THE SECOND MEASURE OF WORTH: URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS' CHILDREN AND THE EXODUS TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

BY

DANIEL L. STIFFLER

Bachelor of Music Education
University of Oklahoma
Norman, Oklahoma
1977

Master of Music Education
Central State University
Edmond, Oklahoma
1981

Specialist in Education
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas
1992

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
December, 1994

THE SECOND MEASURE OF WORTH: URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS' CHILDREN AND THE EXODUS TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Thesis Approved:

Thesis Adviser

Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Adrienne Hyle for her intelligent guidance, inspiration and friendship. In addition, my deepest appreciation extends to my other committee members Dr. Ed Harris, Dr. Nan Restine, Dr. Joe Pearl and Dr. Larry Perkins whose advise, encouragement and friendship have been invaluable.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to my many friends and colleagues in USD #259, and especially to the following who provided suggestions, support and assistance for this study: Dr. John Morton, Mr. Ron Naso and Dr. Phil Rhea.

Special appreciation goes to my children, Jeremy and Kinsey, for their understanding and support during this lengthy process, to my sister Janet and my brother Eric for their steady encouragement, and to my mother, Kathleen Stiffler, for instilling in me the desire to complete such a task.

And finally, I thank two people without whom completion of this degree would not have been possible. Peggy Dokken and Debbie Laudermilk provided the camaraderie and humor that transformed a difficult process into a truly pleasurable venture.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	DESIGN OF THE STUDY	1
	Statement of the Problem	5
	Purpose of the Study	6
	Procedures	6
	Site and Sample	7
	Research Criteria	8
	Data Collection	9
	Analysis of the Data	10
	Significance of the Study	12
	Summary	13
	Reporting	14
II.	REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	15
	National Trends	16
	Historical Review.	16
	Choice	19
	Options	23
	Educator Perceptions.	28
	Push Factors	30
	Instructional Environment	31
	Social Environment	33
	Pull Factors	36
	Academic	37
	Structural	38
	Associations	39
	Summary	41

Chapter Page

III. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA 43

Establishment of Bias 44
Population and Participant Selection 44
Data Collection 46
Participant Descriptions. 47
Private Parochial Schools 48
Private Non-Parochial Schools 53
Returners 55
Summary 57
Data Categorization 57
Curriculum 60
Pedagogy 67
Teacher Expectations 69
Environment 72
Values 78
Summary 85
Summary 86

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA 88

Data Analysis Techniques 88
Axial Coding 89
Causal Condition: Protective Schooling 91
Contextual Conditions 93
Intervening Conditions 95
Action/Interaction Strategies 98
Consequences 102
Summary 104
Selective Coding 105
Story Line 105
Analytic Story 107
Summary 114

Chapter Page

V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS 117

Summary of the Study 118
Data Needs 118
Data Collection 118
Data Categorization 119
Data Analysis 120
Summary of the Findings 122
Analytic Story 122
Discussion 123
Implications 125
School Choice 125
Curriculum 125
Teacher Attitudes Concerning Their Own School 126
Desegregation/Racism 126
School/Class Size 127
Discipline 128
Moral Community 128
Summary 129
Recommendations 130
Research 130
Theory 131
Practice 132
Summary 132
Conclusions 133

REFERENCES 136

APPENDIXES 142

APPENDIX A 143

APPENDIX B 145

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

I. Participant Descriptions 58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures Page

1. The Second Measure of Worth 115

CHAPTER I

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

It was September 21, 1992. The director of pupil accounting for a large midwestern school district was reviewing the official enrollment figures which were received from the individual school data banks on the previous day. Though he checked and re-checked the figures, the numbers remained the same -- a dramatic drop in enrollment had occurred. Why hadn't he seen it coming?

Early estimates indicated the enrollment loss would cost the district over three million dollars in state revenue. Suddenly, the district faced a financial crisis and employees at all levels were wondering how they would maintain quality programs with fewer resources. The school board demanded answers to some difficult questions: What students were leaving the district? Where were they going? Why were they leaving?

Located in a university town of 300,000 people, the district was the largest in the state and the 75th largest in the country. The

student population was 65% white, 20% African-American, 9% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 2% Native American (Curriculum Audit Report, 1993).

Although enrollment had steadily increased since 1980, that trend changed dramatically in the 1990's. When enrollment data was disaggregated, the results were troubling but not particularly surprising; white students were moving to suburban and private schools and the district's minority enrollment was rapidly increasing. For example, in the 1992-93 school year the district posted an official enrollment of 48,836 students while the 1993-94 official figures showed 724 fewer students, a 1.5% drop. Even more telling was the fact that this decrease represented 1,400 fewer white students and 680 more ethnic minority students district-wide (Gates, 1992; Wear, 1993).

A report presented to the Board of Education in the Fall of 1992 cited several possible reasons for the exodus of students from the district:

1. A newly implemented desegregation plan;
2. School safety issues;
3. Academic quality issues;

4. Outcomes-based education curriculum issues;

5. Sex education and morals issues; and

6. Continuous progress or ungraded classes (Gates, 1992).

The author of the report, a 30-year veteran of the school district who was a product of the district, confided privately:

> We have always had ups and downs in enrollment, what with integration and periods of economic downturn. But we have had the children of the city's leaders in our schools; you know, business leaders, the mayor's kids and so on. Why is it they no longer have confidence in the city schools? This is not a good trend.

This district survived bussing in the 1970's and economic downturns in the 1980's. It was a district which had consistently held high standards for academic excellence and had been a national leader in innovative programming, encouraging technology and a curriculum responsive to the needs of its community (Van Meter, 1977). Yet, like many other urban districts, this district appeared to have embarked on an inevitable decline all too common among our nation's cities. Urban schools were increasingly faced with a multitude of barriers to educating students. The social problems of

the inner city seemed insurmountable. No matter the reasons, when formerly good urban schools began to lose enrollment, and subsequently funds, parents would eventually opt for whatever they felt benefited their children (Bourgoin, 1982). Often, they looked to private education options such as a church school or private academy for their children's schooling.

A concern for many educators was the increasing exodus of students to private, parochial, independent or home schools (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Pike, 1992; Knowles, 1988). As reported in a variety of studies conducted over the last several years (Bingham, Haubrich, White & Zipp, 1990; Blum, 1985; Bourgoin, 1982), the prevailing reasons given by parents and educators for the exodus to private schools included:

1. Declining academic quality;
2. Lack of discipline;
3. Violence, perceived lack of safety;
4. Declining community (neighborhood); and
5. Disintegrating morals (values).

Ultimately, parents did what they felt they must do for their own children. The mother of a school-age child summed up the

mounting discontent: "I will not sacrifice my child to an ideal" (Bourgoin, 1982, p. 42).

Statement of the Problem

Nationally, we are experiencing a continual decay of the inner city public schools. This decay is characterized by low student achievement, low staff morale, and a perceived lack of discipline and safety (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Although financial and geographic constraints make it difficult for all parents to exercise choice regarding their children's education, urban parents are increasingly finding ways to provide the private school option for their children (Chubb & Moe, 1989).

When asked to rate the schools in which they teach, the majority of urban educators say their schools are at least above average; yet an increasing number of these educators are choosing the private option when it comes to the education of their own children (Bingham et al., 1990). Evidence of a dual standard seems to exist, but why? Is it school quality? a lack of discipline? school desegregation? Are the people that make up the very heart of the inner city public school system, urban educators, demonstrating

a lack of confidence in that institutions' ability to provide quality education? Why the exodus of educators' children from urban school districts?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to determine the reasons urban public school educators chose private schools for the education of their own children. Specifically, this study was driven by the following research question:

1. Why do urban public school educators choose alternatives to public schools for the education of their own children?

Procedures

Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) served as the research design for this study. A systematic set of procedures for data collection and analyses were used to develop an inductively derived theory about a particular phenomena (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The strategies for a Grounded Theory approach included pertinent questions to be asked, comparisons to be made and, finally,

new theories or theory to be formulated. In a study of this kind, I was continually reminded to reflect on any personal biases or attitudes that were not based on the collected data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Site and Sample

Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend that sites and respondents be chosen deliberately, which allowed the study to carefully focus on data pertinent to the investigation.

Site. In this study, the site was a large midwestern school district of approximately 48,000 students which had experienced national recognition as innovative in the areas of substance abuse prevention and anti-gang programs, and was a curriculum leader in early childhood education, special education, and the arts (Van Meter, 1977). Although enrollment remained steady, and even increased in the late 1980's, that trend changed significantly in the 1990's.

Sample. A purposeful sample of district educators was used, with consideration given to gender, race, years of experience,

position, and whether respondents' children were in a private school or a parochial school. Selection was based on recommendations by teachers, administrators, or support staff within the school system. The sample consisted of parents of children who had moved from public to private education sometime in the last two to five years, the most recent period of decline in enrollment for the urban public school district studied (Gates, 1992).

Research Criteria

Information resulting from a study based on Grounded Theory has to be believable and factual. For this to happen, certain components were present in the research process. These were:

1. A good fit between results and reality;
2. Findings that made sense to those in the field;
3. A theory that was abstract; and
4. Applicability to a variety of contexts (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

By systematically and carefully building a theory about urban exodus, an accurate representation of reality was constructed. The data were comprehensive and the interpretations broad and the

theory included enough variation to make it transferable to a variety of contexts.

Data Collection

Loosely-structured, open-ended questions guided data collection in this study. This procedure yielded:

1. More complete data;
2. Better interview rapport; and
3. More effective communication between the interviewer and the informant (Issac & Michael, 1971).

Interview Protocol. The interview protocol served as a guide for directing the research interviews (Appendix A). A core of approximately five questions were developed, revised and evaluated to meet the needs of the study. The primary advantage of the interview protocol was that it helped initiate the interview. One group of questions covered respondent demographics while another focused on the parents' reasons for private school choice. Three pilot interviews confirmed the utility of approximately 45-minute interviews, the appropriateness of the interview questions, and the

ability to obtain useful information through this data collection method.

Interviews. Interviews were conducted in the Spring of 1994. Interview sites were determined by the participants; two interviews took place in my office, two in the participants' schools, three in their respective homes and the remainder in either a restaurant or the central administration building.

Analysis of the Data

Grounded Theory involved data analysis which was achieved through coding. Data in the form of sentences, phrases or a single word was broken down and examined for similar issues/themes, then put together again in new ways by induction, an open process that inferred a generalized conclusion from particular instances (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Three coding/analysis procedures were used in this study: open, axial and selective.

Open Coding. In open coding, the data were labeled, classified, named, and categories developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. These steps happened simultaneously

and, at times, randomly (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Axial coding. The next step in the analysis process was a procedure which allowed the data to be put together in new ways following open coding. Through axial coding, these new categories were then linked and developed into a paradigm by simultaneously performing four distinct steps:

1. Hypothetically relating categories or topics by explaining their relationships;
2. Verifying these hypothesis against actual data;
3. Searching for properties of categories; and
4. Exploring variation in phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Selective coding. The last step was simply the integration of categories to form Grounded Theory. In this study, the core category, defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as "the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated" (p. 116), was related to other categories in an effort to arrive at a theory of urban school choice. Information was presented narratively, then analytically, resulting in theory (Strauss & Corbin,

1990). By examining the unifying strands of meaning within the culture and context of the study, new insights and understanding emerged about school choice.

Theory development. Coding procedures were aimed at identifying, developing and relating concepts. On the basis of related concepts, a theory was developed which described urban educators' exodus from public to private schools (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Significance of the Study

Parental attitudes toward the public schools and the problems confronting them demand study and greater sensitivity. Insights gained from the study of a sample of one urban district's educators whose children attend private schools may provide knowledge and insights which, if heeded, can help schools improve.

Research on the issue of where public school educators want their children to attend school is scarce, though interest in this area is increasing (Bracey, 1993). A review of the research indicates a need for further inquiry into the differences and similarities

between public and private education and how those factors influence parental choice.

This issue is very complex. Our inner city schools are experiencing decline in majority student enrollment; many of the private inner city schools are poorly funded (Blum, 1985). Even so, these same schools are succeeding with students of diverse backgrounds, and it is imperative that whatever lessons are derived from these successes are made known to public and private school educators alike.

Summary

While most of the urban public school educators in this study said the school district in which they worked was above average, these same urban educators chose the private school option for the education of their own children.

This study was designed to examine the reasons urban public school educators chose other than public schools for their own children. A Grounded Theory approach was used to provide qualitative data from the perspective of urban educators in order to arrive at a new theory regarding urban school choice.

Reporting

This chapter has presented the design of the study. Chapter Two is a review of related literature while Chapter Three is a presentation of data from the in-depth interviews. Chapter Four is an analysis and interpretation of the data collected on parental choice and public v. private school options as well as the theory that emerged from the data analysis. In Chapter Five the summary, discussion, implications, recommendations, and conclusions are presented.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the knowledge base about school choice, as it pertains to both public and private/parochial schools, is presented. The first section focuses on national trends; a historical review of school choice is presented, choice is defined, issues associated with choice are discussed, and school choice options are listed. The last part of this section reviews research regarding educator perceptions on the issue of urban education and school choice. In the second and third sections factors impacting choice are presented through the sociological framework of immigration.

Traditional theories have presented immigration as a response to such forces as overpopulation, famine, war, economic hardship, or religious persecution (Kellogg, 1988). These forces were called "push" factors because they compelled people to leave their homelands. At the same time, receiving countries exerted "pull" through such factors as an expanding economy, a high demand for

labor, or the availability of social opportunities, thus compelling immigration (Kellogg, 1988). The research was therefore presented in two sections, the first identifying the known factors that "push" parents from public education and the second presenting those factors that "pull" parents toward institutions other than public education.

