵

The pervasive ideology at Ring School can be interpreted as an effective mode of control over teachers. Strong examples, differential rewards and sanctions, and selection processes make teacher compliance almost inevitable. However powerful the ideology, teachers do not feel coerced or burdened by it. On the contrary, with a very few exceptions they subscribe to it enthusiastically. The manufacture of consensus constructed on the foundation of ideology means that individual goals can be pursued within the context of organizational

goals. Organizational control should be interpreted in this case as support of individual goals and integration of the collective effort rather than as coercion or repression (see Janowitz, 1975). This largely explains why these teachers feel autonomous even where objective measures of control imposed on them are high.

At Ring School, then, one might argue that teachers are really reporting their satisfaction when they characterize themselves as autonomous, but it is a particular type of satisfaction they feel. Their satisfaction is not so much with pay, social interaction, or working conditions, but rather with the general directions in which the school's operations are moving. This satisfaction translates into perceptions of personal autonomy because of the congruence at Ring School between organizational goals and teachers' personal goals, a congruence assured by the manufacture of consensus.

Organizational Ineffectiveness

At City School, the issue is the anomalous coincidence of relatively lower teacher perceptions of individual autonomy and weak control over teachers. This can be understood in part by considering the problem teachers find most pressing, student discipline, especially attendance and tardiness. Observations at the school supports the teacher view that student behavior is not well controlled. Despite considerable expenditure for community aides to act as hall monitors and an elaborate system of hall passes for students, many students are in the halls even when classes are in session. Moreover, attendance data collected by the Detroit Board of Education show that average daily attendance at City School is only 79 percent, while the city wide figure for junior high schools is 85 percent.

Low student attendance and tardiness to class frustrate teachers' efforts to educate children and their hopes for a satisfactory daily work routine. First, teachers are frustrated by the loss of time spent in dealing with these problems. Continual attention to disciplinary matters also creates barriers to communication and trust

between teachers and students. Finally, a teacher's ability to maintain a routine, allowing for predictability and planning, is curtailed by the continuous interruptions which disciplinary problems and tardy students engender.

Despite the frustrations these problems cause for teachers, control methods are notably ineffective. Gym teachers, whose students are frequently late to their next classes, often do not write passes, nor do hall monitors ask to see passes. In fact, hall monitors spend a good deal of time talking with one another or sleeping rather than doing their jobs. Control over students seems to break down not in conceiving of workable methods, but in implementing the methods chosen. Implementation involves coordination and supervision, responsibilities of administration. Just as the downward flow of directives as a mode of control over teachers is weak at City School, the coordinating and supervising activities essential to implementing solutions for the student behavior problem are insufficient.

Teachers who are truly frustrated with tardy or poorly behaved students perceive sending these students to the counselors as the only remedy. They want the counselor to take custody of the offending student by keeping him or her out of the classroom for the rest of the period. Counselors, however, prefer to send students back to class quickly in order to minimize the loss of instructional time. Lacking any other remedy, teachers are frustrated by their dependence on counselors.

Three factors lie behind teacher dependence on counselors. Each factor is in turn the source of teacher frustration. First, teachers would not be dependent and hence frustrated in this way if they were able to secure an adequate organization-level solution for the problem, such as an effective hall pass system. Second, teacher dependence on counselors would be much reduced if teachers would or could deal more with discipline problems on their own. Part of their abdication in this area comes from the magnitude of the problem. The other part comes from the teacher difficulty in managing difficult students or

from a preference not to confront this part of teaching. Feelings of individual inefficacy result and help create teacher frustrations. Third, teachers would not rely on counselors and then be frustrated by the poor cooperation they receive if teachers and counselors (and administration) shared the same philosophy of discipline. The counselors and the principal believe strongly in reorienting the school away from subject-matter toward the individual needs of students. In this counselors and administrators are supporters of the court-imposed reorganization in which subject-matter departments were replaced by schools-within-a-school organization meant to make middle schools more supportive, family like, and individualized in the treatment of students. Many teachers at City School, however, holding fast to a subject-matter orientation, feel isolated from this philosophical trend. Teacher isolation is well indicated by their conflict with counselors about the appropriate way to deal with discipline problems. The teachers are unwilling to place the child's needs for counseling before the demands of the curriculum. Counselors are unwilling to play the custody role the subject-oriented teachers ask of them. The philosophical isolation of these teachers decreases the cooperation they receive from the counselors and thereby increases their frustration.

These three factors underlying teacher dependence on counselors suggest sources of frustration teachers are likely to experience more generally in seeking solutions to problems at City School. First, teachers may feel frustrated when faced with problems they cannot or choose not to deal with themselves as individuals. Second, they are likely to feel frustrated when the school cannot implement organization level solutions for the problems. And third, teachers are likely to be frustrated by philosophical differences when they try to make other actors at the school appreciate their definition of what important problems and what suitable solutions are.

Consistent with these general expectations, teachers at City School have difficulty in seeking solutions for problems they face and

communicating their ideas for change to administrators and gaining implementation for these ideas. For example, a group of English teachers who wished to individualize their instruction by grouping their classes by ability-level could not gain the approval of the principal. A highly trained reading teacher has been stymied in obtaining the equipment her program needs. In another case, one teacher who wished to delegate attendance-taking responsibility to her students in order to induce them to learn to manage responsibility was prohibited from doing so by the administration. Finally, a mathematics teacher who wishes to create an accelerated class for students who are not stimulated by the present offerings feels the principal will veto it because of its "elitist" character and probable unpopularity in the community.

