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The Socialization of Beginning Principals in Louisiana: Organizational Constraints on Innovation.

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THE SOCIALIZATION OF BEGINNING PRINCIPALS IN LOUISIANA: ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRAINTS ON INNOVATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Administrative and Foundational Services

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational socialization experiences of beginning principals. This study approached the problem through a mixed methodology strategy of research, using both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

A factor analysis of 187 responses to a socialization survey instrument resulted in three components of socialization which were used as the dependent variables in the study. Variation was found in the principals’ socialization level, but this variation was not predicted by any of the independent variables. For the dependent variable vision, African-American principals reported higher mean scores than white principals; also, principals in elementary schools showed higher scores than non-elementary school principals. Principals who worked in a different school during the previous year showed a greater dependence on staff than principals promoted from within the school; also, male principals showed a greater dependence on staff than female principals.

Six individuals were selected as case study subjects, and were observed and interviewed during their first semester as principals. The six principals were compared on the basis of the primary socialization forces encountered in their work, their response to the socialization process, and their resulting level of socialization.
Personal forces such as the principals’ philosophy, promotion context, personality, and vision were usually strong and often positive. Organizational forces such as interactions with students, faculty, and the Central Office were sometimes strong and often negative. Four of the six case study principals were found to have custodial responses to the socialization process, while two had innovative responses. Also, variation was found in the principals’ socialization level, ranging from the lowest to the middle stages of socialization.

The study found that beginning principals in Louisiana have a vision about what they want their schools to be, but constraining forces within the organization often prevent them from placing that vision into action. Because of these constraints, the socialization of beginning principals is a process that is not likely to bring about change or innovation.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Any individual in a new organizational role is involved in the process of socialization. The purpose of this study is to examine the socialization process of beginning principals. To become leaders who can make a difference in schools, new principals must develop their professional identities when going through this process (Block, 1983; Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Hurley, 1990; Parkay & Hall, 1992). This is important because the principal has an enormous amount of influence on the character of the school. The principal sets the tone for the school and establishes direction for the instructional program. In a school, the principal is the person who has the greatest chance to make a significant difference (Parkay & Hall, 1992).

It is estimated that more than 60% of the current principals will leave their positions by the turn of the century (Parkay & Hall, 1992). Because these principals are reaching retirement age, many individuals will soon be accepting their first principalship positions (Daresh, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992). New principals are faced with a wide assortment of challenges, making the initiation process difficult. At the same time that many new principals are accepting their first administrative assignments, the role of the principal has become more complex (Parkay & Hall, 1992).
As the demands of the principalship increase, the need to better prepare principals becomes more critical. Each year, many new principals move into their first principalship positions. There is a need learn more about the work of these principals so that future principals can learn from their experiences. While many new principals are moving into their initial assignments, an examination of the beginning principalship is appropriate. This study examines the induction process of beginning principals, with an emphasis on the socialization forces present in the school organization.

Upon entering the profession, or passing through some other professional boundary, principals participate in a process of socialization. Socialization is most simply defined as the “learning of social roles” (Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1977). The socialization process usually begins with anticipatory socialization, which occurs before a principal assumes a specific position, but the process of socialization continues throughout the individual’s career (Greenfield, 1985c; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The principal begins the profession at the entry stage and then progresses through a hierarchy of socialization stages. Time alone may account for initial movement to higher stages of socialization, but some individuals are thought to plateau at certain stages, and progress no further (Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992).

When going through the socialization process, the individual is expected to adjust to the prevailing norms, or “rules of thumb” for that organization.
These adjustments make a cooperative effort possible and help the principal adopt the values and norms of the school (Hart, 1991). Simultaneously, the school must adjust to the new principal. Both the principal’s personal characteristics and the school’s organizational characteristics are important in this process. The key idea is that both the principal and the school bring something to the socialization process. That is, the principal goes through a period of adjustment to the school while the school is simultaneously adjusting to the principal. The socialization of beginning principals is a part of that interactive process.

Hart (1993) suggests that the socialization process includes professional socialization and organizational socialization. Professional socialization begins in principal training or preparation programs—often through master’s level university course work. As individuals secure administrative positions, they interact with others in the profession and begin to internalize the values and beliefs generally associated with the principalship. This identity-building process is identified as professional socialization.

Organizational socialization occurs when a principal enters a district or school as a new member of that social group. When considering the school as an organization, the process of socialization is thought to be important to the success of the new principal as he or she chooses to accept or reject the values of that particular organization (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1974).
Organizational socialization is a different process than professional socialization in that it teaches a principal the behaviors required in a particular role within a particular organization. The norms associated with a specific school context may be very different from those learned through the professional socialization process.

According to Hart (1993), beginning principals often experience both types of socialization—professional socialization to school administration and organizational socialization to a new school setting. The purpose of this study is to focus on the organizational socialization process by considering personal characteristics and school characteristics that may be related to that process. In addition, how organizational socialization occurs is also examined.

Theoretical Framework

Social Systems Theory

Any examination of the work of the first year principal is also an examination of the first year principal within an organization. The school organization is a system of social interaction—a system of personalities bound together in an interactive relationship. A social system is a bounded set of subsystems and activities that interact and make up a single social organization (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

As a social system, a school is characterized by an interdependence of parts, a clearly defined population, differentiation from its environment, a
complex network of social relationships, and a unique culture. The two basic elements of the social system model include the institutional and the individual. The institutional element is defined in terms of roles and expectations, and the individual element is defined in terms of the personalities and needs of the people in the system (Getzels & Guba, 1957).

The two basic elements of the social system, the institutional and the individual, each explain a portion of the behavior of individuals in systems. Taken together, they provide the basis for a theory of behavior which is an interaction between roles and personalities. An individual's behavior \( B \) is explained in terms of the interaction between role \( R \), defined by expectations, and the personality \( P \) of the individual. Thus, the model states that \( B = f(R \times P) \), or that behavior is a function of the organizational role and personality of the individual. The proportion of role and personality factors present varies from situation to situation. In schools, organizational behavior is thought to be a function of three key elements--bureaucratic expectations, informal norms, and individual needs and motives (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Contingency Theories of Leadership

Because the principal is the leader of the school, an examination of the work of the principal involves reflection on the individual's role as leader. The contemporary views of leadership incorporate the contingency approach. The contingency theories assert that a complete understanding of the work of school
administrators can only be developed by examining the link between personal characteristics and situational variables.

According to the contingency models, there is no one “best” style of leadership. Instead, the effectiveness of the leader is dependent on the interaction of the personality of the leader and organizational variables, such as the personal characteristics of subordinates or environmental demands (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

**Statement of the Problem**

The socialization process is important because it is a defining part of the principal’s work in the school during the first year, a critical time in the socialization process (Duke, Issacson, Sagor, & Schmuck, 1984). As the beginning principal moves into the new role, the difference between the job as it was imagined and the job as it actually exists becomes a reality. Parkay and Hall (1992) use the “sink-or-swim” metaphor to describe the enormity of the move into the principalship. Often, the new principal is literally “handed the keys,” and asked to begin the job with little formal monitoring or support. The principal’s philosophy or belief about the position, combined with the organizational characteristics of the school, result in a particular response to the socialization process.

Responses to the socialization process are thought to take on one of two forms—either custodial or innovative. A custodial response is assumed when
the principal accepts the existing state or condition of the role. Innovative responses occur when the principal enters a new position planning for change. Innovative responses are further defined to include both content innovation and role innovation. Content innovation involves some effort to improve or reform the responsibilities associated with the role. Role innovation responses are similar to content innovation responses, but go further in redefining the functions of the role (Schein, 1971).

A closer examination of the socialization process reveals a basic tenet of socialization theory. Drawing attention to the leader and the context simultaneously, this fundamental proposition suggests that socialization responses are functions of both individual characteristics and organizational contexts (Hart, 1993; Hurley, 1990). The effect that schools, as organizations, have on the socialization process of beginning principals is the main area of interest for this study. The problem area for this study is the new principals’ lack of awareness about the work life and demands that they will face. What occurs during the socialization process that may help lead to success? If new principals are better prepared for the realities of the position, perhaps they will be more likely to “swim” than “sink.”

When examining the socialization of beginning principals, most research is not very helpful in describing how this process occurs. Although it is known that different responses may occur, examining this process more closely is a
useful area for further study. By examining the principals’ personal characteristics and the schools’ organizational characteristics, more can be learned about the work life of beginning principals. The more that can be learned about the socialization process, the more that future principals can be helped to prepare for the job.

Source of the Problem

A new principal will usually gravitate toward one of two opposite poles—either custodial or innovative. Greenfield (1977b) reports that much of the role-related learning occurs during the transition from teaching to administration. Newcomers turn to established members of the administrative community for knowledge and advice about the principalship. At the point where prospective principals have the greatest need for socialization skills—entry to the profession—there is often little coordination between the theoretical and the practical sides of administration. For a beginning principal, the immediate and powerful forces of the organization often overpower the effects of the carefully structured formal training.

Understanding what both the individual and the organization bring to the socialization process may help reveal why particular responses result. Obviously, the principal is the main actor in this process; however, the school, or more precisely, the individuals in the school community (students, teachers, central office staff, and parents) also play a key role in determining the
orientation a principal may assume. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) point out that common sense, along with many research studies, tell us that contextual variables such as “organizational size, staff characteristics, technology, and environment” (p. 2) influence leaders in organizations. In spite of this, research concerning the school’s impact on school administrators has been limited. Considered in this way, the work of the principal is thought to be defined by the process that is a mutual result of the impact of both the principal and the school (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Hurley, 1990).

In this context, organizational socialization seems to establish a fit between the values and priorities of the school and those of the principal. A better understanding of the organizational forces which help shape the principals’ work is needed to make the transition during the first year as smooth as possible.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to describe the socialization process of beginning principals, and to examine the personal and school characteristics that may be associated with those experiences. The demographic characteristics of beginning principals were examined to search for relationships between those characteristics and the socialization experiences of the new principals. Through causal-comparative research methods, the quantitative component of the study was designed to answer the following research questions:
1. Is there a relationship between the *community type* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

2. Is there a relationship between the *age* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

3. Is there a relationship between the *ethnicity* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

4. Is there a relationship between the *gender* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

5. Is there a relationship between the *size of the school* where the beginning principals work and the socialization experiences of those principals?

6. Is there a relationship between the *type of school* (elementary, middle, secondary, combination) where the beginning principals work and the socialization experiences of those principals?

7. Is there a relationship between the *prior location* of the beginning principals' experience and the socialization experiences of those principals?

8. Is there a relationship between the beginning principals' *prior experience* and the socialization experiences of those principals?
In addition, using naturalistic research methods, the qualitative component of the study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do beginning principals' personal characteristics relate to the socialization process?
2. How do schools' organizational characteristics relate to the beginning principals' socialization process?

Importance of the Problem

By learning more about the work of beginning principals, future principals can be better prepared for the job. It is important to help principals become aware of the various stages of the principalship, or what Van Maanen (1977) calls the shape of the career. A career is a combination of ups, downs, and plateaus. Such understanding may help principals feel less inadequate, especially during the early stages of their careers. Also, principals may feel reassurance from the realization that the socialization process takes time, and that the ability to work through difficulties eventually leads to higher stages of socialization.

Some efforts to improve the preparation of school administrators revolve around strengthening formal course work and certification requirements (Greenfield, 1985b). Although training is important, the basic thesis of this study is that the specific organizational context has a significant impact on the
socialization of the new principal. This individual-organization interaction is thought to be the primary factor in determining a new principal’s behavior.

**Summary of Chapters**

Chapter 2 provides a review of selected literature based on the theory of socialization, research on the beginning principalship, professional socialization of beginning principals, and the organizational socialization of beginning principals. Implications and recommendations about the socialization process of beginning principals are also included.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology procedures for this study. This chapter includes a justification for the research framework, and a description of the sample, the methodology, instruments, and data collection and analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the quantitative component of this study. Through the causal-comparative framework, specific factors thought to be associated with the socialization process are examined.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the qualitative component of the study. Through the multiple-case study technique, the process of how principals are socialized is examined.

Chapter 6 summarizes the study. It includes the conclusions reached and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Principal Socialization

This literature review is based on the study of principal socialization to the profession and to existing school organizations. To better understand the organization socialization process of beginning principals, both the professional and organizational aspects of socialization are examined.

Research strategies used to identify pertinent literature included computer and manual searches of various sources, including: journals which were presumed to contain information relevant to the study; bibliographies of selected texts, papers, articles, and studies; and volumes of Dissertation Abstracts International. A computer search was conducted through Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). In addition, a manual search of Dissertation Abstracts International was conducted to identify relevant dissertation research. Examples of journals frequently cited include Educational Administration Quarterly and Journal of Educational Administration. Papers presented at annual meetings and found in Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) were used extensively.

The review begins with some concerns about the beginning principalship and a limited review of the socialization theory literature. This is followed by a review of related literature regarding the socialization of beginning principals.
More specifically, the socialization of beginning principals is examined, with an emphasis on the organizational socialization process. Finally, implications and recommendations about the socialization process during pre-service and entry into the principalship are discussed.

**Beginning Principals**

Many state education agencies, professional associations for school administrators, and university officials have predicted that the next few years will offer excellent career opportunities for men and women seeking positions as principals (Daresh, 1987a, 1987b, 1992). This is due to a variety of factors, including decreases in the number of individuals entering the field of education and increases in the number of students in some districts (Daresh, 1986).

This need for new principals, along with the notion that the principal is the *key* figure in the improvement of schools (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993), suggest a need to know more about the work of beginning principals. Although the growing need for new principals is supported by demographic statistics, many districts are not preparing administrative candidates for careers in the principalship (Daresh, 1987b). As more is learned about the principalship through beginning principal research, new principals may be better prepared for the job in the future (Parkay & Hall, 1992).
Research is also available which examines the induction of other educators, such as new teachers (Owen, 1991; Weiss, 1991) and superintendents (Fitzpatrick, 1992). A major study by Ryan, Newman, Mager, Applegate, Lasler, Flora, and Johnson (1980) also provides in-depth information about the experiences of first-year teachers.

Studies specific to the beginning principalship are reviewed later in this chapter, but most of these studies have found that the first year of the principalship is often characterized by a great deal of frustration, anxiety, and doubt (Daresh, 1987a, 1987b). Daresh (1986) also found that beginning principals’ concerns were in three main areas, including (1) problems with role clarification, (2) limitations concerning technical expertise, and (3) difficulties with socialization. Duke et al. (1984) revealed many of these same concerns in another study of new principals.

While some research has been conducted regarding the first year of the principalship, the focus has generally not been on the socialization process of the new principal. A bad beginning as a new principal can have disastrous results, even culminating in the firing of that individual (Barth, 1992; Kelleher, 1982). More specifically, there has been little attention directed toward the organizational socialization aspects of new principals. A gap in current knowledge exists regarding the school’s influence on the work of the beginning principal.
Socialization Theory

Definition

Stated simply, socialization is the “learning of social roles” (Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1957). Merton (1963) further defines socialization as the process by which individuals acquire the values and attitudes of the group. The framework on which the principal socialization research is based comes from a body of socialization literature that views the leader and the context simultaneously. Beyond these definitions, which essentially look at how members choose to adopt the norms of the group, socialization must also be examined in terms of the way a new work environment makes demands on the individual (Daresh, 1987b).

An even broader definition by Cistone (1977) states that socialization is a process by which new members become role incumbents. Theodorson and Theodorson (1979) consider the individual and the organization simultaneously by defining socialization as the process through which an individual becomes integrated into a social group by learning the group’s culture and the individual’s role in the group.

Organizational socialization has been studied from many different points of view. The field of sociology contributes information regarding the effects of the organization on the new member. The field of psychology provides a framework for examining the interactions between teachers and principals, and
social systems theory gives an explanation of why organizational forces often block new principals’ attempts at innovation (Hart, 1993).

In their often-cited work on organizational socialization, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) state that any theory of organizational socialization must follow three basic principles in order to be theoretically sound. First, the theory must tell where to look within an organization to observe the most salient aspects of socialization. Second, the theory must describe the various cultural forms organizational socialization can take. Finally, the theory must offer some explanation about why a particular form of socialization results in certain kinds of individual or collective outcomes rather than others.

Interaction

Hart (1993, p. 91) defines interaction between individuals as the “fundamental unit of analysis” when studying organizational socialization. Interaction is broadly defined as the overt actions, covert plans, and physical presence of one person that influence others in a cycle of exchange and communication. Methods or types of interaction provide a framework for explaining principal socialization events.

Interaction and culture. Turner (1988) and Schein (1985) provide models of interaction that are useful in interpreting the process of principal socialization. Schein states that organizational culture is the outcome of interaction among group members and between the group and elements in its
environment. Representing the deeper level of assumptions which are the result of learned responses to group problems, culture is the learned product of group experience. Culture is found only where there is a definable group with a significant history. Culture is more concretely identified as observed behavioral patterns, organizational norms of the group, prevailing dominant values, rules for getting along, and the general feeling or climate of the organization.

Turner's model of interaction differs from Schein's view of culture in that Turner's model attempts to unify motivation, interaction, and social structure. Motivation is a part of the process because people are willing to expend energy to interact with others in the group. In the interaction process, people set a course of behavior, interpret their own signals, and interpret the signals of others. They act in response to their interpretations, and the interaction series repeats itself. Structuring, the final element of Turner's model, explains how and why social interactions become structure.

Transformational leadership. Organizational cultures which yield highly collaborative working relationships between leaders and employees are thought to be the result of transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). The most basic reason for transformational leadership is the development of individual and problem-solving capacities of organizational members. According to Leithwood and Jantzi, transformational principals involve teachers in shared decision making processes in order to develop better solutions to
immediate problems, stimulate greater motivation and commitment on the part of teachers to a shared set of goals, and contribute to long term growth in the problem solving capacities of teachers.

**Multiple Process Theories**

Hart (1993) reviews several multiple process theories of interaction which provide some alternative frameworks for examining the interactions between beginning principals and the members of the existing school organization.

*Exchange.* In exchange theories, the relationships between a principal and teacher are personal and depend on the relative profit each person can gain from the relationship. For exchanges to work, the people involved do not need to fully maximize their rewards, but only need to make some profit in the exchange. The resulting gain is considered profit if it reflects progress toward goals accepted by others in the school, such as a favorable schedule or room assignment (Blau, 1964).

*Ethnomethods.* Ethnomethodology relies on detailed analysis of the interaction processes among people, especially the analysis of talk (Hart, 1993). Because so much of a principal’s work is verbal (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Martin & Willower, 1981), this may be a useful method of analysis for examining the principalship.
Schein (1985) realized the importance of understanding the group's conception of reality and cautioned researchers not to depend only on insiders for complete descriptions of the organization. Insiders cannot tell outsiders about assumptions that are so basic that they do not realize the existence of those assumptions. These patterns are out of the range of awareness for group members.

**Symbolic interactionism.** The basis of symbolic interactionism is found in the work of George Herbert Mead (1962). Mead attempts to reveal and explain human experiences about the family, social groups, and work groups from which all people draw support and purpose. The basic assumption of symbolic interactionism is that individuals, not groups or organizations, create and sustain group beliefs through interactions with others (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The unit of analysis is the individual, not the group.

**Dramaturgy.** Dramaturgy emphasizes the importance of the self-concept in shaping interactions. The concept of dramaturgy is based on the concept of "presentation of self" (Hart, 1993, p. 116). In this theory, developed by Goffman (1959), it is hypothesized that people interact with one another as actors on a stage, presenting themselves in the most advantageous manner in any given situation. These presentations may vary from situation to situation, depending on the social context.
Individuals skilled in the art of self-presentation may have an advantage in reading the social context of a given organization. These people can monitor themselves and others and scrutinize their own behavior for appropriateness to the situation. Also, skilled self-monitors are aware of both the “front” stage and the “back” stage of social interaction. Frontstage behavior requires careful monitoring for strict adherence to the expected actions. Backstage behavior is reserved for interactions with insiders in the social group, where some of the careful self-control may be released. Good actors understand the behaviors necessary and monitor both their frontstage and backstage behaviors.

Interaction rituals. Goffman also defines rituals as a primary function of dramaturgy. People assess the basic nature of work interactions as practical, ceremonial, or social. Collins (1985) stated that the goals of organizational members are based on which type of interaction any given situation falls. Practical work situations require that people interact to establish their place in the group authority structure. Ceremonial situations involve a different type of conversation aimed at establishing a sense of belonging and membership in the group. Social situations require people to use their resources to enhance their standing in groups. People enhance their cultural capital by recognizing and repeating successful social encounters, such as conversations with important members of the group.
Responses to Socialization

Any organizationally defined role includes what is known as a "bundle of tasks" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 226). Van Maanen and Schein explain that a role is the set of behaviors expected of a person who occupies a particular position within a particular organization. The three features of an organizationally defined role—knowledge base, strategy, and mission—and the accompanying norms are highly intertwined. As an individual goes through the socialization process, he or she is likely to respond according to some defined pattern.

When the new member begins to be an established part of the organization, the responses to the socialization process become evident. One useful socialization framework developed by Schein (1971) considers the possible responses to socialization to be either custodial, content innovative, or role innovative.

Custodial responses to socialization. A custodial response often reflects the new member's conclusion that the inherited past should be continued. Custodianship may be the easiest and most convenient response for a newcomer to assume. If the organization has been previously successful, why should it be changed?

When responding to the socialization process in a custodial manner, the new principal simply learns the substantive requirements of the job and
strategies necessary to meet these requirements (Hart, 1993). Consequently, at one end of the spectrum of responses is the custodial, or caretaking orientation to the role.

**Innovative responses to socialization.** At the other extreme is a set of responses collectively known as *innovative* (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). When a new principal feels uncomfortable or apprehensive about the organizational role as it exists upon arrival in the organization, he or she may attempt to bring about changes. Schein (1971) refers to this response as *content* innovation. It is characterized by the development of improvements in the knowledge base or essential practices of a particular role. Traditional norms may be accepted, but existing strategies are not.

*Role* innovation, which is similar to content innovation, is a more extreme form of the innovative responses. During role innovation, the new member may attempt to reject and redefine the major premises associated with the role. The new member rejects not only the strategies associated with the role as it previously existed, but also the norms directing conduct and performance of the role (Schein, 1971).

Custodial responses and innovative responses to socialization do not occur at the same rate. The most common outcome of socialization to the principalship is custodianship. Dantley (1989) refers to socialization responses
which maintain that the past is the primary source of organizational behavior as functionalist, meaning those strategies which preserve the status quo.

Van Maanen and Schein (1979) suggest that there are particular forms of socialization that enhance or retard the possibility of an innovative or custodial response to an organizationally defined role. Their well known tactical dimensions of organizational socialization are based on empirical observations and the social science literature.

**Tactical Dimensions of Organizational Socialization**

Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) tactics of organizational socialization refer to the ways in which the experiences of new individuals in an organization are structured for them by members of the organization. These tactics may be intentionally or unintentionally selected for them by others in the organization. Whether consciously or unconsciously selected, any socialization tactic represents a set of events which influences the newcomer. Taken together, these tactics are thought to influence the new member to respond in either a custodial or innovative manner. The following dimensions of socialization follow the fundamental proposition that people respond to organizationally defined roles differently because people and organizations differ, and because socialization processes differ from one organization to the next. These tactics are discussed separately, but are encountered in an organization simultaneously.
Collective versus individual socialization. Collective socialization refers to the tactic of taking new members of the group and putting them through a common set of experiences. Individual socialization refers to the process of socializing new members singly and in isolation through a set of unique experiences.

Formal versus informal socialization. Formal socialization is the process by which a newcomer is somewhat segregated from the group while going through the induction experience. Informal socialization processes do not distinguish the new member's role specifically, and there is little effort made to distinguish the new member from the other more experienced members of the group.

Formal socialization processes prepare new members to assume a particular role as well as the "correct" attitudes associated with that role. Formal tactics often emphasize the proper or accepted ways to achieve something in an organization. The informal process of learning through experience is often quite different. When going through the process of informal socialization, new group members must select their own socialization agents. Mistakes made in the informal socialization process are thought to be more costly, because they occur "on the job." Formal socialization processes often represent only the initial part of the socialization process. The second element,
informal socialization, frequently does not begin until an individual assumes a specific organizational role.

**Sequential versus random steps in the socialization process.** Sequential socialization refers to the extent to which the organization specifies a given sequence of distinct steps through which the new member must pass. Random socialization occurs when the sequence is unknown, ambiguous, or continually changing.

**Fixed versus variable socialization processes.** This dimension of the socialization process refers to the degree to which the various steps adhere to a precise timetable. Fixed socialization processes provide the new member with specific information about how long the socialization process will take. Variable socialization processes give the new member few indicators when to expect the next step. In the variable process, the newcomer must search for clues to predict when the next part of the process might occur.

**Serial versus disjunctive socialization processes.** A serial socialization process is one in which experienced members of the organization coach new members who are about to assume similar kinds of positions. The socialization process is thought to be disjunctive when new members are not following in the footsteps of immediate predecessors, and when no role models are available.

**Investiture versus divestiture processes.** Investiture socialization processes support and strengthen those personal characteristics the new
members bring with them to an organization. Divestiture processes attempt to deny certain personal characteristics of the new member. Often the degree to which a new member finds the socialization process to be an ordeal indicates the degree to which divestiture processes are operating.

Van Maanen and Schein’s (1979) model of socialization tactics presented here serves as one basis for examining the organizational socialization processes of new principals.

**Greenfield’s analysis of socialization tactics.** Using the Van Maanen and Schein model, Greenfield (1985a) argues that the socialization process for beginning principals has the following characteristics: (1) the socialization process is individual, (2) the informal character of the process makes it difficult for the new principal to know what is valued by the organization, (3) the steps and events of socialization appear to be random, (4) the time frame associated with the socialization process is variable, (5) the serial character of the process encourages continuity, and (6) subtle divestiture processes exist which may require new principals to disassociate from their orientation to the teacher group and adopt new values associated with the principalship.

**Socialization of Beginning Principals**

The move from teaching to administration is a critical phase in the professional development of principals (Crow, Mecklowitz, & Weekes, 1992). At this point, the new principal either develops the conviction to become an
innovative leader or adopts the organizational status quo of the previous administration (Greenfield, 1985a).