National Trends

While the superiority of private over public schools has been in dispute, many parents believe their children will receive a better academic experience in private schools. Thus, in the American tradition of "giving my child every advantage possible," a number of parents opt to pay for their children's private education (Bracey, 1993).

Historical Review

Advocates of choice believed that liberty, or choice, was a major tenet of a democratic society and families should have the right to choose the schools they felt were best for their children. The notion of "market forces" played an important role here. By

introducing competition into public education, it was believed schools would improve (Bierlein, 1993).

The debate over school choice can be traced back to notions about competition and vouchers contained in Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, 1776 (Richardson, 1993). Smith voiced a concern which is still being discussed: teachers are public employees, not educational entrepreneurs. He believed that anyone paid with public funds lacked the motivation for performance possessed by those in the private realm and therefore, the "free market" principles of competition did not apply to them (Richardson, 1993).

In more recent history, debate over choice was initiated by Milton Friedman in his 1955 book, Economics and the Public Interest (Witte, 1991). Friedman advocated a system in which parents received a tuition voucher. Supporters pointed to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (i.e., GI Bill) as a good example of using public money to attend both public and private institutions. Though a variety of government reports and projects relating to vouchers were generated in the years following the publication of Friedman's book, few experienced notable success (Kirkpatrick, 1990).

In the early 1980's, President Reagan advocated a system of

tuition tax credits so that private school parents would not have to pay twice, once for tuition and again in taxes. Proponents of his programs felt that choice would force schools to improve or go out of business. Having originated from a republican president, the idea was labeled "conservative" and therefore received strong opposition in both Congress and among educational organizations. The momentum for parent vouchers or tax credits soon began to die down (Kirkpatrick, 1990).

During the Bush administration, many people thought that private school choice had a real chance once again, but strong opposition remained, causing many choice advocates to create privately-funded programs to pay for private school tuition. These programs were designed to prove to the critics that private choice programs could succeed (Bierlein, 1993).

Summary. Like many controversial educational issues, this debate has occurred over a long period of time. The concept of private school choice, begun over 200 years ago, is still one of the nation's major educational issues. It remains a central issue in discussions of American educational reform. As John Witte (1991)

concluded:

> Proponents of choice stress the primary value of liberty, a more equitable dispersion of that liberty, and pluralistic diversity. Opponents of choice stress equality, an integrated society, and common school traditions. Philosophers have been debating these value differences for thousands of years. It is no wonder that these arguments divide well-intentioned parents, education providers, and policy experts. (p. 9)

Choice

Educational choice has been one of the most hotly debated educational reform topics of recent years. In light of this fact, one of the most compelling explanations for the study of private schools was that by isolating the factors responsible for their recognized strengths, scholars could generate strategies for the improvement of all schools, public and private (Erickson, 1983).

Definition. In a broad sense, educational choice refers to the practice of permitting parents to choose the school their children will attend. "Public school choice" refers to movement within a

district or between districts in the context of a public school system. The "magnet school" is one example of a public school option. "Private school choice" expands the definition of public school choice and includes private and parochial schools (Bierlein, 1993).

Private School Supremacy. As public school enrollments declined, private school enrollment continued to grow (Hawkins, 1982). Historically, reasons cited for choosing private over public schools were:

1. Concerns about school quality;
2. Lack of discipline in the classroom;
3. Dislike for desegregation policies;
4. Fear for their children's safety;
5. Lack of a feeling of community (neighborhood); and
6. Absence of the teaching of values/morals (Hawkins, 1982).

Many Americans believed that private schools offered a better education for those who could afford this alternative. This belief supported the perception that many public school students would

consider transferring to a private school if the state augmented their tuition. However, research in support of private school supremacy was mixed. Several researchers revealed that private school students out-performed their public school peers (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Others challenged the validity of these findings (Levin, 1991; Witte, 1991).

Like much of the information on school choice, researchers relied almost solely on quantitative, statistical evidence and provided little data about the reasons "why" educators chose private over public or vice versa.

The Debate. Research data was found to support both sides of the argument. No definitive answer existed as to whether private schooling produced higher student achievement and the debate continued. The general debate over private schools could be stated in terms of the following arguments. Proponents said choice would:

1) rescue children from bad schools;
2) force schools to improve and be more accountable by means of market forces and competition;
3) provide for a variety of teaching options for children

with different learning needs;

4) encourage parents to be more involved in, and committed to, their children's education by virtue of choosing their school;

5) promote voluntary desegregation; and

6) lead to a higher level of professionalism and expertise among teachers.

Opponents said choice would:

1) not improve schools or achievement through competition and no research existed to support that notion;

2) leave needy children--those without supportive, capable parents--with the worst choices;

3) work against low income families unless transportation were provided; money spent on buses was better spent in the classroom;

4) drain money from already needy public schools; and

5) undercut efforts to increase school-community ties by encouraging student transfers (Rothman, 1991).

Summary. After years of debate, most agreed that choosing

between public or private schooling was not going to solve all the problems of education. However choice did appear to have a place as part of larger education reform efforts. The question was shifting from "should there be choice at all?" to "what kind of choice was appropriate?" (Bierlein, 1993).

Options

Urban private school options included private parochial, parochial/non-denominational, non-parochial, neighborhood independent, Christian fundamentalist, and home schooling. For the purposes of this study, focus was on parochial, parochial/non-denominational, and non-parochial private schools, and how parents exercised their options at these private institutions.

Private and/or Parochial. Almost all private schools in the nation are privately supported. Private and parochial schools attract students by offering something parents believe cannot be found in the "free" public schools. Private schools select students as far as the market will permit and expel those who prove to be problems, though they claim expulsion is practiced infrequently.

Attendance at private schools requires commitment from parents and students. The private schools can be distinguished from the public schools by the degree of parent involvement, feeling of community, and the sense of doing something special. Private schools are generally much smaller than public schools and exercise relative autonomy as it pertains to the school's mission or role in the community (Bierlein, 1993).

In their market research, Bainbridge and Sundre (1992) found that parents did not necessarily look for the biggest, most expensive, or the best when they had the chance to choose their children's schools. Parents tended to want their children in an educational environment that allowed their children to excel and develop confidence in their abilities. It was more important to parents that their children were successful than that they attended a school which had high ratings.

Minorities. For decades, the inner city private schools met the academic and social needs of Black, Hispanic, Latino, and Native American children who lived primarily in urban areas all across this nation. While today's minorities are primarily Blacks, Hispanics or

Asians, minority groups in the past included the Irish, Germans and Poles (Ratteray & Shujaa, 1987).

Historically, minority parents were good supporters of public schooling, yet recently they have become disenchanted with public schools and are choosing non-public educational options (Faustine, Arnez & Asbury, 1992). Three conventional preconceptions have dominated the thinking about minority involvement in private schools:

1. Parents were motivated primarily by religious or sectarian concerns;
2. Family tradition existed, thereby creating an elite group; and/or
3. Parents choosing private schools did not value public schools as an important institution in American society (Faustine, Arnez & Asbury, 1992).

A 1982 study (Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights) on inner city private education led researchers to conclude that these were misconceptions, and that minority parents valued what they perceived as "educational quality." In fact, quality was consistently given as the primary reason for choosing a school, with

religion and moral teaching given as secondary reasons.

The American dilemma in education was derived in part from the dispute between Americans of European descent and Americans from other racial and ethnic groups who were referred to as "minorities" even though they were a majority of the world's population (George & Farrell, 1990). Many of the inner city independent private schools were founded on the basis of social reform and a desire to allow "minorities" more say into the critical educational issues affecting their lives. It was within this context that issues governing education became: 1) gaining access to a legitimate education for all peoples; 2) determining what would be taught as curriculum and who would decide the content; and 3) deciding from what socio-cultural perspective children would be taught (Ratteray & Shujaa, 1987).

Majorities. Whites also supported the public schools in the past but now find it necessary to send their children to private schools (Bourgoin, 1982). When formerly good urban schools are faced with declining enrollments, shortages of funds, and perceived lack of leadership, parents eventually opt for whatever they feel benefits their children.

One parent was convinced that the desire for better schools transcended class and race, claiming that those who decried the support for public education had their "heads in the sand;" they were oblivious to the real problems in the public schools which were "disorderly classrooms, turbulent meetings, minority quotas, and concerns that their children were not learning" (Bourgoin, 1982, p. 68).

Summary. All ethnic and cultural groups are represented by those attending urban private and parochial schools. Parents, regardless of race or social status, are prepared to make whatever sacrifices are required to provide a quality education for their children.

If public education does not hold high standards for all children, regardless of needs, parents will opt to provide education by other means. Because a parent opts for institutions other than public education does not mean he/she no longer values the public schools. Though people often define quality differently, increasingly the perception is that quality will be found in the private schools.

Educator Perceptions

Research indicated increasing trends toward public school teachers sending their children to private schools. How educators perceived themselves and their schools impacted the choices they made for their children's schooling. In this section, educator perceptions and attitudes regarding these issues, nationwide are explored.

National Data. The 1984 Metropolitan Life Survey of Teachers found that 14% of public school teachers with school-age children sent them to private schools, a percentage higher than the 12% figure of all school children nationwide who were in private schools (Bracey, 1993). A 1986 study based on 1980 census data also found that 16% of all public school teachers' children were in private schools while 21% of all urban school teachers' children attended private schools (Doyle & Hartle, 1986).

Speculation was that parents desired an environment that allowed their children to excel and develop confidence in their abilities. For parents who were also urban school teachers this meant increasingly choosing private over public education

(Bainbridge & Sundre, 1992).

Teacher Attitudes. In an analysis of the second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa poll, Elam (1989) claimed that if teachers did not begin to feel better about their profession and their working conditions, urban public schools would not have much chance for improvement. He stated that, although teachers gave themselves and their own schools rather good ratings, they regarded themselves as martyrs, believing they were unappreciated and underrewarded.

In 1986, a large midwestern urban school district commissioned a study to assess attitudes about the perceived quality of education in the district. The researchers were somewhat startled to find that a significant number of teachers in the district rated the quality of their own school as high, yet would not want their own children to attend that school (Bingham et al, 1990). Three factors consistently surfaced throughout the study:

1. Overall school quality;
2. Disciplinary inconsistency; and
3. Racial attitudes.

The authors suggested that greater administrative sensitivity to and

support for teacher disciplinary concerns and practices would improve teacher attitudes and perhaps curb the exodus from the public schools. This study also pointed to the fact that race and racial attitudes still played an important part in decisions by urban white educators concerning where they would send their children to school (Bingham et al, 1990).

Summary. Educators differed as to what they looked for in a school for their children. Some sought academic rigor while others wanted caring teachers or a feeling of community. It was generally perceived that public schools were losing public school educators' children to private schools. In fact, the attitude held by many educators was that "institutions other than public schools" provided an education that was of higher quality than that in the public schools. Compounding the problem was the negative attitude many urban teachers held regarding their jobs and their sense that they were not appreciated.

Push Factors

Conditions or events that result in an exodus from public

schools to private schools are referred to as "push" factors. These factors are often present but go unnoticed until circumstances or critical incidents occur which magnify their importance. In this section, instructional environment and social environment are shown to contribute to the "push" out of the public schools. These are often the critical incidents and personal experiences that provide the momentum for exodus from the public schools.

Instructional Environment

A study by Frechtling and Frankel (1982) sought to uncover the reasons children were being transferred out of the Montgomery County (Maryland) School System and into neighboring private schools. They found that religion was a critical factor for only a small group of parents. Of much greater importance were issues of discipline and structure. For many parents, increased structure included a centralized curriculum and a uniform model of instructional delivery used by the schools. In this instance, parents felt a dissatisfaction with the public school system and turned to the private schools for:

1. An individualized environment (tutoring and personal

communication);

2. Smaller classes (lower teacher/student ratio); and
3. Increased academic rigor (a "back-to-the-basics curriculum).

Another study seeking to make an argument for school choice analyzed national polling data for the reasons parents left the public schools. In that study, Hawkins (1982) found that parents felt they had been left out of the public schools. The fragmentation of authority and responsibility for education in numerous school districts had led to perceptions of inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and unresponsiveness.

Parents of children attending urban public schools consistently referred to the need for discipline and structure in the schools. Concern that teachers spent more of their time dealing with unruly students than they did providing quality instruction was growing (Hawkins, 1982).

Associated with discipline and structure, a low pupil-teacher ratio was a significant factor related to private schools that seemed to have almost universal appeal to parents. Efforts of teachers' unions and associations had been quite effective in

convincing the American public that small classes led to better schools (Bainbridge & Sundre, 1992).

Social Environment

The public and private schools, nationwide, have been part of the segregation issue for decades. In spite of efforts to inform, educate, or even force desegregation upon people, we continue to have a segregated nation and, therefore, segregated urban schools. However, desire for a quality education cuts across all race and class lines (Bracey, 1993). This section includes a discussion of the issues of white flight/racism, and poverty within the context of school social environment.

White Flight/Racism. America has continued to be divided along racial and economic lines (Smock & Wilson, 1991). The problem of continuing segregation in the schools is a phenomenon related to increasing birthrates in the cities and rising numbers of non-white students. In a recent study, Casserly (1994) implied that the cause for the increasing isolation of urban public schools was the sociological phenomenon known as "white flight." White flight

was a term first introduced in 1967 and defined as "the departure of white families from urban neighborhoods undergoing racial integration or from cities implementing school desegregation" (p. 41). Reasons given for families fleeing the urban public schools included bussing, crime, racism, lack of quality and indifference (Casserly, 1994).