While workers in many organizations may encounter a management which will not listen to their ideas, professional workers will be frustrated when they are unable to communicate their ideas upward because professionals are socialized to take responsibility for the task in all of its dimensions rather than merely executing orders relevant to parts of the task. In taking responsibility, the professional is likely to develop new program ideas and try to have them implemented. A professional sees the organization in which he or she works as a tool for the implementation of new ideas (Blau et al., 1966; Blau, 1968). This portrayal is consistent with the Weberian perspective that organizations are structured for the efficient application of means to ends. In the Weberian perspective modes of control, such as hierarchy and rules, are the processes by which such application is assured. Thus, where many analyses of professional life in organizations picture hierarchy as compromising professional self-regulation or autonomy (for example, Blau and Scott, 1962), the focus on organization as the means by which professional may seek the implementation of their ideas sees an organizational setting as consistent with professional autonomy. In this view a large administrative component (Blau et al., 1966; Blau, 1968) and general bureaucratic

elaboration (Moeller, 1964; Moeller and Charters, 1966) underwrite the upward communication of ideas. Proposals of subordinates must be passed through and new programs originating in those proposals implemented by the administrative component. This process is especially important to professional subordinates and to others who seek input into organization-level problem solving.

Teachers at City School and presumably at numerous other schools are not able to satisfactorily communicate and gain implementation for their ideas. Their problems, therefore, remain unsolved and frustrations mount. The administrative component is inadequate for processing teacher ideas because of attendant circumstances. First, the administrative component will only process the ideas of subordinates if the members of the administration are receptive to the ideas suggested. At City School the ideas of teachers who hold a subject-matter orientation are likely to be poorly received by administrators oriented to individual student needs. Second, administrative intensity will not boost effective upward communication if intermediate members of the hierarchy do not command the support of their superiors. At City School the principal respects the abilities of one of the unit heads more than the other and is more likely to respond to ideas emanating from her unit. Third, the members of the hierarchy, however numerous and sympathetic to ideas communicated upward, are unlikely to give more than passing attention to these ideas if they are preoccupied with pressing demands from other parts of the organization or the organizational environment. At City School, the principal's time is taken up by discipline problems and court-mandated programs; he is virtually uninvolved, therefore, with the implementation of curriculum ideas, even with those he could be expected to favor. Fourth, ideas proposed by subordinates may encounter rival claims for control of the decision area in question from other components of the social system in which the organization is embedded. Different components have different amounts of power. When the superior power of a rival claimant is invoked, an idea may

be rejected or delayed, even if it has support in the organizational hierarchy and environment. At City School, the rival claims of regional board members, Central office personnel, and the federal court frustrate teachers and administrators alike. And finally, an initiative from subordinates which involves central functions of the organization, whether they concern operational goals or organizational survival and maintenance, is less likely to be implemented than an initiative which touches on functions less centrally situated. At City School, scheduling and attendance seem to fall into decision areas which the administration considers quite central. Teacher initiatives in these areas were rejected by the principal although philosophically he would have favored the proposals. The strenuous competition of claims which buffets City School can be seen as the origin of many of these barriers to upward communication. The competitors include community activists, the federal court, the teachers' organization, and officials from the central office.

This explanation of the anomolous coincidence of low organizational control and low teacher perceptions of autonomy at City School can be seen in the context of an important body of research on organizational structure and individual behavior with equally nonintuitive results. Tannenbaum and his colleagues (1968) have found that mean satisfaction and productivity in an organization are predicted by the total amount of control exercised by organizational actors. Surprisingly, it is not the amount of control an individual has over others and over his own work life which relates positively to his own satisfaction and productivity but rather the organization-level property of total control exercised which relates positively to the mean satisfaction and organizational productivity. City School is an organization where the total control exercised is relatively low. Taking satisfaction, at least the facet of satisfaction related to the fulfillment of personal goals, as very closely related at City School to perceived autonomy, low teacher perceptions of autonomy at this school are predictable in the light of Tannenbaum's findings.⁶

The City School case suggests that a high level of total control, absent in this school, is important because it contributes to the successful pursuit of collective goals. It does this by furthering the coordination of individual efforts.⁷ A key aspect of coordination is rooting out individual behaviors which are counterproductive for collective ends. At City School, the poor state of student discipline and the difficulty in improving it by a school-level effort are in part due to such recalcitrance.⁸

Coordination is particularly important in a school because without it, two factors that favor the tendency for teachers to pursue private goals predominate. First, the professional training and socialization of teachers does not assure their dedication to a common set of goals or their subscription to a common set of operating procedures (Dreeben, 1970). These might assure a basis throughout the occupation for coordinated effort. At City School teachers oriented to the subject and those oriented to students conduct their classes differently even when their grade level and subject assignment are the same. For example, subject-oriented teachers try much harder than student-oriented teachers to cover all points in the curriculum, even if this means some students fall behind. Such differences become especially important when innovation or other types of change are attempted because of differential acceptance of the proposed changes. At City School subject-oriented teachers resist the new middle school structure and philosophy more than do their child-oriented colleagues, for instance, by arguing against efforts to individualize instruction. Second, the ecology of the school supports private goal pursuit. Teaching takes place behind closed doors, is infrequently observed by administrators or other teachers, and consequently is not subject to great control (except at times by the students in the class). An important implication here is that norms among teachers are harder to enforce than among workers where productivity and style are visible to coworkers (see Blau, 1955). The pursuit of organizational goals, the implementation of organization-level changes, and the solution of

organizational problems all demand imposing some uniformity or discipline on the private behavior of teachers. This involves breaking down the diversity that comes from incomplete occupational socialization and the isolation caused by the ecology of the school. Such uniformity can be imposed and teacher efforts coordinated, but the conditions which usually obtain in schools do not favor this. They are certainly not present at City School.