Daresh and Playko (1992) also consider the move from teaching to administration to be pivotal, and distinguish among three types of socialization processes which may occur during this time, including (1) anticipatory socialization, (2) professional socialization, and (3) organizational socialization.

Transition to the Principalship

The transition from teaching to the principalship involves socialization experiences that help to create not only the technical expertise but also the values and norms associated with the position. Differences in the socialization process may be responsible for differences in philosophy, such as adoption of a custodial or innovative orientation to the principalship (Crow et al., 1992).

Anticipatory socialization. Using a construct developed by Griffiths, Goldman, and McFarland (1965), Greenfield (1977a) and Wolcott (1973) describe the activities that precede the move from teaching to administration as GASing (Getting the Attention of Superiors). GASing, as a part of the larger framework of anticipatory socialization, is useful when studying the period prior to the first administrative position. The decision by teachers to become principals often occurs early in the career. In an effort to move from the classroom to administration, these teachers are thought to exhibit different behaviors than other teachers.
Often, anticipating the principalship is not enough to ensure appointment to an administrative position. Help from a sponsor, or mentor, may be critical in order to make the teacher-to-administrator transition. In a sponsorship situation, the candidate is selected by current administrators, and an elite status is then granted to that individual (Diederich, 1987; Wolcott, 1973).

Once appointed to the principalship, the recently sponsored individual can then become a sponsor for others (Hayden, 1990; Wolcott, 1973). After appointment, the behaviors used during the anticipatory phase become unnecessary. The difference in behavior exhibited by an individual during the anticipatory phase and by that person after becoming a principal is the result of a critical transformation. A great deal of this change occurs during the induction period, or first year, of the principalship (Diederich, 1987).

**Role learning.** The process of transition is marked by the learning of a new administrative role. The appointment to the position of assistant principal often serves as a transition for individuals moving from teaching into administration (Greenfield, 1985c). Although the assistant principalship is not the focus of this review, research by Greenfield (1977b, 1985c) indicates that a great deal of an administrator’s role-related learning occurs during this transitional period. However, recent research has found that a major subgroup of beginning principals are promoted directly from the classroom with no experience as an assistant principal. In a random sample of beginning
principals in 16 states, Parkay and Hall (1992) found that 34% of the principals had no administrative experience. In a study of New York City beginning principals (Crow & Pounders, 1994), 19% of the new principals were promoted directly from the classroom.

Regardless of the type of prior experience a principal has, transitions are significant. During transition periods, principals move from one organizational group to another, and important organizational boundaries are crossed. When an individual becomes accustomed to a familiar pattern, changing that pattern often leads to uncertainty. Additionally, the movement from teacher to administrator includes a role transition that involves a change in the individual's basic occupational assumptions. The teacher role must be discarded in order to adopt the role of administrator. Therefore, this transitional period involves not only a disassociation from one group and subsequent association with another group, but also learning the role that accompanies that new position.

**Role conception.** The notion of role conception provides a useful structure for understanding why principals adapt to their roles in different ways (Crow & Pounders, 1994). A principal's role conception is made up of the values and beliefs concerning why tasks are important, the ultimate purpose of the role, and what it means to be a school leader. The role conception of principals may be influenced by societal, occupational, organizational, or individual factors.
Beginning Principals Research

A number of research studies have been conducted which examine the socialization process of new principals in a general manner—not specific to professional or organizational socialization. In general, research on the first year of the principalship concludes that this is a time marked by apprehension, anxiety, and frustration (Daresh, 1992; Diederich, 1987; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Sussman, 1985; Roberts, 1993). Often, new principals are so discouraged after the first year that they consider leaving the principalship at that time (Duke et al., 1984).

Participant-observer framework. Several researchers have examined the socialization of beginning principals through a participant-observer framework. When the author of the study is the new principal being socialized, a unique view of the socialization process is provided (Hart, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1993; Hartman, 1985; Jaskowiak, 1992; O’Brien, 1988; Shackleford, 1992).

Direct observation. While participant-observation provides one perspective of the socialization process, direct observation also has proven to be invaluable in beginning principals research. According to Greenfield (1985c) direct observation is an underutilized approach for studying organizational administration. Although there are limitations to this method, data collected through direct observation over an extended period of time can provide important data about the principalship. There is no substitute for “thick”
description when the objective is a basic understanding of the social processes involved in educational administration (Greenfield, 1985c). In-depth case studies, such as the well-known work by Wolcott (1973), can provide basic understanding about the work of the school principal.

**Beginning and experienced principals.** Studies that compare the socialization of beginning and experienced principals find that differences exist between the two groups (Bogotch & Riedlinger, 1991; Daresh, 1992). Daresh found that discrepancies exist between beginning and experienced principals regarding the kinds of skills necessary to perform the job. Aspiring or beginning administrators place a much higher value on the demonstration of technical skills, while experienced administrators believe that it is more important for new principals to be socialized effectively. However, Bogotch and Riedlinger found that new principals enter the school system previously socialized, with little role ambiguity.

**Interactions.** According to Hart (1993), the socialization process for beginning principals is primarily achieved through personal interactions with teachers, students, parents, other administrators, and central office personnel. The primary means of socialization is personal communication.

In a self-study of the socialization process, Hart (1987) reports that a system of social interaction support developed from a variety of sources. For
example, principals from other schools assisted by visiting, sustaining, and supporting the new principal.

Dissertation research by Alvy (1983) and Sussman (1985) also provides support for the notion of socialization through interaction. Sussman states that the socialization process is a mutual one, involving the participation of teachers as well as administrators.

Assistant principals. There is a school of thought which parallels the work of the assistant principal to that of the principal, but the prevailing notion is that they are two separate and distinct positions. The notion of the assistant principalship as preparation for the principalship is thought to be an erroneous one (Greenfield, Marshall, & Reed, 1986; Hess, 1985). Socialization processes at work within the school organization often cause the assistant principal to adopt a managerial perspective rather than a innovative vision of school leadership.

Professional Socialization of Beginning Principals

In educational administration, Wolcott (1973) provided a classic description of the socialization process of a new principal. His study showed how the principal was influenced by central office personnel, peers, teachers, and administrative guidelines. The socialization of principals to the profession begins in training or pre-service preparation. Research on the professional socialization of beginning principals investigates the major variables that help to
develop the principal during this process (Duke et al., 1984; Greenfield, 1985a, 1985b). This model emphasizes the impact of the existing structure of administrators, training, university preparation, and professional associations on the new principal (Hart, 1993). As Leithwood, Steinbach, and Begley (1992, p. 286) explain, socialization is the "process by which an individual selectively acquires the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to adequately perform a social role, in this case the school principalship."

The process of socializing principals may begin during classroom teaching and administrator preparation. While teacher socialization may begin the administrative socialization process, it is more likely that teaching and administration are two separate and distinct careers (Duke, 1987; Hart, 1993). As principals acquire their first administrative positions and interact with other administrators, they begin to internalize the norms, values, and behaviors generally accepted as part of the profession. This role learning process is known as professional socialization.

Building on research from other professions, the principal professional socialization literature helps to establish a framework for the subsequent examination of organizational socialization of principals (Hart, 1993). When being socialized to a new profession, the individual builds up a repertoire of interpersonal responses that assists new-role learning. In Greenfield's (1977b)
study of new principals, the interaction of the learned interpersonal orientations and situational factors subsequently influenced the socialization outcomes.

In a major longitudinal study documenting the professional socialization of 12 first-time high school principals (Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992), it was found that during the socialization process, principals pass through five distinct stages: survival, control, stability, educational leadership, and professional actualization. The stages are thought to exist in a hierarchical pattern, but each principal does not necessarily go through every stage.

Using Parkay, Currie, and Rhodes’ (1992) results as a model, Parkay, Gmelch, and Rhodes (1992) developed a quantitative study to test this socialization framework. It was found that while principals typically pass from one socialization stage to the next, time in the principalship does not automatically result in entry to the higher stages of professional socialization, except at the lower levels.

Daresh (1986, 1987a, 1992) identified three major problem areas reported by principals in a study of new principals. Principals reported problems with role clarification, limitations on technical expertise, and difficulties experienced with the socialization to the profession and a particular school system. The principals discussed problems with “how to read” the signs of the system in which they were working. They wanted to know, “How were principals supposed to act?”
The 1984 study by Duke et al. identified four features of professional socialization to the principalship that they applied to principals' first years. These features are (1) duration of the socialization period, (2) mechanisms of socialization, (3) relationships between expectations and the realities of the job, and (4) formal and informal preparation for school administration. Principals in this study generally found that professional socialization experiences occurred during their first year as principals.

According to Hayden (1990), superintendents' communication of role expectations to principals is a significant factor in the professional socialization process. A systematic evaluation process is necessary for transmission of the instructional leader role. Hayden stated that a principal's role identity develops from focusing on the superintendent's instructional messages.

Recent dissertation research also provides some insight to the role-learning process of new principals. In a 1988 study, Akerlund reported difficulties with the role-learning process for new principals. The findings indicate that as principals encounter the "reality shock" of the first year, their expectations regarding the amount of control they could exert over on-the-job activities decline significantly.

O'Brien (1988) also examined the role-learning process of new principals and developed five themes central to this issue. It was reported that (1) concerns associated with role-taking in the principalship change throughout
the course of socialization, (2) anticipated roles and selected role messages are
different from role behaviors required for daily work, (3) novices interpret roles
to be human relations and politically oriented, (4) the legacy of predecessors
influence role interpretations and role performances, and (5) transitions from
outsider to insider are memorable, gradual, and sequential occasions of
feedback on role performances.

In a socialization study of new principals, Gaberina (1980) stated that
new principals gain their knowledge of the role from the following three
sources: (1) observation of principals while they were in other positions, (2)
conversations about the role with a principal while they were in another role,
and (3) informal transmittal of experiences from other principals once they were
on the job.

Organizational Socialization of Beginning Principals

When principals enter a school or district as new members of that
organizational culture, they experience the other type of socialization--
organizational socialization. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) define
organizational socialization as the process by which one is taught and learns
"the ropes" of a particular organizational role. Organizational socialization is
the process that teaches the new member the knowledge, values, and behaviors
expected within a particular organization. Professional socialization is more
closely related to the beliefs and attitudes associated with the profession in
general. The values and norms learned through the organizational socialization process may be very different from those learned during the professional socialization process (Hart, 1993).

**Context of organizational socialization.** The process of organizational socialization is imbedded in the context of the particular organization. This immediate and persuasive process often overpowers the effects of the more carefully structured professional socialization process (Duke, 1987). In many professions, including teaching and administration, the carefully planned formal study and internship experiences often yield to the immediate pressure of the new setting (Hart, 1993). Unfortunately, the process of socialization used by school districts to induct principals to their roles is often not adequate for the development of innovative leadership (Anderson, 1988).

**Organizational norms.** In their pioneering work on organizational socialization, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) were among the first to consider the effects of the group on the individual. Patterns of thought and action are passed down from one generation of the organization to the next, and the organization develops long-standing "rules of thumb." This process may be deliberate, or it may occur informally without awareness by either the organizational members or the role incumbent (Greenfield, 1985c). These shared beliefs help edit a member's work experience by acting as a sort of residual knowledge regarding what is and is not appropriate behavior within the
organization. All of these modes of behavior are fragmented to some degree, leading to various subcultures or segments within the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

New members to an organization or members passing through an organizational boundary experience organizational socialization. Organizational socialization research considers the organization’s effect on the new member, while leader succession research examines the new member’s effect on the organization as a whole (Hart, 1993). Either intentionally or unintentionally, organizations apply various tactics to integrate new members. Research in the area of organizational socialization of new principals may view the process through any of several frameworks, including (1) tactics used in the socialization process, (2) socialization stages through which new members pass, (3) the personal and social contexts that shape the entire process, or (4) the outcomes or effects of socialization practices likely to result from these factors (Hart, 1993).

One of the major problems of new principals reported by Daresh (1986, 1987a, 1992) is socialization to the organization. Here, principals seem to be questioning their “fit” into the specific school system. At issue were the implied expectations that principals should somehow understand the proper routes to be taken to survive and solve problems. Beginning principals,
especially those coming from other districts, feel naive regarding the effects of a political and social system they do not fully understand.

According to Greenfield (1985b, 1985c) organizational socialization processes are focused in two primary areas—moral socialization objectives and technical socialization objectives. Moral socialization is concerned with the acquisition and internalization of group norms, values, and attitudes. Completing formal preparation and certification requirements are necessary but not sufficient for appointment to an administrative position. One must also demonstrate adequate knowledge of the values, attitudes, and beliefs associated with the position. Technical socialization is concerned with the development and appropriate use of the knowledge, skills, and associated behaviors needed in a particular role or position.

Dissertation research by Shackleford (1992) yields the following cultural themes regarding the socialization of a first-year principal: (1) socialization directed toward aspiring instructional leaders can be coercive, and (2) coercive socialization is more apt to occur at the building level by "squeaky wheels." Socialization of principals is a phenomenon that results from the interaction of the vision of the principal and the existing norms of the school culture.

A study by Hurley (1990) indicates that the organization plays a major role in the socialization of the new principal in the following ways: (1) both supervisors and teachers influence principals' leadership behavior, (2)
principals receive strong, consistent messages to become involved with student personnel issues, (3) teachers limit principals' power in the areas of curriculum development and staff personnel issues, and (4) selection interviews convey powerful messages to principals about job expectations.

Implications From Principal Socialization Research

The results of socialization research show that there is need for change in the current method of socialization. Daresh (1986) states the following implications for new school principals: (1) principals need a better type of practicum to let them experience the world of administration before they take their first job; (2) specialized inservice training needs to focus on issues of daily, practical concern; (3) new principals need more collegial support, perhaps a sort of "buddy" system; and (4) principals need patient mentors available to talk about job concerns.

Pre-service Suggestions

Although some aspects of the socialization process cannot begin until the principal has been appointed, several researchers agree that administrative training programs should address this issue prior to appointment. Dubin (1987) discusses the need to socialize administrator candidates to their new roles through experiential interaction using case studies, close supervision, and videotaping in graduate training programs.
An administrator licensing framework developed by Chester and Pecheone (1992) recommends a socialization component during inservice preparation, along with a continued study of educational administration during the beginning years of administrative service. The idea that the socialization process should be shared by the university training programs and the school districts is also advanced in dissertation research by Akerlund (1988) and Marrion (1983).

Socialization Suggestions

Several research studies conclude with suggestions for improving the socialization process of beginning principals. Crow et al. (1992) recommend that the socialization experience include the following: (1) grounding in multiple perspectives, (2) the development of organizational diagnosis skills to help future administrators understand the complex social system of schools, (3) an understanding of how change can occur in school settings and the development of a repertoire of skills for intervening in educational organizations, (4) a collegial approach, (5) a close relationship between faculty and students that nurtures the values and norms of an innovative role orientation, (6) a close relationship between school and university that increases the credibility that the preparation is valid for "real work," and (7) a blending of administrator and teacher perspectives.
Hurley, in a 1990 study of school administrators, gives the following suggestions for improving the socialization process for principals: (1) identification of school needs and evaluation of the principal’s role prior to the selection process, (2) involvement of teachers in the development of the selection process, and (3) the creation of a principal socialization committee after selection.

Mentoring

Mentoring is thought to be an important component of the socialization process, both before and after appointment to the principalship. Mentoring for beginning principals is recommended in studies by Cohn and Sweeny (1992), Daresh (1987b, 1988, 1992), and Peterson (1986). Helping principals develop a vision of leadership through mentoring is likely to be at least as important as the traditional aspects of principal preparation (Daresh, 1992).

Summary

This chapter reviews the literature pertinent to all aspects of the socialization of beginning principals, including socialization theory, professional socialization, organizational socialization, and implications for socialization research. Specifically, research findings in the area of organizational socialization indicate the need for additional investigation. While earlier studies of the principalship were primarily investigations about styles of leadership and identification of leader traits, later work has
begun to recognize the importance of the context in which principals work. Knowing that the principal/organization relationship is a reciprocal one influences the agenda for future research. Evidence has been provided to suggest that principal effectiveness may be tied to the conditions under which the socialization process occurs.

While previous research has examined the socialization of beginning principals, the primary interest has been in the area of socialization to the profession. There still exists a research gap concerning the organization’s influence on the new principal. Thus, the focus of this review is to examine the organizational socialization process of beginning principals, and the impact that process has on the principal’s work in the school.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Socialization to the school organization is an important component of the induction process for beginning principals. The initiation process is thought to be important, because new principals need to develop their professional identities in order to become proactive leaders who can make a difference in schools. (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Parkay & Hall, 1992). Whether they are conscious of it or not, principals in any new school setting are involved in the process of organizational socialization. The purpose of this study is to examine this process. Stated informally, the fundamental questions driving the research study are, “How does the school ‘break in’ the new principal?” and “What factors account for differences in the socialization experiences of new principals?” If the way that a principal is socialized by a school has an impact on that principal’s work, then the socialization process is worthy of examination.

Much of the previous work in the area of principal socialization focused on the professional aspect of socialization. Professional socialization, or how the principal learns the principal’s role, is important; however, the organizational socialization process needs further study. Previous research in the area of principal socialization provides several possible frameworks for the continued study of this problem. This study is based on the notion that
organizational socialization does occur, with a major emphasis on how it occurs.

The approach taken here reflects a commitment to the mixed methodology strategy of research, using both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to study selected issues in depth, while quantitative methods use standardized measures which can be fit into predetermined categories to which numbers are assigned. By using both strategies, the results are thought to be strengthened and more robust (Patton, 1990).

Research Design

The combination of methodologies, or triangulation, is thought to strengthen a study by providing multiple sources of data. Denzin (cited in Patton, 1990) has identified four types of triangulation, including: (1) data triangulation, (2) investigator triangulation, (3) theory triangulation, and (4) methodological triangulation. While a variety of mixes are possible, this study used methodological triangulation, or the use of multiple methods, to study the problem. Survey techniques were employed to gather quantitative data, while qualitative techniques were used to develop a series of case studies. The qualitative design is based on the inductive process of naturalistic inquiry, and the quantitative design is based on the hypothetico-deductive model (Patton, 1990). Both components of the study were conducted during the fall semester.
of the 1994-1995 school year. Because it is thought that the most pronounced aspects of socialization occur during an individual’s initial phase in a new position (Parkay & Hall, 1992), the data were gathered during the first semester of the school year.

**Quantitative Research Design**

The quantitative element of the study is built on the causal-comparative research framework. Because this part of the study examined naturally occurring phenomenon to search for possible relationships between defined groups, the causal-comparative method was employed (Borg & Gall, 1989). In this study, personal and school characteristics were examined to determine the relationship between those characteristics and the principals’ socialization experiences.

The quantitative component of the study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the *community type* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

2. Is there a relationship between the *age* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

3. Is there a relationship between the *ethnicity* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?
4. Is there a relationship between the gender of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

5. Is there a relationship between the size of the school where the beginning principals work and the socialization experiences of those principals?

6. Is there a relationship between the type of school (elementary, middle, secondary, combination) where the beginning principals work and the socialization experiences of those principals?

7. Is there a relationship between the prior location of the beginning principals' experience and the socialization experiences of those principals?

8. Is there a relationship between the beginning principals' prior experience and the socialization experiences of those principals?

To gather information about the socialization experiences of beginning principals in Louisiana, an existing principal socialization instrument, the Principal Socialization Inventory (Parkay, Gmelch, & Rhodes, 1992) was modified for use in this study.

Qualitative Research Design

Case studies of six Louisiana beginning principals form the basis of the qualitative component of the study. The six principals were selected to
represent a cross section of different characteristics, as defined by the demographic categories described in the quantitative component of the study.

Through case study techniques (Yin, 1989), the six principals were observed and interviewed during the first semester after their appointment to the principalship. Both the quantitative and qualitative components of the study focus on the personal characteristics and the organizational characteristics of the beginning principals. However, while the quantitative element primarily examines the principals' socialization level, the qualitative component explores how the personal and organizational forces work to result in a particular response to the socialization process (Schein, 1971). In addition, the resulting stages, or levels of socialization are explored (Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992). In an effort to reveal the forces at work in this process, the qualitative component of the study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do beginning principals’ personal characteristics relate to the socialization process?

2. How do schools’ organizational characteristics relate to the beginning principals’ socialization process?

According to Yin (1989), case studies are the preferred research strategy when how or why questions are being studied, when the researcher has little control over the events studied, and when the focus is on a contemporary event
in a real-life context. This description is appropriate for an examination of the beginning principal socialization process in the context presented here.

Studies that contain more than a single case use the multiple-case design. Multiple-case designs have some advantages and disadvantages in comparison to single-case designs. The evidence from multiple cases may be considered more compelling, with the overall study being thought of as more robust. When using the multiple case design, every case is selected to serve a specific purpose. Cases are selected to produce either similar results (a literal replication) or contrary results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication) (Yin, 1989). In this study, contrary results were expected, based on the varying demographic characteristics of the principals.

Sample

This study builds on earlier work concerning school principals, and more specifically, beginning principals (Daresh, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Hart, 1993). In this study, a beginning principal is defined as an individual who is in his or her first year as a school principal. This definition excludes individuals who are new principals in a particular school, but were previously principals in some other school.

Traditional sampling techniques require a comprehensive definition of the entire pool of potential subjects, followed by a statistical procedure for selecting the specific subset of respondents to be studied. This type of sampling
logic is necessary for quantitative research designs, but inappropriate for case studies. Case study principals were purposely selected based on their specific personal and organizational characteristics (Yin, 1989).

The general population for this study is the total population of beginning school principals. The information derived from this study would be useful to any school principal in analyzing the social factors that influence their work in any new situation. Because all school principals are, at one time, beginning school principals, the study is applicable to all school principals.

**Quantitative Sampling Technique**

Before the beginning of the 1994-95 school year, the 66 school districts in Louisiana submitted a comprehensive list of 1,441 public school principals to the Bureau of School Accountability at the Louisiana Department of Education (Louisiana Department of Education, 1994a). A manual comparison of that list to a list of all 1993-94 public school principals provided in the *1993-94 Louisiana School Directory* (Louisiana Department of Education, 1994b) resulted in an exhaustive listing of 302 individuals with new school assignments for the 1994-95 school year. According to this process, 21% of the public schools in Louisiana were identified as having new principals for the 1994-95 school year.

Of the 302 surveys mailed, 245 (81.1%) were returned. Based on the demographic information provided by the principals, 58 principals were
identified as transfer principals. A transfer principal is defined as an experienced principal with a new school assignment. Transfer principals were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a usable sample of 187 first-year principals. The unit of analysis is the individual school principal.

**Qualitative Sampling Technique**

**Sample.** Only individuals identified as first-year principals by the survey instrument were considered as potential case study subjects. Six principals were selected using the following basic framework: two elementary principals (one metropolitan and one non-metropolitan), two middle school principals (one metropolitan and one non-metropolitan), and two secondary principals (one metropolitan and one non-metropolitan).

In addition, the principals were purposely selected to represent most of the demographic subgroups identified in the survey instrument. The subgroups represented by at least one case study principal are as follows: community type (rural, town, urban fringe, metropolitan); age (30-39, 40-49); ethnicity (African-American, Caucasian); gender (female, male); school size (250-499, 500-749, 750-999, 1000+); school type (elementary, middle, secondary); prior experience (assistant principal, teacher); and prior location (within school, outside school).

**Sample selection.** The six case study principals were selected to represent the demographic subgroups described in the preceding section. The Central Office of each school district in the sample was contacted to get
permission to contact the school principal. The larger districts requested written documentation about the research project before permission was granted, while the smaller districts granted permission by telephone. Once permission was given, the principals were contacted by telephone to schedule a convenient time for a two-day visit. A letter was then sent to each principal restating the purpose of the study and confirming the dates for the school visit.

**Instrumentation**

Because the two parts of the study are based on different methodological frameworks, different types of instruments were used for the quantitative and qualitative components of the study. The quantitative element of the study used traditional survey techniques, while the case study data were gathered through observation and interview techniques.

**Quantitative Instrumentation**

*Instrument.* The quantitative component of the study is designed to provide information about relationships that exist between subgroups of principals and their socialization experiences. The survey used in this study (see Appendix A) is based on the *Principal Socialization Inventory* (PSI), a self-report instrument developed by Parkay, Gmelch, & Rhodes (1992). One component of the PSI is a set of 14 Likert scale items designed to assess principals' level of socialization, based on previously established stages of socialization, as defined by the *Professional Socialization Hierarchy* (Parkay,
Currie, & Rhodes, 1992). The stages of socialization identified by the *Professional Socialization Hierarchy* include: (1) survival, (2) control, (3) stability, (4) educational leadership, and (5) professional actualization. The PSI consists of several items designed to describe different aspects of the socialization process. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale measuring the degree to which the principal believes the statement describes his or her experiences. Most new principals begin at the survival stage, and progress upward through the hierarchy over time (Parkay & Hall, 1992).

**Reliability.** The instrument was modified, and the reliability scores of the PSI were calculated on the data collected, using Cronbach’s *coefficient alpha* technique. Cronbach’s alpha is a form of the K-R 20 formula that can be used when items are not scored dichotomously (Borg & Gall, 1989). One of the most important indicators of the scale’s quality is the reliability coefficient measured by alpha. Problems associated with Likert scales, such as noncentral means, poor variability, or low item-scale correlations, tend to reduce the alpha coefficient. The alpha associated with this administration of the modified PSI was calculated to be .76. According to DeVellis (1991), an alpha level between .70 and .80 is considered respectable.

**Validity.** Before the administration of the survey instrument, scale items were analyzed by three current and previous school administrators and three Louisiana Department of Education staff members to assure content validity.
The scale items were analyzed for clarity and focus, with the respondents providing written and verbal feedback. In order for each item to represent only a single idea, the wording of some scale items was modified and simplified from the original scale. The modified version of the Principal Socialization Inventory was sent to all principals in the sample.

**Data collection.** The survey instrument was mailed to the beginning principals approximately two months after the beginning of the 1994-95 school year. The survey was attached to a brief letter describing the study (see Appendix B), and a stamped envelope was included. Follow-up letters (see Appendix C) encouraging participation were mailed to those principals who did not return the survey within a three-week period (Borg & Gall, 1989).

**Variables.** In addition to the Likert items, the survey instrument included a section which requested demographic information from the beginning principals. The demographic information provided by the principals, along with additional data from the Bureau of School Accountability at the Louisiana Department of Education (1994a) was used in the data analysis procedures. A brief summary of each variable is presented below.