In their study, Smock and Wilson (1991) sought to clarify the issue of race as it related to urban public school exodus. Somewhat surprisingly, they found that nationally, white enrollment was more sensitive to school and district racial composition than to the implementation of a desegregation plan such as the bussing policies many school districts implemented in the early 1970's. In other words, it was impossible to detect a strong pattern of "white flight" because the patterns after desegregation tended to resemble those before desegregation. Whether the result of desegregation policies or the subtle effects of racism, the issue of race continued to serve as a factor which compelled people to leave the urban public schools. The movement to private urban schools was not necessarily a "white flight" problem. Ultimately, when all was said and done, parents did what they believed was in the best interest of their own children

(Bourgoin, 1982).

Coming from a slightly different perspective, Maddaus (1988, 1990) cautioned educators to be careful about associating race or social differences with moral behavior or "morally bad" peers. He found that racial and/or class bias was not as important in parents' decisions regarding school choice as previously thought. The point was that parents of any race or class, and especially mothers, felt that they were personally responsible for the welfare of their children, and they wanted their children to attend a school which came the closest to meeting their definition of a "morally good school."

Poverty/Prestige. Whatever the reasons, the "resegregation" of the urban public schools involved an abandonment of public education by middle class whites and grew to the point that segregation or desegregation was no longer the question. At some point, the issue became one of how we educated the children who had been left behind. As new private schools were set up to meet growing demand, the students left behind in the inner city public schools were starved for political, financial, and cultural

resources. The fear was that this phenomenon depicted a country which was racially divided and indifferent to the needs of minority or poor children (Casserly, 1994).

Summary. Crime, violence and racism all contributed to the "push" away from the urban public schools. Parents decried the lack of discipline and structure in urban classrooms. Among other things, the "forced bussing" implemented by some urban districts also led to a general feeling of "isolation" by many parents of urban public school students. These events have left many children in the urban areas scrambling for increasingly scarce resources.

Pull Factors

Conditions or expectations which tend to draw parents toward the private or parochial schools are considered "pull" factors. Parents view these factors as representing educational opportunity for their children. In this section, the pull factors are presented on the basis of three drawing factors: 1) academic; 2) structural; and 3) associations.

Academic

While the superiority of private versus public schools was often disputed, many parents believed their children would get a better education in private schools (Bingham et al., 1990). Factors found in the literature as contributing to the success of private schools were:

1. Caring faculty;
2. Small class size;
3. Parental involvement;
4. Parent and teacher empowerment; and
5. Religious (morals) teaching (Frechtling & Frankel, 1982; Maddaus, 1988, 1990).

A study of one urban district provided traditional explanations given by parents leaving the public school system. In his report, Peebles (1982) found that parents routinely indicated a preference for the neighborhood school and a need for higher academic standards and a more rigorous curriculum as reasons for leaving.

Structural

Parents often turned to private schools where they believed their children would receive a disciplined and rigorous educational experience.

Did parents of minority children have different expectations for the private schools than their white counterparts, or did all parents want much the same for their children? In their study, Holmes and Hiatt (1984) sought to examine the expectations that White, Black, Asian, and Hispanic parents had for private schools. Specifically: 1) were private school enrollments on the rise because of desegregation mandates and secular humanism taught in the public schools; and 2) were minority parental expectations different from those of white parents? Their conclusions were as follows:

1. Parents chose Christian schools because of the Christ-centered curriculum;
2. Parents choosing the private option expected:
    a. Strong academics;
    b. Caring staff; and
    c. Strong discipline.

3. No significant differences were found between ethnic groups studied.

Holmes and Hiatt (1984) concluded that private school enrollments were not primarily a result of desegregation and secular humanism. They also were led to believe that parents' ethnicity did not significantly affect their expectations for the private or parochial schools.

Many parents, regardless of race, wanted strong academics, a caring staff, and firmer discipline in their children's education. Also, since religion was a strong factor for enrolling in Christian schools, the public schools were not likely to bring families back with alternative programs or intensive school improvement efforts (Holmes & Hiatt, 1984).

Associations

While academics played an important role in a parent's choice of schools, the issue of "community" encompassed a greater part of the "school choice" picture. Community was formed by sharing common beliefs and values among parents, students, and teachers. It was a "comfortable fit" for parents who believed that their children

were associating with the right kinds of people and learning in a safe and nurturing environment.

Morally Good Schools. Recent studies, such as those conducted by Maddaus (1988, 1990), seemed to dispute some of the earlier assumptions regarding the pulling forces exerted by private schools. He found that, for most parents, it was not "cognitive learning" (e.g., academic subjects, intellectual challenges) but "morals" and "values" that were important to parents seeking an alternative to the public schools. Parents wanted to be assured access to "morally good" schools. The studies revealed that "neighborhood" was more important because it formed the "moral community" with which the school interacted.

If parents felt that controlling their children's moral environment outside the home was their responsibility, they would undoubtedly choose a school that was perceived as providing the correct moral development for their children. So, rather than quality being the determining factor, parents chose a school based on whether or not its "location" or the "neighborhood" created by those associated with the school provided for an ongoing

relationship with what was perceived to be a morally good community (Maddaus, 1988).

Summary. Parents were "pulled" to private schools with expectations of smaller classes, caring teachers, stronger discipline, and increased academic rigor. Perhaps, more important than these factors was the presence of what was perceived as a "moral community" surrounding the school's activities, including consistent parental involvement. Unfortunately, race was an issue for a few, but for many the issue was to escape "morally bad peers," regardless of their race.

Summary

In this chapter, research and historical issues relative to school choice were examined. By using the sociological framework of immigration push/pull factors, attitudes toward the public and private schools were explored through current studies and current nationwide practices.

Current nationwide practices included choosing private independent schools, parochial schools or home-schooling as

alternatives to the public schools. When parents felt the public schools were not educating their children, they chose what they believed was the best learning environment for their children.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this research was to determine the reasons urban public school educators chose institutions other than public schools for the education of their own children, with an emphasis on probing the factors that impacted choice. Viewing school choice from this perspective required a qualitative research method that revealed individual experiences.

For the purposes of this study, methods typically associated with qualitative research were employed to collect and analyze data. This chapter includes a discussion of:

1. Establishment of bias;
2. Population and participant selection;
3. Participant descriptions; and
4. Data categorization (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Establishment of Bias

I am a principal with 16 years experience in education in a variety of settings. In addition to working as a building administrator, I have worked in central office in two different districts and taught in elementary, middle and high schools. Since I have lived in or near large cities for most of my adult life, I have been very interested in the trends associated with urban schools. I believe my personal experiences with and interest in the future of urban schools added depth and energy to my study.

Because of these experiences and interests, I continually reminded myself to explore other perspectives related to urban schools and school choice. I intended to provide accurate data which added to the body of knowledge on school choice.

Population and Participant Selection

In Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) sites and respondents are chosen deliberately. Rationale for selection as well as participant descriptions are presented for each educator who took part in the study. Participants included employees of one large

urban school district located in the midwestern United States. Two administrators, five teachers, a counselor, a speech pathologist and a paraprofessional agreed to participate in the study.

Selection Method. I acquired permission from the chairperson of the district research review committee to announce the intent of my study and request referrals at various district meetings. By doing so, I received many names of potential research subjects. Principals, teachers, and, in one case, a participant in the study made referrals.

I found that district employees whose children had always attended a private or parochial school were easy to find. However, it was those individuals who had experienced a need to change to private schools in recent years that I needed for my study. I contacted all of the leads in order to see if their situation met the appropriate criterion of having children who were previously in public schools but moved to private schools in the last 5 years.

My goal was to reflect a breadth and diversity of non-public school experiences and, therefore, it was necessary to have responses from those attending Catholic schools, non-Catholic

parochial schools, and non-religious private schools or private academies. A guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality was made. Because of that guarantee, pseudonyms are substituted for the participants' real names.

Data Collection

The aim of the study was to determine what influences or reasons impacted the school choice decision. An interview protocol, included in Appendix A, was developed through consultation with dissertation committee members, and by asking, "what questions would provide the most pertinent data?" Information received from the University Institutional Review Board served as a further guide for the development of the protocol (IRB approval form and consent form included in Appendix B).

Interviews, which ranged between 30 and 50 minutes in length, were recorded on audio tape and later transcribed by a professional transcriber. Interview locations were determined by the subjects. Two were conducted in my office, two in the participants' schools, three in the participants' homes and the remainder in other locations such as a restaurant or the central administration building.

Participant Descriptions

The participants were eight women and two men. They ranged in age from 37 to 61 years and represented from 5 to 31 years in public or, as in two cases, public and private education. Eight of the subjects were Caucasian, one African-American and one Hispanic.

Pseudonyms were chosen to reflect the group each participant represented. In this way, the individual's background and school choice were readily known. For example, all participants whose children attended parochial school had a first name that began with a (P). They were further clustered by assigning a letter for their last name based on whether the parochial school was Catholic (C), Lutheran (L), or non-denominational (D). For example, Penny Cannon sent her children to a Catholic parochial school and Phillip Denton's children attended a non-denominational parochial school.

The parents of children attending non-religious private schools or academies were designated by starting the first name with (N) such as Nadine Cotton and Nora Owens. The two participants whose children recently returned to public schools were further indicated by starting the last name with (R). For example, Paula Roe's son

returned to the public middle school after attending a parochial school, and Naomi Ryan's daughter recently returned to the public high school after attending a non-parochial private school. The participant descriptions were, therefore, presented in clusters based on these groupings.

Private Parochial Schools

Six of the participants for this study (four females and two males) had children who attended private parochial schools. They represented attendance at Catholic, Lutheran, and non-denominational private schools. This group included an administrator, three elementary teachers, a counselor, and an instructional paraprofessional.

Penny Cannon. Penny Cannon, who had worked in education for 18 years, was in her third year as the principal of the largest high school in the district. Penny had five children, ages 14, 15, 17, 19, and 24. Her children had attended a total of three different Catholic schools and two of her children had also attended urban public schools. I selected Penny based on her position as a high

school principal, her insights into the Catholic community, and because she was Hispanic and two of her adopted children were African-American.

Penny was a staunch supporter of public schools and especially favored her own school. In fact, she would gladly have had her own children attend her high school if not for the fact that she was Catholic and the tenets of her faith dictated that her children attended a church school.

Pamela Carroll. Pamela Carroll had worked in education as a classified paraprofessional for five years, all of that time for the district which was the site of the study. She traveled to four different high schools within the school district and provided vocational assistance and job counseling for high school age students. She had a son, age 13, and a daughter, age 10, who attended a Catholic school. In fact, they were the only children in the school who were not Catholic. She explained that she received reduced fees at this particular school because the children's grandparents were Catholic. I selected Pamela because she had experience in several public secondary schools.

Pamela would not "feel good" about having her children attend one of the high schools in which she worked because of the things that she said happened in urban high schools. She remarked with disgust at the "obscene language" that she often heard "up and down the hallways of the high schools."

Parker and Peggy Lawson. The Lawsons both taught at elementary schools in the public school system. Parker taught fifth grade while Peggy taught fourth grade. They were members of the Lutheran Church and both Parker and Peggy had taught in private Lutheran schools. Peggy, who wanted to be an administrator in the public schools, was in her second year of applying for administrative positions.

Parker and Peggy had two daughters, ages 9 and 12. The Lawsons' daughters first attended a public elementary school but, at the time of the interviews, both attended a Lutheran school. Parker Lawson had taught elementary school for 20 years, 13 in private Lutheran schools and then 7 in the public schools. Parker felt the staff at his school worked very hard and were committed to trying to provide a quality education for students, but he did not want his

own children attending there. He was concerned about the lack of student motivation and the lack of parent support and involvement. Parker felt his daughters would not learn as well if they attended school with students that did not have their values and religious upbringing.

Peggy had taught a total of 18 years, 12 of those were in two different Lutheran schools in Illinois, while the next 6 had been in the district. Peggy felt, as Parker, that the school in which she worked was not suitable for her own children. Like Parker, she expressed concern about wanting her children to associate with children of similar background and religious upbringing. I selected Peggy and Parker for the study because their situation reflected the dual teacher/administrator family sometimes seen in public education.

Phillip Denton. Phillip Denton was a high school guidance counselor. He had been in the district a total of 22 years, including two district junior highs and 16 years at the school where he was working at the time of the study. Before becoming a counselor, Phillip taught government and American history. He had two

daughters, ages 7 and 12. The younger was still attending public school but the older daughter had recently begun attending a Christian academy.

Phillip and his wife had been quite active in district politics, attending school board meetings and serving on committees when possible. Because Phillip was very interested in the public schools, he had taken time to reflect on what he wanted for his own children. He believed that the high school in which he worked was a "good" school and would have liked for his daughter to attend there, though his wife and daughter were reportedly not as enthusiastic about that happening.

Patricia Downs. Patricia Downs had worked in education for over 20 years, including 15 years as a second grade teacher at the same elementary school. She had two boys, ages 17 and 19, who had both attended a non-denominational Christian academy. I selected Patricia because her children were in a Christian school for reasons other than religious education. She said she appreciated the religious instruction, but the real reason for the move was the "lack of academics" in the public schools.

Patricia thought highly of her school and its staff and said she was glad for the 15 years she had spent there. Her school was a magnet elementary school which boasted a somewhat more selective population by typical urban public school standards. She enjoyed having her sons attend there as elementary age students and would gladly have them attend there again.

Private Non-Parochial Schools

Two of the participants in the study had children that attended non-parochial private schools. The subjects were female teachers who both said they would not want their children to attend the school in which they taught.

Nadine Cotton. Nadine Cotton was in her 2nd year of teaching a 1st and 2nd grade combination class in a small elementary public school where she also served as the director of an on-sight, before- and after-school day care service for elementary school-age students. She had taught or worked as a school librarian for a total of 20 years, all of that experience having been in the urban public school district under study.