The elaboration of Tannenbaum's findings suggests that when teachers feel they have little autonomy, the existing structure may not be binding them closely enough within a system of controls to overcome problems of incomplete occupational socialization and isolating school ecology and to allow the coordinated pursuit of collective goals. This implies that collective goals are more central to perceptions of individual autonomy than are individual goals. Teacher frustration in the face of organizational failure to improve student discipline, a collective problem, supports this idea. Social control in schools may enable individual to feel effective or autonomous.⁹

The Impact of Uncertainty

At Village School, strong control over teachers accompanies low teacher perceptions of autonomy. The particular manner in which control is imposed at this school creates substantial uncertainty for teachers. This uncertainty arises because the control system at this school does not include a downward flow of directives about desired teacher behavior but only an upward flow of information about teacher performance. This creates uncertainty for teachers in several ways. First, information-gathering control has not often been subject to regulation by contract while directive control has been. For example, evaluation is strictly regulated in many contracts; rules through which teachers might be harassed or exploited, such as the amount of time they may be required to spend with students, are often preempted by contract negotiation. Information gathering control, not usually

regulated in a comparable way, remains in the hands of administration. The emphasis at Village School on an unregulated kind of control increases uncertainty for teachers there. Second, teachers can only guess what the effects of information gathering are likely to be. At Village School, teachers fear that student test information will be used to evaluate their own performances, but they cannot demonstrate this. Therefore, even the building representative for the teachers' organization states he must wait to see that the administration is abusing teacher rights with the test data it gathers before he can act. The information gathering emphasis of the control system at Village School causes uncertainty for teachers, then, because it raises the potential for directive control without revealing what kinds of teacher performance will be required. The uncertainty teachers at Village School feel about the directives to which they may be subject is not due to their ignorance of the principal's ideas or intentions. He has made no decision yet about new directives in several areas, such as student writing skills. Moreover, he is basically in accord with the conventional pedagogical methods his teachers use and the expectations for order and discipline they have for their students. For both of these reasons it would be impossible for teachers to fathom the thrust of directives the principal might issue based on all the information he gathers from lesson plans, test scores, and the like.

While the uncertainty teachers face at Village School is a key characteristic of the control system at the school, teachers at the other two schools studied face uncertainty as well. Importantly, the way the uncertainty is managed is a good indicator of the dynamics which determine teacher perceptions of their autonomy at these schools. At City School, the contingencies of dealing with disciplinary problems are very important to teachers. Since it is counselors who usually control these contingencies, it is counselors who control the uncertainty teachers face. At Ring School, parents attempting to influence school decisions about their children generate

uncertainty for teachers, although such uncertainty is much greater at the other schools where parental dissatisfaction and organization are greater. Even in relatively placid Ring School, however, one can see the role the principal plays in defusing or buffering this uncertainty. The principal at Ring School, therefore controls uncertainty in teachers' work lives.

In general, the uncertainty facing teachers is likely to be greatest where the competition of claims for control of the directions the school will take is greatest. As discussed earlier, such a competition means that school goals are unsettled. This greatly increases uncertainty by making it hard to design efficient structures. At City School the competing definitions of proper educational goals and practice create an uncooperative relationship between teachers and counselors. Teachers face uncertainty because counselors will not cooperate in disciplining students. At schools with active parent bodies, parental aspirations to influence school operations and decisions raise the possibility for teachers of interference by non-professionals. While many teachers perceive the source of uncertainty as the principal of whose backing they are unsure, the principal merely localizes or focusses the uncertainty whose real origin is the parental claims on the school. At Village School, the principal's stress on gathering information about teacher performance, the source of such great uncertainty for teachers, comes from his involvement in the educational accountability movement. This movement is the expression of claims on schools by state agencies and local organizations, unhappy with student achievement and with the responsiveness of the educational establishment.

Facing uncertainty, teachers in these schools and actors in other organizations become dependent on those who create and manage the uncertainty. Exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Emerson, 1961) reasons that dependency is a resource from which power can be generated. The dependence of actor A on actor B can be translated into the power of B over A. Crozier (1964) and Hickson and

Hinings (Hickson et al., 1971; Hinings et al., 1974) have found empirical support for this proposition in organizational settings. The creators and managers of uncertainty in schools are likely to exercise power and the potential for control over teachers. The perceptions of low autonomy of Village School teachers can be understood in these terms. They feel they lack autonomy because the principal can control them due to their dependence on him. Thus, autonomy perceived is inversely related to control imposed. Teachers at Village School construe their autonomy in conflictual terms. This contrasts with Ring and City Schools and is, thus, the only case studied where control and perceptions of autonomy related inversely as originally expected.

The power-dependency formulation of exchange theorists points to the uncertainty teachers at Village School experience as the reason these teachers construe their autonomy in conflictual terms. As the control to which they are subject increases, they perceive their autonomy as decreasing. Legal anthropologists, such as Gluckman (1967), Nader (1969), and Macaulay (1963), have reported systems where disputes are settled cooperatively, that is where both disputants feel their interests are furthered by the settlement. Their explanations, when applied to schools, suggest another set of factors which may contribute to the conflictual perceptions of Village School teachers. The anthropological analyses identify three factors as encouraging cooperative settlements: the multiplexity of the relationship between the disputants, the introduction of extraneous issues into the dispute, and the role of third parties in the dispute.