The principals were asked to provide their age in years, based on the following ranges: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, or 60 or above.
The principals were asked to indicate their *ethnicity*, based on the following categories: African-American, White, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, or Alaskan Native/American Indian.

The principals were asked to identify their *gender*, either female or male.

The principals were asked to provide their *school size*, based on student enrollment. The following categories were provided describing the student population: less than 250, 250-499, 500-749, 750-999, or 1000 or greater.

The principals were asked to provide the grade levels taught at their school. This information was then converted to a *school type*, based on categorization procedures used by the Bureau of School Accountability at the Louisiana Department of Education (1994a). The definitions used for categorization are as follows: An elementary school is any school whose grade structure falls within the range of PK-8 and is not a middle school. A middle school is any school containing grades 7 or 8 whose grade structure falls within the range of 4-9, excluding K-3 and 9-12. A secondary school is any school whose grade structure falls within the range of 6-12 and must include grades 10-12. A combination school is any school whose grade structure is not described by the above definitions (typically K-12).

The principals were asked to provide the location of their prior *experience* during the 1993-94 school year, based on the following categories:
same school as this year, same district as this year/different school, or different
district than this year.

The principals were asked to identify their work *experience* during the
preceding school year (1993-94), based on the following categories: assistant
principal, teacher, principal at a different school, Central Office staff, or other.
Individuals who identified themselves as principals during the 1993-94 school
year were excluded from the sample.

Data was collected about the schools' *community type* from the
Louisiana Department of Education (1994a), based on the following community
codes: A rural area is defined as an area with 2,500 inhabitants or fewer. A
town is defined as an area having a minimum population of 2,500 inhabitants
which is not contiguous to any city or urban area. A city is defined as an area
having a minimum population of 25,000 which is not a metropolitan core city or
urban fringe area. An urban fringe area is defined as having a minimum
population of 2,500 inhabitants and is a closely settled area contiguous to a
metropolitan core city. A metropolitan core city is defined as being a social and
economic hub area with a minimum population of 25,000 inhabitants.

The demographic characteristics described above represent the
independent variables in the study. The dependent variables (socialization
level, vision, and dependence on staff) were extracted from the PSI Likert scale
items.
**Scale development.** Using the PROC CORR procedure (SAS Institute Inc., 1985a), the data from the 14 items of the *Principal Socialization Inventory* were entered in a correlation matrix to determine relationships between scale items (see Appendix D). The original intercorrelation matrix shows a pattern of low to moderate negative and positive correlations between scale items. Based on negative correlations with the other scale items and qualitative review, items 1, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were reverse scored. The resulting matrix, containing primarily positive correlations, is presented in Appendix E.

**Factor analysis.** Factor analysis was used to indicate the extent to which the instrument measured socialization concepts or constructs that accounted for performance on the instrument. Factor analytic techniques, used to identify latent variables in the instrument, are frequently used to confirm the existence of such constructs (Teddlie, Virgilio, & Oescher, 1990).

After reverse scoring, the 14 items were then analyzed using the factor analysis procedure (PROC FACTOR, SAS Institute, 1985b) to determine the number of factors represented in the 14-item scale. The varimax rotation option was used to determine how many dependent variables were imbedded within the PSI scale items. The varimax option, which maximizes variance of squared loadings (i.e., correlations of items with factors) is the most common orthogonal rotation method (DeVillis, 1991).
Four factors were initially chosen based on eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Three factors were chosen for further analysis based on the following criteria: an eigenvalue greater than 1.0, an appropriate positioning on the scree plot, a factor loading value greater than .50, and further qualitative review of the related scale items. A three-factor solution was then forced through the PROC FACTOR procedure, and the resulting factor pattern is shown in Appendix F.

Of the three identified factors, one related to the socialization level, one to the concepts leading to a particular socialization response, and the third to the socialization process. The dependent variables were identified as socialization level (items 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, and 14), vision (items 9 and 10), and dependence on staff (items 3 and 8). Because items 4, 6, and 11 showed factor loadings below .50 on the three identified factors, these items were omitted from further data analysis.

All retained factors had an eigenvalue of 1.0 or greater, and the three factors accounted for 60% of the variance in item responses. All scale items within a given factor had factor loading values of .50 or greater.

According to Parkay et al. (1992), the original Professional Socialization Inventory was developed to identify the beginning principals’ level, or stage of socialization. Based on the factor analysis procedures, this information about the socialization level is available from scale administration, along with limited information about the principals’ vision and dependance on staff. The vision
component is thought to be related to the custodial and innovative socialization responses, as described by Schein (1971), while dependence on staff is a part of the socialization process.

**Data analysis.** A three-step procedure was used to determine the most likely predictors of the variance in the dependent variables. Using stepwise regression analysis, analysis of variance procedures, and descriptive statistics, the data were analyzed to search for possible relationships between independent and dependent variables.

First, each dependent variable was examined using stepwise regression analysis (PROC STEPWISE, SAS Institute, 1985b). Stepwise regression selects one independent variable at a time, in order of the strength of the relationship with the dependent variable ($p < .15$). Stepwise regression also includes only independent variables that are significantly linearly related to the dependent variable. Collinearity is reduced because inclusion of one independent variable is likely to eliminate a highly correlated second independent variable (Keller, Warrack, & Bartel, 1988). Regression analysis assumes that the variables are interval-scaled and linearly related; however, several of the collected variables were originally nominal-scaled. The independent variables *community type, age, and school size* were used in the form originally entered. Dummy variables were created for the independent variables *ethnicity, gender, school type, prior location, and prior experience* in
order to meet the interval scale requirement. These variables were recoded to have only two values \((0, 1)\), resulting in an intervals which were consistent and constant (Keller, Warrack, & Bartel, 1988).

Secondly, based on the results of the stepwise regression procedure, the selected independent variables were then analyzed using analysis of variance procedures \((p < .05)\) (PROC ANOVA, SAS Institute, 1985b). Analysis of variance is used to test more than one independent variable, and the interaction effect of those variables, against one dependent variable.

In addition, the demographic information is presented through the use of descriptive statistics and the chi-square \((\chi^2)\) test of association. Frequency distributions and percentages of demographic subgroups are presented to give an overview of the entire sample of beginning principals. Chi-square analyses \((p < .05)\) were conducted (SAS Institute Inc., 1985a) to determine if the distribution of principals by subgroup was proportional to the overall sample. Differences in the socialization experiences of beginning principals which exist between groups may be due to uneven distributions of those subgroups.

**Qualitative Instrumentation**

In qualitative research, humans are the primary data gathering instrument (Patton, 1990). Information about the case study subjects was collected through direct observation and personal interviews. According to Yin (1989), case study design must indicate not only how the data are to be collected, but also
what is to be done with the data after it is collected. The unit of analysis is the same in all parts of the study—the school principal.

Validity. As the internal control over the environment increases, the ability to generalize beyond that environment decreases (Patton, 1990). External validity of qualitative findings refers to the degree to which the findings can be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn (Borg & Gall, 1989). In the qualitative component of this study, the interest is in determining what generalizations can be drawn from the six case study principals to the work of all beginning principals. Qualitative research examines a research area holistically in order to gather a better understanding of the problem. While expansion of the scope of a study increases generalizability and comparability, in-depth analysis of a smaller group also adds deeper meaning to the comparison (Rist, 1982). According to Patton (1990), qualitative methods are used to gather data on any number of aspects of the setting to put together a complete picture of the problem area.

Because generalization in qualitative research is difficult, Patton (1990, p. 487-488) suggests “particularization” to give detailed meaning to the research. Particularization involves knowing the particular details of a given subject or area in an in-depth manner. To generalize, the research design should do as much as practically possible to extend the findings beyond the limited
sample. Each possible generalization should be regarded as only a working hypothesis, to be tested again in future research.

Experimental designs that are narrowly focused may lose any meaning beyond the experimental situation, and case studies that yield little information beyond the case study setting are also of limited value. Instead, a design that balances both the narrow and broad aspects of research permits a reasonable \textit{extrapolation} of the findings to other settings. Extrapolation suggests that the researcher has gone beyond the findings of the study to consider other applications of the findings. Extrapolations are modest suppositions that the qualitative findings may be applicable to findings in other situations under similar conditions (Patton, 1990).

To increase generalizability in this study, the multiple case design is used (Yin, 1989). The results of the multiple-case study analysis suggest that similar patterns may be found in other groups of beginning principals. Also, the results of the study are used to clarify aspects of the socialization process in need of further study.

\textbf{Data collection.} Observations and interviews were the primary methods of data collection in the case study component of this study. In an effort to closely examine the \textit{how} aspect of principal socialization, two-day observations were conducted at each of the six schools. Because the principals’ work is primarily verbal (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986) and socialization is primarily
based on interaction (Hart, 1993), patterns of interaction among the principals, teachers, and students were of particular interest. Interactions were observed along several dimensions, including: shared decision making--autocratic decision making, open style--closed style, and formal--informal interactions.

A formal exit interview was conducted at the end of each school visit. Using Patton's (1990) interview guide approach, each exit interview was conducted using a predetermined set of initial questions (see Appendix G). The questions were developed to provide information about the following dimensions of socialization: general school context, promotion context, prior experience, and training. In addition, several questions were developed to determine which personal and organizational forces had the greatest impact on the principals’ work. The final two questions were related to the principals’ socialization response, either custodial or innovative. The interview guide approach provided a framework to help make the interviewing process systematic, while still allowing for some flexibility. Based on the responses to the initial questions, follow-up questions were explored.

As the data were collected, information was recorded longhand during the school observations. Using a tape recorder, general impressions of the school were recorded on the way to and from the school. At the conclusion of each day of observation, the data were entered into a word processing program to aid in later coding. While being entered into the word processing program,
additional information recalled from the school visit was recorded along with
the original data.

**Variables.** The qualitative portion of the study is based on an
examination of relationships that may exist between different actors in the
socialization process. Based on the principal’s personal characteristics and the
school’s organizational characteristics, key components of the organizational
socialization process were examined. The variables examined in this
component of the study were the principals’ personal characteristics and the
characteristics of his or her school. These aspects were studied to determine the
relationship and patterns which existed between these components and the
organizational socialization process.

**Data analysis.** The qualitative data are presented through the use of
within-site analysis and cross-site analysis. The within-site analysis provides a
description of the socialization experiences of each individual “case study,” or
principal. Each case is described in some detail in an effort to “paint a picture”
of the site. In an effort to increase generalizability, a cross-site analysis is also
provided to compare and contrast the socialization experiences of the six case
study principals. By comparing cases, there is a greater potential for
explanation than the single case can deliver (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

The analysis of observation and interview data provides an overall
impression of the work of the beginning principal, with particular emphasis
given to the socialization process. As the fieldnotes were entered into a word processing program, the data were reorganized to fit into predetermined "bins," or categories (Miles & Huberman, 1984) to aid in data management. Using the constant comparative technique of data analysis developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the data were sorted according to the following system.

The first step in the sorting process was to unitize the data into smaller and more manageable segments. Each bit, or segment of information then represented a thought or statement to itself. The sorting process was done manually, using printouts of the reorganized original data.

After the data was unitized, the categorization process began, with each segment of information being examined for its basic theme or topic. Based on a "look alike/sound alike" process, each subsequent segment of information was then compared to previous pieces of information. As the data were examined, categories of information emerged. After the categories were developed, a set of rules, or propositional statements, was developed to fit each category. This categorization process yielded the general themes of the qualitative portion of the study.

The data from the case studies were analyzed using within-site and cross-site analysis techniques (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The six principals were described and compared on the basis of the primary socialization forces encountered in their work, their responses to the socialization process (Schein,
1971), and their resulting socialization stage, or level (Parkay, Gmelch, & Rhodes, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992).

The cross-site analysis was conducted to search for patterns from the different cases. After standardizing the cross-site data in the within-site analysis, the data were examined for overall themes. In an effort to reduce the data, much of the cross-site analysis is presented through the use of summary tables, site-ordered descriptive matrices, and contrast tables.

**Limitations of the Study**

The *Principal Socialization Inventory* is one of the few available instruments in the area of principal socialization. However, much of the instrument is focused on the professional socialization of beginning principals. In addition, the instrument is very new (Parkay, Gmelch, & Rhodes, 1992), and little reliability information is available.

The quantitative aspect of the study depends on the self-reporting of data by the principals, which always is cause for some concern in research. The relatively large sample size eases this concern somewhat, but the data is only as accurate as is provided by the principals in the sample. Due to the ex post facto research design, causality cannot be determined. It may be seen that some relationships are identified between variables, but these may exist in a reciprocal, rather than causal framework.
The qualitative component of the study is primarily based on information provided by the principals. More detail about the socialization experience could be gathered if focus groups of teachers had also been included in the interview process.

Because the entire sample is from a single state, it must be noted that characteristics unique to that state may affect the external validity of the findings. Although the findings may be cautiously extrapolated to the larger population of beginning principals, generalizability is always a concern in qualitative research.
CHAPTER FOUR: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

The data were analyzed using a three-part approach. Using stepwise regression analysis and follow-up analysis of variance procedures, each independent variable was examined to search for possible relationships with the dependent variables. In addition, some additional analyses were performed using descriptive statistics. Through this process, the dependent variables *socialization level*, *vision*, and *dependence on staff* are each examined separately. The independent variables that were used in the regression model were: *age*, *ethnicity*, *gender*, *school size*, *school type*, *prior location*, *prior experience*, and *community type*.

Socialization Level as the Dependent Variable

Stepwise regression analysis of the dependent variable *socialization level* shows that none of the independent variables entered at the $p < .15$ level; therefore, no follow-up ANOVA analysis was conducted on this variable. However, individual differences in the socialization level of the principals were discovered, and these differences are reported through the use of descriptive statistics, including range, mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution.

The principal’s socialization level represents the degree to which the principal has been socialized to his or her school. A higher score represents a more controlled situation, and possibly a smoother transition to the
principals were thought to be at higher socialization levels if they gave responses which indicated that things were "running pretty smoothly" or that they were "nearly always in the classrooms." Items which indicated that the principals did not "have enough hours in the day" or that they were "experiencing overload" were thought to show lower levels of socialization.

The principals in the sample showed a wide range of scores on the socialization level variable, from 8 to 35 out of a possible range of 8 to 40. However, as noted above, this variation is not explained by any of the demographic independent variables entered into the model. The mean score for the principals' socialization level is 15.85, and the standard deviation is 4.65. An examination of the scores indicates that the frequency distribution is positively skewed, or "bunched up" at the low end of the scale (Glass & Hopkins, 1984), indicating that many of the principals are at the lower levels of socialization. However, within the lower range, the scores are normally distributed, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Although the differences in the overall level of socialization for the principals are not significantly related to demographic categories such as age, race, sex, or school size, individual differences were found. These differences were found to be a function of the unique interaction of the principals' personal characteristics and the schools' organizational characteristics. This variation is
due to factors which are better explained through qualitative research, and are discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

**Vision as the Dependent Variable**

The correlation matrix for the dependent variable *vision* and the eight independent variables is presented in Table 1. Generally low correlations indicate that few of the independent variables are strong predictors of the principals' vision.

The stepwise regression analysis of the dependent variable *vision* shows that only the independent variables *ethnicity* and *school type* entered the model at the $p < .15$ level. The results of the stepwise regression analysis are shown in Table 2.
Table 1. Intercorrelations of Variables Used in Predicting Principals’ Vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School Size</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Prior Location</th>
<th>Prior Exper.</th>
<th>Comm. Type</th>
<th>Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>.08</td>
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<td>.11</td>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>-.23</td>
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<td>(Afr. Amer.=0, White=1)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(F=0, M=1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
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<td>.23</td>
<td>-.13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.14</td>
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<td>.12</td>
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<td>(Asst. Prin.=0, Not Asst. Prin.=1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Type</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. The data in this table are based on 178 observations.

Table 2. Stepwise Regression Results for Principals’ Vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Entered</th>
<th>Partial R²</th>
<th>Model R²</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Ethnicity</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>8.99 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: School Type</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .01

Based on this initial analysis, a 2 x 2 analysis of variance was employed to further test the significance of the relationships among the variables.

ANOVA results indicated that the independent variables ethnicity and school type have a statistically significant relationship with the principals’ vision.

Scale items measuring the principals’ vision are thought to represent higher
level components of the socialization process. These items relate to the principals' leadership and development of new ideas, as compared to other items which measure the more practical routine operations of the school. The ANOVA results for vision are presented in Table 3 below. No interaction effects were found between the independent variables and vision.

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Principals' Vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.68 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Type</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.46 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity x School Type</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>173.92</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>193.19</td>
<td>163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05  
** p < .01

An examination of the means for the two significant independent variables reveals that higher levels of vision were recorded by African-American principals and elementary principals. African-American principals were found to have higher vision scores (M = 8.51, SD = 1.02) than white principals (M = 7.97, SD = 1.08). In addition, the results show that the type of school where the principal works is also related to the vision component of socialization. Elementary principals reported higher vision scores (M = 8.35, SD = 1.14) than did non-elementary school principals (M = 8.02, SD = 1.11). Non-elementary schools are defined as middle schools, secondary schools, and combination (K-12) schools.
Dependence on Staff as the Dependent Variable

The correlation matrix for the dependent variable dependence on staff and the eight independent variables is presented in Table 4. Low correlations suggest that most of the independent variables are not strong predictors of the principals' vision.

Table 4. Intercorrelations of Variables Used in Predicting Principals’ Dependence on Staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School Size</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Prior Location</th>
<th>Prior Exper.</th>
<th>Comm. Type</th>
<th>Depen. on Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Type</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Location</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Experience</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Type</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The data in this table are based on 160 observations.

The stepwise regression analysis of the dependent variable dependence on staff shows that the independent variables gender, school type, and prior location entered the model at the $p < .15$ level. The results of the stepwise regression analysis are shown in Table 5.
Table 5. Stepwise Regression Results for Principals’ Dependence on Staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Entered</th>
<th>Partial R²</th>
<th>Model R²</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1: Gender</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>5.28 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2: School Type</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>7.00 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3: Prior Location</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01

Based on this initial analysis, a 2 x 2 x 2 analysis of variance was employed to further test the relationships among the variables. ANOVA results show that the independent variables gender and prior location show a statistically significant relationship with the principals’ dependence on staff. Dependence on staff is related to the principals’ reliance on staff members at the school to provide information and assistance to the beginning principal. The ANOVA results for dependence on staff are presented in Table 6 below. No interaction effects were found between the independent variables and dependence on staff.

Male principals were found to have higher dependence on staff scores (M = 6.39, SD = 1.75) than female principals (M = 5.88, SD = 1.79). In addition, the results show that the promotion context of the principal is also related to the dependence on staff component of socialization. Principals promoted from outside the school (M = 6.37, SD = 1.78) were found to be more likely to rely on others than principals promoted from within the school (M = 5.85, SD = 1.74).
Table 6. ANOVA Results for Principals’ Dependence on Staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>12.23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.90 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Type</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Location</td>
<td>12.24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.90 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x School Type</td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x Prior Location</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Type x Prior Location</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender x School Type x Prior Location</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>522.73</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>598.33</td>
<td>183</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The demographic data collected in the study provides information about the characteristics of the sample. The analysis of the data reveals that the beginning principal in Louisiana is likely to be white (67%), between 40 and 49 years old (59%), working in a rural (35%) or metropolitan school (29%) with an enrollment between 250 - 499 (40%). The principal is about as likely to be male (51%) as female (49%), and about as likely to be promoted from within his or her own school (45%) as from a different school within his or her own district (53%). He or she was probably an assistant principal during the previous school year (71%). This demographic information is summarized in Table 7 below.

Demographic variables which showed some relationship with the socialization experiences include ethnicity, school type, gender, and prior location. These variables, along with the socioeconomic level of the principals’
Table 7. Demographic Characteristics of 187 Beginning Principals in Louisiana.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency (N)</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Fringe</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Size</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 250</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-499</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-749</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750-999</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000+</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Counselor, etc.)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior Location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within School</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within District/Different School</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different District</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
school, were more fully examined through the use of chi-square analyses. These results reveal that the first year principals are not distributed proportionally to the overall sample among all subgroups. This uneven distribution may help explain some of the differences between groups.

**Distribution of the Sample by Gender**

A closer examination of the sample reveals some interesting findings concerning the beginning principals' distribution by gender. In the total sample, male and female principals are about equally represented; however, in some subgroups this distribution is not proportionate to the overall sample.

**Gender by school type.** Results of a chi-square analysis show that principals in elementary schools are much more likely to be female than male. Middle schools are more likely to have male principals, and secondary schools and combination schools are much more likely to have male principals. These results are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8. Chi-Square Analysis, Distribution of Beginning Principals by Gender and School Type.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>(66)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>(34)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>(49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(40)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>(60)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>(23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(30)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(70)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(23)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>(77)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>(49)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ²(6) = 20.36, p < .001
Gender by socioeconomic level. It was also found that the principals in the lower two socioeconomic quartiles are more likely to be female, while the principals in the upper two quartiles are likely to be male. These differences are more pronounced in Quartiles 1 and 4 than in Quartiles 2 and 3. Stated another way, principals in the lowest socioeconomic group are most likely to be female while principals in the highest socioeconomic group are most likely to be male. Results for this chi-square analysis are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Chi-Square Analysis, Distribution of Beginning Principals by Gender and Socioeconomic Level (Quartile).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 (Lowest SES)</td>
<td>25 (64)</td>
<td>14 (36)</td>
<td>39 (24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>22 (54)</td>
<td>19 (46)</td>
<td>41 (25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>19 (47)</td>
<td>21 (53)</td>
<td>40 (25)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 (Highest SES)</td>
<td>14 (33)</td>
<td>28 (67)</td>
<td>42 (26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80 (49)</td>
<td>82 (51)</td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2_{(p)} = 8.07, \ p < .05 \]

Distribution of the Sample by Ethnicity

An analysis of the total sample of beginning principals shows that 67% of the principals are white and 33% are African-American. When separated by the demographic categories community type, school type, and socioeconomic level, the distribution by ethnicity is not proportional to the overall sample.
**Ethnicity by community type.** White principals were found to be over-represented in rural communities, towns, and urban fringe communities in comparison to the overall sample. African-American principals are more concentrated in cities and metropolitan areas, as compared to the overall sample. These differences are the most extreme in rural communities (81% white) and metropolitan areas (59% African-American). Results for this chi-square analysis are presented in Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>(39)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Fringe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>(59)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>(33)</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 21.22, \ p < .001 \]

**Ethnicity by school type.** African-American principals are found more often in middle schools, as compared to the total sample, while white principals are more prevalent in secondary schools and combination schools. The differences are most extreme where the white principals are over-represented—secondary schools and combination schools. In this sample, no African-American principals were found in the 12 combination schools, and only 7 of 31
secondary principals are African-American. Elementary school distribution is proportional to the overall sample, and middle schools are equally represented by African-American and white principals. These results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Chi-Square Analysis, Distribution of Beginning Principals by Ethnicity and School Type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity by Socioeconomic Level</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>29 (36)</td>
<td>51 (64)</td>
<td>80 (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>18 (50)</td>
<td>18 (50)</td>
<td>36 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>7 (18)</td>
<td>31 (82)</td>
<td>38 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination (K-12)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>12 (100)</td>
<td>12 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54 (33)</td>
<td>108 (67)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2_{(3)} = 14.74, \ p < .01 \]

Ethnicity by socioeconomic level. According to the analysis of ethnicity by socioeconomic level, when the school population is in the lowest socioeconomic quartile, the principal is much more likely to be African-American. As compared to the overall sample, white principals are over-represented in the higher two quartiles, while African-American principals are over-represented in the lower two quartiles. The differences are most extreme in the lowest quartile (68% African-American) and the second highest quartile (90% white). Also, the highest is 78% white. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 12.
Table 12. Chi-Square Analysis, Distribution of Beginning Principals by Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Level (Quartile).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 (Lowest)</td>
<td>21 (68)</td>
<td>10 (32)</td>
<td>31 (21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>18 (47)</td>
<td>20 (53)</td>
<td>38 (26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>4 (10)</td>
<td>35 (90)</td>
<td>39 (26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 (Highest)</td>
<td>9 (22)</td>
<td>31 (78)</td>
<td>40 (27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52 (36)</td>
<td>96 (65)</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2_{o} = 30.35, \ p < .001 \]

Distribution of the Sample by Prior Location

Regarding their promotion context, the beginning principals were approximately evenly distributed between within school promotions (45%) and outside school promotions (55%). However, this distribution is not consistent across different community types and school types.

Prior location by community type. Principals in the smaller areas (rural, towns, cities) are more likely to be promoted from within their own school, while principals in larger areas (urban fringe, metropolitan) are more likely to be promoted to the principalship from a different school. The differences are most extreme at schools in metropolitan areas, where 73% of the principals are promoted from a different school. Results for this chi-square analysis are presented in Table 13.
Table 13. Chi-Square Analysis, Distribution of Beginning Principals by Prior Location and Community Type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Location</th>
<th>Within School</th>
<th>Outside School</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>32 (52%)</td>
<td>29 (48%)</td>
<td>61 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>18 (55%)</td>
<td>15 (45%)</td>
<td>33 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>12 (57%)</td>
<td>9 (43%)</td>
<td>21 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Fringe</td>
<td>5 (42%)</td>
<td>7 (58%)</td>
<td>12 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>14 (27%)</td>
<td>37 (73%)</td>
<td>51 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81 (45%)</td>
<td>108 (67%)</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2_{(v)} = 10.20, \ p < .05 \]

Prior location by school type. Principals in elementary schools and middle schools are much more likely to be promoted to the principalship from a different school, while principals at secondary schools are more likely to be promoted from within the school. These chi-square results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Chi-Square Analysis, Distribution of Beginning Principals by Prior Location and School Type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>Within School</th>
<th>Outside School</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>32 (36%)</td>
<td>58 (64%)</td>
<td>90 (49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>16 (39%)</td>
<td>25 (61%)</td>
<td>41 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>27 (69%)</td>
<td>12 (31%)</td>
<td>39 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>7 (54%)</td>
<td>6 (46%)</td>
<td>13 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82 (45%)</td>
<td>101 (55%)</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2_{(v)} = 13.51, \ p < .01 \]
Summary

The quantitative results of this study show that most of the demographic variables are not significant predictors of the socialization experiences of beginning principals. However, statistically significant differences between some subgroups of principals were found. Variation was found in the principals' socialization level, but this variation is not predicted by any of the independent variables. For the dependent variable vision, African-American principals reported higher mean scores than white principals; also, principals in elementary schools showed higher scores than non-elementary school principals. Principals who worked in a different school during the previous year show a greater dependence on staff than principals promoted from within the school; also, male principals show a greater dependence on staff than female principals.