Nadine had two daughters whose ages were 16 and 19. The younger daughter had attended only a private non-parochial school but the older girl started in a public school (where her mother worked) and stayed for 6 years, changed to the private schools for one year, tried a public middle school for 2 years, and finally, returned to a private non-parochial school.

Nadine was very complementary of her principal and staff but would not place her children in the school where she worked because of what she perceived to be very low expectations for children. It concerned her that the basics were not being taught. She said the public schools were "just trying to do too many different things." She would have preferred to see less "interrelating" of subjects and more "basics." I selected Nadine because her choice was not influenced by a desire for religious education for her daughters, and because she had worked in a variety of settings in the urban public schools.

Nora Owens. Nora Owens was a mother of four children, ages 10, 13, 14, and 15, who six years ago began teaching in the public schools. She had taught at the elementary level but was teaching

seventh grade science in one of the public middle schools at the time of the interview. Nora's children had all attended a private non-parochial school since moving to this midwestern city five years ago. I selected Nora because of her strong commitment to private education and because she and her husband based their opinion of public urban schools on a district other than the one in my study.

Nora reported the school in which she taught was too big and impersonal, though she praised the administration for working very hard with limited resources. She would not have had her children attend the school based partly on what she called "an atmosphere of intimidation and threats by other students."

Returners

The last category included two participants whose children had attended private schools yet returned to the public schools. One was a speech/language pathologist and the other an elementary principal.

Paula Roe. Paula Roe was an elementary speech/language pathologist for the district who had worked in education 18 years.

Half of that time was in the public schools and half working for the county special education preschool office. She had two children, ages 12 and 15, who were both attending the public schools. I selected Paula because her son previously attended a Catholic school and was back in the public schools at the time of the study.

Paula worked in two different schools as the speech/language pathologist. Paula liked both schools very much and would have been pleased for her own children to attend either one of them.

Naomi Ryan. Naomi Ryan had spent 31 years in education, all of that time in the urban public school district being studied. She began as an elementary teacher, worked for several years as a reading specialist, and was an elementary principal when I spoke to her. She had two children, a daughter age 19 and a son age 28. Her son spent all of his school years in the public school system and her daughter began in a private school, later changing to a public high school by her own choice. I selected Naomi, even though her children were not of school age, because she was African-American and because her daughter chose to move back to the public schools when she entered high school for what Naomi described as "social"

reasons.

Naomi believed it was possible to have a good public school and said it depended on the personnel and their commitment to the kids. She would have been perfectly happy for her children to attend the school where she served as principal.

Summary

The participants represented diversity in terms of positions and private school choices. However, only two of the educators who participated had experience working in private schools. It was interesting that half of the respondents, four of those classroom teachers and one an instructional paraprofessional, said they did not want their own children attending the school where they worked. A participant description summary is presented in Table 1.

Data Categorization

Data categorization processes followed recommendations by Strauss and Corbin (1990) for developing Grounded Theory. Open coding is presented in this chapter.

The term coding refers to the processes by which data were

TABLE I

PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIONS

Subject Name	Position	Experience	Total Ed Years	Children	In Your School?	Private Option
Penny Cannon	H S Prin	Public	18	5	yes	Parochial/Catholic
Pamela Carroll	Paraprofessional	Public	5	2	no	Parochial/Catholic
Parker Lawson	5th gr Tchr	Private & Public	20	2	no	Parochial/Lutheran
Peggy Lawson	4th gr Tchr	Private & Public	18	2	no	Parochial/Lutheran
Phillip Denton	H S Counselor	Public	22	2	yes	Parochial/non-denom
Patricia Downs	2nd gr Tchr	Public	20	2	yes	Parochial/non-denom
Nadine Cotton	1st/2nd gr Tchr	Public	20	2	no	Private/non-parochial
Nora Owens	7th gr Science	Public	6	4	no	Private/non-parochial
Paula Roe	Speech/Lang Path	Public	18	2	yes	Parochial/Catholic, return
Naomi Ryan	Elem Prin	Public	31	2	yes	Private/non-parochial, return

broken down, re-conceptualized, and put together in new ways by induction. Induction enabled the move from specific facts to general conclusions. The data were named and categorized through close examination (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During this process, I made comparisons and asked questions. The steps in this analysis were: 1) labeling; 2) classifying; 3) naming; and 4) developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. These steps often happened concurrently.

After carefully reading each of the transcripts, three were selected for the initial open coding process based on the fact that they represented three opposing or extreme viewpoints. The three transcripts were carefully read and notations made in the margins in order to label the content of each section. Envelopes were then labeled with the names of these categories. The sections were cut from the transcripts and placed in the envelopes, forming the first set of categories. The remaining transcripts were then read, sections cut, and placed in the correct categorical envelope. As new categories emerged, new categorical envelopes were created.

The second stage in the open coding process involved determining categorical groups. These were placed in marked

envelopes corresponding to each main category. Five main categories emerged from the interviews: 1) curriculum; 2) pedagogy; 3) teacher expectations; 4) environment; and 5) values.

Curriculum

Parents wanted the best possible education for their children, one that met their child's particular needs. The perception was that urban public schools had lowered their expectations and watered-down the curriculum. Parents wanted high academic rigor, basic skills, and consistency. When they did not find them in their local public school, they began to look elsewhere.

Academic Rigor. Were parents leaving the urban public schools because of a perception of inferior quality and watered-down curriculum? The answer was yes, especially for those opting for the private non-sectarian school or academy. Complaints of "little or no homework" or "low expectations" were often heard. Naomi Ryan's decision to place her daughter in private school was based, in part, on her son's experience. She explained, "I never saw Brian really work that hard, you know, very little expected, it

seemed. It was as if the teachers were saying, 'you can't do very much.' " She continued by noting, "That's why we started her (daughter) at the private school. Because we knew the public school just wouldn't meet her particular needs."

What did urban parents look for in institutions other than public schools? As it pertained to curriculum, the answer seemed to be "rigor." They wanted a curriculum that challenged, excited, and one that had been tried and tested through the years. They wanted the same school and the same curriculum that they experienced in their youth, and it appeared that was precisely what the private and parochial schools were trying to provide.

> It's smaller classes. There's more discipline. It's what is meant by a traditional school--lot's of discipline, uniforms, very structured. They do not have a lot of free time. They do not have a lot of recess time. They are working pretty much the whole day--fast and furiously. (Pamela Carroll)

Students and parents also worked under different expectations in the other than public schools. Nadine Cotton said,

> I found the motivation level is just so much different in private school. The expectation of parents that kids will

perform, and the kids--the kids are competitive, but it's been a good kind of competition for our kids. Our kids have learned excellent study skills which, you know, we had little or no homework in public school.

The issue of whether students should be passed on or retained if they were not working up to grade level was one that also frustrated Nadine. She said,

One lady came up to me in tears. She said they kept passing her son on and passing him on. You see, private school they won't pass you on. I mean, if you don't make that next level and it is challenging, you will not be passed on. I know there's a big wave on that, but I believe in retention.

Basic Skills. Many times throughout the interviews, comments were heard related to "basic skills," "back-to-the-basics" or an "old-fashioned" education. Phillip Denton said, "I think the basics need to be stressed. I think the basics have to be there--the old fashioned basics, and I don't see anything wrong with the way we learned. It's worked for centuries." Nadine Cotton agreed:

The private school just concentrates on the basics. They drill,

> drill, drill, drill for math and phonics in first grade and kindergarten. So, by the time you get out of there, if you're half way attempting anything, you're going to get it.

Consistency. Curriculum consistency was a concern for Nora Owens and one of the main reasons she sent her children to private school. She said,

> One of the things that really concerns me is the lack of consistency between grade levels--the lack of consistency in curriculum. I feel that when kids move from one school to another it's like going through and starting over again.

Public School Positives. The parents interviewed for this study were not deceiving themselves about the drawbacks of the private school curriculum. Paula Roe commented, "The public schools have more to offer musically and artistically for students, things like band." Patricia Downs said, "I really feel like their (parochial school) academic program needs to be improved, and they're working on it. So, as far as making a better change (public to private) for academics, we really didn't." I asked Parker Lawson how his younger daughter felt about her private school experience:

"We've heard some complaints about the (private) education there, from Erica. She has to copy her spelling words every week five times, even before they take the test."

Penny Cannon believed that size had something to do with why the parochial schools did not excel in some areas. She explained, "The sheer numbers of a smaller school preclude offering the wide variety that we do in a comprehensive public school. The attendance is just not there." She continued, "Academically, I don't think that their (her children's) experiences are as strong as they would have been in a public school."

While small classes were a draw for private schools, this was not the case when the classes became too small. Nadine Cotton explained, "They only had about 12 kids for all of the seventh grade and that was just not enough experience there, although it was a great school." When Nora Owens was asked how her oldest daughter felt about her private school experience, she commented, "She has been bucking the system in some ways. She doesn't like it because it's so small. There's just so few people."

Some parents wondered if their children were getting a "real life" experience or curriculum in the cloistered environment of the

private school. Paula Roe explained it this way,

> In the public schools we teach kids how to get along with differences--with people that are different than us--not of the same backgrounds or beliefs. I mean they're (those in the private schools) all the same, they're all Catholic or whatever.

As an African-American, Naomi Ryan explained her concern this way, "We felt that she (her daughter) needed some experience with public education because going to an elite private school you don't get to see any other African-American children, and that may not be the real world you will be living in."

Magnet Schools. Magnet schools within a public school system are schools that offer specialized programs or academic themes designed to attract students from throughout the district, hence the term "magnet." Magnet schools have become a viable option for many parents seeking what they feel is a better and, perhaps, more exclusive environment in which their children can receive their education.

During the course of my interviews, several parents referred favorably to the magnet schools. In fact, some said they would

consider returning to the public schools if the "traditional magnets" were offered or if they could get into a magnet high school.

When I asked him where his daughter might attend the 9th through 12th grades, Parker Lawson explained, "our hope at this time was to get her into the Magnet International Baccalaureate Program." When I asked what drew him to that program, he explained "high academic standards they expect from kids, and she would have a chance to continue her music education there." Phillip Denton stated it this way, "The public schools are getting a bad rap and the only positive things that the public in general sees are the magnet schools."

Parents of children attending private schools made financial sacrifices to keep them there. This was especially true of parents who operated on an educator's salary. So, for many parents, public magnet schools were the next best thing to a private education. Parents were lured to these schools by reports of higher academic standards and the feeling that a public school of choice offered a better clientele with which their children could associate.

Summary. Parents leaving the public school systems were

often seeking a more challenging curriculum for their children. They believed that higher expectations for students and teachers, alike, would result in better learning. Basic skills and an old-fashioned curriculum seemed to be high priorities for parents who wanted schools to be the way they used to be. Public schools, too, had their bright spots when it came to the area of curriculum. Many parents felt academic opportunities were to be found in the larger comprehensive public schools and, especially, in the public magnet schools.

Pedagogy

Middle schools received a large share of the criticism directed toward public schools. Having a middle school age child meant it was decision time. Phillip Denton said,

> Most teachers and counselors truly feel the middle school today is not teaching. They do field trips. They do projects. They do exercises, but not a lot of high school preparatory types of stuff. They are not strict. There's very few rigid guidelines.

Rigor v. Accommodation. The issue of self-esteem as it related to discipline was something that more than one parent mentioned. The perception was that the public schools, and especially the public middle schools, sought to accommodate students rather than establish firm guidelines and strict discipline. Phillip Denton spoke to this when he said,

> I still hear from my middle school peers that they cannot be hard on the students. They've got to keep them happy. They have to build self-esteem. If they teach in a magnet school, they have to keep the enrollment up. They coddle the students.

Pamela Carroll said,

> I think it goes back to the whole emphasis on self-esteem. Let's make the child feel good no matter what, even if he's proved he hasn't learned one thing, we'll make him feel good, and that isn't accomplishing anything for anybody.

Summary. For many parents, the move to middle school was the deciding factor in choosing a private school for their children. Middle school was seen as too "free", without the necessary

structure and discipline for appropriate learning. Parents saw a big difference in the types of associations developed at the middle school as opposed to the elementary school. The chance of those interactions interfering with their children's education was not worth the risk.

Teacher Expectations

Several comments were made regarding the degree of public school teacher preparedness and the effect that tenure had on teacher motivation. Naomi Ryan, an African-American, felt that teachers were not accountable for results. She explained,

> I did not feel my son was treated well at all....the teachers need to know we are watching, and they are going to be accountable for what they have taught. We will not listen to your innuendos about your contract, or that you can do this or can't do that.

She later confided,

> I just hate to see kids fail, and if they're your children, it really hurts. If it happened to my son, just think how many other children it's happened to. I decided that if it cost us

everything we have, we will not allow it to happen to our daughter!

The private schools also received criticism for failure to recognize student needs. Paula Roe cited this example as the major reason for placing her son back into the public schools:

> We had several conversations with her (parochial teacher) about Steven and the strategies she might use if he was being unsuccessful and was not working up to grade level. Then one day the principal called me at my school and said he should be retained in sixth grade. I told her that would not work and that he would not be returning. As it turned out, he was evaluated (in the public school) and found to have a learning disability.

Bias. Earlier, the issue of self-esteem in the middle schools and the perceptions of parents who believed that teachers were lowering expectations and offering up a weakened curriculum was presented. Naomi Ryan, who was an African-American, related a different perspective about the need for all students to feel good about themselves. She stated,

> I didn't feel that my son was getting the self-confidence that

> he needed. He had a second grade teacher that when he was showing something for show-and-tell, started drilling him over speech, instead of just allowing him to show it. I'll never forget how stern and abrupt she was with him.