A relationship is multiplex or diffuse when the parties interact through more than one set of roles. Thus, in Nader's study of a Mexican village, disputes which arise in a business relationship may at the same time be between kinsmen. When the relationship of disputants is diffuse, there is pressure to settle the dispute in a way which will allow the disputants to continue the other aspects of their relationship. The business relationship may be harmed, but the

disputants still wish to be able to work together in their family. Indeed, by extension, the need of the disputants to be able to reconstruct the very part of their relationship in which the dispute arose brings pressure for a cooperative settlement. This is the reason Macaulay gives for the hesitance of businessmen to settle their disputes in court and, therefore, conflictually. At Village School, the relationship between the principal and the teachers is not diffuse. It centers exclusively on their work roles. This happens largely because the principal sees himself as a manager. In order to be obeyed, he emphasizes his greater status and power. For example, he is explicit about the difference in decision making roles. While teachers may participate in decisions about day-to-day operations, he alone makes policy. Similarly, he feels free to take vacation time for such purposes as deer hunting, while teachers could not. Teachers at the school are quite conscious of the difference between themselves and the principal. Some react angrily that the principal has made claims which his age, experience, and competence do not justify, but the barriers between them also trace to the lack of diffuse ties between them. In the absence of social relations between teachers and principal or of relationships among teachers one of whom happens to be the principal, the manager-worker facet stands out as the only facet of the relationship. The teachers and the principal do not have the need, therefore, to settle their disputes cooperatively in order to avoid contaminating other facets of the relationship. At Ring School, in contrast, the principal and teachers have a relationship with social (between friends), collegial (between teachers), and managerial (between manager and workers) dimensions. This may be one factor which encourages a cooperative mode of dispute settlement at their school.

In the United States courts, extraneous issues or facts are considered improper for introduction. Rules of procedure emphasize specificity. In contrast, the judges in Nader's Mexican study and Gluckman's African study encouraged the exploration of every issue

even tangentially related to the dispute. This seemed to encourage cooperative rather than conflictual settlements in two ways. First, the extraneous issues reminded the disputants of the multiplexity of their relationship. Second, extraneous issues allowed bargaining to reach solutions which were satisfactory to both parties. Where only one issue is disputed, the gain of one party is quite probably the loss of the other, for were this not the case, the dispute would not have arisen. With the introduction of related issues, however, the loss of one party in one area can be balanced by a gain in another area. In this way both parties can be satisfied. While there are no suggestive examples of the introduction or exclusion of extraneous matters in disputes at the three intensive study schools, this process is probably very important in determining the settlement of labor issues such as contract bargaining or grievance arbitration. The insistence by one of the parties that the negotiations concentrate on a very narrow range of issues is likely to encourage the perceptions that only one side can be satisfied with the settlement. On the other hand, if the scope of the dispute is allowed to expand, cooperative settlements may be discovered.

In the anthropological studies, third parties who might have an interest in the settlement were frequently brought into the negotiations, because they seemed to increase the salience of extraneous issues and reinforce in the minds of the disputants the multiplexity of their relationship. Thus, for example, an argument over rights to a coffee crop between an estranged husband and wife was settled when the judge emphasized the couple's duties toward its sick daughter (Nader, 1969). The daughter, a third party with an interest in the case and especially the extraneous issue of her illness reminded the feuding business partners of their familial tie. This same process may occur in schools, for example, if the intervention of an interested parent group reminds antagonistic teachers and principal of their need to cooperate in the education of the students. In contrast to the anthropological reports, however, the intervention of a third

party in a school dispute is more likely to increase the conflict in the dispute than to encourage a cooperative settlement. Third parties often become involved in school disputes when the dispute cannot be settled by the original disputants. For example, a grievance filed by a teacher is only brought to the attention of the superintendent, the school board, or an arbitrator if it cannot be settled between the teacher and the principal. This decreases the chance for a cooperative settlement for two reasons. First, when the dispute is no longer located within the school but rather is a matter for the school district or even in extreme examples for the legal system, the impetus for cooperation deriving from multiplex relations and the web of extraneous issues within the school is lost. Third parties, outside the school will direct attention to the issue at hand, not to the complexity of related issues and their possible effects on the ongoing relationship between the disputants. Second, relationship between teachers and parties outside the school are thoroughly regulated in most districts by contract language. Consistent with legal forms and processes in the United States, such contracts predispose settlements to conflictual formulations in which only one side can win.

There is likely to be considerable pressure in most school districts to settle disputes inside the school. First, the principal appears to be doing a poor job if disputes reach higher levels. The principal, therefore, is under pressure to settle them himself. Second, if a dispute becomes a grievance and must be settled by an arbitrator, the considerable costs are shared by the teachers' organization and the school board. The former has the financial backing of the state teachers' organization, (The Michigan Education Association pays 65 percent of the cost of arbitration incurred by the local teachers' organization.) but the school board must carry the full cost itself. Thus, the school administration works hard to settle disputes short of arbitration. Despite these uniform pressures for settlements within the school and, therefore, by cooperative means, there is