The demographic data shows that the beginning principal in Louisiana is likely to be white (67%) and between 40 and 49 years old (59%). The principal is about as likely to be male (51%) as female (49%), and about as likely to be promoted from within his or her own school (45%) as from a different school (55%). He or she was probably an assistant principal during the previous school year (71%).

Also, it was found that elementary school principals are much more likely to be female, and non-elementary school principals are more likely to be
male. Principals in the lower two socioeconomic groups are more likely to be female, while the principals in the upper two socioeconomic groups are more likely to be male.

While 67% of the beginning principals are white and 33% are African-American, when separated by some demographic categories, their distribution by ethnicity is not proportional to the overall sample. African-American principals are more likely to be found in metropolitan areas, middle schools, and lower socioeconomic areas; white principals are more likely to be found in rural and suburban areas, secondary and K-12 schools, and higher socioeconomic areas.

Principals are more likely to be promoted from within their own schools in rural areas and in secondary schools, while principals are more often promoted from outside the school in metropolitan areas and in elementary and middle schools.
CHAPTER FIVE: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

Qualitative research has often been used in an exploratory manner to gain insight into areas where little information has previously been available. Another valuable use involves using qualitative research as a tool for adding depth and detail to previously completed quantitative data analysis. While statistical results may suggest general patterns found across a given sample, extending the meaning of those patterns through qualitative methods may provide additional information. Used in this way, quantitative analysis identifies the areas of focus, and qualitative analysis gives richer meaning to those areas (Patton, 1990).

When using qualitative data to provide deeper meaning, one purpose of the research is to show what the survey respondents might have meant when they answered in a particular manner. In addition, this qualitative extension may suggest how the research fits together as a whole. As Patton (1990, p. 132) stated, "Qualitative data can 'put flesh on the bones' of survey results."While the role of qualitative research as an exploratory tool is generally well understood, the confirmatory role of qualitative data analysis is less well understood.

In this study, the qualitative component was designed to answer additional research questions, and also to give a "face" to the survey results. As
previously stated, the *how* aspect of socialization was not answered through the quantitative survey instrument. Based on this limitation, the qualitative data were gathered in an effort to learn more about how the socialization process occurs. In addition, an attempt was made to discover the source and fundamental characteristics of the primary socialization forces at work on beginning principals.

Two existing frameworks were also used to place qualitative data in predetermined categories. The modified *Principal Socialization Inventory* (Parkay, Gmelch, and Rhodes, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992) describes five categories, or levels of socialization, and survey items were designed to place principals at one of those five levels. Using the same framework, qualitative inquiry also placed the six case study principals at a particular level of socialization, and these levels are compared across the sample. Finally, Schein’s (1971) description of socialization responses, either custodial or innovative, was also used to add meaning and clarification to the principals’ work.

In this chapter, case studies of six beginning principals are presented. The principals were selected to represent a pair of elementary schools, a pair of middle schools, and a pair of secondary schools. Each pair of schools consists of one metropolitan school setting, and one non-metropolitan school setting. In addition, the principals were chosen to represent a variety of personal
characteristics and a variety of organizational characteristics. Karen, Anne, Paul, Joyce, Dale, and Larry were selected to give an overview of different settings in which beginning principals in Louisiana work. The personal and organizational characteristics of the six case study principals are summarized in Table 15 below. Findings are presented as within-site analyses and cross-site analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Karen: Non-Metropolitan Elementary School

Karen was white, in her late 30s, married, and had two children. She was an elementary classroom teacher at East Street Elementary School for more than 15 years before being selected to be the principal at that school.

Organizational Characteristics

The community. East Street Elementary School was located on the “wrong” side of a small, isolated town. Connected to major metropolitan areas only by a two-lane highway, the town had the feel of being off the beaten path. This town did not seem to be “on the way” anywhere—you probably only come here if this is your destination or you are lost. The downtown area was small, but not quaint. Very few modern buildings were seen on the way to the school, and there was an outdated feel about the whole area.

The school was located in a lower-income residential neighborhood consisting of very modest wood frame houses and mobile homes. Most of the
Table 15. Summary Table of Case Study Sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Highest Degree</th>
<th>Promotion Context</th>
<th>Prior Experience</th>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>School Enrollment</th>
<th>SES Quartile</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Late 30s</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s + 30 hours</td>
<td>Within School</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>Q1 (lowest)</td>
<td>Non-Metropolitan (Town)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Late 40s</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Education Specialist</td>
<td>Outside School</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>Q4 (highest)</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Mid 40s</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Master’s + 30 hours</td>
<td>Outside School</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>Q4 (highest)</td>
<td>Non-Metropolitan (Rural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>Late 40s</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Master’s + 30 hours</td>
<td>Outside School</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>Q2 (2nd lowest)</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Early 40s</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s + 30 hours</td>
<td>Within School</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Middle/Secondary</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>Q3 (2nd highest)</td>
<td>Non-Metropolitan (Rural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Early 40s</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>Within School</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1,854</td>
<td>Q4 (highest)</td>
<td>Metropolitan (Urban Fringe)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
homes in the neighborhood were small, dingy, and appeared neglected. The local subsidized housing development, consisting of small duplex apartment buildings, was located about two blocks from the school. East Street Elementary was a neighborhood school serving only the students in the nearby area.

The facility. East Street Elementary School was situated on a two-lane residential street about one mile from the center of town. The school was built in the 1950s, and the exterior was somewhat deteriorated. The grounds were freshly mowed, but the chain link fence surrounding the school playground was broken down and all of the playground equipment was either broken or missing. From the outside, the school was not an inviting place to enter.

Since Karen’s appointment as principal, the inside of the main building had been given a thorough facelift. The inside of the building looked considerably better than the outside, and according to some faculty members, the condition of the school was “much better than before.” The hallways and classrooms had been recently painted, and almost every classroom was attractively decorated. In each classroom, the lower windows had been painted over “to keep the heat out.” Each classroom had one small window air-conditioning unit. These were not provided by the school, but the teachers were given permission to air condition the rooms at their own expense, if they wished. The office area, consisting of the main office and the principal’s office,
was freshly painted, clean, and neat. The principal’s office had a distinctly feminine look, with pink walls, attractive wallpaper borders, and lace curtains in the windows.

The hallways and classrooms were clean and freshly painted. The school was aging, but the main building was in fairly good condition. The auditorium, cafeteria, and playground all showed signs of wear, and badly needed renovation.

The students. The 290 students at East Street Elementary were from a disadvantaged part of one of the most disadvantaged school districts in Louisiana. The student body was about 75% African-American and 25% white. More than 85% of the students qualified for free lunch, an indication of the socioeconomic level of the community.

About the students, Karen said, “The students here are really very sweet. Sometimes they don’t get along, but they are really good kids.” During the observations, her assessment was substantiated. The students were very polite and respectful when she spoke to them singly or in small groups. In the classrooms, in the cafeteria, and in the hallways they were well behaved. However, during recess or before and after school, the students were quite a bit more rowdy. They did not seem to be well trained in controlling their emotions, and Karen was often called upon to sort out some argument or minor scuffle between students. When not in an organized situation, the students seemed to
antagonize each other by pushing, arguing, and fighting. All of the students in the school had recess at the same time, an accommodation that required fewer duty teachers, but which led to a chaotic situation on the playground. Karen was not willing to ask the teachers to serve more time on duty, although it probably would have cleared up some of the playground discipline problems.

The faculty. The small faculty was a mixed group--some young, some old, some white, some African-American. There were 12 classroom teachers, several ancillary teachers, and a few teacher aides. There were no new teachers at East Street Elementary, and Karen knew the faculty well; most of them had been at the school for several years. The teachers seemed uneasy and apprehensive during my observations. They were friendly enough, but they seemed suspicious about my presence. They may have been unsure about their skills, or they may just have not wanted me around. In one class, I commented on how quiet the students were, and Karen replied, "Yes, but there doesn't seem to be much teaching going on."

On the surface, the faculty seemed to present no problems, but they did not seem very happy. During the structured interview, I learned that there were some problems with several of the teachers. This situation seemed to result from a personality clash with the teachers, and appeared to have deteriorated some since the beginning of school.
The Central Office. Karen had few complaints about the Central Office personnel or the district superintendent. This was a very small district, and she knew the superintendent and all of the supervisors personally. She worked in the past with several of the supervisors, and they encouraged her to apply for a principal's position in the district.

Immediately upon being appointed as the principal at East Street Elementary, Karen requested and received help from the Maintenance Department to improve the physical condition of the school. She stated, “This summer they were here for two months, painting, replacing worn-out tile, and working on the landscaping. They really have been a big help.”

Personal Characteristics

Promotion context. Karen was an “insider,” having worked for the previous 15 years at East Street. Her only experience as an administrator came during the three years before her appointment to the principalship. Because the school enrollment was below the designated level, the district allowed only one administrator at the school. While a teacher at the school, Karen was selected as the faculty member to be the principal’s designated “teacher in charge” whenever the principal was away from the building. This was a position in addition to Karen’s regular classroom duties, but involved no extra compensation and no official release time from her class.
About the previous principal, Karen said, "I don't like to talk about people when they're gone," but she did suggest that many of the teachers at the school felt that it was time for the former principal to move on. Karen said,

"All she did last year was sit on that bench out front, smoke cigarettes, and talk to the janitor. She was gone a lot—not on sick leave, but gone. She was seen around town during school hours. She was just burned out. Nobody could do much—she would sit in her office with her door closed. We knew not to bother her."

During the three years that Karen served as the principal's designated teacher in charge, the principal gradually shifted most of the school's administrative duties onto Karen's shoulders, including virtually all matters pertaining to student discipline. The former principal did less and less, and Karen did more and more. Often Karen was called out of her classroom to handle a discipline incident, while the principal waited in the office "behind closed doors." Karen was not a principal, or even an assistant principal, but she gained practical administrative experience during that time.

Almost all of Karen's teaching experience was at East Street Elementary, and she had no official administrative experience. However, during the previous year, it became apparent that there would be several principal's positions coming open in the district in 1994-95, and Karen was interested. She was encouraged by several Central Office supervisors to apply for administrative positions at other schools. Karen was interested in becoming a principal, but she wanted to stay at East Street. She said,
“My supervisor encouraged me to apply at the junior high. I told her I wanted to stay here, and she said that was a mistake. She told me that the teachers here were my friends and my peers, and that it would be hard to be the boss.”

Eventually, she convinced the supervisors to appoint her as the principal at her own school, but her supervisors’ warning about problems with teachers was proven to be accurate.

**Philosophy.** Karen was part principal and part social worker. Her warm, caring, and calm personality reflected her background as an elementary teacher. She was very sensitive to the students’ troubles, and she really believed that the school should do all it could to meet the needs of the students in this disadvantaged community. Karen was easily upset by troubling situations regarding the students’ home life. When relating stories to me about the students’ problems at home, sometimes she would begin to cry.

The school had a history of low achievement, and Karen actively worked to make it better during her first semester as principal. She was very involved with the families at the school, and frequently visited parents at home. Karen professed to be a strict rule follower, although she would often take a student home in her car to speak to the parent, even though it was “against district policy.” She said, “I do it all the time. When it comes to the children’s welfare, I’ll face my punishment if I have to.” Karen believed in following the rules, but in this case, the rules were less important than what she believed was right.
Karen made a conscious decision to be the instructional leader of the school. From the very beginning, she had an idea about improving the instructional program at East Street Elementary. During the preceding year she was a teacher, and she still had much of the classroom in her. Unlike principals who may have spent many years in the assistant principal’s position, she was still very connected to the classroom. She was somewhat unsure of how to go about improving the school’s instructional program, but she was convinced she wanted to do it. Although Karen was promoted from within her own school, she was an “innovator.” She saw that the school needed changing, and she was going to do it.

**Socialization Forces**

Because Karen had previously worked in the school where she became the principal, she did not become socialized to the school as much as she became socialized to her new role within that school. Personal characteristics that seemed to be important in this process included Karen’s philosophy of the principalship, her vision for the school, as well as the context of her within-school promotion. In addition, her interactions with teachers and students played a major role in her socialization to her new role at East Street Elementary. As recently as the previous summer, she had been “one of the gang,” and that was causing problems for her as the principal. As the only administrator in the school, dealing with the students’ behavior problems
consumed a great deal of Karen’s time, although she was comfortable handling these situations.

**Personal characteristics.** Karen’s leadership style was low-key, in comparison to other principals. She said, “I had some of the more experienced principals tell me, ‘You just tell the teachers what to do. It’s your school.’” However, Karen believed that the authoritative type of principal was outdated, and that the new principals should share the decision-making power with the teachers. She also believed that the principal should be a helper, or nurturer, to both faculty and students.

Karen related an experience about a school improvement plan that was developed as part of a larger program. Her supervisors at the Central Office suggested that she write up the plan herself. Instead, Karen had the entire faculty come together, with everyone making a contribution toward the establishment of school goals, and the means for meeting those goals.

**Vision.** According to Schein’s (1971) framework, responses to organizational socialization are thought to be innovative or custodial. Using this framework, Karen was clearly an innovative principal. Because she had previously worked in the school, she had a definite opinion about the school. She believed it needed changing. Her school improvement plan was focused in two areas during the first semester— the physical condition of the school building and the instructional program of the school.
During the first semester, Karen had been on a mission to improve the physical condition of the school. The interior of the main building had been the first priority, and it had been thoroughly cleaned and painted. The cafeteria, the auditorium, and the playground equipment had not been taken care of yet, and there was a distinct difference between the renovated and non-renovated parts of the facility. If the auditorium and cafeteria were an indication of how the school had looked the previous year, the physical condition of the school had been very bad. The dimly lit auditorium, which doubled as the gymnasium, was very dilapidated and in need of repair. The cafeteria was even worse. The tiny room had concrete floors, uncomfortable seats, and needed painting. Karen was proud of the maintenance done during her brief tenure as the principal, but she recognized the areas that still needed work. She had plans to replace the playground equipment, and update the cafeteria and auditorium. The faculty had worked together to prioritize their needs and came up with a workable plan to improve the school facility.

Besides improving the physical appearance of the school, Karen was actively involved in several projects to bring new resources to the school. Through a variety of funding sources, Karen was able to bring in new equipment and staff development resources in an effort to improve the school’s instructional program.
By using federal funds available to lower socioeconomic populations, East Street Elementary had developed a plan in which every classroom would have a full time teacher's aide. Several teachers' aides were previously working in the school in a "pull out" situation, but by expanding this program, Karen believed this resource could be better used, and that more students could be helped.

Also, Karen had been actively involved in writing school improvement grants, one of the few means of bringing extra funding to this disadvantaged school. As a result of one grant, a team of educational consultants had been contracted to provide nine days of assistance to the school. The consultants worked with the faculty in developing school improvement strategies and assisted Karen in developing her leadership skills.

Karen also convinced the district to provide East Street with the computer hardware to develop a full time computer lab. She then wrote a grant to get funding to install educational software on the new computers. A teacher was trained to run the lab and by October, it was being used extensively. Karen proudly stated, "We use our lab every day, while [another school] hasn't gotten their computers out of the box yet."

Karen told me that she had not made any major changes in the managerial aspects of the school. As she stated, "The old school rules were
really okay, they just needed to be followed.” She related the following example concerning the school schedule.

“Last year, our dismissal time was 2:40—the same as this year. We were in the habit of stopping class at 2:30 to allow time for loading the bus and lining the students up. This year, we decided that if we were really going to focus on instruction, we needed those extra ten minutes. Now, we stay in class until the 2:40 dismissal bell, and then line up for the busses. That played havoc with the bus drivers’ schedules, but that’s too bad. This is important.”

Faculty. Karen’s promotion from teacher to principal within the same school caused some problems with the faculty members. Overnight, Karen went from being a member of a peer group to being the leader of that group. This situation would have probably been even more problematic, except for Karen’s unofficial role as assistant principal during the previous three years. Even so, two types of problems with teachers had occurred. First, teachers were overly familiar with Karen, and “did not give her the respect she deserved.” Secondly, there was some resentment about her promotion from a small clique of teachers who had been very supportive of the previous principal. Interactions with the members of the small faculty seemed to play a large role in acclimating Karen to her new role as principal of East Street Elementary.

Students. Because East Street Elementary had only one administrator, all serious discipline problems were referred to the school principal. According to her own estimates, Karen spent a large portion of every school day dealing with student discipline. Karen knew almost all of the students in the school by name,
as she handled most of the school discipline in the previous years. This was not a new responsibility for Karen, and she felt competent to handle the problems that occurred.

During my observations, Karen made an effort to be understanding of the students’ problems, but she was also firm in her manner with the students. One fifth-grade student who was involved in a fight on the playground was sent to the office. The district policy stated that fighting was supposed to result in an automatic suspension, but Karen felt this altercation was really a judgment call. The incident was not a “real fight, but more like pushing.” The duty teacher insisted that the student should be suspended, but Karen was reluctant to follow the stated policy. Because the student had been previously suspended, he was facing a 10-day suspension if she followed through according to policy. After the student was issued an alternate punishment, Karen confided, “He was just released from the hospital—he has terrible problems. I just can’t do it.” The teacher was angry that the student was not suspended, but Karen felt strongly that she made the right decision.

Another incident occurred when a third-grade student was caught showing two knives to his classmates. Again, district policy stated that the student must be suspended. Karen followed through, but called the mother to carefully explain the situation to her, and reassured her that the student really was “a good boy.” She seemed to follow the policies regarding student
discipline up to a point, but she deviated when she felt necessary. Karen would
not administer a punishment that she felt was not right for that student, even if
her decision went against the stated policy. She seemed to have a feel for the
needs of the students, and she was actively involved with the troubled students
at the school.

Summary

Karen’s main socializing influences to the principalship at East Street
Elementary were her own caring personality, her prior experience in the school,
and problems with the faculty members at the school. This combination of
factors led Karen to have a rewarding, if somewhat difficult, first semester as
principal. She was calm, and did not like to confront the teachers, and
situations had developed within the faculty that needed correcting. These
problems, along with ongoing problems with student discipline, made the first
semester somewhat difficult. However, Karen had made great progress in
carrying out her vision of what she thought the school should be. She had
developed goals, set priorities them, and begun work on implementation.

Although the beginning of the school year was chaotic for Karen, by the
end of the first semester she had begun to put her philosophy into action. She
believed that she was the right person for the job, and that in time, her vision
would become a reality. Karen’s dimensions of contrast, including the
socializing forces, the socialization response, and the resulting socialization stage, are summarized in Table 16.

**Table 16. Summary Table for Karen’s Dimensions of Contrast.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Contrast</th>
<th>Result or Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Socialization Forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Principalship</td>
<td>Principal as social worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Context</td>
<td>Teacher/Within school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Strong ideas about school needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>Problems resulting in move from peer group member to leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Caring mother figure/School disciplinarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Response</strong></td>
<td>Innovative: A school that needed changing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Stage</strong></td>
<td>Stage 2: Control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Anne: Metropolitan Elementary School**

Anne was white, in her late 40s, married, and had several grown children. She had been an elementary teacher for 23 years in the district, and spent one year as an assistant principal at a school in an upper-middle neighborhood on the other side of town before being appointed as the principal at Woodridge Elementary School.

**Organizational Characteristics**

The community. Woodridge Elementary was located in a small community which bordered a large metropolitan area. Technically, the school was within the metropolitan boundaries, but the community was actually a small town to itself, and separate from the city. Away from the city, and off a four-lane state highway, Woodridge Elementary was located in a small, working-
class subdivision consisting of well-maintained small homes. The neighborhood was quiet and clean, with little noticeable activity during the day. The school was located near the back of the subdivision, only about 40-50 feet from the nearest houses.

**The facility.** The one-story red-brick building was clean and well-decorated with examples of student work and messages about school pride, such as, “You are entering the best place on earth.” The facility consisted of one main building and one small additional building for the fifth-grade classes. The main building contained classrooms situated around the perimeter of a double hallway, with the office complex, the library, and the auditorium located between the two halls.

The small office area was clean and orderly. Although the space was limited, the area was well organized and functional. Decorated tastefully, with photographs and other personal items situated on the desk, the principal’s office was pleasant. More than some other offices I visited, this seemed to be an executive’s office. The furniture was standard government issue, but seemed more fashionable because of its tasteful arrangement.

**The students.** The school enrolled about 500 elementary school students, about 40% African-American and 60% white. 75% of the students were from nearby neighborhoods, and about 25% were bussed in from another part of the district. Although the school was in a largely metropolitan district,
this school served a more rural blue-collar population, with less than 30% of the students on the school’s free lunch program.

The students were very well behaved in the classrooms, the auditorium, the cafeteria, and the library. They were not as well behaved when outside the building, at recess, or waiting for the bus. Although Anne had only been at the school for about two months at the time of my visit, the students were very friendly toward her. Throughout the day, younger students often walked up to Anne and hugged her around the waist. They seemed to like her very much.

The faculty. The faculty consisted of 23 regular classroom teachers and 8 ancillary teachers. The ancillary faculty members taught art, music, gifted/talented, and were only at the school part time. The teachers interacted a great deal and seemed very closely knit. Because the ancillary teachers were not at the school all day, they had a somewhat lower profile in the school’s social structure. Most of the teachers had been at Woodridge for several years, and considered it a school where they wanted to stay. Many teachers lived on the other side of the district, and had commuting times of 30 to 45 minutes every morning and afternoon. They said that it was “worth it” to drive across town to teach at Woodridge. During my visit, the faculty members were very curious about what I thought of their school. They were very friendly, and wanted me to be a part of things at the school. They were very proud of their school, and spoke highly of Anne when they realized I was there to observe her.
The staff. The office staff consisted of one "Executive Secretary" and one clerk. These two women worked closely with Anne throughout the day. The secretary, an older woman with 19 years experience at the school, assumed most of the managerial duties of the school. She gave solicited and unsolicited advice to Anne, and made many autonomous decisions as a regular part of her job. The secretary acted as the key informant for Anne, and much of the information about the school came to Anne only after being filtered through the secretary.

The Central Office. The district was one of the largest in the state, with more than 100 elementary schools, and was administered by a proportionately large Central Office staff. During her first semester as principal, Anne had many interactions with Central Office supervisors, both in person and by phone. She told me that she did not really know the superintendent, but she had no problems with him. She said,

"I never met the man until I interviewed to be an assistant principal. I don’t really interact with him at all—he’s just this man downtown, like in *The Wizard of Oz*. He’s just this little man behind the scenes."

Personal Characteristics

Promotion context. Although she worked for many years as a teacher in the district, Anne was an "outsider" to Woodridge Elementary. Because she was new to the principalship and new to the school, professional and organizational socialization occurred simultaneously (Hart, 1993). Anne was
learning how to be a principal at the same time that she was learning the norms of her new school. In addition, Woodridge Elementary was a small school, and therefore had only one administrator. In this case, there was no assistant principal to rely on for information.

After working for many years on the other side of town, first as a teacher, and then for one year as an Assistant Principal, Anne was appointed to the principalship. Although she valued her administrative experience as an Assistant Principal, she stated,

“This [the principalship] is a much bigger job. When I was the Assistant Principal, I could help the principal with some things—little things. An Assistant Principal's job is very different because you are not the boss. This is a big change. Now, the decisions are mine and I have to live with them.”

Anne was glad that her district had a policy against promoting principals from within their own schools. She believed that a difficult job would have been even more difficult if she had been promoted within her previous school. She said,

“It's hard to be an administrator if you come up through the ranks. While you're a teacher you establish peer relationships, and then you would have to be their boss. I would think that would be very difficult. I much prefer the way that we do it, moving from one school to another.”

Anne perceived her situation at Woodridge as somewhat precarious. She was appointed to replace the previous principal, who was on a sabbatical leave for one year. No one was sure what was going to happen at the end of Anne’s
first year. It was possible that her predecessor would be placed in a Central Office position, or perhaps back at Woodridge. Anne realized that her assignment for the following year was probably dependent on her performance during her first year. She stated, "If she [the previous principal] comes back, I hope I get my own school. I feel that I’ve earned it.” Although the previous principal was well liked, many faculty members told me that they hoped that Anne would stay at Woodridge. Anne had a reputation for being more firm with the students, and the faculty seemed to like her very much.

**Philosophy.** Anne was friendly, but firm, and extremely professional in her demeanor and appearance. She made a sincere effort to be helpful to the teachers, and considered herself as a facilitator in assisting them. Concerning the management of the school, she was all business.

Often during my visit, teachers would stop Anne in the hall to ask for help or for a small favor. In every case, she listened carefully, and then either helped the teacher or promised to “do what she could.” She felt that she should be approachable to the faculty, and they evidently perceived this. She could not always solve their problems, but she was always willing to try. In return, the faculty had been supportive of their new principal during her first semester. The school was very calm and businesslike, giving an outsider no hint that a new principal was in charge.
Anne was a strong believer in following the rules and established routines of the school. She was actively involved in the details of school management. She checked the arrival times of the school buses to the exact minute, and monitored the duty teachers before and after school, and at every recess. She believed in being visible on the school grounds during every recess, even though this was an inconvenience, often interrupting other work she was doing.

Although the students were very well behaved, Anne was uncomfortable when they were in less structured situations, such as on the playground during recess. Before school, the students were allowed to play outside until the bell rang. As we watched the children play outside, Anne said, "I hate this--this is my least favorite time of day. We have problems during recess--I need to tighten up some things here." Although there were some minor discipline problems during this time, none required more than the "principal's stare" or a few words of warning.

Socialization Forces

Anne had only one year of administrative experience before being appointed to the principalship, and she learned a great deal about the profession and her new school in a very short time. Personal characteristics which seemed to influence Anne's socialization included her desire to be a helping principal and her need for the school to be run in an organized and efficient manner. Her
temporary assignment constrained her from making any significant changes during her first semester as principal. Important organizational characteristics included the bureaucratic nature of the Central Office, the secretary, and the faculty members.