Naomi also felt that her family was held suspect by the school system. She went on, "I saw his self-esteem just deteriorate and he came from a family that loved him. Our parents had been married for over 50 years--both sets. It's not a broken family!"

Did public school teachers have low expectations for minority students? Naomi Ryan believed so:

> He was already reading when he started first grade. But instead of his teacher putting him in material based on where he was, she waited, and she kept waiting and he never really did get to read. She said she felt the other children should catch up to him. I should have done more, but I wanted to believe in the public schools because I'm a teacher.

Accountability. Teacher quality was mentioned but, more specifically, teacher accountability. Naomi Ryan explained it this way,

> I feel that the teachers (private) knew that they had to produce results. I just feel that the teachers knew that they had to or they would not be there (private academy). Even though she was the only African-American student in many of the classes that she attended out there, they enjoyed working with her. They really enjoyed working with her. She learned to work. She learned the value of work, and she learned to expect something of herself and to produce.

Summary. It was difficult to know what portion racial bias and bigotry played in the private choice decision, or how many minority students were deprived appropriate opportunities for academic achievement. Whatever the case, increasingly, minority parents were finding the public schools sadly lacking, and the private schools more inviting.

Environment

The attitude held by many parents fleeing the urban public schools was that the public schools were not places where their children would be safe and free from intimidation. No other

comment illustrated this point more strikingly than when Pamela Carroll, whose son attended a parochial school at the time, said:

> My son is a very sharp kid. He took the ACT at age 13 and got a 21 composite, yet he's flunking several subjects. I told him, "I'm not going to pay for you to flunk school. You can do that for free. So, I'll throw you back to the wolves." And this teacher friend said, "Pamela, don't do it. You're paying for more than his grades. You're paying for safety and environment. You don't want him in our middle schools."

In this section, issues related to environment are discussed. They include discipline, profanity, safety, intimidation, counter-values, parental fear, teacher fear, and gangs.

Discipline. Lack of classroom management and the presence of disruptive behavior in and out of the classroom were significant factors for parents leaving the public schools. Nadine Cotton commented, "The level of expectations from the students was not there. The discipline for the classroom was definitely not there."

Profanity. Profanity was mentioned as one of the many "unpleasantries" that their children were forced to endure. Pamela

Carroll said, "I don't want my kids hearing every other word a cuss word as they walk down the halls." Patricia Downs concurred, "The kids were just extremely rude and calling the teacher names and no attempt to stop it or anything like that."

Safety. There were few references to violent acts or parents fearing for their children's safety. In most cases, parents were simply tired of their children having to put up with the constant distractions to learning. When asked about her perception of safety in the schools, Patricia Downs replied, "Safety really didn't enter into our picture other than just feeling comfortable. Mike wasn't feeling very comfortable as he thought about going to high school."

Intimidation. Much of the problem involving discipline was not immediately obvious to the casual observer. Oftentimes the messages were little more than body language or a "look." "There is a lot of unstated intimidation--not overt intimidation. Just the presence of some students is very threatening to others although nothing is ever said. The way you walk through the halls. You watch yourself. I've noticed that with kids" (Nora Owens).

Counter-values. Patricia Downs made references to her concern over the racial stereotyping and prejudice that she began to recognize in her sons who were attending the public schools. She noted that she and her husband did not tolerate these attitudes in the home and it concerned them that the activities in the classrooms and hallways at their sons' schools were tarnishing their opinions of minorities. She referred to this as part of the motivation for moving the boys to the private school.

> Some of the kids would say, "You can't sit here. This is our table." They actually said, "this is a Black table." Mike has always had close friendships with Black students. In fact, we still have two kids who come spend the night, and he was just getting a really bad feeling for Black people and we just didn't want that. (Patricia Downs)

Parental Fear. Fearing for a child's safety also came about as a result of incidents that had nothing to do with the classroom or teacher control. Some occurrences were system-related and the result of factors outside the school's control. For example, Pamela Carroll recalled a critical time in her decision-making process,

> My eight year old was standing on a street corner by herself in the dark, waiting for the bus, while I zipped past her on my way to work. I couldn't handle it. It was very frightening. One day she was lost for quite awhile. The whole neighborhood was out searching for her. Another day she missed the bus and got the neighbor to take her to school and I thought, "this is ridiculous. I can't work this way." So I put her in the private school.

When asked how her younger daughter felt about attending the private rather than public school, she replied, "She's happy there. They both feel safe. Of course, my daughter would like to be back at the magnet elementary, but she would only have one more year there" (Pamela Carroll).

Teacher Fear. Comments were made relating to the fact that some teachers did not feel completely comfortable with certain students. Phillip Denton lamented,

> I have teachers that tell me they go to school fearful every day because the kids have been given such a loose reign for so many years that they are verbally abusive. They're

threatening--physically threatening. They even threaten them with lawsuits.

Gangs. Through the course of my interviews, I found few direct references to someone's race or color as the reason for leaving a particular school. There was an occasional mention of a gang but not specific information about whether it was a Black, White, Asian or Hispanic gang. However, Pamela Carroll did cite one instance when gangs played a part in her decision,

> We went one night for a parent night, and as we left, the principal was standing in the parking lot surrounded by about 20 huge fellows that we assume were gang types. She was trying to get them to leave the property and they were busy cussing her out.

Summary. The perceived lack of discipline, often cited as a major cause for exodus from the urban public schools, was exhibited in a variety of ways, from profanity and outward aggression, to intimidation and subtle threats. Teachers stated that their hands were tied because the schools were too interested in building self-esteem. Parents wanted all students to show respect and restraint,

but the stories they heard were of intimidation and rude behavior.

Values

The value of "community" involved several areas of interest to parents wanting the best possible education for their children. Among those were friends, relationships, communication, a school/church connection, or simply a feeling of family. The factors related to community were, at times, difficult to pinpoint because they represented values and emotions that were not easily verbalized. The factors mentioned fell into one of the following categories: community v. neighborhood, setting, homogeneity, religion, tradition, community, networking, and parent involvement.

Community v. Neighborhood. The issues of community, neighborhood, and associations with peers could have run contrary to earlier arguments if viewed in different ways. Community may or may not have been contingent upon the "location" of the school building. In regard to the neighborhood around the school where his children attended, Parker Lawson explained, "In the neighborhood surrounding (the children's private school), there is probably more of

a chance of something happening there than at the public middle school."

Setting. Patricia Downs spoke of the private school this way: "The surroundings, the care for the students, the friendships they make, the opportunities they have are excellent."

But how was this environment so different from the public schools? Penny Cannon saw it this way,

> We had to get her back into a good cloistered environment. The public middle school was much, much too free. I felt the tremendous lack of community. I knew no one. I didn't know those parents and I didn't know what their values were.

I asked Penny how her daughter felt about making the move to the parochial school. She said, "Once she got back and realized all that pressure (freedom) was gone, and being back with all the flat-chested Catholic girls in their plaid uniforms, she was fine."

Phillip Denton said this about his daughter's perceptions of the private school: "At her private school she is taught religion almost every day. That was not originally the reason we sent her, but it's been a secondary blessing. I think she fears going back into a non-

Christian setting."

Homogeneity. It was important to many parents that the associations their children made were with people of similar background and interests. Parker Lawson explained: "We hoped the friends that she would get there would be people with similar interests as ours. You know, more like us in their religious thinking and morals and stuff like that."

When Patricia Downs confided that the private school her children attended was somewhat lacking in academics, I asked her if she still thought the private school was the right decision. She responded, "Yes, I do simply for the friendships that they've made and the kind of people they are with now. For the kind of associations they've made. Plus, our kinds of values are promoted."

Regarding peer associations, Peggy Lawson shared,

> Not all kids fit into the molds of these Lutheran schools. In those situations, I would suggest that you go to the public schools because you'll probably find more of your kind in that school setting. If you're not good, if you don't do well in school, you probably won't fit into that mold (private school),

and you're probably happier somewhere else.

Religion. For many families, the question of where their children attended school had little to do with academic rigor and everything to do with church affiliation or obligation.

> Basically, if you are Catholic and there is a Catholic school, you must, by the tenets of your faith, have your children attend Catholic schools. There are many Catholics who ignore that, but the reality is that we must send our children to Catholic schools. (Penny Cannon)

Tradition. Family history and tradition also played key roles in the decision. Again, Penny Cannon shared,

> My husband's family is a charter member of (the children's Catholic school), the parish we lived in and still belong to, so that's why the kids went there. I know for sure it was not a vote against the public schools as much as it was probably just the tradition and the obligation we had.

Peggy and Parker Lawson had both taught in the Lutheran schools. She related, "It's mainly because my husband and I taught in Lutheran schools and for religious purposes. Religion's really

important and they have memory (Bible) work, and that's important."

Paula Roe also admitted that religious tradition played a part in their decision to originally send their son to Catholic school. She said, "The main reason was for the religious education. My husband attended a Catholic school from kindergarten through high school and felt very strongly about that. We were both raised Catholic although I attended public schools."

Community. Peggy Lawson explained "community" this way: "It's a church/school connection. We go to church there and they see all of their friends, and they go to school there and it becomes more of a family type connection rather than school separate, church separate." Penny Cannon saw the parent's perspective enhanced. She said,

> In the parish setting, when you have the school attached to your church, you tend to know people from birth all the way through the 12th grade. You know where your children are going at night. You know whose party they're going to. On a strictly practical level, that's really helpful to know that with teenagers, and it builds a bond with kids.

How was it that these parents felt more of a connection with their children's private school? Naomi Ryan presented her unique perspective,

> It is the way they approached the parents and the meetings they had with parents. I feel we were all treated with respect and dignity. I knew I wasn't their wealthiest customer, but I was always treated very well, and here we were the African-American.

Networking. Parents wanted information about their children's schools, and if the schools did not provide that information, parents would form networks to acquire it. The schools may have had a tendency to blame the media for poor publicity and for driving parents out of the public schools, but the parents in this study relied very little on the media for their opinions. Phillip Denton explained it this way,

> They (parents) talk. That's why the public schools are in trouble. They talk. They talk as neighbors. They talk in Brownies and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. They talk in church, just old friends that network. They talk about the violence.

They talk about the teachers. They talk about the curriculum. So, what were the private schools doing that the public schools were missing out on? Naomi Ryan explained,

> All children want to learn and be successful, and I feel we need to give them that opportunity and acknowledge them--validate what they know and the same with the families. The families need to hear how beautiful and how wonderful your child is. In the public schools, I didn't hear any of that, I just heard negatives.

Parent Involvement. Parental support and involvement was a key component in the building of a feeling of "community." It was important that the schools made parents and students feel significant. There was a perception that the private schools worked harder to make people feel they were integral parts of the organization.

Patricia Downs said, "We're always at the school. My husband coaches the soccer team, we drive on all the trips. It makes for more of a bond. The parents are right there and active, and that makes a difference to kids."

Summary. Community was best described as a feeling of belonging. A school with "community" gave a sense of family and provided a comfort level for parents that assured them their children were getting an appropriate education and that they were associating with the "right kinds" of kids. For many parents, religious education was the deciding factor in their decision to place their children in parochial schools. Coupled with the desire for religious education were the issues of tradition and family history. Parents wanted to feel they were supporting the church or the parish school where they attended or had a strong allegiance.

Summary

A challenging curriculum, strict environment, qualified instructors, and a sense of "community" were all major elements driving parents' choices toward private or parochial schools. Parents wanted a traditional education for their children; back-to-basics was the battle cry often heard. Private schools were able to recruit with promises of higher expectations, tougher standards, and better preparation for college.

Religious education ranked high among those seeking private

church schools for their children. Often, family tradition or a sense of church obligation influenced the decision to leave the public for the parochial school.

Another important factor for private schools that encompassed elements of both high standards and the issues of religion and morality was the need for a school to provide a sense of "community." A bond was formed which acted as a connection among parents, teachers, students, school, and, in the case of parochial schools, the church. When this took place, the sense that the school "family" was caring for and watching over the students existed, providing moral lessons and associations.

Summary

The data presented in the form of open coding provided the basis for this research. The main categories for choosing private over public schools were: 1) curriculum; 2) pedagogy; 3) teacher expectations; 4) environment; and 5) values.

While this study was developed to discover the reasons people were leaving the public schools for private education, not all comments were negative toward the public schools nor positive

toward the private schools. Many felt that public magnet schools were a viable option. Often, contradictions expressed during the interviews served to indicate just what a difficult and sometimes emotional decision private school choice was for parents who were also public school educators.

This chapter presented data which resulted from open coding. Chapter Four includes axial and selective coding of the data which results in a grounded theory of private school choice.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

In this chapter, the tenets of Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) were used to develop an inductively derived theory about the phenomena of urban educator school choice. During the process of analyzing and interpreting the data, connections between the categories and subcategories were made. A core category was identified into which all other categories were integrated from which a theory for urban school choice emerged.

Data Analysis Techniques

Open coding, the first data analysis technique, was presented in the third chapter. Through this process, the data were divided into categories and subcategories according to their properties and corresponding dimensions.

In this chapter, findings from axial and selective coding techniques are presented. During axial coding, the data were put

back together in new ways by making connections between categories and subcategories by use of a "paradigm model." In this way, it was possible to "hypothetically relate categories to each other by explaining their relationships in terms of the variation of the phenomena under certain conditions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 107).

Selective coding was the third data analysis technique. The core category, private school choice, was systematically related to other categories so a story about private school choice could be described. A story line was developed in an attempt to depict the essence of the story. This is the "conceptualization of a descriptive story about the central phenomenon of the study" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 119). When the story line was analyzed, it became the core category. In this case, it resulted in a theory of private school choice.