probably variation from school to school in the frequency with which disputes are in fact settled at this level. For example, at Ring School, no one could recall a dispute between teachers and principal which had required the intervention of a third party. At Village School, three grievances had been filed lately in which the superintendent routinely became involved. The difference between the settlement of disputes at the schools can in part be understood by the difference in the independent control exercised by the two principals. The principal at Village School has depended throughout his career and still depends on the backing of the superintendent. The principal at Ring School, however, not only has the backing of his faculty, but also has considerable support on the school board and in the community. In contrast to the principal at Village School, therefore, he is able to call upon his own resources to achieve settlements where often the principal at Village School must depend on others for settlements. For example, gym teachers at Village School were enraged that some of their equipment had been appropriated by the high school. The principal was not able to reclaim it. When the principal at Ring School faced an analogous problem with insufficient equipment for one of his teams, he mobilized his resources and personally demanded funds from the central office. He got exactly what he wanted. In much the same way, the principal at Village School has been unable (or unwilling) to keep the school board from intervening in the instructional affairs of the English department, but parents who complain about the treatment of their children at Ring School regularly wilt when they are confronted with the prestige and power of the principal.

Overall, then, cooperative settlement, common at Ring School, is encouraged by multiplex or diffuse relationships between teachers and principal, by including extraneous matters in the settlement, and by the exclusion of third parties. The latter depends in good measure on the independence of the principal as he relates to those third parties. Where such cooperative settlements do not prevail, as at Village School, teachers can be expected to perceive the balance of control at the school in conflictual terms.

Relating the Three Explanatory Models¹⁰

The consideration of these three schools started with a decision not to use the Weberian perspective. The Weberian perspective assumes the goals of an organization to be given and the organization's interactions with its environment to be minimal. The goals of many schools today, however, are the object of a continuing competition of claims in which many of the claimants are actors in the schools' environments. In addition, the Weberian perspective would not have been sufficient for dealing with the particular problem on which this paper has focused, the ways in which individuals experience the control which their organizations impose on them. The Weberian framework is interested in individual reactions to control, but only insofar as these reactions influence the probability of obedience. Weber suggested that this likelihood is increased by subordinate belief in the legitimacy of superordinate control. Subordinate perceptions that control is legitimate, however, do not assure that subordinates experience control in such a way as to feel autonomous or constrained.

Instead of the Weberian perspective, this analysis has used the orienting concept of a competition of claims to describe the setting in which many schools operate. In retrospect this seems to have been appropriate, because important parts of the explanations developed here derive from the impact on school operations of parents, teacher organizations, the federal courts, the accountability movement, and a generalized discord about proper educational philosophy and practice.

For example, the consensus about ideology at Ring School might be called agreement about a philosophy of education by practitioners. Individualization, the consensus philosophy at Ring School, may be typified by an orientation to the students' needs rather than to the subject matter and by expectations for student achievement which are not uniformly high. The same categories describe two other philosophies. One is characterized by a much greater orientation to the

subject matter than to students needs, demands for achievement varying from teacher to teacher. The other, often the position of disaffected parent groups, preserves a child orientation, but insists on upgrading achievement. The configuration of educational philosophies at a school may indicate the extent of competition for control of school directions. The contrast between Ring School and City School is an extreme example. At the former where the competition of claims is minimal, individualization sums up the orientation of virtually all actors. At the latter, all three philosophies are actively advanced by competing actors. Individualization is favored by the agents of the court as most likely to help poor children succeed in school and by innovative staff members, including the principal. Many teachers are subject matter oriented, some openly expressing a preference for high school teaching which they believe is so oriented. Finally, state administrators and community groups favor an emphasis on student achievement, hoping to raise the performance of Detroit children on standardized tests. More generally, the unsettled nature of argument about the orientation education should assume suggests the varying interests competing for control of school operations.

Variation in the intensity of the competition of claims on schools also helps explain different levels of principal's control over teacher selection. While the principal at Ring School uses his substantial control over teacher selection to filter out teachers unlikely to participate in the ideological consensus, other principals have far less control over the selection process. In most schools, the principal may choose or recommend from a small pool sent to him by the district personnel office. This is the case at Village School. Even there, however, the principal senses growing pressure for an increased role for the school board, traditionally inactive in teacher selection, in the screening of applicants. The situation in Detroit is far more extreme. Principals report virtually no role for themselves in this area. At best they can veto the candidate selected by the central office, often only after a trial period of several months.

This can be traced to a centralized locus of claims made by the teachers' union for control over personnel matters. While the community control movement in Detroit resulted in the decentralization of many functions to regional school boards, the union demanded and gained the retention of contract negotiations at the central level (LaNoue and Smith, 1973). The union feared that decentralization of this function would result in important contract differentials from region to region, cleavages among teachers, a breakdown of solidarity, and weakness in the union. The implications of low school level input into teacher selection for goal or ideological consensus are great. The principal at Ring School feels he needs almost personal knowledge of an applicant's character before he can predict how well the applicant will fit the directions the school is taking. The centralization of the process without the consultation of the principal or other school staff makes it impossible to work toward this fit of applicant and school orientations. First, the central personnel officer is unlikely to know what the school's needs in this area are, especially if the district is large. Second, centralization of this function increases the number of applicants who must be processed, probably so much as to force heavy reliance on documentary evidence rather than face-to-face interaction. As selection processes at Ring School suggest, face-to-face interaction may be very important in estimating an applicant's character attributes.

The idea of an ongoing competition for control of the directions schools take has led to the explanatory models used here to account for teacher perceptions of their own autonomy. Two of these, administrative effectiveness and the generation of uncertainty, seem to be applicable where the competition of claims is great; the other, the manufacture of consensus, is applicable where the competition of claims is minimal. These models help explain particular configurations of control imposed on teachers and autonomy perceived by them. Such theory generation via analytic induction does not assure that the models will bear much relationship to one another, but the common

competition of claims framework for examining these configurations suggest that they might.