**Personal characteristics.** Anne presented herself as very professional and efficient. She moved about the office and the building constantly, never sitting still for more than a few minutes at a time. She had a need to be "on top of" the management of the routine school duties. She observed the teachers and students before and after school, during recess, and at lunch. In addition, she went from room to room throughout the school day, either to observe briefly or to check with the teachers about some detail.

Her philosophy of helping teachers influenced the way she went about her work, and also her relationship with the faculty. Faculty members told me that Anne had been very supportive of them during her first semester, telling them when they did a good job, writing notes to leave in their mailboxes, or helping them with small favors. These gestures had generated a feeling of good will between Anne and most of the faculty members, although there were minor problems with a few teachers.

Because Anne saw that her position might be temporary, she perceived herself as a "custodial" principal (Schein, 1971). She knew that she might be placed in a different school the next year, and she was reluctant to make many
changes. In addition, she believed that Woodridge was a very good school, and she thought that her primary duty was to keep it running as smoothly as it had been run in the past. Due to her lack of permanent status, Anne did not have an overall plan, or vision, for the school. She speculated that if she could maintain the school's high standards of the past, she either would be allowed to stay or she would be assigned an equally "choice" assignment the next year.

Central Office. The large school district had a proportionally large Central Office staff, and Anne interacted with many of them during her first semester as principal. These interactions occurred in three ways—through the mail, by telephone, and in person. Key actors in this process were the various supervisors for different areas, the assistant superintendents, and the Maintenance Department.

Anne perceived the Central Office as an ineffective bureaucracy almost completely incapable of providing any assistance to principals or teachers. Usually, when she interacted with the Central Office, it was because someone needed something or someone had a complaint about the school. Rarely did they communicate with any good news or any message of assistance.

An example of Central Office communication occurred during one of my observations, when Anne was going through the morning mail. Included with some other mail were three pieces of correspondence from the Central Office. One was a letter from a supervisor indicating that Anne would need to be out of
the school for three days in the spring for some in-service training. Another
was special education correspondence which was routed to a specific teacher.
The third document was from the Maintenance Department indicating to Anne
that they would not be able to complete the requested work orders.

She related the contents of the letter from the Maintenance Department,
commenting as she read. "This tells me all the things that they are refusing to
do. These are work request refusals." The refusals were for a variety of
reasons, such as the forms being improperly completed. Another refusal stated
that the request should be resubmitted, if the work "still needed to be done."
Anne had some ideas about what was needed regarding the physical condition
of the school, but she had trouble working through the bureaucracy to get these
things done. She learned through experience, as shown in the following
example.

"Before school started we had some sand delivered that one of the
kindergarten teachers ordered. The maintenance people just dumped this
big pile of sand by the school and then left. I asked one of our school
custodians to spread out the sand. He said, 'We don't spread sand,' so I
asked him, 'Who spreads sand?' He told me that the Maintenance
Department from the Central Office spreads sand. I called the Central
Office and they tell me that the custodians spread sand. It turns out that
the custodians spread sand if it's less than three yards, and the
Maintenance Department spreads sand if it's more than three yards.
Then it took me three days to find out how much sand we had. It turned
out to be less than three yards, so the custodians spread it. This goes on
all the time. Next time, I'll just look at the sand and say, 'It's less than
three yards. Spread it.'"
Anne felt that she was being taken advantage of in some ways because she was new, and not permanently assigned to her school. After the school year started, an unusual situation developed regarding the staffing at the school. Because the school reached a quota of seven special education students, the Personnel Department assigned an additional teacher to Woodridge Elementary.

The problem came about when the assigned teacher turned out to be an uncertified teacher with no experience in education. The teacher’s lack of experience combined with the challenging special education class developed into a problematic situation for Anne. She explained that she called the Personnel Department back and told them that this was an unacceptable situation. The Central Office indicated to Anne that it was not negotiable—the teacher was there to stay. Anne admitted that the secretary said, “[the former principal] would have never let this happen.” Anne felt that due to her inexperience, she had been taken advantage of by the Central Office. She believed that this would be a problem throughout the year.

The Central Office generated an enormous amount of paperwork for Anne to handle. She developed a system for routing the documents to designated places and this did not seem to be a problem for her.

Faculty. The faculty members seemed happy to have Anne as their principal. However, they worked to get her into the relaxed informal atmosphere that they shared with each other. Anne dressed very professionally,
and the teachers encouraged her to "dress down" like them and wear something more casual to school. On the day of the school carnival, the teachers were excited when Anne arrived wearing a denim skirt and a Woodridge Elementary t-shirt.

The teachers were not demanding, but often had requests for Anne's response. When they made requests, they did it in a relaxed, conversational style. Most of the faculty members were not members of the teacher's union, and none had filed any type of formal complaints during Anne's first semester.

Anne was considerate of the teachers' workload, and was reluctant to make any changes which would increase their duties. In return, the faculty members seemed to make an effort to carry their share of the load, and did not try and take advantage of Anne's lack of experience. One teacher requested an exception to her normal duties, as described in the following quote:

"On Friday, my son's school has a breakfast for the seniors and their parents. It's from 8:00 to 9:00, and I really would like to go. Is it okay if I get a parent to sit with my class until I get back around 9:15? I don't think I need to get a substitute, because I won't be that late. This is really a big deal, at least to me."

Anne agreed that the teacher's request was acceptable. Technically, the situation did not fall within an allowable policy. If a teacher planned to be out, a substitute was supposed to be called. However, the shortest time a substitute could be used was one-half day. Because the teacher was willing to return quickly, Anne agreed that the teacher's suggestion was a good one, even though
it "bent" the rules slightly. Both Anne and the teacher gave a little, and the situation was handled with ease.

When I asked Anne how the teachers let her know how she was doing, she replied, "I don't think I have done anything that they dislike. They like the things that I do—they appreciate the attention. I have gotten a lot of positive feedback. Teachers let me know verbally what they like."

**Secretary.** The school secretary acted as a key informant for Anne. The information she relayed seemed to come in two forms. Some information was given strictly at face value, while other information came with a message about how things "should be" done. In addition, the secretary routinely handled many aspects of school management which might be done by an assistant principal in another school.

When a student was being processed for suspension due to a discipline problem, the secretary told Anne, "You can release him to anybody listed on his [personal information] card. If anybody else comes for him, you can't let him go." In this example, the secretary merely filled in the details concerning what should happen when following the district suspension policy. This piece of information was useful to Anne in completing the necessary paperwork.

In another instance, the school librarian wanted to cancel the remainder of her classes for the day so that the custodians could set up for the school carnival. At first Anne agreed that this was acceptable, but the secretary told
her, "If you cancel library and they [the teachers] don't know, there will be trouble." Anne reconsidered, and they made a compromise with the librarian. The secretary provided information, and also a message about what was she felt was the appropriate action Anne should take.

During one observation, Anne was talking in her office with the drug education coordinator from the Central Office when a student was sent to the office for disciplinary action. When Anne came out of the office, the secretary told her about the incident, and stated, "I've handled it, and sent him back to class, but you may want to put this [paperwork] in his file." I wondered how a less open principal would respond to this sharing of authority. Anne seemed briefly concerned, and then turned her attention elsewhere.

**Summary**

Woodridge Elementary was a good school, with relatively few management problems. The administration and staff worked together to accomplish the work of the school, and the climate was very warm and positive. Anne had been well received, although she made a conscious effort not to "make waves." Her sense of detail helped to keep the school running smoothly, and her belief in helping the teachers made the transition a smooth one. She received consistent message from the Central Office that they were "in charge," but she seemed not to let that bother her. This situation seemed to be a good
combination of school and principal. Anne’s dimensions of contrast are summarized in Table 17 below.

Table 17. Summary Table for Anne’s Dimensions of Contrast.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Contrast</th>
<th>Result or Influence</th>
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<td>Helping teachers/Professional who ran a “tight ship”</td>
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<td>Promotion Context</td>
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<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Ineffective bureaucracy/Not supportive of new principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Supportive/Helped for smooth transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Assumed administrative duties/Filter information to principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Response</strong></td>
<td>Custodial: A temporary assignment at an effective school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Stage</strong></td>
<td>Stage 2: Control</td>
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**Paul: Non-Metropolitan Middle School**

Paul, a divorced African-American man in his mid 40s, had several grown children from a previous marriage and one infant son. Paul had more than 20 years of work experience, but less than 5 years experience as an educator. He was an elementary physical education teacher before being appointed as the principal of Fairview Middle School.

**Organizational Characteristics**

The community. The community of Fairview was rural, but not remote. It was a very small community, with less than 1,000 inhabitants. The “downtown” area consisted of a few stores situated on either side of a state highway, and a small residential area. Fairview was very small, but was located less than 15 miles from several larger towns. Many of the residents of Fairview
were farmers or they commuted to one of the nearby towns to work in industry. Unemployment levels were very low, as compared to other areas of the state.

**The facility.** The school was located at the end of a two lane country road, about one mile from the center of town. A faded sign on the main highway reading “Fairview Middle School” pointed the way to the school. The small school was shaded by large trees, and set back from the road about 100 feet.

The school building was built in the 1960s, but was in good physical condition. The grounds were neatly mowed, and the campus was clean. The main building housed the classrooms and the office area, while an auxiliary building held the library, the band room, and the in-school suspension area. In front of the main building, the cafeteria and gymnasium face each other, resulting in a U-shaped courtyard area. The courtyard was attractively maintained, containing several flower beds, a landscaped area, and several benches that students used to relax during their free time.

The principal’s office was small and cluttered. Basketballs and other sports equipment were strewn about, and in front of the principal’s desk, several cardboard boxes half-filled with papers crowded the small space. The main office was next to the principal’s office, and had a much more organized appearance.
**The students.** The 240 students at the school lived in the community of Fairview and the surrounding area. After leaving Fairview Middle, the students attend the consolidated high school in a larger town about 10 miles away. The students were about 70% white and 30% African-American, and about 35% qualified for the free lunch program. They had a clean-cut, "country" appearance, and they seemed extremely polite. Paul talked about discipline problems, but during my visit, the students appeared to be very well-behaved. The students were described as being cooperative, but not academically aggressive.

**The faculty.** There were 16 classroom teachers and 3 ancillary teachers at Fairview Middle, with most of the teachers having many years experience at that school. Except for a few younger teachers, the faculty averaged about 20 years of experience. Some of the teachers lived in the Fairview community, but most drove in from other areas.

The school had one full time secretary and one part time secretary, both of which were new to the school. Paul said that they were helpful, but they could not provide much information to him because of their inexperience at the school.

Two of the teachers at the school applied for the principal’s job, and one was appointed to the position at the end of the preceding year. He worked as the principal for about two months, and then “stepped down” to his former
position as a teacher. As Paul said, “He’s a local person, and it might have been harder for him because of that. He might be subject to more pressure from the people in town, because they know him.”

**The Central Office.** Paul worked several years in the same district where he was appointed to the principalship, so he had some knowledge about the Central Office. He was very happy with the practical side of the Central Office, and said that “help is there if you ask for it.” The Maintenance Department was very good, and they came as soon as they were called. They did not require extensive paperwork, and if necessary, they were very creative when performing repairs.

Paul was not so pleased with his immediate supervisors and the upper hierarchy of the school system. He thought that the supervisors were meddlesome, giving input where none was needed, but did not provide the kinds of help that he would have liked. In addition, the political aspects of school board were bothersome to Paul, and he preferred to interact with the Central Office staff as little as possible.

**Personal Characteristics**

**Background.** Paul was an “outsider” to Fairview Elementary. He grew up in a town about 15 miles from Fairview, but had lived outside of Louisiana for most of his adult life. Paul was a small, athletic man in his mid 40s, but had a very youthful appearance. As soon as we met, he said, “I look young, but I’m
old. I'm a grandfather.” He was clean cut and during my visits, he dressed sharply in fashionable three-piece suits.

Paul’s background was not typical for school administrators. After graduating from college, he spent several years as a Marine, and worked for the telephone company in another state for seven years. He then became a probation officer on the West Coast for eight years. Upon returning to Louisiana, he worked as an elementary physical education teacher at a nearby school. While he was teaching, he returned to graduate school to get his administrative certification. After four years as a teacher, he was appointed as the principal of Fairview Middle School.

Promotion context. The previous principal at Fairview Middle had worked at the school for 29 years--22 as a teacher and 7 as the principal. Paul met the former principal several times, and he encouraged Paul to apply for the position when it became available. The teacher who was originally appointed to the position resigned at the end of the summer, and Paul was appointed only a few days before school started in August.

Because of the unusual situation with the teacher that temporarily held the principal’s position, and the many years of experience that most of faculty had at the school, Paul was careful to “tread lightly” in his first semester as the principal. Also, Paul realized that his lack of administrative experience was not typical for most principals. He said,
"I don’t come in here with the attitude that I know all about this job. I think some principals who worked as assistants [assistant principals] sit there for years thinking, ‘If I was the principal, I would do this or that.’ I humbled myself. I realize that I don’t know anything. I have a philosophy about what is right and wrong, and that’s what guides me.”

Because of the small enrollment at Fairview Middle, there was only one administrator assigned to the school. The district office requested that Paul appoint a designated teacher to be in charge when he was away from the building.

Paul said,

“You have to leave a designee. They are reluctant. I have two teachers trained in administration, but they don’t really want to do it. My resource teacher helps out a lot. I try to get him to cover when I have to be out or go to a meeting.”

Paul’s promotion to the principalship was not typical in that he had little experience as an educator and no experience as an assistant principal. In addition, he was appointed as the principal from outside the school, and he had no assistant principal to rely on for help. During Paul’s first semester, he went through an extensive socialization process, both to the profession and to the school.

Philosophy. Paul had a philosophy that influenced everything that he did. Even though there were some problems at Fairview Middle, he had a vision about what he wanted the school to become. Paul spoke in sayings, or quotes, and he had an idea about what he wanted. He was also realistic, and
knew that change could not occur immediately. He said, "I can see it coming together. I can see my school beginning to form."

Paul developed his philosophy of education from many sources, including his parents, his former principal, and his training. According to Paul, every action that he made was guided by a personal belief or principle. Some of his ideas he developed on his own, and some he modeled after the principles of others.

Paul knew that education meant more than just academic education. He saw the value in traditional education, but also in life skills. He thought of his father as a man educated in life skills. About his father, he said,

"My father is not an educated man, but he has many skills. He can fix a roof or a door—he's a tailor, he can sew. He can play the piano like you've never heard. He never got too far in school, but he has been able to make a living. Somebody was willing to pay him for what he could do."

Paul spoke proudly of his former school. In part, his vision for Fairview Middle School was based on what was developed at his former school. He said, "The philosophy of that school is what I want to establish here. Be positive in everything that you do, have school spirit, and be proud of your school." About his former principal, he said, "She's always approachable, and she's always professional. That's how I would like to be."
Socialization Forces

Paul had no administrative experience before coming to Fairview Middle School. He was keenly aware that his lack of administrative experience and his lack of knowledge about Fairview Middle would affect his work during his first year. During the difficult moments of his first semester, his personal philosophy guided his actions. The primary organizational force which influenced his work during the first semester was pressure from the Central Office, although he also gained an awareness about the culture of the school from teachers and students.

Personal characteristics. Paul presented himself as a very calm, professional, and sensitive administrator. He did not have much knowledge about the principalship, but he was eager to learn “on the job” as quickly as he could. Although he did not seem to be detail oriented, he was not easily frustrated by problems in the school. When trouble occurred, he said, “I’m just trying to do the best that I can.”

Although Paul was inexperienced in education, he stated that he had a variety of “life experiences” that he brought to the job. He did not react to problem situations in a random way, but instead reacted according to his personal philosophy. Paul said,

“The kind of person I am affects how I do my job. It’s my home training. This is an institution of learning, and there is a certain behavior expected for students and teachers alike. If you see that there is a
problem, we can communicate. My role is that I will help the communication. My job is to show the students how to act.”

Paul felt strongly about respecting the feelings and rights of the students and teachers. He did not believe in ever raising his voice, or speaking harshly to a student in front of other students. He said,

“If you give respect, you get it back. If you confront someone or try to intimidate them, they will intimidate you back. If you respect them, what else can they do but respect you back.”

Paul had a definite vision about what he wanted the school to become, but he also realized that changes would take time. Although bringing his philosophy to the school might take some time, Paul considered himself to be an “innovative” principal (Schein, 1971). His lack of experience as an administrator and his lack of knowledge about the culture of Fairview Middle caused Paul to move cautiously.

When I visited Paul during his first semester at Fairview Elementary, he was still trying to organize his files and paperwork. He started at the school so abruptly that he spent most of the first semester trying to catch up. Despite his lack of experience and his abrupt appointment to the principalship, Paul appeared to be calm and relaxed. He was working to bring about his vision for Fairview Middle, but knew that there would be problems along the way.

Central Office. Although Paul was happy with his position at Fairview Middle, he had many complaints about the Central Office. He received many
messages from the hierarchy, most of which he considered a waste of time. Paul complained about irritating supervisors who interfered with his work, school board politics, and the district meetings which caused him to be away from the school on many occasions.

Paul related an incident in which three supervisors met with him shortly after the beginning of school to discuss some general school improvement ideas. Shortly after the meeting, Paul received a nine-page memorandum from his supervisor titled "Summary of Areas in Need of Change." This very detailed list included lengthy descriptions about the following items: office procedures, comprehensive discipline structure, school master time schedule, positive student activities, operating procedures, in-school suspension procedures, and facility renovations. Each of the proposed changes was described in detail, with exact procedures outlined and diagrams included (facility renovation and in-school suspension area).

Against the supervisor's wishes, Paul copied the memorandum and gave every faculty member a copy, requesting their input. The supervisor wanted Paul to put the agenda into place without any input from the faculty; however, Paul was adamant about having the faculty see the proposed list of changes. He said,

"They have no input. Why would any teacher support these changes? If they want to send a nine-page list of recommendations, I'm okay with that. But realistically, I know that if they want me to do these things, I'll
have to stop doing everything else. I'm trying to keep my head above water, and they want me to reorganize the school. I know that I'm doing the best that I can. I'm okay that they think there should be changes, but I know what's realistic.”

Paul saw the irony of asking a brand new principal with no administrative experience to make immediate and drastic changes to the school structure. He did not seem to be concerned, but instead amused, by the situation. He said, “I'm too old—it takes a lot to bother me.”

Fairview Middle had the longest school day in the district, from 8:10 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. This presented a problem because bus drivers started dropping students at the school at 7:15 in the morning, but the duty teachers were not required by contract to arrive at the school before 7:30 a.m. If Paul was involved with some other activity between 7:15 and 7:30, the students were left unsupervised.

He wrote a letter to the district supervisor of transportation about the situation, requesting that the bus drivers not drop the students off until 7:30, and received a letter back that this would be no problem. A few days later, Paul received another letter from the supervisor which stated that the original drop-off time was going back into effect. In the time between the letters, the school bus drivers' organization had met with the supervisors and applied pressure to enforce the schedule that the drivers wanted.
Paul said that he learned several lessons from the experience. First, the bus drivers were one of the most powerful organizations in the district. They got their way—the bus drivers determined what time school would start and what time school would dismiss. Secondly, he learned that the group that complained the most would probably be the group that would get their way.

He also complained about the number of meetings that he was required to attend, both by the district and the state. He believed that the principal should be at the school as much as possible, but he was often called away to attend various meetings. During the first nine weeks of school, Paul was away from the school for all or part of a day at least 16 times. He said, “We even have articulation meetings. What are these for? It’s more like a gripe session for principals. It’s a big waste of time.”

**Paperwork.** Handling the assorted documents for the school presented a problem for Paul. He was not comfortable with the paper flow associated with the principalship, and it was influencing his ability to establish organizational routines. The primary factors leading to this problem included: Paul’s lack of attention to details, the lateness of his appointment to the principalship, his lack of administrative experience, his lack of experience at Fairview Middle School, no assistant principal to share the load, and the inexperience of the secretarial staff. Paul recognized this problem, and knew that he was going to have to establish some type of system to handle the school’s documents.
Teachers. When Paul arrived at the school, he requested that the teachers give him an opportunity to establish himself. He said,

"I don't know what they expected, but they got me. Being brought in from the outside is hard, but not all bad. They [the teachers] have to give you a chance because they don't have any preconceived ideas about you. They have to give you the opportunity to succeed or fail."

Paul recognized that there were advantages and disadvantages to being an outsider. He realized that the teachers were established at the school long before he arrived, and he did not come in and make radical changes. About the teachers' influence on him, he said,

"The teachers' favorite phrase is, 'in the past we did this or that.' You have to be open to what the school and the faculty has to offer. The teachers know the school, not me. They have been here longer."

If the faculty members had a complaint, they were reluctant to confront Paul with the situation. If they had a problem, they would "elect" a spokesperson to explain the teachers' concerns, and see if a compromise could be worked out. Paul made every effort to be approachable, but he felt that the teachers were still reluctant to voice their opinions. During my observations, the teachers were very respectful towards Paul. They seemed to like him, and several teachers told me that he was "doing a really good job."

Students. At the end of his first semester, Paul was still learning about the students at Fairview Middle. The climate of the school was different than his previous school, and it took Paul some time to get comfortable with the
different culture of the school. With no assistant principal at the school, Paul was in charge of all student discipline. During his first few months as the principal, this was his primary form of interaction with students. He enjoyed interacting with the students at the school, but had not yet developed a great deal of knowledge about them on an individual basis.

Paul believed strongly in not embarrassing students in front of their peers. He knew that confrontations often led to explosive situations, and he was reluctant to be involved in those type of situations. He said, “If I lecture a student alone, he can go out and save face. He can say whatever he wants to his friends, and not have to be embarrassed.”

Paul knew that the principal’s job was not always an easy one. During his first month at the school, a critical incident with a student occurred which resulted in police intervention. While Paul was away from the school, a troubled student pulled a gun at a school assembly, and began to shout and wave the gun in the air. After running out of the gymnasium, the student fired several shots, nearly hitting several other students. This incident occurred when Paul was away from the school at a principal’s meeting, and by the time he returned, an extremely chaotic situation had developed. Although the episode was severe, Paul did not allow it to ruin his confidence. He said,

“This is a good school, and now people may have the wrong impression, but I know that we are doing the best that we can. If there is trouble in
the school, you have to face it. You have to put out little fires before they become big ones.”

Summary

Paul was socialized to his new position primarily through his own personal philosophy of the principalship and through the bureaucracy of the Central Office supervisors. He believed in sharing the decision making authority with the faculty, and they were supportive of his early work at the school. Paul made an effort to base his relationship with the students on mutual respect. He was honest about his lack of experience, and was open to new ideas. Paul had a vision for the school, but was willing to be patient to implement that vision. He felt strongly that Fairview Middle was where he was meant to be, and he was willing to work hard to learn all he could about his new position. Paul’s dimensions of contrast are summarized in Table 18 below.

Table 18. Summary Table for Paul’s Dimensions of Contrast.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Contrast</th>
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<td>Shared decision making/Be professional</td>
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<td>Promotion Context</td>
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<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Supportive/Helped for smooth transition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialization Stage</td>
<td>Stage 2: Control</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Joyce: Metropolitan Middle School

Joyce was African-American, in her late 40s, married, and had two children. Before becoming a middle school principal, she worked for more than 10 years as a high school teacher, and then as an assistant principal in two different high schools.

Organizational Characteristics

The community. Washington Middle School was located in the heart of an inner-city neighborhood, about two miles from the central business district of a metropolitan area. The residential neighborhood on either side and behind the school consisted of small single-family homes. A heavily traveled four-lane street in front of the school was lined with homes, a community center, and small businesses. The area was described as “high crime” by the principal and teachers.

The facility. The main part of the Washington Middle School campus was a tan brick two-story building, built in 1940. Adjoining buildings housed the physical education areas, special education classrooms, band and choir rooms, the in-school suspension room, and the cafeteria. The exterior doors were brightly painted in the school colors, and large pine trees and shrubbery gave the front lawn a pleasant, country look.

The aging school showed some signs of wear and tear, but the grounds were clean and the landscaping was well maintained. A large chain-link fence,
topped by barbed wire, surrounded the school campus. The gates on the fence were locked each day at 4:00 p.m., and no students or staff were allowed inside the building after that time.

The school was built for fewer students and faculty than the number assigned to the facility for 1994-95. Consequently, every classroom, storage room, and closet were occupied during every period, resulting in a very overcrowded and congested situation.

The office area was large and well organized, except for waiting area, where boxes were piled in the visitor’s seats. In the office a poster stated, “Now I’m somebody, cause God don’t make no junk.” My visits occurred during red ribbon week, a type of drug prevention emphasis. Red ribbons and school pride decorations adorned the office area and main hallway.

The principal’s office was large, clean, and somewhat plain. The desk was neat and well organized, with pictures of the principal’s family prominently displayed. Two guest chairs were placed in front of the desk, and a slate blue couch was on one side of the office.

The students. Washington Middle enrolled about 800 students, many of whom were brought to school on one of the 24 busses that served the school every day. The Central Office staffed the school for 600 students, but more than 800 showed up on the first day, resulting in overflow classes during the first part of the year. The student population was about 80% African-American,
10% Asian, and 10% white. Primarily living in four different inner-city neighborhoods, about 70% of the students qualified for the free lunch program, placing this school in the next to lowest socioeconomic quartile. During the first part of the school year, there were many fights resulting from local “turf battles.” Joyce said that the fighting had calmed down some by late October, the time of my observations.

The students were not well behaved in the classrooms or in the hallways. They were loud and boisterous, and Joyce often called them down for running in the hall. In addition, during the school day, there were often many students in the hall or in the office, away from their scheduled classrooms. Many of the students were friendly toward Joyce, but she reported that she had to regularly deal with many discipline problems.

The faculty and staff. Besides Joyce and two assistant principals, there were 45 teachers at Washington Middle. Joyce said that the staff was “stable,” but due to overcrowding, eight new teachers arrived at the school after the beginning of the school year. Two other teachers resigned in mid-October, and were replaced by new, uncertified teachers. In addition, three other teachers at the school were also teaching on temporary certificates.

The faculty was polite, but distant. Most of the teachers I met during my visit were female, although there were several male teachers working at the school. The older female teachers tended to be African-American, while the
younger female teachers were mostly white. Evidently, the new teachers at the school had a difficult time adjusting to their work. About these teachers, Joyce said, "What we had here was chaos. We're trying to make some order out of it." The large number of new teachers assigned to the school may have contributed toward the instability of the faculty.