Axial Coding

In axial coding categories and subcategories were taken from open coding and linked to a new category through a set of relationships by use of the following "paradigm model:"

1. Causal Condition referred to events or incidents that led to the development of a phenomena.
2. Phenomenon was the occurrence under study.
3. Context represented the particular set of conditions in which the action/interaction strategies were carried out.
4. Intervening Conditions acted to either facilitate or constrain the action/interaction strategies.
5. Action/Interaction Strategies were aimed at managing, handling, carrying out, or responding to the intervening conditions as they existed under a specific set of conditions.
6. Consequences referred to the outcomes which resulted according to action/interaction strategies (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

There were four distinct steps for linking and developing these categories:

1. hypothetically relating subcategories by explaining their relationships;
2. verifying these hypotheses against actual data;

3. searching for properties of categories; and

4. exploring variation in phenomena.

By using this "paradigm model," new categories were developed and a theoretical basis was formed, eventually leading to the theory revealed through selective coding.

The categories which emerged from axial coding resulted in the "paradigm model," with the phenomena being school choice. The axial coding presented here was based on the causal condition of protective schooling. Protective schooling led to an exodus from the public schools. The contextual conditions were public schools, private schools, the community and society. Intervening conditions were values, racism, tradition, and critical incidents. There were four action/interaction strategies: magnet schools; parent/teacher empowerment; site-based management; and public relations efforts. Two categories emerged as consequences; increase in public school dissatisfaction and increase in public school satisfaction. These factors may have happened in any order or concurrently.

Causal Condition: Protective Schooling

After conducting the axial coding process, a major phenomena

was discovered which resulted in a causal condition of school choice. The causal condition was labeled "protective schooling."

This causal condition emerged after careful analysis of the participant interviews. A common thread ran throughout the interviews. Parents spoke of concerns about discipline, safety, and curriculum. Some sought religious education or a sense of community. But, what were the intervening conditions which tied these responses together? It was through this process that the intervening condition of "unpredictable school experiences" arose. What were the experiences which caused parents to send their children to other than public schools? If parents exercised "protective schooling," unpredictable experiences would be minimized leading to what they believed would be, a better education for their children.

The "protective" qualities sought by parents leaving the public schools were found in a variety of sources best described as a "safeguarding society" which may have included school, family, church, community, friends and/or neighborhood. Parents who felt disconnected from those safeguarding elements in the public schools sought to connect with an environment in the private schools which

reflected their idea of a morally good society. As Penny Cannon remarked, "I knew no one. I didn't know those parents and I didn't know what their values were....we had to get her back into a good cloistered environment."

Contextual Conditions

The contextual conditions referred to the location of events pertaining to the phenomena along a dimensional range. Context referred to when, how, numbers and types. At least four contextual conditions emerged in this study: public schools, private schools, community, and society.

Public Schools. Public schools came in a variety of sizes and ranged from pre-kindergarten through high school. The urban public schools were culturally diverse and could be found in every type of neighborhood throughout the city. Within the context of public schools were the public magnet schools which offered some of the kinds of programs and appeal demonstrated by private schools.

Private Schools. Private schools also came in a variety of sizes and styles though they were, as a rule, smaller than their

public counterparts. Private schools in this study fell into one of the following categories: independent private schools, non-denominational Christian schools, and Catholic schools.

Community. The community consisted of different ethnic mixes and represented groups of diverse socio-economic status. Yet these people expressed similar interests and common goals for their children's education. A community of people shared not only common space, but common beliefs and values as well. Peggy Lawson described her experiences with the Lutheran schools as a "bond...a feeling of family that was not evident in the public schools."

Society. The context of society encompassed issues of diversity, multiple and contrasting values, and real-world experiences. The nature of the society could be reflected in items as varied as a community's crime statistics or the influence held by the religious community. Urban society was the product of many cultures as they combined or clashed in the never-ending quest for survival.

Summary. The contextual conditions played a significant role

in a parent's decision to opt for institutions other than public education. In this study, contextual conditions included public schools where parents worked in addition to those which had experienced a decline in enrollment. It also included the private schools which promised a better education, and the elements of community and society which interacted to form the context wherein the school choice scenario was played out.

Intervening Conditions

Intervening conditions were those conditions which acted to either facilitate or constrain action/interaction strategies taken in a specific context. They were broad and general conditions bearing upon the action/interaction strategies. The following intervening conditions emerged in this study: values (beliefs), racism, tradition, and critical incidents (individual experiences or external events that served to trigger a response or action). Intervening conditions could happen with individuals, like the racism that Naomi Ryan experienced, or within groups, such as the sense of tradition that compelled several of the participants to send their children to parochial schools.

Values. Values held by the parents influenced their decision about their children's schooling. The parents wanted and expected their values and beliefs to be replicated by the schools their children attended. For some, this represented a standard of "Christian" or "moral" values. For others, it was characterized by a strong work ethic and high academic expectations. Whatever the case, the desire was for the schools and the students in them to meet the criteria of acceptability for maintaining an environment of moral purity. For these parents, values represented absolutes--unchanging codes of thought and behavior.

Racism. Overt racism was not evident in the responses given by the participants of this study. I spoke with urban public school educators who have devoted their lives to teaching all children to the best of their abilities. Nevertheless, asking what part racial bias played in the exodus from culturally diverse urban public schools to the sanctuary of the safe and homogeneous setting of the private school was difficult to avoid. Patricia Downs said that one of the reasons she moved her sons was her fear they were becoming prejudice toward "blacks." Was she fooling herself? Was there an

element of fear, fed by racial bias, in her decision? Perhaps selecting for children which members of other cultures they may or may not befriend was only a "nicer" form of racism.

Tradition. Individual opinions of what constituted quality schooling depended, to a great extent, on personal experience, background, and upbringing. Several parents lamented if only the schools could be like they were "when we were in school." They found comfort in the things they knew and with which they could relate. The "good old-fashioned schooling" was good enough for them, after all, they'd done just fine.

Critical Incidents. Critical incidents played an important role in the decision to choose private over public education. Many of these experiences were characterized by an event or series of events that produced fear about a child's safety or educational well-being. One parent was concerned that her daughter was getting too much attention from boys in the public school and "could not handle the freedom." She chose the Catholic school as a more "cloistered" environment. Another parent grew tired of having her daughter wait for the school bus in the dark. Another heard stories about the

terrible condition of the middle schools and made an abrupt change, though he and his daughter had been perfectly happy with the public elementary school.

Summary. Any decision regarding school choice involved the management of intervening conditions which impacted that decision. The intervening conditions visited were values, racism, tradition, and critical incidents. Any of these may have impacted the decision, but not all conditions would apply to every situation. It was up to me to identify those elements that applied under certain conditions and show how they facilitated or constrained action/interaction strategies.

Action/Interaction Strategies

Whether studying individuals, groups, or collectives, action/interaction which was directed at managing, handling, carrying out, or responding to a phenomenon, occurred (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Action/interaction was evolving. Thus it could be studied in terms of sequences or change over time. It was often purposeful, done for some reason in response to some phenomenon.

The action/interaction strategies in this study were identified as public relations efforts, site-based management, teacher/parent empowerment, and magnet schools.

Public Relations Efforts. School district public relations efforts generally fell into two categories: those at the central office or district level, and those initiated at the individual sites. All district employees shared the responsibility for presenting the best image of the district to the public. Much of the difficulty lay with the news media which was more apt to lead with the story of a school's gang incident than to announce the winner of the science fair. The participants in the study indicated that their own personal experiences and the "talk" among neighbors and church friends was the basis for their opinions and not district-wide public relations efforts.

Site-based Management. School districts initiated site-based management in an effort to get curriculum decisions, finances and other resources closer to those who had contact with children (Gates, 1992). This was important, especially in a large district, because it was the first step in focusing control at the smaller,

neighborhood school level where parents were more apt to feel a sense of connection with the organization. By breaking down the district into controllable entities, the public schools were more likely to have the same "feeling of community" as the smaller private schools. Closely tied to the issue of site-based management was teacher/parent empowerment.

Teacher/Parent Empowerment. Educational empowerment was realized in a variety of ways. For teachers it meant more say in school curriculum, budgeting, or discipline policies. To parents, empowerment was the right to assess teacher competence, decide curriculum, or decide rigid standards for all children. From an administrative standpoint, empowerment was a two-edged sword. On one hand, administrators wanted members of the school organization to be active and involved in their school. On the other hand, there was a tendency for people to want authority over decisions without having responsibility for the ultimate outcomes. Consensus building was another component of the empowerment issue that could provide problems. Establishing consensus among the parents of a small, all-white Christian Academy was an entirely

different task than building consensus in a culturally diverse public school.

Magnet Schools. Based upon the responses received from the interviews, the implementation of magnet schools was the action/interaction strategy that had the greatest success in curbing the flow of students from public to private schools. Magnet schools had become a viable option for many parents seeking what they felt was a more exclusive environment for their children. Some parents said they considered returning to the public schools if the "traditional magnets" were offered or if they could get into a magnet high school. For many parents, public magnet schools were the next best thing to a private education. Parents were lured to these schools by reports of higher academic standards and the feeling that a public school of choice offered a better climate for their children.

Summary. Action/interaction strategies were aimed at managing citizen perceptions of the public schools. Phillip Denton commented that the public magnet schools were viewed as a "positive." This and other strategies were designed to promote involvement and a feeling of ownership in the public school

education. Once again, we saw the public schools seeking to connect with their customers, hoping to cast aside the negative image so often associated with urban public education. Penny Cannon contended that the public schools could seem like "family", too. The question was, whose family would they represent?

Consequences

Consequences were outcomes as a result of action/ interaction strategies. Two possible consequences of the implemented strategies existed: 1) dissatisfaction with the public schools will increase; 2) satisfaction with the public schools will increase.

Dissatisfaction Increases. Though it was still early to detect a definite trend in student movement, the signs were toward a continuous flow of students out of the urban public schools and into private and parochial schools. Parents who remained in the public school system in order to expose their children to new technology, extra-curricular opportunities, or a real-life experience existed, but they too were gradually lured away by prospects of religious education, higher academic standards, or the small,

"protected" environment of the private school.

Complex and divisive issues existed for urban public school districts and all indications were that these problems would continue to multiply. State funding was not adequate to provide all of the necessary services; desegregation and bussing issues continued to create heated debates; urban decay led to students with greater social, emotional, and educational needs. Segments of the community became further polarized along the lines of culture, race or political interests. Waiting lists for entrance to private schools were very long and, for many parents, acceptance to one of these schools was a great privilege.

Parents wanted their children to be successful. As the public schools were increasingly perceived as not providing a successful experience for their students, parents made whatever sacrifices were necessary to find a school that provided refuge and educational opportunity.

Satisfaction Increases. Given the societal issues at play, the prospect of a decrease in students exiting urban public schools for private schools was bleak. The implementation of magnet

schools kept some families in public education, but the bussing and special programs necessary for running magnet schools were expensive and limited the number of students served by such schools. If urban public schools were viewed as the home for those who either cannot afford, or are not wanted in private schools, the issue would not be whether parents left, but how quickly. Further expansion of public school choice options provided some hope of stemming the tide of students to private schools, but these alternative programs were often costly to implement. While there were those who criticized attempts to increase spending for public education, an increase in resources, facilities, and salaries was, perhaps, the first badly needed step toward placing the public schools on a level playing field with their private counterparts.

Summary

These categories emerged as the result of axial coding and were organized according to the paradigm model. The causal condition was identified as "protective schooling." The contextual conditions were identified as public schools, private schools, the community, and society. Values, racism, tradition, and critical

incidents all represented what were referred to as intervening conditions. Action/interaction strategies were identified as public relations efforts, site-based management, teacher/parent empowerment, and magnet schools. The consequences were an increase in public school dissatisfaction, and an increase in public school satisfaction. They provided the basis for selective coding and the theory for private school choice.

Selective Coding

Selective coding was similar to axial coding, except on a higher, more general and abstract level. The "paradigm model" was used to explicate the story line from categories derived from axial coding. The analytic story was then told in more general terms. And finally, a theory of school choice emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Story Line

In spite of attempts by the urban public schools to upgrade their image and retain student enrollment, many parents, including public school educators, continued to opt for institutions other than public schools for the education of their own children. The parents

who were interviewed in this research were chosen for a variety of reasons including their commitment to public education and because they moved their children to private schools within the last five years. Why did these parents recently lose trust in the urban public schools?

At times, it appeared that parents wanted the impossible. They wanted high academic standards and structured curriculum but not if it stifled creativity. Parents wanted their children in a moral environment but desired a real life experience too. Schools were supposed to be small enough to feel like a community of family and friends but large enough to provide for competition and a wide variety of course offerings. Parents wanted the newest technology and best trained instructors, yet they longed for the "good old days" and pleaded for "back-to-the-basics" instruction.

A difference seemed to exist between what they defined as a "good" school and a school where their own children would attend. The essence of that difference lay in the degree of "connection" or "shared values" that a parent experienced with a school. Those shared values were the result of a complex interaction of past experiences, critical incidents, personal opinions and attitudes, and

what the parents perceived as philosophical or spiritual benefits.

Some people valued religious instruction; others saw academic rigor as the priority. A sense of community or belonging drew some parents, while others expected a school that stimulated and recognized individual creativity. Whatever it was they longed for, parents were increasingly turning to institutions other than public schools for the answer.

Since the educators who participated in this study were different people with different personalities and experiences, it naturally followed that they would make school choice decisions based on their unique intervening conditions. However, there was a commonality present which ultimately led each of them to the private choice.