The manufacture of consensus at Ring School both made substantial direction of their behavior acceptable for teachers and obviated the need for surveillance through the gathering of information about teacher performance. Such information gathering can become a major part of the administrative effort, as at Village School. Eliminating it without cost to control, frees administrative time for other efforts. Insofar as administrative resources determine administrative effectiveness, the manufacture of consensus should allow administrative effectiveness. Of course, such effectiveness could be translated into oppressive heavy-handed control over teachers. The consensus about appropriate teacher behavior, however, makes this unnecessary, allowing the application of administrative resources to the solving of problems which, again because of the consensus, are likely to be important to both administrators and teachers. The discussion of Ring School and City School suggests that an important determinant of both consensus and administrative effectiveness in solving internal problems is a low level of demands from the environment, that is, essentially the absence of a competition of claims. Ironically, then, the same conditions which make resources for control over teachers available also decrease the need for their use.

Uncertainty, the prime cause of Village School teachers' perceptions of low autonomy, derives from the competition of claims and more specifically from surveillance activities involving the gathering of information about teacher performance in the absence of directives about expectations for that performance. While information gathering in Village School was largely a response to the accountability movement, data from the other schools show that the claims of other actors in the school's environment also lead to surveillance. The federal court requires the gathering of information to monitor the implementation of programs it mandates. Parents' efforts to influence their children's treatment at school leads the school to collect

information for use in defusing the threat of parental intervention. The existence or manufacture of a consensus about school practice signals the absence of both this general and this specific cause of uncertainty for teachers. A consensus indicates the absence of an active competition of claims and makes the gathering of information about teacher performance unnecessary. The greater the consensus, then, the less the uncertainty for teachers.

Uncertainty produced by administrative action, such as information gathering, or mediated by administrative action, such as buffering teachers from the intervention efforts of parents, can indicate an administration that is effectively in control of school directions and operations, although this does not mean that teachers will be in accord with administrative decisions. As uncertainty born of the competition of claims increases, however, the administration no longer is able both to deal with the actors generating the uncertainty and to use the power available to them by virtue of their uncertainty managing role. Thus, at low levels uncertainty is a resource for effective control, but at higher levels it becomes the cause of administrative preoccupation and ineffectiveness, especially in dealing with problems teachers consider important.

Certain variables in these explanatory approaches covary monotonically: as the competition of claims, especially that arising from a turbulent organizational environment, increases, the uncertainty with which the administration must cope increases; this decreases the ability of the administration to effectively manage the internal operation of the school. However, a key variable, power, derived from the dependence of teachers on administrators, does not vary with this cluster in the same monotonic fashion. Rather, it increases as uncertainty increases only until that uncertainty becomes preoccupying. Then, such power decreases. When power generated by teacher dependence on administrators who manage uncertainty is high, as at Village School, teacher perceptions of their own autonomy are low due to a conflictual definition of the operation of control and

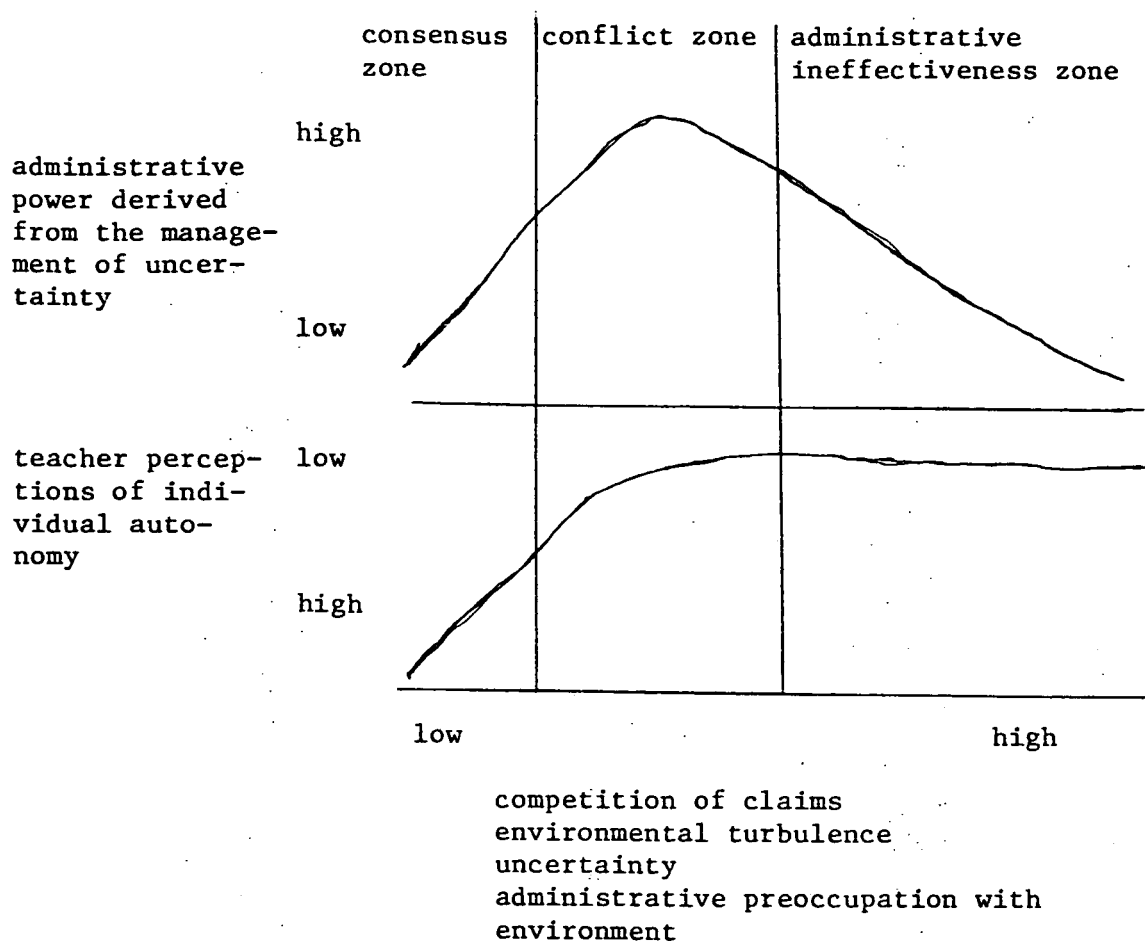
their own experience of it. When uncertainty is low, that is when the competition of claims is largely absent, teachers feel quite autonomous due to a consensus about school philosophy and practice. When uncertainty is very high, due to a heated competition of claims, administrative preoccupation makes the solution of pressing problems unlikely, leading to relatively low perceptions of individual autonomy. There is no way to know whether administrative weakness or conflictual definitions of settings where administrators effectively manage uncertainty leads to lower teacher perceptions of individual autonomy. Graphically represented, then, conclusions taken from all three explanatory approaches together would be:

[Insert Figure 1 Here]

A final suggestive outcome of this inquiry is the demonstration of limitations in a conflictual view of the relationship between social control and individual experience. Teacher perceptions of individual autonomy, an important indicator of the manner in which these semiprofessionals experience their work lives, do not regularly vary inversely with the intensity and pervasiveness of the control to which they are subject. The analysis of the Village School case shows circumstances in which a conflictual framework is suitable, but the other two cases point out contexts in which social control is conducive to positive individual experiences and in which the absence of social control undermines such experiences.

The positive impact of social control on individual perceptions of autonomy in these cases operates through two processes. First, social or organizational control facilitates the coordination of the collectivity and thereby the efficient mobilization of its resources. Organizational resource mobilization may further individual goal attainment, raising perceptions of individual autonomy. This may happen either by furthering the pursuit of organizational goals which are identical with individual goals or by solving problems frustrating to individuals. The second process through which social or organizational control increases individual perceptions of autonomy is by

Figure 1: Four Determinants of Administrative Power and Perceived Autonomy.



defining interests of various actors in the collectivity, such as teachers and administrators, as congruent rather than contradictory. The limitation of dissent in the collectivity is one important way through which this process operates. Ring School achieved a very low level of dissent by selecting for teaching positions only candidates who would easily fit themselves to the consensus goals and by disseminating that ideology pervasively throughout the school organization. As a result of the definition of individual and collective goals as congruent, actors come to conceive of their interactions with others in less conflictual, more cooperative terms. Key among these redefined interactions is the relationship between subordinates and superordinates. Where subordinates do not see their superiors as having interests different from their own, they are inclined to see control activities of their superiors as acts of leadership, coordination, or support, rather than as burdens, impositions, or threats. A system of social control as social support has costs, such as those attendant on the suppression of dissent and the domination of a uniform value system. Moreover, these case studies indicate that such supportive applications and perceptions of social control depend on increasingly rare prerequisites. Both the treatments of Ring School and of City School point out that organizational control can serve the goals of teachers best where competing demands on the school are minimal and goal consensus is strong. Teachers should not expect, therefore, that their work experiences will be characterized by a sense of individual autonomy in most school settings.

Endnotes

1. To this end, it would have been desirable to include other types of schools. For example, other community types could have been represented, including a small city or a suburb, especially where the school drew from an upper-middle class parent body. Although field and questionnaire data from such a school were collected, they are not reported here, because their quality is substantially lower than the quality of the data from the other three schools. This is indicated by a much lower teacher response rate on the questionnaire pretest, poor reactions to requests for interviews, and a low level of rapport with many teachers in the informal settings on which field work relies.
2. The mean autonomy reports for the other fifteen decisions did not differ significantly from school to school. Perhaps some individual-level characteristic, such as years of experience, would point up significant differences in response. Likewise, other modes of aggregating individual responses might be important, for example, subject area. Quite possibly, however, the level of autonomy in some of these decision areas is an occupational characteristic or, indeed, an attribute of work situations in general. Generally teachers report exercising far more autonomy on classroom and personal behavior matters than on coordination matters.
3. Not surprisingly, the principal was himself a coach at the high school before his selection for the principalship at V. North Junior High School. The ways in which he personally exemplifies the school ideology in the minds of the teachers fit in well, therefore, with the model provided by the athletic program.
4. One female teacher explained that this gives a sexist tinge to the school. The greatest opportunities to volunteer and those most valued by the administration are in the athletic program which is largely for male students. Men, therefore, are most likely to be seen as "going the extra mile" and to be rewarded with extra-paying jobs. Moreover, since many of these jobs are carried out at lunch time and since students are held in their homerooms during the lunch period when they are not actually in the lunchroom, the same teachers who have been given extra-paying jobs are also relieved of homeroom responsibilities. This woman's dissent is rare, however. Most teachers who she says shared her ill feelings have left the school. However, within the small range of variation in questionnaire measures of satisfaction, which overall were quite satisfied, female teachers tended to be less satisfied than male teachers, especially with the amount of control they have over their lives at school.