Joyce related that the faculty was instructionally weak. Although I did not observe very many classrooms during my visit, what I did see confirmed her assessment of the teachers at the school. Joyce hoped that she would be able to "get rid of" the weakest teachers, and help some others improve.

The secretary was new to the school. The former secretary, who had served the school for many years, decided to resign when Joyce was appointed as the principal. The new secretary seemed helpful, but unsure about how to handle every situation. When she was forced to deal with the students' questions, she sometimes gave inconsistent responses.

The two assistant principals were both at the school before Joyce's arrival. Joyce said that both of the assistant principals aspired to the principalship, and that both wanted the principal's job at Washington Middle. She did not have much to say about the assistant principals, and during my visits, they did not interact often during the school day.

The Central Office. The district was a very large one, and had a very large Central Office staff. During my visit, Joyce had many interactions with
the Central Office staff members, both in person and by phone. Joyce was primarily involved with the Central Office through the Personnel Office, the supervisors who handled teacher grievances, and the Maintenance Department.

**Personal Characteristics**

**Promotion context.** Joyce had more than 20 years experience in education, all in the same district. After about 10 years as a classroom teacher, she was appointed to be an assistant principal at a local high school. She spent five years in that position, and seven more years as an assistant principal at another high school. Joyce described her appointment to the principalship as follows:

"I was appointed in June to be effective as of July. On June 13th, I set up an appointment with [the previous principal] to meet and see what was what at the school. We met during the morning, and then about lunchtime, he handed me the keys and said, 'I'm gone.' I was here from then on. I didn't even get to go and clean out my old office for two weeks."

Joyce had worked for more than 20 years in the district, but she was an "outsider" to Washington Middle School. She was new to the principalship and new to the school, so both professional and organizational socialization occurred simultaneously (Hart, 1993). Joyce was learning how to be a principal at the same time that she was learning about her new school. Although there were other administrators at the school, Joyce said that she had no informant to give her information about the school routines. She said, "They are just waiting
to see if I'll fall on my face." In addition, Washington Middle was a large school with many new teachers, so there was a general feeling of newness about the faculty.

Joyce realized that her experience as an assistant principal was helpful to her as a principal, but she thought that the two positions were clearly different. About the difference, she said,

"There's a big difference—it's two different jobs. When you are the assistant, you always have the option of stepping back and saying 'this is yours' to the principal. You can always pass the problem on. Now, you have no one to pass it on to. Not only that, you have to cover for everyone's errors in judgment. If someone messes up, it's still your responsibility, and then you have to talk to that person to make sure it doesn't happen again."

**Philosophy.** Joyce had an idea about what she wanted to do at Washington Middle School. She wanted to improve the school's instructional program, to upgrade the technology at the school, and to get the students out of the halls and into the classrooms. However, she spent most of her time during the first semester "putting out fires" and had not been able to implement much of her agenda by the end of the first semester.

Joyce was not detail oriented. She had an overall grasp of what was going on at her school, and she recognized that there were serious problems, but she often forgot to follow up on details. She had trouble remembering what class period it was at any given time, asking, "What hour is it?" throughout the
day. Several times she told students to “meet her at the office,” and forgot that they were there until she arrived back and saw them waiting.

Joyce’s relationship with the teachers was professional, but slightly remote. A group of teachers was involved in supporting a teacher who had filed a grievance over her placement in a particular classroom. This caused some tension with the other faculty members who were also members of the local teachers’ union. Joyce had not developed a close relationship with any of the teachers, and some were openly hostile toward her. When interacting with the younger teachers, Joyce tended to “talk down” to them, treating them in a manner similar to the students. She knew that the school situation at Washington Middle was chaotic, and she was trying to survive her first year.

Joyce was visible in the halls when classes changed and during lunch and recess, but it did not really seem to help. Although the students were not well behaved, Joyce intervened only occasionally and briefly. She wanted to establish control over the discipline problems, but she knew that they had a long way to go.

Socialization Forces

Although she had worked her entire career in the same district, Joyce had little prior knowledge about Washington Middle School before she arrived to be the principal. Joyce had a philosophy about the principalship, but it was overwhelmed by the immediate context of the school. Primary socialization
forces Joyce encountered included problems with teachers and students, parental complaints, and the chaotic nature of the school.

**Personal characteristics.** Joyce presented herself as professional and helpful, but there were many factors which influenced her work at Washington Middle School. On the surface, she was doing all the “right” things, but her school had many problems. Joyce had an idea about what she wanted to do at the school, but the context of the school seemed to overwhelm her ability to put her vision into place. According to some teachers, she had made some improvements in the school, but real change would take time.

Joyce wanted to be an “innovative” principal (Schein, 1971), but at Washington Middle, being a “custodial” principal was a big job in itself. Given time, Joyce believed that she could make a difference. For her first year, she was willing to follow the advice of her mentor, who said, “During the first year, sit back and see what happens. Then take the second year to make your changes.”

During the first part of the year, Joyce had been able to make some school improvements. She started a program which involved parents patrolling the hallways during the day to act as security guards or hall monitors. Although it was early in the year and the program was not formally in place, several parents were already “on patrol” in the hall by late October. Joyce also had made some physical improvements to the building by having some old and
unsafe windows replaced. The Maintenance Department was reluctant to replace the windows because they were not broken, but Joyce convinced them it was necessary.

In the office, Joyce was working to get the school records converted to a computerized system. When she arrived in June, all school records were maintained by hand or with a typewriter. She arranged to purchase two computers for the office, and got the necessary training and software for her office staff. Joyce realized that these improvements were only a beginning, and that the real needs of the school were in the instructional areas. She also realized that improving the level of teaching was going to be difficult, based on the school’s long history of poor academic achievement.

Teachers. The faculty at Washington Middle was a strong socializing force for Joyce during her first semester. She anticipated the problems she would have with students, but she was unprepared for some faculty problems. Joyce found that she was pressured by the teachers to make certain decisions, both formally and informally. In addition, she was forced to “cover” for the inappropriate actions of some faculty members.

Joyce had been very involved during the first semester with a union grievance filed by a particular teacher. Due to school overcrowding, two resource teachers were asked to share classroom space, a request which one
teacher resisted. By the time of my visit, the situation had escalated, and the matter was only one step away from a full school board hearing. Joyce said,

“This is about power and authority, not classroom space. I stepped on some toes, and now I’m being punished. I just want this put to an end.”

The teacher filing the complaint had been at the school for 11 years and she had the support of a small group of teachers. Joyce described the group of teachers in the following quote:

“We have a group of teachers who stick together. There are eight teachers in the group, and the membership is not open to new members. They talk about issues and decide what their opinion will be. I’m not sure if they are trying to break the new principal or what, but sometimes I have to laugh. When I cut down on faculty meetings, to save time, they complained that I was impeding communication. So we had some more meetings, and they complained about that. It’s a good thing I have a strong constitution.”

In addition, Joyce received the usual informal messages from the faculty about their feelings and concerns. When Joyce was first appointed to the job, many teachers “dropped by” the principal’s office, some on Joyce’s first day. They wanted to let her know “what was what,” or “the pecking order” of the faculty. Joyce said they told her, “This is the way its been done, or so and so does a really good job with whatever.” Some teachers wanted to let her know what kind of changes they wanted made at the school, while others merely wanted to meet the new principal.

Joyce stated that she often had to follow up on inappropriate actions by faculty members. Students came to Joyce with complaints about particular
teachers, and Joyce suspected that some complaints were legitimate. During my visit, two incidents occurred which illustrated this problem.

Joyce was confronted by two parents who complained that a teacher had written an inappropriate letter to them about a situation with their child. The student had asked the teacher for some advice about the upcoming Homecoming activities, and the teacher responded with a letter to the parents. Responding was not the problem, but the contents of the letter were evidently inappropriate, coming from a teacher. Joyce spoke in support of the teacher, but after reading the letter, she apologized for the situation. She then called the teacher in to discuss "professional behavior." This situation was disturbing to Joyce because she had no knowledge about what occurred until it was too late.

On another occasion, five students ran into the office, complaining that "Mrs. G. cursed them and then threw them out of class." When Joyce was able to investigate this situation, she found out that when the students misbehaved, the teacher did use foul language. The students then left the class, threatening to "tell the principal and get her fired." The situations involving inappropriate teacher behavior were in addition to the poor teaching that Joyce felt was occurring at her school.

**Students.** Joyce spent a large part of her time at the school interacting with students who misbehaved. During my observations, Joyce was forced to deal with six discipline problems which were serious enough to result in the
students being sent to the principal's office. In addition, she monitored the student discipline in the halls and on the school grounds.

The school had one assistant principal with the title "Assistant Principal for Discipline," but he did not handle all discipline matters. When I asked Joyce how they decided who did what regarding student discipline, she said, "It's really just whoever gets to it first." Evidently, there was not a clear plan regarding this situation.

When the students were sent to the office, they were respectful toward Joyce, and they listened to what she said. Joyce dealt with each problem patiently, explaining to the students where they made their mistake, while encouraging them to improve. She assigned various kinds of punishment, from writing essays to a visit to the in-school suspension room.

Parents. The parents at Washington Middle School were involved with the school, but not in the way that Joyce had hoped. She was working to increase parental involvement in school programs such as the parent security patrol and the Parent-Teacher Association. Instead, a more common interaction with parents occurred when parents came to the school to complain. Joyce talked about many different interactions with parents, and during my observations, parents came by the office to see her on five different occasions, and she responded to phone calls twice.
One example of parents as a socializing force is described in the following example. Two parents were waiting for Joyce when she returned to the office after walking around the campus. The mother said, “We don’t have gym shorts for our daughter, and she was sent to intervention [an in-school suspension] for not having the shorts. I called the school board and they told me she could wear regular shorts.” Joyce replied,

“I don’t know how this happened. We will provide gym clothes for students who do not have them. If the school board made some policy about P.E. clothes, I’m not aware of it. Whenever there is a problem, you see me, and we’ll work it out. You don’t have to call the school board.”

As other examples, other parents called or came to Joyce’s office to complain about various incidents, including: rude treatment on the telephone by a school staff person, a student’s lack of books for his math class, a discipline problem, and Joyce’s failure to return a parent’s phone call.

Joyce said that, in time, she believed that the parents would become involved in school matters in a more positive way. About the level of parental involvement, Joyce said to one parent, “We had 40 parents at the PTA [meeting], but that was more than they had last year by 35. You may not like everything that goes on here--maybe I don’t either. We’re trying to improve.”

School context. Washington Middle School was in need of improvement. Due to a combination of student, faculty, and community problems, there was an environment of instability at the school. Joyce said,
"Some days it just seems out of control. If I had more confidence in our instructional program, I would feel a lot better. There are things going on in the classroom that I am not aware of, and it's causing me problems."

Washington Middle was a large school in a large district, and "getting a handle" on things had been very difficult for Joyce during her first semester. There were communication problems, and as Joyce put it, "The right hand does not always know what the left hand is doing."

Deviation from the school schedule was common. Either individual students were seen out of class, or entire classrooms were with the teacher, but away from the classroom. In one instance, an entire class of students was found on the benches located outside the school cafeteria. Joyce asked, "Why are you here?" A student responded, "Our teacher is in a conference in the cafeteria." Joyce did not pursue the matter, but related to me that she knew this was a problem. Problems with the lunch schedule worsened this situation. Because they were forced to feed many students in a short amount of time, the next class period was often interrupted.

Students were often found outside of class during class time. Either they had to "go to the office," or they were "looking for" someone. Students who went to the office to use the telephone were given inconsistent responses by the secretary. Some students were allowed to make their case and use the telephone, while others were sent away.
Almost every class period was interrupted by intercom announcements. Official “morning” and “afternoon” announcements were made by a member of the Student Council, and Joyce, the secretary, and attendance office personnel routinely used the intercom to call individual students to the office. During the last period class on a Friday afternoon, the intercom was used seven different times.

Joyce had not been able to establish a routine for her day. She said,

“When I am out of the office, there is usually someone or something waiting for me when I return. Parents, teachers, and students need to see me immediately, and I have to stop whatever I’m doing. The paperwork has to wait. When I started, I thought I would do paperwork in the morning, and deal with other things in the afternoon. That didn’t work very well, so I turned it around and did paperwork in the afternoon. That didn’t work very well either, and now I just mix it up all day. Planning the day is very difficult.”

As an example, one morning Joyce planned two classroom observations for the first part of the school day. Instead, the following field notes show the actual schedule of events that occurred.

- **7:30 a.m.** Deal with the students caught fighting the previous day.
- **7:45 a.m.** Find substitute teachers for two teachers who have not arrived at school.
- **8:00 a.m.** Talk with the band director about his conflict with another teacher.
- **8:45 a.m.** Talk with parents who arrive unannounced to discuss a problem teacher.
- **9:15 a.m.** Deal with five students who walked out of class.
- **9:30 a.m.** Talk with the district’s Assistant Superintendent, who arrived unannounced.
- **10:00 a.m.** Talk with a mother and son about the son’s lack of class materials and other problems.
That schedule of events, totally different from the one Joyce planned, may have typified Joyce's work at Washington Middle School. She was doing the best that she could, but this was crisis management, and it was still out of Joyce's control.

**Summary**

Joyce was socialized to her new position primarily through the chaotic context of the school and conflicts with some experienced faculty members. Joyce's dimensions of contrast are summarized in Table 19 below. Problems with students, teachers, and parents caused Joyce to temporarily set aside her agenda for school improvement. Joyce was candid about what she had been able to accomplish during her first semester, but she was hoping for greater improvement in the future.

**Table 19. Summary Table for Joyce's Dimensions of Contrast.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Contrast</th>
<th>Result or Influence</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Socialization Forces</strong></td>
<td>Reduce school chaos/Improve instructional program</td>
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<td>Philosophy of Principalship</td>
<td>Assistant principal/Outside school</td>
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<td>Promotion Context</td>
<td>Not supportive/Problems with teachers' union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Involved, but not supportive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Chaotic school in need of improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School context</td>
<td>Many discipline problems consumed valuable time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Response</strong></td>
<td>Custodial: Too busy &quot;putting out fires&quot; to implement innovative ideas</td>
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<td><strong>Socialization Stage</strong></td>
<td>Stage 1: Survival</td>
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Dale: Non-Metropolitan Secondary School

Dale was a single white male in his early 40s, who had lived almost his entire life in the same community. Except for his first year as a teacher, his entire educational career was at Cypress Bend High School, the school he attended as a student. Before becoming the principal, he taught for 11 years at the school, and then was appointed as the assistant principal, a position he held for seven years.

Organizational Characteristics

The community. Cypress Bend, an isolated community of less than 2,000 inhabitants, was located about 30 miles from a larger metropolitan area. The main part of town consisted of several square blocks of small wood frame and brick homes, a number of small businesses, and several churches. The residents of Cypress Bend worked primarily in the fishing business and the oil industry.

Cypress Bend was different from some other towns that I visited and observed in one distinct way—its isolation. It was isolated physically, located at the end of a two-lane highway; it was also isolated in a more intangible way, due to the closely knit interaction of the Cypress Bend residents. Most of the people who lived in Cypress Bend focused their lives in and around the town. Except for some shopping, and the few people that worked out of town, they lived, worked, and interacted primarily within their own community.
When I contacted the district office about visiting the school, the superintendent told me, "You’ll like Cypress Bend—it’s like stepping back in time." When I arrived in town, I found this prediction to be true. The community had a 1950s atmosphere, but in a quaint way.

**The facility.** Cypress Bend High School, a red-brick two-story building built in 1932, was located in the center of the Cypress Bend community. Besides the main building, the campus consisted of five smaller buildings, built at various times between 1932 and the late 1980s. The other buildings housed the junior high classrooms, the library, the band room, the gymnasium, the industrial arts area, and the cafeteria.

Although it was quite old, the school was in good condition. The office area had been remodeled in recent years, and all of the classrooms and hallways were neat and orderly. Dale told me that there were some structural problems that needed to be fixed, but the school appeared to be in good repair.

**The students.** The school served about 500 middle school and high school students. The student body was very homogeneous, having approximately a 90-95% white population. About 35% of the students qualified for the free lunch program, placing Cypress Bend High in the bottom part of the highest socioeconomic quartile. They students were well behaved in the halls and on the school grounds. Although I did not personally see any discipline problems during my visit, Dale told me that they had real problems with
fighting, especially among the female students. According to the assistant
principal’s estimate, they had about 20 fights at the school by late October.

About 10-15% of the Cypress Bend graduates attended college at the
nearby regional university. For a small school, Cypress Bend High had many
student activities, including band, Beta Club, football, basketball, volleyball,
and track. They had one “honors,” or accelerated section of each core subject at
each grade level. I asked if these were the classes for the advanced students,
and the guidance counselor said, “I wouldn’t say advanced, but they are for our
better students.” I did not get the impression that the Cypress Bend students
excelled academically, but they appeared to be getting a good basic education.
They had some of the more modern innovations, such as tele-learning and a
computer lab, but most of the classes appeared to be very traditional.

The faculty and staff. The 30 member faculty was very stable. Except
for the assistant principal, no new faculty members were hired for the 1995-95
school year. They seemed to be very close, although they socialized in several
different groups.

The faculty members were very friendly and congenial. They were
curious about my visit, and when they found out why I was there, they were
quick to defend the school and the work of the principal. Throughout the
observations, they joked and kidded with each other and the students. Often,
they traded barbs and snappy comebacks with one another. They faculty and
staff were all white, and the two special education aides were African-American.

Two of the faculty members also applied for the principal’s job. Dale had been the assistant principal during the previous year, and he hired a female Central Office supervisor who had once taught at Cypress Bend High as the new assistant principal.

In a way, there were three generations of teachers at Cypress Bend High. A number of the teachers had been Dale’s classmates at Cypress Bend High. In addition, several of the teachers taught Dale when he was in school, and a few of the teachers were Dale’s former students. Dale said the faculty was like “a big family” and it did seem that way.

Both of the school secretaries at the school had been hired by Dale during the summer before school began. When the school board advertised for the two secretarial positions, there were 42 applicants for one position and 47 applicants for the other. Because the school board was not able to screen the applicants, Dale developed a secretarial test for the applicants, consisting of spelling, typing, composing letters, and simple mathematical calculations.

One of the secretaries hired was a classmate of Dale’s. He said, “She is very good. When she was here [as a student], she was the valedictorian, and I was way down there. I am not a smart individual. I’ve had to work for what
I've gotten.” He seemed to have and open and friendly relationship with both of the secretaries at the school.

**The Central Office.** Dale had no unkind words about the Central Office, but he said that it was a very political situation. He related an incident about being close with the former superintendent, who was voted out of office. Dale was not sure if he would get the principal’s job when it came open, due to internal politics, but in the end he was appointed. He said, “I wasn’t sure who was going to make the hiring decision. It was a long wait.”

During my visit, a Central Office supervisor visited the school to conduct some teacher evaluations. She spoke very highly of Dale, and praised his work at the school. Dale nodded and smiled as she went on to discuss left brain learning, right brain learning, school improvement, and the state curriculum. “Achievement--that’s the key,” she told us. Dale had a good relationship with the Central Office staff, but they did not influence his work in any noticeable way.

**Personal Characteristics**

**Background.** Dale had lived in the Cypress Bend community for most of his life. He attended Cypress Bend High as a student, and he worked there his entire career, except his first year as a teacher. Dale was close to his family--his sister, mother, and father still lived in town near the school. His father was the Cypress Bend chief of police until he retired.
Dale enjoyed living in Cypress Bend, and he said that he would not consider living anywhere else. Having been a longtime resident of the community, he knew almost everyone in town. In the evening, he would often visit with his mother and father, or eat in one of the town’s small restaurants. Every Friday, after work, he packed his gear and went to his fishing camp for the weekend. He enjoyed getting away from town to hunt and fish. When I asked where his camp was located, he replied, “It’s not on a road--you go there in a boat.”

Promotion context. During the seven years that Dale was the assistant principal at Cypress Bend High School, he gradually took over most of the school’s administrative duties. His predecessor had been in education for 38 years, most of it at Cypress Bend High. As Dale put it, she had been “semi-retired” for the past few years.

When Dale was appointed to be the principal, he moved from one office to another, but his job did not change very much. According to Dale, having been a strong assistant principal under a weak principal made the transition almost effortless. They only principal’s duty Dale had not done previously was “fill out the annual report for the state.”

Dale said the job had been better than he expected. When he was the assistant principal, he gradually began to learn the functions of the principalship. Over time, as he did more of the principal’s duties, the former
principal did less and less. Although the former principal caused this shift of
responsibilities to occur, she was resentful about the situation. As Dale took
over more of the duties, individuals conducting business with the school would
ask to see Dale instead of the principal. He said that she got very angry about
this, and that they had to resolve the conflict during her last few years at the
school.

About his appointment to the principalship, he said,

"I was interviewed in April, and named principal in May. I didn’t know
what would happen. I felt that the lady sitting here [the former
principal] wasn’t really pulling for me. As it turned out, she had no
influence at all. The new superintendent couldn’t stand her—he’s more
political. I was the first principal he hired so I think he supports me. I
had some competition—some within the school and some outside."

Philosophy/personality. Dale had a very friendly, gregarious, and
outgoing personality. His relationship with the teachers was open and informal.
Over time, Dale had developed a close relationship with many of the teachers,
and they often discussed student problems in an informal way, as if they were
talking about their friends or family. Of the principals I visited, he had the best
personality. He did not appear to be frustrated, overwhelmed, worried, or
overworked. If he was nervous or upset, it did not show.

Dale introduced me to almost every faculty member, the cafeteria
workers, and many of the students. He told each person a little bit about my
study, telling the students that I “had to write a term paper about first-year
principals like him.” Dale was very pleasant, making sure that I had coffee and
snacks, and he drove me around town, showing me his house and other local
sights.

Dale was a “custodial” principal (Schein, 1971). He said that he was not
interested in changing things at the school because they were “in good shape,”
and that “this school runs itself.” Most of the improvements Dale made
consisted of following the previously established written policies of the school
and district. According to Dale, under the previous principal, things had been
allowed to “slide” and he merely tightened up on the policies already in place.
He said, “If we have a policy, I follow it to a ‘T.’”

Dale was most concerned about having a “smoothly run” school. The
students were well behaved; they went to class on time and stayed there until
the bell rang. For the most part, they did their homework, and caused the
teachers few problems. They teachers were established community members
and Dale felt that he could trust them to do their jobs. He depended on his
personality to keep things running, and he did not appear to be interested in
making many substantive changes in the school organization.

Socialization Forces

Dale had a long history at Cypress Bend High School before his
appointment to the principalship. He was not overworked, and he felt little
pressure in his new position as the principal. While not overly concerned about
the school's instructional program, he wanted the managerial aspects of the school to be smooth. The "well-oiled machine" and "tight ship" metaphors are appropriate when describing Cypress Bend High School. Dale did have an idea about what he wanted at the school, and he interacted with the teachers, students, and community members to bring about his vision. According to Dale, Cypress Bend High had few organizational problems, and it was an enjoyable place to work.

Personal characteristics. Dale's leadership style was not aggressive, but he was clearly in charge of the school. He did not appear to be overly concerned about the school's instructional program, although he did tell one teacher, "I think we should start having shop classes again for the boys." He said he thought Cypress Bend High was perceived to be a good school, but he knew that he could be more aggressive regarding teacher observations and evaluations.

Dale had certain expectations about the students at the school. They were expected to behave, to treat the teachers with respect, and to have their homework done. Dale reviewed the student handbook before school started, making revisions where he felt they were necessary. Included in the handbook was a section for students to sign and return, which stated that they had "read and understood" the material.
Dale did not speak openly of his educational philosophy, nor did he make any statements or declarations about what the school should "be." However, he did seem to have a sense about what he wanted, particularly concerning student behavior. This awareness seemed to guide his actions, although he did not state it in a formalized way.

According to the Schein (1971) framework, Dale's response to the socialization process was custodial. Because of his elevated status in the assistant principal's role, most of his organizational socialization influences had already been established before his appointment to the principalship. He had worked in the school for many years, and he had a previously established opinion about the school. Although he planned to do things "his" way, he did not believe that the school needed many changes. His school improvement plan was focused primarily on student discipline. When I asked Dale if there were any areas at the school that he wanted to change, he replied, "Well, I've been thinking about changing the way we elect the Homecoming Court."

Community. Dale had a great deal of history in the Cypress Bend community. He grew up in Cypress Bend, attended the Cypress Bend schools, and worked almost his entire career in one school. He personally knew the students, their parents, and most of the people in the town. Dale perceived this as both a positive and negative situation.
He enjoyed his interactions with the community members. Several times during my visit, friends from the community stopped by the school to visit with Dale. I could not easily distinguish business conversation from personal conversation during these visits. When a school board member came to visit Dale, there was some discussion of school business, but also a great deal of conversation about hunting, fishing, and other community matters. Dale also knew that having a long history in the community could be a problem. He said that his reputation was established, and that it would be difficult to change.

Students. Dale was interested in the students at Cypress Bend High School, and tried to help them work through their problems. He knew every student in the school, and he had known most of them for their entire lives. He proudly pointed out one student and said, “See that boy. He’s a reformed alcoholic. A year ago he was no good, and now he is planning to go to college.” The student was an office worker, and he spent more than 20 minutes in Dale’s office one afternoon discussing trucks, guns, and his plans for the future. He was completely relaxed in Dale’s presence, and they seemed to be very close.

Dale asked the students many questions during my visit. Sometimes he appeared to be “making conversation” with the students by joking with them and teasing them in a good-natured way. Other times, he was quietly trying to get some information that would help him solve a problem with some other student. “What happened in that fight? Who started it? Did you see it?” he
asked one female student. "Do you know why Susan was acting that way?" he asked another.

Another student was sent to the office for sleeping in class. Dale talked to the student, called his mother on the telephone, and searched for the reason behind the problem. He sent the student home, with instructions to the mother to "keep him there until he catches up on his sleep." Dale was not harsh with the student; he knew from other students and teachers that this student was having trouble at home.