Analytic Story

The belief in, and the valuing of an appropriate education by parents ran throughout this study. Education was so highly valued among the participants that many would have gone to any lengths and made any sacrifice to see that their children had access to a "good education." They exercised their right to freedom of choice. But

what "frames of mind" or "social perspectives" drove this choice? A look at some of the findings and categories described earlier provided some clues.

The Movement. Parents wanted small schools with small classes where not only the students but also the parents and teachers all knew each other and shared common values. They wanted a learning environment where their children had the best chance for educational and intellectual survival. Parents often heard rumors and stories of conditions for learning in private schools which were more favorable, and they sought to take advantage of those conditions. They saw their children as "starving" academically in the public schools, so they "uprooted" them from this less-than-favorable condition in search of the "promised land" of educational opportunity. What was the mind set that drove this movement?

Ruralism. Part of the answer lay in a historical phenomenon called "ruralism." Humankind had been rural in character throughout history. Ruralism was characterized by smallness, simplism, homogeneity, and xenophobia (distrust of strangers). The ruralistic

nature was a socially standardized way of acting, feeling, and thinking characteristic of the rural community (Claerbaut, 1983).

In the rural outlook, the people were very much alike socially, ethnically, and educationally, lacking complexity and sophistication and maintaining a clannishness which viewed outsiders with distrust. Individuals were usually self-sufficient and therefore not reliant on others for their livelihood. This perspective worked well for them and was an effective mode of living. When people had a rural outlook yet resided in cities and attended urban public schools, this social perspective called "ruralism," often led to counterproductive feelings about the urban setting.

Some parents had found themselves living and raising families in the forces of urbanization while stubbornly retaining a ruralistic outlook. The ruralistic outlook bred desire for a family bond, a sense of community with which to connect. The often recited desire to return to the "basics" or "the way things used to be" was akin to the longing for a return to "the old country." The same psychological and social forces were at work in both scenarios.

This somewhat nostalgic notion was also akin to Toennies's

concept of "gemeinschaft" -- an idea modeled after rural society -- as opposed to "gesellschaft," which was a term that denoted a more modern or urban societal structure (Coser, 1991). According to Toennies, "gemeinschaft" represented people who led relatively undifferentiated lives in which their social, moral, economic, and religious activities were closely integrated. This contrasted with those in a "gesellschaft" type of society which involved greater role segmentation and where people related to one another for specific ends, having hardly any other interests in common (Coser, 1991).

Ruralism, or "gemeinschaft," therefore denoted the "rural" perspective while urbanism, or "gesellschaft," was marked by a social perspective more appropriate to "urban" life. This desire for a simpler educational environment resulted in "protective schooling."

Urbanism. Urbanism was not urbanization. The former meant discarding or greatly reducing a rural outlook and adopting a frame of mind appropriate to urban life. The latter referred to physical movement of populations into urban regions (Claerbaut, 1983). When people were unable to adopt an urban frame of mind and throw away

the rural perspective, they often sought to recreate the ruralistic society and the social elements of that society within the urban setting.

In order to cope with the larger, urban schools, a new paradigm for urban schooling which valued and was comfortable with urban schools was needed. Urbanism was an attitude that was diverse, heterogeneous, sophisticated and reliant on others, an attitude that accepted change and development, and was at ease in interacting with those who were culturally different. In other words, with urbanization must come urbanism. Urbanism took into account unique needs of urban societies, and hence, urban schools.

Theory. Urban public school educators who made school choice decisions for their own children, found it necessary to avoid the personal conflict spurred by what was ultimately a decision based on a "dual standard" for school suitability. This was accomplished by maintaining one set of values for the children in the urban public schools, and another set of values for the schooling of their own children. For this study, the expression "The Second Measure of Worth" was used to characterize this "dual standard" and

the subsequent reasons for the exodus of urban public educators' children to private schools. During the research process three components emerged which helped to define the theory: academic, psychological, and social.

The academic component was realized in the way parents who were educators differentiated between what constituted "academic quality" for their own children and the education provided for children attending the urban public schools. Personal conflict arose when the parents' desires for "basic skills" and "academic rigor" for their own children were in disharmony with the more "affective" teaching strategies and programs which, as urban public educators, they helped to design and implement to meet the needs of educationally and culturally diverse groups of urban children.

The psychological component was best presented in terms of "selected values v. the real world." For many parents who were also urban public educators, the innate responsibility to shelter or "mother" their children was much stronger than their desire to insure their children were properly socialized. Parents faced a dilemma when they recognized the need for their children to acquire what might be considered "real world experiences" yet found it

difficult to ignore their own desire to control their children's "moral environment."

"Ruralism v. urbanism" described the sociological component whereby urban public educators identified with an urban (gesellschaft) outlook (characterized by diversity and complexity) as it pertained to their responsibility to the public schools. At the same time they tended to embrace a ruralistic (gemeinschaft), or more homogeneous, frame of mind when confronted with school choice decisions involving their own children.

Summary. Selective coding resulted in a theory about parental school choice called The Second Measure of Worth. This was described as the double standard that existed for parents who were public school educators and who sent their own children to private schools.

Ultimately, these parents who were educators dealt with the personal conflicts involved with maintaining one set of values for their own children, and a different set of values for the public school children they had pledged to educate. They recognized the quality present in the public schools, but for them a second variable

existed (i.e., academic rigor, morals, values, a cloistered environment) which was a determining factor in choosing a school for their own children.

The steps followed the "paradigm model" at an abstract level, after which the story line was identified, the analytical story was told, and the theory emerged. A diagram which illustrates The Second Measure of Worth Theory is shown as Figure 1.

Summary

In this chapter, analysis and interpretation of the data was presented. Categories from open coding were recast in axial coding in order to create a "paradigm model." The causal condition for the phenomena of school choice was "protective schooling." The contextual conditions were identified as public schools, private schools, community, and society. Values, racism, tradition, and critical incidents all represented what were referred to as intervening conditions. Action/interaction strategies were identified as public relations efforts, site-based management, teacher/parent empowerment, and magnet schools. The

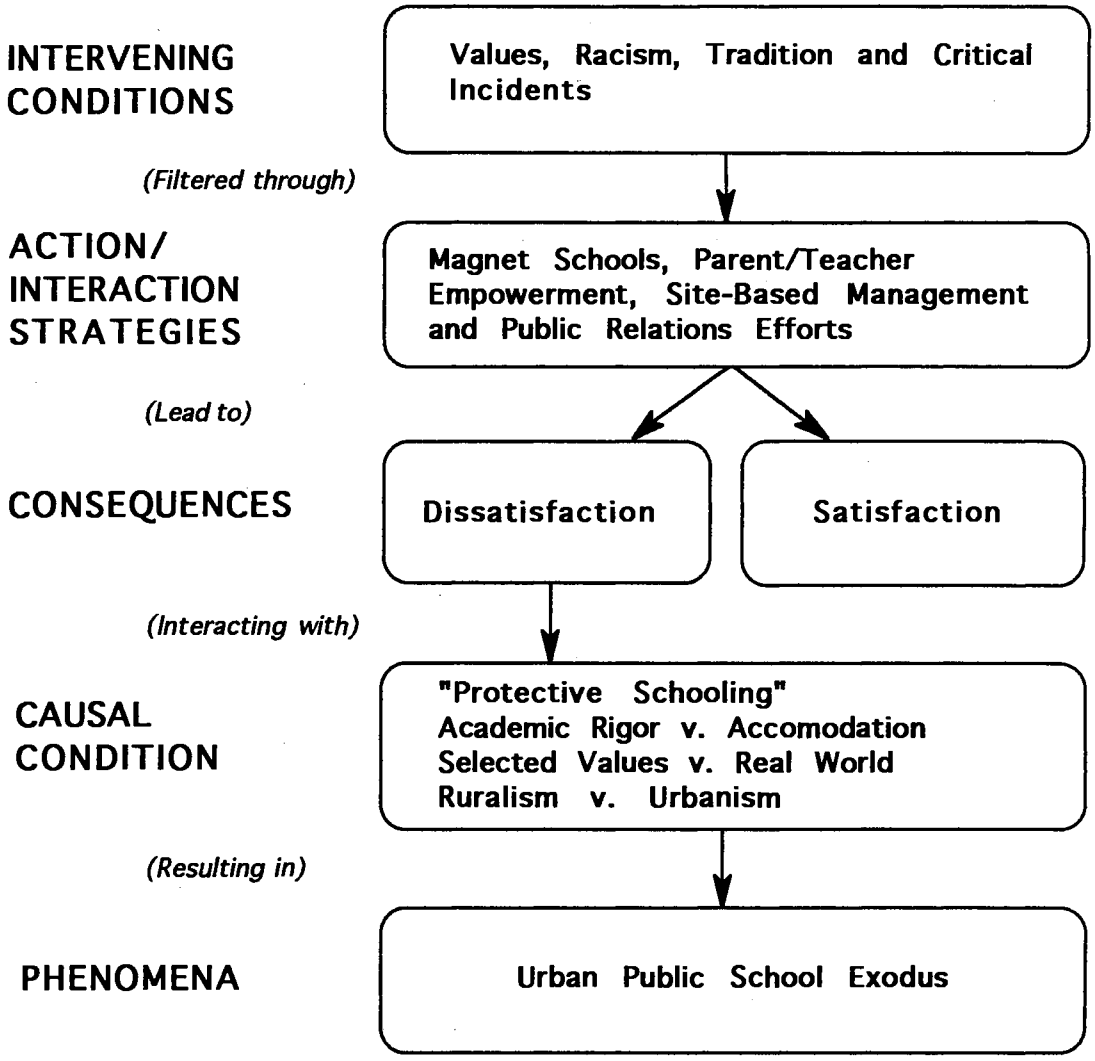


Figure 1. The Second Measure of Worth

consequences were an increase in public school dissatisfaction and an increase in public school satisfaction.

During selective coding, the "paradigm model" was used again on a higher level of conceptualization. During this process, a theory was derived called The Second Measure of Worth. The Second

Measure of Worth occurred when urban public educators held one set of standards for the urban public schools and another set of standards for the schooling of their own children.

Chapter Five presents the summary, discussion, implications, recommendations, and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Perspectives and opinions expressed by urban public school educators provide the basis for this study. This chapter presents a summary of the study using Grounded Theory as the theoretical and methodological frame. A review of the data collection, data analysis, and findings is presented. The summary sections providing discussion, implications and recommendations follow. In the conclusion, I reflect on this study and the process involved.

The knowledge base in the field of school choice was somewhat narrow. Most of the literature focused on public school choice offerings (i.e., magnet schools) or on government incentives and voucher systems. Few studies looked at the reasons why parents chose urban private schools over their public counterparts and even fewer looked at parents who were also public school educators.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the reasons why urban public school educators opted to send their own children to institutions other than public schools. The research was designed to gain insight into the beliefs, values and goals that impacted the decisions made by these parents, ultimately leading to the formation of a new theory about private school choice.

Data Needs

In-depth interviews were conducted to gain data which provided me with insights into the real reasons parents chose as they did. Ten educators from a midwestern urban school district provided candid responses about their own schools, their children, and the reasons they chose private schools over public.

Data Collection

The loosely-structured open-ended interview served as the method of data collection. A group of questions related to demographics and several "prompting" phrases were developed and

used to provide consistency and to aid in the interview process. These questions are contained in the interview protocol (Appendix A). The interview protocol was developed through stages as questions were assessed and judged for appropriateness in obtaining data. Pilot interviews were conducted to determine interview length and suitability of interview questions.

Analysis of the pilot interviews verified that the data met the needs of the study. Minor changes plus the use of audio recording were employed to provide the best reproduction of the interviews for transcription and analysis.

Data Categorization

Coding was a term that depicted the operations by which data were broken down, re-conceptualized, and put back together in new ways by the process of induction, which enabled me to move from specific facts or data to general conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Three coding procedures were used in this study: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Data Analysis

During Open Coding, the data were organized into categories according to the perceived reasons these parents chose private over public school education. Originally, a set of data units emerged, then new elements were added as information warranted. Five general topics emerged from the interviews with parents: 1) curriculum; 2) middle schools; 3) teacher quality; 4) discipline; and 5) community/morals.

Categories comprising the topic of curriculum included academic rigor, curriculum consistency, and basic skills. The issue of teacher quality dealt with such categories as student self-esteem and teacher biases or accountability. The area of discipline included such things as fear, gangs, intimidation and profanity. All of those were continually evaluated and reevaluated in order to maintain efficacy.

Axial Coding involved putting data back together in new ways after open coding. It resulted in the "paradigm model." The causal condition which led to the phenomena of private school choice was "protective schooling." Protective schooling occurred when parents

sought to provide a learning environment for their children that represented what they felt was a "morally good school." Action/Interaction strategies led to the consequences of an increase or decrease in student exodus from the public schools. The action/interaction strategies were identified as public relations efforts, site-based management, teacher/parent empowerment, and magnet schools. Intervening conditions were values, racism, tradition and critical incidents. Contextual conditions affecting the intervening conditions were public schools, private schools, community, and society. Connections were made between categories by use of a "paradigm model" utilizing the elements of context, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and consequences to those strategies.

Selective Coding was used to integrate the categories to form a Grounded Theory of school choice. The "paradigm model" provided a frame for explaining categories. A story line was then explained, followed by the development of an analytical story, and finally, a theory about school choice evolved.

Summary of the Findings

Parents wanted to feel a connection with the parents, teachers and students of the school where their children attended. Reasons such as concerns over discipline, desire for higher academic standards, or longing for the teaching of religion/morals had at their core a desire by parents to protect their children physically, educationally, and spiritually. The term "protective schooling" was used to describe the way educators who were parents sought to minimize the "unpredictable school experiences" for their own children. Consequently, a theory of school choice titled "The Second Measure of Worth" emerged. This theory explained the dual standard that existed when urban public educators held one set of standards for the public schools and another set of standards for the schooling of their own children.