5. The community in which the school is embedded also seems to be a part of the ideological consensus. The chief indicator of its participation in the consensus or at least of its acquiescence in its content is the total absence of organized community activity to influence decisions made at the school. While individual parents do visit the school, there is no Parent Teacher Organization nor any ad hoc organization of parents, nor has there been one since the school opened six years ago. While several explanations for this placidity are possible, an important one for the argument here is the seeming satisfaction of the community with the thrust of schooling at V. North Junior High School. Both teachers and administrators report parental satisfaction, ascribing it to parental feeling that the school is teaching their children as they themselves would have it. In effect, under this explanation community neglect amounts to a delegation of control by parents and taxpayers to the school staff. Teachers and administrators tell of times, however, when nascent and unorganized protest, usually about the treatment of an individual student by his or her teachers, was effectively blunted by the massing of school resources against the protest. Key among these resources are the prestige of the principal, data the school has collected, and subtle threats about adverse outcomes for the children of parents who persist in not complying with school wishes. It is not completely accurate, then, to claim that the community totally ignores the school; rather, the school is able by largely satisfying the community and effectively blunting influence efforts by the dissatisfied to extend the effective boundaries of the ideological consensus into the community.

6. The parallel argument about levels of productivity is riskier in part because appropriate definitions and measures of school productivity are the subject of great disagreement. The furor over the accountability movement which includes the charge that educational outcomes are being poorly measured reflects this disagreement.

7. Of course, this is not necessarily the case. High control in the form of an horrendous elaboration of work rules resulting from labor negotiations, curriculum development leading to unworkably prescribed directions for instruction, and/or overbearing supervision by administrators, for example, may lead to a bottleneck of control which ties the hands of administrators and teachers alike. Crozier (1964) suggests that the side of bureaucracy called pejoratively "red-tape" may arise from the exercise of a lot of control, in the French case for private rather than organizational purposes.

8. Other explanations are possible. Schlechty (1976) states that urban students are often unruly because they lack commitment to the goals or symbols of the schools they attend.

9. This analysis of the problems of organizational life in schools resembles Durkheim's approach to social life, in general. Durkheim pictured the ability of the individual to function in society as based on the controls with which society binds him. When these controls are relaxed, the individual becomes ineffectual and even distraught enough to commit suicide. Social control as the mechanism for integrating individuals into their collectivities, underwrites individual adjustment.

10. These three explanatory models do not necessarily exhaust the dynamics which operate to explain variation in the way control systems are perceived autonomy covary. More intensive case studies might well have uncovered more models. This is one of the costs of deriving theory inductively from data rather than from a set of categories which are logically all-inclusive. The benefit here is that the models derived inductively are more likely to find empirical verification in other sets of data than are deductively derived models (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

References

Blau, Peter M.

1955 The Dynamics of Bureaucracy: A Study of Interpersonal Relations in Two Government Agencies. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1964 Exchange and Power in Social Life. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

1968 "The hierarchy of authority in organizations." American Journal of Sociology 73(October):453-467.

Blau, Peter M. and W. Richard Scott

1962 Formal Organizations: A Comparative Approach. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company.

Blau, Peter M. et al.

1966 "The structure of small bureaucracies." American Sociological Review 31(April):179-191.

Blauner, Robert

1964 Alienation and Freedom: The Factory Worker and His Industry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Coleman, James S.

1974 Power and the Structure of Society. New York: W.W. Norton.

Crozier, Michel

1964 The Bureaucratic Phenomenon. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dreeben, Robert

1970 The Nature of Teaching: Schools and the Work of Teachers. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co.

Emerson, Richard

1962 "Power-dependence relations." American Sociological Review 27(February):31-40.

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss

1967 The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.

Gluckman, Max

1967 "The judicial process among the Barotse." Pp. 59-91 in Paul Bohannan (ed.) Law and Warfare: Studies in the Anthropology of Conflict. Austin: University of Texas Press.

- Hickson, D.J. et al.
 1971 "A strategic contingencies theory of intraorganizational power." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 16:2(June): 216-229.
- Hinings, C.R. et al.
 1974 "Structural conditions of intraorganizational power." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 19:1(March):22-44.
- Hirschman, Albert O.
 1970 *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Janowitz, Morris
 1975 "Sociological theory and social control." *American Journal of Sociology* 81:1(July):82-108.
- LaNoue, George R. and Bruce L.R. Smith
 1973 *The Politics of School Decentralization.* Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books.
- Lortie, Dan C.
 1969 "The balance of control and autonomy in elementary school teaching." Pp. 1-53 in Amitai Etzioni (ed.), *The Semi-professions and Their Organization: Teachers, Nurses, Social Workers.* New York: The Free Press.
- Macaulay, Stewart
 1963 "Non-contractual relations in business a preliminary study." *American Sociological Review* 28:1(February).
- Nader, Laura
 1969 "Styles of court procedure: to make the balance." Pp. 69-91 in Laura Nader (ed.), *Law in Culture and Society.* Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Schlechty, Phillip C.
 1976 *Teaching and Social Behavior: Toward an Organizational Theory of Instruction.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Tannenbaum, Arnold S.
 1968 *Control in Organizations.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Thibaut, John W. and Harold H. Kelley
 1959 *The Social Psychology of Groups.* New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