In another instance, a 17-year-old junior came to the office to "check out," the formal procedure for withdrawing from school. He was dropping out to take a job in the oil industry "pulling pipe." Dale summoned the guidance counselor, and together they tried to convince the student to stay in school, but the student's mind was made up. The student was extremely polite, but firm in his position. Dale said, "You're quitting--I'm shocked. You're making a big mistake. You will regret this later." Dale spent quite a bit of time with this student, but he did not make any progress. He told me later that Cypress Bend does not have "a lot" of students who drop out, but "maybe 10 a year."

Dale spent a great deal of time interacting with the students, both formally and informally. Although he shared the responsibility with the assistant principal, he was actively involved in the student discipline at the school. He worked diligently to investigate problems and potential problems
with students, and tried to help the students both as the principal and also in a more informal way. Although he was firm with the students, they respected him, and they seemed to like him very much.

**Work context.** Dale was a first-year principal, but he was not overwhelmed by the job. He arrived at school each day about 30 minutes before the students, and he spent the day in and around the school. Unless he had some specific after school activity, Dale went home every day at 2:40 p.m., ten minutes after the dismissal bell. He said, “I’ll give it 110% while I’m here, but at 2:40, I’m gone.”

He spent a large part of his time in the office and in the halls, interacting with students and teachers. During lunch, he walked the school grounds, joking and laughing with the students. He dealt with the paperwork in an orderly, efficient manner, routing each piece to the proper teacher or staff member. He said that he liked to get the paperwork finished and off his desk as quickly as possible. Dale was able to get his work done in the time he was at school, and he rarely stayed after school or came in on the weekend, except to attend athletic events. He seemed to be in control of his schedule, and he was not frustrated by the demands of the job.

**Summary**

Cypress Bend High was a pleasant school with few administrative problems. Dale worked closely with the teachers to keep the school running in
an orderly, efficient manner. The students and teachers at the school seemed happy to be there, and the school climate was pleasant. When the job came open, Dale was the logical choice to be the principal, and he had been well received in his new position. He kept the school running smoothly and that seemed to be what the community wanted. Due to the context of his promotion, he felt little socialization pressure from the organization; however, he did work closely within the school and community to make Cypress Bend High an orderly and pleasant place to be. Dale's dimensions of contrast are presented in Table 20 below.

**Table 20. Summary Table for Dale's Dimensions of Contrast.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Contrast</th>
<th>Result or Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Socialization Forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Principalship</td>
<td>&quot;This school runs itself.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Context</td>
<td>Assistant principal/Within school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Used as a tool/Friendly and gregarious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Life long resident/Many interactions with community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Interest in helping students solve problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Response</strong></td>
<td>Custodial: Few changes wanted by the principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Stage</strong></td>
<td>Stage 3: Stability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Larry: Metropolitan Secondary School**

Larry was in his mid 40s, white, married, and had two children. He was a small, athletic man with an intense personality. A former coach and teacher, he had more than 20 years experience in education, all within the same district. He knew for many years that he wanted to be the principal at Red Bank High
School, the school where he had been the assistant principal for the past five years.

**Organizational Characteristics**

**The community.** Red Bank High School was located in the town of Red Bank, a bedroom community of a larger metropolitan area. Although Red Bank was a suburb of the city, it was a separate municipality of more than 20,000 inhabitants. This town was thought to be a desirable middle-class place to live and work.

The large school campus occupied an area larger than several city blocks. On two sides of the school were attractive middle-class homes, while the back side of the campus bordered a busy four-lane city street lined with small businesses. The remaining side of the school was flanked by a large church and the church’s parking lot.

**The facility.** The tan brick two-story building was very attractive and was surrounded by a well landscaped lawn and grounds. The campus resembled a small college, and consisted of the large main building, as well as several other auxiliary buildings and a large athletic complex. The school was built in the early 1950s, with most of the athletic facilities being built in more recent years.

The athletic complex was located on the back side of the campus, near the four-lane street. The football and baseball stadiums took up most of the
area, with separate practice facilities located to one side. A small building housed the weight-training equipment, and an old elementary school near the athletic complex had been converted into a dressing room for the football team. The old gymnasium was used as the physical education facility, and the new gymnasium, which had a seating capacity of more than 2,500, was used only for games and events.

Inside the main building, each major subject area took up an entire wing of the school. The large interior halls were carpeted, and pictures of different school scenes were attractively displayed on the walls. The building housed many classrooms, with up to 75 different classes being conducted at any given time.

The school's administrative area consisted of the principal's office, several smaller offices for the clerical staff, a large conference room, and a waiting area. The attendance office and the assistant principals' offices were located in another part of the school.

The principal's office was large and well decorated. More than twice as large as other principals' offices that I had seen, Larry's office was spacious and attractive. Handsomely framed pictures decorated the walls, and the office was carpeted in one of the school colors. Four large wingback style chairs formed a kind of small conference area in front of his desk.
The students. Red Bank was a middle-class community with middle-class students. The 1,800 students at Red Bank were about 90% white and about 10% African-American. Only about 15% of the students participated in the free lunch program, placing the school in the upper part of the highest socioeconomic quartile. Many of the students enrolled in college when they graduated from Red Bank High School.

Because the school was so large, there were many opportunities for extracurricular involvement at Red Bank. The students had a wide variety of activities from which to choose. Academically, courses ranging from remedial to advanced were offered in almost every subject area. During my visit, the students were extremely well behaved. As we visited the classrooms, the lessons appeared to be orderly and focused.

The faculty and staff. Red Bank High was a big school with a big staff. In addition to Larry and three assistant principals, the school employed four secretaries, four guidance counselors, a maintenance/janitorial staff of about 40, and about 120 teachers. Because there were so many students, everything was done in a big way; for example, the football team had one head coach and 12 assistant coaches. When the students were at lunch, 22 teachers were required to cover all the various posts on the duty schedule.

Larry said that the faculty had been stable over the past few years, but that during the fall semester, his first as the new principal, he had to hire 22 new
teachers. 14 teachers resigned or retired after the previous year or during the summer, and 8 more resigned effective at the end of the fall semester. The new teachers represented about 18% of the faculty, but several faculty members had been at the school for more than 30 years. Larry gave no indication that the high teacher turnover rate was due to his appointment as the principal, but it did seem to be a possibility. His unusually strong personality may have helped some teachers decide that it was time to leave the school.

Larry said that he had no difficulty in finding new teachers. He stated that Red Bank was an extremely desirable place to work, and that there was a waiting list to teach there, even though the pay was low compared to some other districts in the area. All of the teachers had “regular,” not temporary, teaching certificates, and many held a Master’s degree or higher.

The Central Office. Larry spoke highly of the Central Office staff, the superintendent, and the school board. Although he declared his loyalty to the Central Office, it was not clear if he really felt positive or if he just did not want to be perceived as negative. He seemed to be politically connected, and Red Bank was evidently one of the top schools in the district. He was able to work well within the organizational structure of the district, and he had “been around” long enough to know the system. Larry used his political connections with the school board to help in his appointment to the principalship, and he would “do a favor,” for a “favor in return.”
Personal Characteristics

Background. Larry was a veteran educator, with more than 20 years experience. He was a teacher and a coach for almost 15 years, and then he was an assistant principal for about 10 more years, both at the middle school and secondary school level. For the past five years, he had been one of three assistant principals at Red Bank High School. About his career, he said, “I have the principal’s job now. I guess all that left is the superintendent’s [job].”

Promotion context. Larry said that he decided many years ago that he wanted the principal’s job at Red Bank High School. He moved from the assistant principal’s position at the middle school to the assistant principal’s position at the high school in order to get “in line” for the principalship. Having been one of the assistant principals at the senior high school, he had a definite idea about what he wanted to do in the position when he was appointed.

He was not openly critical of the previous principal, but he made some comments that could be interpreted as negative. He said that the former principal “allowed things to slide” for a while and that things “just needed improvement.”

When the former principal retired, Larry applied for the position, along with 14 other candidates. He said that he had made some people mad along the way and there was a group of people that did not support him. Evidently, as the assistant principal, Larry had developed the reputation for “stepping on toes.”
He had been in the district long enough to know how the system politics worked, and had developed several allies on the school board. Having the support of the majority of the school board members, Larry was appointed to the principalship late in the summer.

Larry was a true "insider," having worked for many years in the same school and district. He believed that in a large high school like Red Bank, only current assistant principals should be appointed to the principalship. He said, "There is too much to know that an outsider couldn't know. I can't imagine an outsider coming in here and being able to do this job." He also felt very strongly that a principal should have experience as an assistant principal. He said,

"You have to be an assistant principal first. You have to go through that apprenticeship to learn what to do. There is too much to know if you don't have that experience."

**Personality.** Larry made the decisions at Red Bank High. This was his school, and he ran the show. He was an extremely intense man with a very strong personality. His recognized this and said, "I'm what you call a volatile person. It's not so much that I'm out of control--I just say what I think. Sometimes that makes people mad." He moved and spoke rapidly, and although he was friendly, he seemed slightly agitated most of the time.

**Philosophy.** He believed in hard work. About the principalship, he said that the successful principal was one who was willing to work hard. He said,
“Can you do the job? Are you willing to roll up your sleeves and get to work?
A doctorate degree doesn’t mean anything--it could just be a smoke screen.
Can you do the job?” Larry worked long and hard; however, his work consisted
primarily of making “executive” decisions and developing his political
connections to benefit the school.

As the head administrator at a large school, Larry delegated most of the
school’s operational work to others on the staff. For example, Larry rarely dealt
with students, he did not make out schedules, and he was not responsible for
any of the school’s routine duties. Instead, he was more of a “front-man,” or a
public relations person for the school. Larry spent a great deal of time on the
phone, calling people in the area for information or asking for favors. Over and
over during my visit, he would grab the phone, dial up someone he knew, and
“make a deal” about some event.

Larry was an “innovative” principal (Schein, 1971). During his tenure
as the assistant principal, he planned many things that he would change about
the school if he ever got the chance. He had a definite plan for school
improvement that he implemented immediately upon his appointment to the
principalship.

Larry said that before he was appointed, the biggest deficiency at Red
Bank High was communication. He was very emphatic about it, stating,
“Communication. Communication was our biggest problem.” Larry told the
following example as an indication of how he tried to improve communication at the school.

“When I took the job, one of the big problems we had was communication with the parents. I sent out a parent opinion survey, requesting input on how they felt about many aspects of the school. When those came back, I presented the results to the faculty, and we prioritized them and got to work.”

During his first semester, Larry’s main areas for school improvement included better student discipline, developing a new computer lab, upgrading the technology in the school library, purchasing new overhead projectors and maps for the classrooms, and reorganizing the student parking lot. Larry said that he spent over $75,000 on “instruction” during the first part of the year.

Larry had a plan for school improvement, and he began to carry it out immediately after his appointment. Because he had worked in the school previously, he was familiar with the problems at the school. Prior to his appointment, the school was already stable and well organized, allowing Larry to spend his time working on new ideas for the school. His work was not fragmented, unstable, or chaotic. Even though it was extremely large, Red Bank was an established school with a good reputation in the community and state.

Socialization Forces

Because of Larry’s strong personality and his prior experience at Red Bank High School, he was not overly influenced by the socialization forces of
the organization. When I asked him what pressures or influences he felt during his first semester as the principal, he replied, "Don’t have any. None." No doubt Larry felt some pressure from the school community, especially concerning the high teacher turnover rate, but he was not willing to reveal those pressures to me. Although he may not have felt the same forces as other principals, he was involved in an interactive process with teachers, the Central Office, and the State Department of Education.

**Personal characteristics.** Larry’s primary socialization force was himself. He knew what he wanted for the school, and he approached his job directly. Open to the ideas of others, Larry listened carefully, but he was quick to interject his opinion in any discussion. He presented himself as professional and cooperative, but I felt that his forceful manner could cause conflict with students, teachers, or parents.

**Teachers.** Even though he was a strong leader, Larry’s interaction with the school faculty was a part of his socialization process. As the school counselor stated, Larry’s job was difficult because there were so many different faculty members to deal with. She said, “He doesn’t stop. From the time he comes up here to the time he leaves, there are 120 of us pulling him in all directions.”

During my observations, some of the veteran teachers approached Larry in his office to make requests or socialize, but most of the teachers
communicated with him through the department heads. Larry had made an
effort to meet the teachers’ needs and not be an autocratic leader. He knew the
importance of shared decision making, but it was difficult for him to give up
any of his power to others in the school. Because of the school’s size, he was
somewhat detached from many of the teachers. He said,

"The teachers let me know what they want through their department
heads. We’re departmentalized, and every couple of weeks we have
meetings with the department heads. If a teacher has a problem or need,
they just let the department head know, and we’ll try to help them out.
The teachers presented me with a list of wants and needs at the
beginning of school, and we have accomplished almost everything on
that list. Anything we do, the teachers are involved in it."

The faculty was considering making some changes in the way the school
elected cheerleaders, pep squad members, and dance team members. They
considered these changes to be important, and during my visit a group of five
teachers, the "Cheerleader Constitution Committee," met with Larry to discuss
the proposed changes. Larry knew what he wanted, but he wanted to get the
input of the committee members. During the meeting, Larry was very
opinionated and outspoken, but he did listen to what the teachers had to say.
The teachers voiced their opinions, and did not seem to be intimidated by Larry.

The number of new teachers and Larry’s detachment from most of the
faculty led me to believe that there may have been trouble with some of the
faculty members. The teachers I spoke with were very supportive of Larry, but
they were all members of the unofficial “inner circle,” including the head
football coach, the head guidance counselor, and the long-time band director.

Because of the number of new teachers at the school, Larry was very involved with classroom observations during his first semester. Most of the new teachers he hired were very young and inexperienced. About the new teachers, he said, "They’re not excellent teachers yet, but they will be excellent teachers."

School board/Central Office. Larry spoke very highly of the upper administration of the district. He was very involved in district politics, and he knew who supported him and who did not. He said that several of the old board members had not supported him, but that they lost in the recent election.

According to Larry, the school board did not interfere with his administration of the school, but they offered support when needed. He said,

“I run the school. They [the board members] may call and ask, ‘Larry, how are you addressing this or that?’ As far as pressure about hiring teachers—it doesn’t exist. Their job is to govern the school system and set policy, and my job is to run the school. They should get the best person they can find to be the principal, and let that person do his job. I can’t say anything bad about the school board."

Larry was also very supportive of the superintendent. He said, "Our superintendent is one of the best in the state, if not the best in the state. He is very conscious of pouring money into the instructional program at the school. He’s very good. We’re in the process of doing some good things for our system.”
State Department of Education. Larry had many complaints about the State Department of Education. The state had recently implemented a new evaluation system for beginning teachers, and this was causing Larry a great deal of stress. He did not like the state's interference in the district policies, and he was resentful of the number of meetings that he was required to attend.

Compared to the other principals I visited, all who had to deal with the same state-level issues, Larry was the most irritated about the state regulations. These regulations were outside of his control, and he was not happy about having an outside agency telling him how to run "his school."

Summary

Larry was socialized to his new position primarily by his own ideas. Even though he made an effort to be an open, less authoritative principal, he was still primarily an autocratic leader. The orderly school context of Red Bank High allowed Larry to immediately implement his own agenda for school improvement. Larry also had socializing interactions with the faculty, the district administration, and the State Department of Education.

Larry was careful to give a good impression of the relationship between himself, the faculty, the school board, the Central Office staff, and the superintendent. He knew what he wanted, and had accomplished a great deal in a short time. Larry seemed to be a very professional and competent administrator, but I was not sure that I was getting a true picture of his work at
Red Bank High School. Larry’s dimensions of contrast are summarized in Table 21.

Table 21. Summary Table for Larry’s Dimensions of Contrast.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Contrast</th>
<th>Result or Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Socialization Forces</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Principalship</td>
<td>Principal as executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Strong willed, forceful, volatile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Context</td>
<td>Assistant principal/Within school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>A clear idea about what the school should be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>Politically connected with the school board and Central Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Many teachers resigned after Larry’s appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Department of Education</td>
<td>Resentful of Department of Education’s authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Response</strong></td>
<td>Innovative: Even before his appointment, he knew what he wanted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization Stage</strong></td>
<td>Stage 3: Stability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cross-Site Analysis**

In this section, the six principals previously examined through within-site analysis are studied through the use of cross-site analysis techniques (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The analysis is based on one emergent model and two existing frameworks. The primary method of contrast which emerged from the data analysis was a comparison of the six principals on the basis of the primary socialization forces encountered in their work, both through the direction of the force, as well as the strength of the force. In addition, the principals are compared based on their responses to the socialization process (Schein, 1971), and their resulting socialization stage, or level (Parkay, Gmelch, & Rhodes, 1992).
Primary Socialization Forces

In an effort to reduce the data, the six cases are summarized concerning the direction and strength of the socialization forces encountered by each principal. A socialization force is defined as a personal characteristic or organizational characteristic which has an impact on the socialization of the principal.

Although all of the principals encountered many forces which influenced their work, this analysis is based on the characteristics which seemed to be primary factors contributing to their socialization responses. Forces could be positive, such as a supportive faculty, or negative, such as constraints from the Central Office. In some instances, forces are thought to be both positive and negative. Forces which seemed to be neutral, or forces for which insufficient data were collected, no direction is indicated. Table 22 illustrates the positive or negative direction of the socialization forces which influenced the work of the case study principals.

Each principal was faced with a different set of organizational circumstances, and each principal brought different personal characteristics to the position. The interaction between the two types of forces resulted in a varying set of circumstances for each beginning principal.
Table 22. Summary of Direction of Socialization Forces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Personal Characteristics</th>
<th>Organizational Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"+" = Positive/Supporting Force  
"-" = Negative/Constraining Force  
"□" = Neutral/Insufficient Data

The forces encountered varied not only in direction, but also in magnitude. All of the principals encountered the same general socialization forces, but in varying levels, or strengths. The relationships between the principals and the strength of the socialization forces are shown in Table 23.

At this stage of the analysis, the observed forces are clustered, or grouped under general headings (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Reading down the columns of the table illustrates the frequency and strength of the various forces of the socialization process. Reading across the rows shows an overall pattern
of the influences each principal encountered. Because the forces are represented by nearly universal dimensions, all principals encountered the same types of influences. For example, all principals deal with teachers, but not in the same way, and not to the same degree. The differences are represented by the strength and direction of the influence on the behavior of each beginning principal.

**Personal forces.** As shown in the table above, the most commonly observed personal socialization forces included the principals' personal
philosophy, the promotion context of the principal, the principals' individual personality, and the principals' vision for the school. The analysis reveals that the personal forces are moderately to strongly represented in almost every example. Karen, Paul, and Larry were strongly influenced by their own personal characteristics, while Dale and Joyce were influenced slightly less. Anne, probably due to her temporary status, allowed her personal ideas to be put aside in order to keep the continuity of the school structure.

The following summary table (Table 24) presents short quotes or field note examples from some of the different types of personal socialization forces encountered. Personal characteristics may act as supporting, or positive forces, or as constraints, or negative forces. For example, the principal's promotion context may assist the socialization process, or the promotion context may constrain the socialization process, depending on the unique characteristics of that situation. This list is not inclusive, but it gives examples or quotes about some of the personal characteristics which are thought to influence the principals' work.

Organizational forces. In addition, the principals were influenced by the schools' organizational characteristics. The most commonly observed organizational forces included interactions with the students, faculty, and the Central Office. All principals encountered the same types of organizational influences, but the strength and direction of the influence varied from site to
Table 24. Examples of Prominent Personal Socialization Forces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Characteristics</th>
<th>Illustrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Philosophy of Principalship | New principals should share the decision making power with teachers. (Karen)  
                            | A strong believer in following the rules and established routines/Actively involved in the details of school management (Anne)  
                            | "I have a philosophy about what is right and wrong, and that's what guides me." (Paul)  
                            | Philosophy to improve the school, but most of the first semester was spent "putting out fires" (Joyce) |
| Promotion context        | Having previously worked in the school, she knew it needed to be changed. (Karen)  
                            | "I don't come in here with the attitude that I know all about this job. I realize that I don't know anything about this school." (Paul)  
                            | When he became principal, he moved from one office to another, but his job did not change very much. (Dale) |
| Personality              | A friendly, gregarious, and outgoing personality/Informal and open relationship with the teachers (Dale)  
                            | "I'm what you call a volatile person. It's not so much that I'm out of control--I just say what I think. Sometimes that makes people mad." (Larry) |

For example, all six principals received messages from the Central Office, but these interactions were a major factor for three of the principals (Anne, Paul, Larry), a moderate force on one principal (Dale), and had little influence on two principals (Karen, Joyce). The following summary table presents short illustrations of some organizational characteristics which are thought to influence the principals' work.
Table 25. Examples of Prominent Organizational Socialization Forces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Characteristics</th>
<th>Illustrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>&quot;They like the things that I do—they appreciate the attention. I have gotten a lot of positive feedback.&quot; (Anne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The teachers' favorite phrase is, 'in the past we did this or that.' You have to be open to what the school and the faculty has to offer. The teachers know the school, not me.&quot; (Paul)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I stepped on some toes, and now I'm being punished.&quot; (Joyce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>There is only one administrator, so all serious discipline problems are referred to the school principal. (Karen, Paul, Anne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;If you give respect, you get it back. If you confront someone or try to intimidate them, they will intimidate you back.&quot; (Paul)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office</td>
<td>&quot;This tells me all the things that they are refusing to do. These are work request refusals.&quot; (Anne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;If they want to send a nine-page list of recommendations, I'm okay with that. I'm trying to keep my head above water, and they want me to reorganize the school.&quot; (Paul)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School context</td>
<td>&quot;Some days it just seems out of control. There are things going on in the classroom that I am not aware of, and it's causing me problems.&quot; (Joyce)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to Socialization

A fundamental proposition of socialization suggests that the responses to the socialization process are functions of both individual characteristics and organizational contexts (Hart, 1993; Hurley, 1990). The interaction of the principal's personal characteristics combined with the organizational characteristics of the school result in a particular response to the socialization process. According to Schein (1971), responses to the socialization process are thought to be either custodial or innovative.
Qualitative results reveal that two of the six case study principals are custodial in orientation, while the other four have an innovative orientation. However, of the four principals with an innovative orientation, only two are able to achieve an innovative response (Larry, Karen), while the other two (Joyce, Paul) achieve a custodial status due to other factors. The two principals with the custodial orientation (Dale, Anne) both perceived their schools as “good,” and they believed that little change was needed.

The ordered summary table below (Table 26) shows the principals’ desired and actual socialization responses, as well as a brief description of the conditions leading to that response. In this table, the principals are arranged from the most custodial (top of chart) to the most innovative (bottom of chart). The responses fall easily into one of the two categories, custodial or innovative, but for reasons which seem to result from more complex interaction patterns between the individual and the organization.

Socialization Stages

Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes (1992) and Parkay & Hall (1992) found that during the socialization process, principals proceed through as many as five stages, including: survival, control, stability, educational leadership, and professional actualization. The stages are thought to exist in a hierarchical pattern, but every principal may not pass through every stage; some principals
Table 26. Case Study Principals’ Socialization Responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Desired Response</th>
<th>Actual Response</th>
<th>Conditions Related to Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dale</td>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>No changes wanted by principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>Few changes wanted by principal/T temporary assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>Chaotic school context/Outside school promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>Cautious philosophy/Changes take time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Aggressive personal style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Drastic changes needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on an analysis of the data gathered for the qualitative portion of this study, the case study principals have been assigned to one of the five socialization stages, or levels. The designated stages, shown in Table 27 below, are based on the principals’ status during the observation period, which occurred between October and December, during the principals’ first semester.

Table 27. Case Study Principals’ Socialization Stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Survival</td>
<td>Joyce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Control</td>
<td>Karen, Anne, Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: Stability</td>
<td>Dale, Larry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4: Educational Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: Professional Actualization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis reveals that one principal, Joyce, was still at the *survival* stage late in her first semester as principal. This is thought to be related to her outside-school promotion and the chaotic nature of her school. Based on their own descriptions, three principals entered at the survival stage, but had progressed to the *control* stage by the time of the observations. Two of these principals (Anne, Paul) were from outside the school, but had the advantage of working in an orderly school context, while the third (Karen) had many years experience at her same school. The remaining two principals, Larry and Dale, were found to be at the *stability* stage. These principals were promoted from within the school, worked in orderly environments, and had strong, decisive personalities.

Although causality cannot be determined, the principals’ promotion context and school context seem to have some relationship with the resulting stage of socialization. These relationships are illustrated in the form of matrices in Tables 28 and 29 below. Although the correlation is not absolute, the within-school principals tend to be at the higher stages of socialization, while the outside-school principals tend to be at the lower stages of socialization. No within-school principal was found to be at Stage 1, and no outside-school principal was found to be higher than Stage 2.
Table 28. Interaction Between Promotion Context and Socialization Stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion Context</th>
<th>Outside School</th>
<th>Within School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Survival</td>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Control</td>
<td>Anne, Paul</td>
<td>Karen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: Stability</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dale, Larry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4: Educational Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: Professional Actualization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also, as shown in Table 29, the principals working in orderly schools, particularly Larry and Dale, tend to be at the higher levels of socialization (Stage 2 and Stage 3), while the chaotic school principals are at Stage 1 and Stage 2. A quick scan, or “squint” analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984) down the rows and across the columns of Tables 28 and 29 shows a diagonal pattern. This visual pattern suggests a possible correlation between the promotion context and socialization stage, and the school context and socialization stage.

Table 29. Interaction Between School Context and Socialization Stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Context</th>
<th>Chaotic</th>
<th>Orderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1: Survival</td>
<td>Joyce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Control</td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Anne, Paul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: Stability</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dale, Larry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4: Educational Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: Professional Actualization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

The six case study principals represent unique interactions between personal characteristics and organizational characteristics. However, an examination of the socialization forces, the socialization responses, and the stages of socialization do show some overall patterns.

Although there are many differences between the cases, the principals seem to cluster into three groups of two principals each. The groups are as follows: Joyce and Karen; Anne and Paul; Dale and Larry. Each of these groups is briefly discussed below.

Joyce and Karen both worked in chaotic school situations. In many ways, their jobs were very much alike, working in similar situations with similar students. The immediacy of their disorderly school climate was a likely reason that they were not concerned about messages from the State Department of Education or their Central Offices. The primary difference was that Karen was able to actually bring about her desired socialization response as an innovator, while Joyce was only able to desire, but not achieve, the innovative status.

Anne and Paul were both promoted to the principalship from outside the school, and both were the only administrator at their school. Anne and Paul experienced strong messages from teachers and the Central Office. Both worked in orderly, high socioeconomic level schools and both had reached the control stage by the end of their first semester.
Dale and Larry, the two white male principals in the sample, represent a more stereotypical arrival to the principalship. Both relied on strong personalities to accomplish their goals, and both worked as coaches before moving into school administration. They also reached their positions through within-school promotions from the assistant principalship. Although the sizes of their schools were drastically different, both worked in orderly school environments with few apparent problems. Dale and Larry were both very self-assured and confident, and both appeared to have reached the *stability* stage of the principalship.
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Study Overview

Individuals in new organizational roles go through socialization experiences when becoming acclimated to their new positions. This study was designed to examine the organizational socialization process of beginning principals. Principals have a strong influence on the character of schools, and socialization experiences are thought to significantly influence their work. In a school, the principal is the key person who has a chance to be a positive influence (Parkay & Hall, 1992).

When going through the socialization process, the individual is expected to adjust to the “rules of thumb” for that organization. By making these adjustments, a collaborative effort is possible between group members, and the principal is helped to adjust to the norms of the school (Hart, 1991). At the same time, the school must adjust to the new principal. Both the principal’s personal characteristics and the school’s organizational characteristics are important in this process. This study focuses on the organizational socialization of beginning principals by considering personal and school characteristics that may be related to that process. In addition, how organizational socialization occurs is also examined.
The informal research questions driving the research study were, “How does the school ‘break in’ the new principal?” and “What factors account for differences in the socialization experiences of new principals?” The socialization process is important because it is a defining part of the principal’s work in the school during the first year, when most socialization experiences are thought to occur (Duke et al., 1984). When the principal begins in his or her initial assignment, the difference between the job as it was imagined and the job as it actually exists becomes a reality.

This study approaches the problem through the mixed methodology strategy of research, using both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Qualitative methods allowed the data to be gathered from a large sample of beginning principals, while qualitative methods helped to confirm the initial findings and provide more in-depth detail.

**Summary of Findings**

**Quantitative Findings**

The quantitative results of this study, based on a survey of 187 beginning principals, show that most demographic variables are not significant predictors of the socialization experiences. However, in some areas of socialization, statistically significant differences were found between subgroups of principals.

Variation was found in the principals’ socialization level, but this variation is not explained by any of the demographic independent variables.
Different levels of socialization were confirmed across the sample (Parkay, Gmelch, & Rhodes, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992), and these levels are thought to vary with the unique conditions resulting from the interaction of personal and organizational characteristics.

The principals’ vision, or idea about what the school should be, was found to have a statistically significant relationship with the principals’ gender and school type. African-American principals reported higher vision scores than white principals; also, principals in elementary schools showed higher scores than non-elementary school principals.

Dependence on staff, a variable related to the socialization process, varied with regard to the principals’ prior work location and gender. Beginning principals who worked in a different school during the previous year show a greater dependence on staff than principals promoted from within the school, and male principals show a greater dependence on staff than female principals.

Qualitative Findings

Six beginning principals were selected as case studies subjects, and were observed and interviewed during their first semester as principals. The data from the case studies were analyzed using within-site and cross-site analysis techniques (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The six principals were compared on the basis of the primary socialization forces encountered in their work, their responses to the socialization process (Schein, 1971), and their resulting
socialization stage, or level (Parkay, Gmelch, & Rhodes, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992).

Personal and organizational characteristics were found to be supporting or constraining forces that influenced the work of the beginning principals. Because the forces are represented by nearly universal dimensions, all principals encountered the same types of influences, but in different ways. The differences are represented by the strength and direction of the influence on each beginning principal.

Commonly observed personal socialization forces included the principals’ personal philosophy, promotion context, individual personality, and vision for the school. The analysis reveals that these personal forces are usually positive, and are moderately to strongly represented in almost every case.

In addition, the principals were positively and negatively influenced by the schools’ organizational characteristics. The most commonly observed organizational forces included interactions with the students, faculty, and the Central Office. All principals encountered the same types of organizational influences, but the strength and direction of the influence varied from site to site. Interactions with students, faculty, parents, and the Central Office were often constraints on the work of the beginning principal. Less frequently, these forces were found as positive influences. In addition, a chaotic school context, when present, was the strongest negative influence observed.
The interaction of the principal's personal characteristics and the organizational characteristics of the school results in a particular response to the socialization process. According to Schein (1971), responses to the socialization process are thought to be either custodial or innovative. Qualitative results reveal that of the six case study principals, two are custodial in orientation while the other four have an innovative orientation. Of the four principals with an innovative orientation, only two were able to achieve an innovative response, while the remaining two were limited to custodial responses due to other factors.

The two principals with the custodial orientation both perceived their schools as "good," and they believed that little change was needed. The responses fall easily into one of the two categories, either custodial or innovative, but for reasons that seem to result from more complex interaction patterns between the individual and the organization.

Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes (1992) and Parkay & Hall (1992) found that during the socialization process, principals go through as many as five stages, including: survival, control, stability, educational leadership, and professional actualization. Based on an analysis of the data gathered for the qualitative portion of this study, it was found that one principal was still at the survival stage late in her first semester as principal. This was thought to be related to her outside-school promotion and the chaotic nature of her school. Based on their
own descriptions, three principals entered at the survival stage, but had progressed to the control stage by the time of the observations. Two of these principals were from outside the school, but had the advantage of working in an orderly school context, while the third had many years of experience at the same school. The remaining two principals were at the stability stage. These principals were promoted from within the school, worked in orderly environments, and had strong, decisive personalities. Although causality cannot be determined, the principals' promotion context and the school context seem to have some relationship with the resulting stage of socialization. Within-school principals were at the higher stages of socialization, while the outside-school principals were at the lower stages. Also, the principals working in orderly schools were at the higher levels of socialization, while the chaotic school principals were at the lower levels. These results suggest some correlation between the promotion context and socialization level, and also the school context and socialization level.

Qualitative Research as Confirmation for Quantitative Findings

Socialization level. The qualitative findings supported the quantitative findings, and also provided clarification and detail (Patton, 1990). Quantitative findings showed variation in the principals' socialization level, although this variation was not predicted by any of the independent variables. The qualitative results generally suggest the same pattern. Differences in the level of
socialization were observed, but these differences were not consistent across most demographic categories, such as ethnicity, gender, or school type. However, the qualitative findings suggested that differences in the socialization level were somewhat related to the promotion context of the principal, as previously described.

**Vision.** Quantitative results show that African-American and elementary principals have higher levels of *vision* for their schools, and this was supported by the qualitative findings. All of the case study principals had a moderate to strong level of vision, so differences between groups were somewhat difficult to assess. However, the two African-American principals both exhibited a clear sense of vision, as well as one of the two elementary principals.

In a longitudinal school effectiveness study, Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) found that African-American principals are often more authoritative and directive than their white counterparts. That conclusion supports the findings of this study, which found that African-American principals have a stronger sense of vision than white principals.

The more directive behavior of African-American principals may be related to their placement in lower socioeconomic schools, as reported in Chapter 4. Also, the vision of African-American principals may be higher than white principals due to dissimilar backgrounds.
Elementary school principals also showed higher vision scores than non-elementary school principals. A possible explanation of this finding relates to the more caring and nurturing behavior often exhibited by elementary school principals. This type of principal may be less likely to demonstrate managerial behavior and more likely to focus on future school improvement.

Dependence on staff. Quantitative findings show that principals promoted from outside the school and male principals have higher scores for the variable dependence on staff. Through observation of the six case study principals, these results were confirmed. All three of the male principals in the study relied heavily on staff members to help with their socialization experiences. Of the female principals, only one of the three relied on the support staff to assist with her socialization experiences.

Differences between males and females in this area may be due to true gender differences. However, other factors may also be related. As previously stated, female principals are over-represented in elementary schools, where the principal often works without the aid of an assistant principal. Without administrative help, the principal may feel that he or she is working in isolation, with little dependence on staff members to assist in the socialization process.

Principals promoted from outside the school rely on others during the early phase of the principalship, as shown in both parts of the study. A principal who has previously worked in a school would be expected to be more
independent, based on his or her prior knowledge of the staff and school routines. Outsiders need more assistance in the socialization process, based on their limited understanding of the school climate, personnel, and routine.

The insider-outsider relationship with dependence on staff was not as clearly confirmed by the limited case study sample. Two of the three outsiders depended heavily on their staff, and also two of the three insiders. Because the two insider principals who relied on staff were also male, this may account for lack of a clear difference between groups.

**Additional Depth From Qualitative Research**

Beyond confirming the quantitative research results, qualitative research also provides additional insight to the socialization process. In the quantitative component of the study, no differences were found between major subgroups regarding their socialization level. However, differences were found between two subgroups of beginning principals not identified through the quantitative research.

*“Traditional” principals.* The qualitative analysis suggests that a smaller subgroup representing the “traditional” principals were more highly socialized at the time of the observations. This potential group is characterized as white males principals promoted from the assistant principalship within the school.

Further quantitative research may show that this specific subgroup, representing
the more stereotypical arrival to the principalship, is socialized at a faster rate than other principals.

The two principals in the study matching this definition, Dale and Larry, were found at higher levels of socialization, average to high levels of vision, and a high level for dependence on staff. For this small subgroup of "traditional" principals, qualitative results confirmed quantitative results for vision and dependence on staff, and provided additional insight about their level of socialization. Their similar levels in the three areas of socialization, along with their similar demographic descriptions, describe a subgroup that may be worthy of further study.

"Chaotic" principals. In addition, a small sample of principals working in chaotic school situations were at lower socialization levels at the time of the observations. These principals were not identified in any way through the quantitative analysis, and therefore potential differences were not reflected in their socialization scores.

These principals, Karen and Joyce, were at generally lower socialization levels than most of the other case study subjects. However, both reported higher than average levels of vision, and lower than average levels of dependence on staff. The chaotic schools in the qualitative sample were from the lower two socioeconomic quartiles, but this does not imply that all lower socioeconomic schools are chaotic. However, it does suggest that lower
socioeconomic schools that are chaotic may have principals who take longer to become socialized.

**Conclusions and Discussion**

Beginning principals in Louisiana have a vision about what they want their schools to be, but constraints within the organization often prevent them from placing that vision into action. Quantitative and qualitative results show that most beginning principals are able to see the school not only as it is, but also as it might be. This vision thought to develop from a clear concept of the principal’s role within the school.

The organizational socialization of beginning principals is a process that is not likely to bring about change or innovation. Although new principals have a sense of what should occur in their schools, several factors are likely to prevent that change from occurring. The most commonly observed constraints on innovation include organizational forces such as a bureaucratic Central Office, pressure from faculty members, student discipline problems, or a chaotic school context.

Apart from the results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis, several themes emerged from this study of organizational socialization. An adequate understanding of the process involves not only an interpretation of the results, but also an examination of the larger implications of the study. The essential
meaning of the study lies below the surface of the findings, and these are discussed in the following section.

A Process of Conservatism

The socialization of beginning principals is a conservative process. For principals who want change, innovation is possible, but not a likely result of the socialization process. Socialization theory predicts that new principals are presumed to assume the custodial, or status quo role. A caretaking response is thought to be likely when becoming a principal (Greenfield, 1985c).

Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) suggest that changing school norms, or innovation in the principalship, involves two necessary conditions. First, the principal must want innovation, or have a vision about what the school should be. In this study, it was found that some principals move into their new positions wanting the school to remain unchanged. These principals may perceive the current state of the school as acceptable, or they may not have the capabilities to bring about change. The second essential factor is the principal’s ability to express his or her ideas effectively to the members of the school community. This study suggests that a third condition is necessary for change to occur—that is, the principal’s assignment to a school that is conducive to change. It was found that the immediate demands of a chaotic school context may displace a principal’s personal need for innovation. Often, the carefully
developed plans of the new principal are set aside due to the immediacy of the new job (Hart, 1993).

This notion is supported by Schein’s (1971) suggestion that forces are in place in organizations that generally lead to the custodial, rather than innovative response to the socialization process. The mechanisms associated with the socialization of principals are extremely stable. The process is one that encourages sameness and stability when promoting current members into positions of authority. School administrators have the unique distinction of becoming leaders of a culture of which they have been members for all but a few years of their lives (Greenfield, 1985b). As students, then later as teachers and possibly assistant principals, new principals have almost an entire lifetime of experiences after which they can model their behavior.

The traditional administrator preparation program, usually taken on a part-time basis, and usually spread over several years, is not likely to be a contributing factor in the development of a new principal’s role conception (Greenfield, 1985b). Instead, the forces within the organization usually encourage the new principal to continue on a path of stability.

**Vision**

Most beginning principals have a vision about what the principalship should be. Vision is that quality that allows the principal to see the world as it might be, and not only as it is (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986). Qualitative and
quantitative results confirmed that high levels of vision were nearly universal in the beginning principalship. The principals knew what they wanted their school to be; however, this does not necessarily imply innovation or change. For some principals, the desired outcome is stability. Also, the principal may not be able to place the vision into action, depending on the various constraints existing in the new position. The process may vary, the outcomes may vary, but the notion of vision seems to be prevalent among beginning principals.

The development of a vision results from a clear concept of the role. Role conception is based on the development of an idea about what the principalship should be, and is related to the way that principals act out their roles. Values and beliefs concerning the ultimate purpose of the role are important in developing an idea about the principalship. A role conception includes not only the principals’ beliefs about what is important, but also a larger view of what it means to be a school leader (Crow, 1993).

Step one, then is the development of a role conception by the principal that certain things should be occurring in the school. Step two is identifying the means and strategies for bringing that conception into reality. Research should be furthering an investigation about what kinds of incentives and organizational factors act as support for developing the principals’ role conception into appropriate ideas and visions for the school.
Principals for the 90s

Many recommendations have been made about the role of new principals for the 90s, and it was found that new principals know how they are supposed to act. This type of leadership, sometimes known as transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990), is typified by highly cooperative working relationships between leaders and employees. The principal for the 90s is fully aware of the recommended role of the principal as shared decision maker and instructional leader. Although principals are aware of the "new" type of principal, they may choose not to act according to those standards.

In the qualitative component of this study, the principals were entirely familiar with the notion of the "new" principal. They all talked about the new kind of principal, or the "principal for the 90s." As Paul said, "Shared decision making--that's the thing." Karen talked about the old autocratic type of principal being outdated. Dale and Larry were promoted in environments that encouraged complete stability, but they also talked of shared decision making, and the "kinder, gentler" principal.

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (1990), transformational principals involve teachers in shared decision making processes to develop solutions to immediate problems, stimulate greater motivation and commitment by teachers to a shared set of goals, and contribute to long term growth in the problem solving capacities of teachers. Although this idea of the "new principal" is now
common, traditional principals are still pervasive. In an era of change, innovation, and reform, traditional principals are still frequently found.

The Socialization Process

An emergent theme resulting from the study of principal socialization was one of context, or culture. A study of the organizational socialization of beginning principals essentially involves a study of principals within schools. Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) write of being struck by the "embeddedness" of the principalship in the school culture, even when the study is not designed for that purpose. An examination of principal socialization patterns is difficult, if not misleading, outside an examination of the associated culture of the school.

It was found that there are distinctly different socialization patterns that occur in different situations. The patterns result not only from individual differences, but also contextual differences. This study suggests that personal forces are likely to be helpful in the socialization process, while organizational forces are often constraining. A beginning principal's personal characteristics are more likely to be strong and helpful, while organizational characteristics are often constraints, and exist in a more unpredictable random pattern.

Differences in Initial Experiences

The first year of the principalship has been characterized in the literature as a year of uncertainty and apprehension. According to several authors (Daresh, 1987a, 1987b, 1992; Diederich, 1987; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Sussman,
1985; Roberts, 1993), the first phase of the principalship is distinguished by uncertainty. These studies paint a picture of the beginning principalship as a time of learning, but also a time of instability.

For the most part, this study confirmed these findings, but the study also identified a major subgroup of more stable principals. These principals, who were found in both parts of the study, enter the profession at higher levels of socialization. It is thought that the prior experience and traditional leader succession patterns of these principals may lead to entry at the higher stages. The quantitative results show that some beginning principals, although the minority, were found to enter the profession at the higher levels (Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992). Of the six case study principals, two fit this description of stability, and did not match the literature’s description of the beginning principalship.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

**Further Development of Socialization Response Theory**

One of the major themes of the study involved the principals response to the socialization process, either custodial or innovative. Schein’s (1971) framework was supported in this study; however, the implications of these results are unclear.

First, it would be useful to have quantitative survey instrument that could be used to gather a larger data set regarding the principals’ socialization
response. Using a Likert scale, principals could respond to a series of items representing both the custodial and innovative viewpoints, providing additional information about these perspectives. At this point, it is somewhat speculative to suggest what other personal or organizational factors may be associated with a particular response.

Secondly, more information is needed concerning the appropriate response to the socialization process. Current literature hints that change, innovation, and reform are the "proper" responses to the socialization process, but further research may also support the notion of stability. The informal questions that need to be answered are, "What is happening?" as well as, "What should be happening?" with regard to beginning principals.

"Learning to Swim"

The ultimate goal of this research is to help beginning principals understand the forces at work during their initial phase in the job. Examining the socialization process is important because these forces are a defining part of the principal's work in the school during the first year (Duke et al., 1984). The "sink-or-swim" metaphor (Parkay & Hall, 1992) has been used to describe the beginning principalship, and many principals receive little support or training to help in this process. The principal's philosophy or belief about the position, combined with the context of the school, lead to a particular response to the socialization process.
This study has identified some factors that are important in the organizational socialization process. The problem area for this study is the new principals' lack of awareness about the demands that they will face. If potential problems can be identified or predicted, the new principal may have a greater chance for success. New principals that are better prepared may be more likely to "swim" than "sink."

First, it was found that there are distinct differences in the socialization experiences of different beginning principals. As more is learned about the different types of individual-organizational interactions, perhaps the most problematic situations can be better identified. Secondly, these difficult situations must be fully investigated to learn what factors are at work that may be associated with the problem. Finally, assistance must be developed to help beginning principals in the particularly difficult situations.

Daresh (1986) has suggested socialization assistance such as a better practicum to experience the world of administration before the first job, more specialized in-service training for practical issues, more collegial support, and mentoring for beginning principals. Crow et al. (1992) make several socialization suggestions, including the development of diagnosis skills to help future administrators understand the complex social systems of schools, a development of an understanding of change, and the development of a collegial approach. All these suggestions are appropriate, with an understanding that
some principals are more “needy” than others. Placing assistance where it is most crucial may be an important first step.

**Development of a Beginning Principal Typology**

It has been suggested throughout the study that a beginning principal’s socialization is a unique process resulting from the interaction of person and context. However, to state that “every situation is different” is not very helpful in developing assistance for new principals or advancing the current state of socialization theory. Because of this, the development of a typology (Patton, 1990) of the beginning principalship may be useful.

Two types of principals, or principal-context situations, have been suggested in this study. First, a more stable subgroup of traditional principals was identified in the qualitative component of the study. As previously stated, these relatively stable principals may enter the profession at higher levels of socialization than some other principals. This principal, a true “insider,” may be promoted from within after many years of being groomed for the job, finally earning a position as principal without disturbance to the social scene. At this point, this cannot be perceived as a positive or negative situation, but as one that is worthy of further study.

Another type of principal may be the chaotic school principal, or the “missionary.” These principals may be found in schools where the working conditions are poor and the school context is undesirable. Further study is
needed to determine what factors these principals have in common, and what can be done to assist them in the socialization process.

The difficulty in principal socialization is that the most profound experiences come as "on the job" training, and that may lead to situations where the context overpowers the individual. By definition, pre-service training occurs before the principalship is assumed, and the lessons learned are not likely to have the same meaning as later experiences. The socialization experience may not be the same for all principals, but there may be common themes that can help future principals become better prepared for the job.
REFERENCES


of beginning leadership (pp. 263-273). Needham Heights, Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.


APPENDIX A: BEGINNING PRINCIPALS’ SURVEY

Please respond to the following statements in reflection of your first semester as a principal. Circle the items which most closely describe your experiences so far. Please use the following phrases as a guide for your responses.

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither Agree or Disagree (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “I’m often so busy dealing with others’ problems that it is difficult to implement my own agenda.”</td>
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<td>2. “I am nearly always in the classrooms.”</td>
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<td>3. “There is a person at my school who helps me to know who and what is important and what to deal with first.”</td>
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<td>4. “Things are beginning to fall into place and I’m beginning to work out my routines.”</td>
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<td>5. “I never seem to have enough time to get into the classrooms as much as I would prefer.”</td>
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<td>6. “I never know what kinds of fires I might have to put out next.”</td>
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<td>7. “Things are running pretty smoothly now, and all I have to do is routine duties.”</td>
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<td>8. “Faculty members supervise most of our projects so that I can be free to facilitate new ones.”</td>
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<td>9. “I like to provide the leadership, follow-up support, and actively contribute input on all school projects.”</td>
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<td>10. “I have many new ideas for our school and I am always helping others to see them.”</td>
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<td>11. “Hiring a few more faculty and staff of my own choosing might make things work more smoothly.”</td>
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<td>12. “There are not enough hours in the day to do everything that this job requires.”</td>
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<td>13. “Since taking this job, I almost feel like a stranger to my personal life and family.”</td>
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<td>14. “Because of the many details of this job, I worry about experiencing overload.”</td>
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Please give the response which most closely describes you or your school situation.

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<th>School Name:</th>
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<td>□ 750 - 999</td>
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<td>□ 1000 +</td>
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<th>Parish or District:</th>
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<th>Age:</th>
<th>Grade Levels Taught at Your School:</th>
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<td>□ 40 - 49</td>
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<td>□ 50 - 59</td>
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<th>Ethnicity:</th>
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<td>□ Assistant Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ White</td>
<td>□ Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Hispanic</td>
<td>□ Principal (at a different school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>□ Central Office Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Alaskan Native/ American Indian</td>
<td>□ Other (specify)</td>
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<th>Gender:</th>
<th>Please check the description which most closely describes your work location last year (1993-94).</th>
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<td>□ Female</td>
<td>□ Same school as this year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Male</td>
<td>□ Same parish as this year, but a different school.</td>
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<td>□ Different parish than this year.</td>
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Thank you for your participation in this survey. Please return in the stamped envelope provided. All responses are confidential. Please write any additional positive or negative comments concerning the principalship on the back of this page.
APPENDIX B: PRINCIPAL’S LETTER

October 1, 1994

Mr. John Doe, Principal
Louisiana High School
Baton Rouge, LA 70000

Dear Mr. Doe:

Your school district has identified you as a principal with a new school assignment for the 1994-95 school year. The attached survey, which is about issues facing new principals, is a part of the research being carried out for my doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University. The dissertation is based on beginning or new principals in Louisiana. This is an important topic, and I hope that the results will help districts prepare new principals in the future.

I am specifically hoping to get information from you, because there are a limited number of beginning principals in the state. As a new principal, your input will contribute significantly towards providing more information about the concerns of principals today. This survey should take a minimum amount of time. The average time for principals trying out the survey was less than five minutes.

I would greatly appreciate if you will complete the enclosed survey prior to October 15th, and return it in the stamped envelope provided. Other phases of the research project cannot be carried out until I complete the analysis of the survey data. I also would welcome any positive or negative comments concerning the principalship not addressed in the survey. Your responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

I will be glad to send you a summary of the survey results if you desire. Thank you for your cooperation and good luck this year.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Norton
Baton Rouge, LA 70809
APPENDIX C: FOLLOW-UP PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

October 30, 1994

Mr. John Doe  
Louisiana High School  
Baton Rouge, LA  70000

Dear Mr. Doe:

This letter is a follow-up to a letter you should have received several weeks ago. According to my records, you have been classified as a principal with a new school assignment for the 1994-95 school year. If you are a new principal, I am hoping to get information from you, because there are a limited number of new principals in the state. The attached survey, which is about issues facing new principals, is a part of the research being carried out for my doctoral dissertation at Louisiana State University. I realize that you are very busy, but this survey takes only a few minutes to complete.

If you have already responded to my survey, please disregard this notice. If you are not a new principal, please write returning principal or transfer principal on this letter and return it to me so I can update my records.

I would greatly appreciate if you will complete the enclosed survey prior to November 11th, and return it in the stamped envelope provided. I also would welcome any positive or negative comments concerning the principalship not addressed in the survey. Of course, your responses will be held in the strictest confidence.

I will be glad to send you a summary of the results if you desire. Thank you for your cooperation and good luck this year.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Norton  
Baton Rouge, LA  70809
## APPENDIX D: ORIGINAL INTERCORRELATIONS OF SCALE ITEMS USED IN THE MODIFIED PRINCIPAL SOCIALIZATION INVENTORY

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*Note. N = 187.*

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APPENDIX E: INTERCORRELATIONS OF SCALE ITEMS USED IN THE MODIFIED *PRINCIPAL SOCIALIZATION INVENTORY*, ITEMS 1, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, AND 14 REVERSE SCORED

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*Note.* N = 187.
APPENDIX F: FACTOR STRUCTURE FOR THE MODIFIED PRINCIPAL SOCIALIZATION INVENTORY

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Proportion of Variance Explained

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Note. N = 185.
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS, CASE STUDY INTERVIEWS

1. How do you feel about your work at [school name] so far?

2. You were promoted from another school [or from this school] to be the principal. Based on your experiences so far, does this seem to be a good method for promoting principals? Why, or why not?

3. What has the change been like moving from the classroom [or the assistant principalship] to the principalship?

4. How has your training as a principal affected your work?

5. How did the school “break you in” to your new job?

6. What messages have you gotten from the teachers and students about your work so far?

7. What kinds of messages have you gotten from the Central Office so far this year?

8. How have the students affected your work as principal so far?

9. Do you see yourself as a “changer” or as someone who tries to keep the established routines of the school?

10. In what ways has the principalship been what you expected? In what ways has it been different?
VITA

Originally from Cleveland, Tennessee, Scott Norton has lived in Louisiana since 1980. He was a middle school and high school band director for 12 years, primarily at the Louisiana State University Laboratory School. Since 1993, he has been employed at the Louisiana State Department of Education.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Scott Martin Norton

Major Field: Administration and Supervision

Title of Dissertation: The Socialization of Beginning Principals in Louisiana: Organizational Constraints on Innovation

Approved:

[Signatures]

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: March 16, 1995