Analytic Story

Parents who are also public school educators tended to value education and wanted their own children to get a "good education." But why did they turn to private schools rather than public? They

sought a school which provided a sense of security, both educationally and physically, for their children. This protective schooling was a result of a historical phenomena known as "ruralism," which was characterized by a tendency toward smallness, homogeneity, and a distrust of strangers and change. When people lived in an urban society, yet held a ruralistic perspective, this condition led to counterproductive feelings about the urban setting. Those who retained a ruralistic outlook turned to protective schooling rather than embrace the urban spirit.

Discussion

The changes which occurred in our urban public schools, whether the results of immigration, over-population, poverty, crime, or a combination of all of these, were viewed by many members of the community as diminishing the quality of education. Once this perception was implanted, it grew and multiplied. It was fed by fear, prejudice, lack of communication, and, in many cases, negative personal experiences.

When parents recognized problems in their children's public schools, they fled the public schools in search of quieter, simpler

learning opportunities for their children. For them, the desire to support the public schools and remain behind to fight the good fight was not worth the chance of losing their children, either physically or spiritually. They did not accept the argument that diverse environments or "real life" experiences would make their children better citizens as opposed to the cloistered surroundings of the private school setting. Their instincts told them, instead, to be fearful and to flee the public schools in search of what was assuredly a more quality education.

School choice advocates sought to reward those who exercised their individual freedom of choice. If parents found something better for their children, they were encouraged to seek it. Parents had a "right" to get the best they could get. The free market tenet of supply and demand came into play.

This study revealed that public school educators were no different than other parents when it came to the education of their own children. They would do whatever it took and make whatever sacrifices were necessary to insure that their children got what they perceived to be the best possible educational experience. In a society which increasingly emphasized academic preparation, they

viewed this protective parental stance as their most solemn duty.

Implications

The findings of this study served to support much of the existing research on school choice. The range and depth of this type of study provided an expanded understanding of a very complicated issue. Because of enhanced awareness of the far-reaching complexities of this phenomenon, a need for further research existed.

School Choice

In their study, Bainbridge and Sundre (1992) stated that there were indications parents turned to private schools desiring an environment that allowed their children to excel and develop confidence in their abilities. While my research did not dispute that possibility, the reasons were obviously much more complex, involving issues of morals, values, and personal safety.

Curriculum

An examination of the data supported current studies which

stated that parents indicated a need for higher academic standards and a more rigorous curriculum as reasons for leaving the public schools. Calls for "back-to-basics" or an "old-fashioned" curriculum further emphasized this area as impacting parental school choice.

Teacher Attitudes Concerning Their Own School

I did not create a rating system for schools, nor did I ask teachers to specifically rate their schools on a particular scale. However, they did indicate a certain appreciation for their schools by commenting on the dedicated staffs, committed administrators, and variety of curricular or extra-curricular offerings.

Half of the educators who participated in this study stated that they would not have their children attend the school in which they worked. This supported the Bingham et al (1990) study which found that teachers from a large midwestern school district rated their own school above average, yet would not want their own children to attend that school.

Desegregation/Racism

This study did not significantly add to the knowledge base on

the issues of desegregation and racism as causes for parents to leave the public schools for private schools. The study supported the findings of Maddaus (1988,1990) that race or class bias was not as critical an issue as was the parents' fear that their children were associating with "morally bad peers," regardless of their race. Perhaps, if this study had included parents moving to the suburbs, additional pertinent data would have surfaced.

Interestingly, the interview with the African-American parent, an administrator, did indicate that she placed her daughter in private schools because of what she perceived as the tendency for white public school teachers to hold low expectations for black children. Two opposing perspectives existed placing the public schools in a tenuous position. A segment of the white community was convinced the urban public schools catered to black children, while a segment of the black community complained of veiled racism and discrimination by public school educators.

School/Class Size

Frequent references to school or classroom size were found in the interviews. This supported the findings of Frechtling and

Frankel, (1982) from their study of the reasons parents were leaving the Montgomery County (Maryland) School System. The perception in both instances was that the private schools offered smaller schools and lower pupil/teacher ratios, therefore allowing for greater individualization and increasing the chances for teachers and administrators to build relationships with students and their parents.

Discipline

Parents talked about discipline frequently throughout the interviews. This information supported the earlier studies and found the complaints ranging from merely classroom or hallway disruptions to outright threats and intimidation. As was found in the study of another large midwestern urban school district (Bingham et al, 1990), often it was the administrator, not the teachers, who was blamed for allowing these kinds of activities which were simply "not tolerated" in the private schools.

Moral Community

This study served to confirm yet clarify the assertions of

Maddaus (1988, 1990) as they pertained to the issues surrounding the phenomenon of moral community. His research suggested that parents wanted access to "morally good schools" for their children. An environment that embraced the appropriate morals and values was more important than the desire for "cognitive learning."

Maddaus (1988, 1990) stated that rather than quality being the factor a school was chosen on whether or not its "location" provided for an ongoing relationship with a "morally good community." My study found that to be only partly true. The physical or geographic location was not as important as the "community" that was created by the participants in the school organization. The school "building" may have been in an undesirable neighborhood, yet in the parents' minds, the protective moral barrier created by the "family" of teachers, parents, administrators, and students provided for a safe and morally good learning experience for their children.

Summary

Private school choice and the reasons parents chose private over public education were important elements in the discussions about urban education. This study supported previous research

efforts and created some new insights that should encourage additional examination.

Recommendations

School choice is a topic that will undoubtedly see much further discussion. Urban public school systems continue to search for answers to their critical and seemingly overwhelming needs. It is important that the elements of "protective schooling" be further defined and analyzed in order to give educators better information about the direction for schools. There are those who would say that the urban public schools are doomed to inevitable decline--that they do not have the resources nor the organizational flexibility in place to make the drastic changes needed. The following recommendations for research, theory, and practice are suggested:

Research

This research should assist further research efforts which attempt to examine theories of urban private school choice. Other urban school districts should be studied to verify the theory generated by this research to look for differences or similarities in

the findings.

Some urban locations may not have the number of private school options or may, in fact, have more options than the district in this study. Where fewer private options are available, is there more movement of families to the suburbs or surrounding communities? How are the private schools responding to the needs of districts with much greater percentages of minority students? Are these students leaving the public schools at a greater or lesser rate than the white population (Holmes & Hiatt, 1984)?

These and other issues add to the knowledge base on urban school choice as they are explored. Narrowing the topic to one of these research areas may result in worthwhile studies that can lead to the improvement of urban schools, both public and private.

Theory

Theorists can use the coded data from this research to verify or contradict their own opinions regarding urban private school choice. New theories may be generated which add to the knowledge base. The data and derived theory can also assist theorists in creating new ways to look at the phenomenon of school choice and

its future implications for urban schooling (Bracey, 1993).

Practice

This research has potential to be of great value to teachers, administrators, board members or anyone responsible for educating children. It provides insights into the core reasons people value one school over another. This data supports the continued practice by many urban districts of offering public school choice options such as magnet schools in an effort to rebuild connections with parents and interested business or community members (Bierlein, 1993).

This study also provides valuable data for interested school leaders to use as they seek to provide an inviting school climate for parents and students. As competition is increasingly part of the urban school scene, educators whether public or private need to know what their "customers" are looking for. Those institutions which are "tuned in" to the requirements of the "morally good school" will undoubtedly benefit with increased enrollment and notoriety.

Summary

Recommendations for using this research are many and will

depend upon the needs of the reader. The study provides impetus for further research, theory development, and for private or public educators practicing in the field.

Conclusions

This study began with the report of a sudden and unexpected drop in enrollment by a large, midwestern urban public school district. I sought to gain insights into the exodus from the school system by examining existing research pertaining to school choice, and by enlisting the opinions of some of the urban district's educators who had recently chosen to place their own children in private schools.

Was the flight caused by racial prejudice, parental fear, a desire for academic opportunity? Through the course of the study, evidence emerged which indicated that the increase in movement from urban public to private schools was an issue that reached beyond the schools and into the very core of urban American society.

Family values, a sense of community, high academic expectations were issues at the forefront of American education and Americans were challenging their schools to promote these notions.

Parents wanted their children in a safe, nurturing educational environment, and because our increasingly mobile society had allowed many parents to "see what's out there" as they moved from community to community, parents were able to compare and contrast school strengths and weaknesses. They were better prepared to exercise an informed choice regarding where they sent their children to school.

The urban educators who participated in this study shared these values for education--values they apparently had not seen demonstrated in their schools because half of the educators who participated in the study said they would not even want their own children to attend the school in which they worked.

These public school educators, when choosing a school for their own children, exhibited attitudes toward the public schools which were based on a very personal and rigid standard. They, in fact, held a higher standard for discipline, safety and academic integrity than did the public schools for which they worked. For these urban public school educators, what may have been an acceptable standard in their public schools was not an acceptable standard for their families and, therefore, not one to which their

own children would be held. Their children were entitled to attend a school instilled with a "Second Measure of Worth."

References

Bainbridge, W. L. & Sundre, S. M. (1992). What parents really look for in a school. Education Week, 12(6), 27-29.

Bierlein, L. A. (1993). A national review of open enrollment/choice: Debates and descriptions. Tempe, AZ: Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Arizona State University.

Bingham, R. D., Haubrich, P. A., White, S. B. & Zipp, J. F. (1990). Dual standards among teachers: This school is good enough for other kids but not for my child. Urban Education, 25, 274-288.

Blum, V. C. (1985). Private elementary education in the inner city. Phi Delta Kappan, 66, 643-646.

Bourgoin, M. F. (1982). Fleeing the public schools: I'd rather switch than fight. Learning, 11(1), 68-69.

Bracey, G. W. (1993). George Will's urban legend. Education Week, 13(4), 29-30.

Casserly, M. (1994). Urban segregation: Who's to blame? Education Week, 13(23), 56.

Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. Inner city private education: A study. (1982). Milwaukee, WI: Author.

Chubb, J. E. & Moe, T. M. (1989). Give choice a chance: Answers to the most frequently asked questions about mediocrity in American education and what can be done about it. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.

Chubb, J. E. & Moe, T. M. (1990). Politics, markets, and America's schools. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.

Claerbaut, D. (1983). Urban ministry. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Coleman, J. S. & Hoffer, T. (1987). Public and private high schools--The impact of communities. New York: Basic Books.

Coser, R. L. (1991). In defense of modernity. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Curriculum Audit Report. (1993). Wichita, KS: Unified School District #259.

Doyle, D. A. & Hartle, T. J. (1986). Where public school teachers send their children to school: A preliminary analysis. Paper presented at the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC.

Elam, S. M. (1989). The second Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa poll of teachers' attitudes toward the public schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 70(10), 785-798.

Erickson, D. A. (1983). Private schools in contemporary perspective. Stanford CA: California Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance.

Faustine, C. J., Arnez, N. L. & Asbury, C. A. (1992). Why not public schools? Journal of Negro Education, 61(2), 125-137.

Frechtling, J. A. & Frankel, S. M. (1982). A survey of Montgomery county parents who transferred their children between public and private schools in 1980-1981. Rockville, MD: Montgomery County Public Schools.

Gates, J. (1992). Report presented to Unified School District #259 regarding 1992-93 predicted and actual enrollment. Wichita, KS: Author.

George, G. R. & Farrell, W. C. (1990). School choice and African American students: A legislative view. Journal of Negro Education, 59, 521-525.

Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research. Chicago: Aldine.

Hawkins, R. B. (1982, November). Educational opportunity, parental choice and community: The case for reforming public education. Presented at a conference sponsored by the Heritage Foundation and the New Coalition for Social Change. San Jose, CA: Sequoia Advisories.

Holmes, J. C. & Hiatt, D. B. (1984, April). Parental expectations of the Christian school. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Issac, S. & Michael, W. B. (1971). Handbook in research and evaluation. San Diego, CA: Robert R. Knapp.

Kellogg, J. B. (1988). Forces of change. Phi Delta Kappan, 70(3), 199-204.

Kirkpatrick, D. W. (1990). Choice in schooling: A case for tuition vouchers. Chicago: Loyola University Press.

Knowles, G. J. (1988). The context of home schooling in the United States. Education and Urban Society, 21(1), 5-15.

Levin, H. M. (1991). The economics of educational choice. Economics of Education Review, 10(2), 137-158.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Maddaus, J. (1988, November). Parents' perceptions of the moral environment in choosing their children's elementary schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Moral Education, Pittsburgh, PA.

Maddaus, J. (1990, April). The problem of "location" in parental choice of school. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.

Peebles, D. (1982). The admission and withdrawal of elementary school pupils to and from North York public schools: A survey of parents. Willowdale, Ont: North York Board of Education.

Pike, B. (1992). Why I teach my children at home. Phi Delta Kappan, 73(7), 564-565.

Ratteray, J. D. & Shujaa, M. (1987). Dare to choose: Parental choice at independent neighborhood schools. Washington, DC: Institute for Independent Education, Inc.

Richardson, J. (1993). Surveys at odds on public's view of school choice. Education Week, 13(5), 1, 12-13.

Rothman, R. (1991). Debate on merits of public, private schools reignites. Education Week, 11(3), 1, 16.

Smock, P. J. & Wilson, F. D. (1991). Desegregation and the stability of white enrollments: A school level analysis 1968-1984. Sociology of Education, 64-65, 278-292.

Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. M. (1990). Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Van Meter, S. (1977). Our common school heritage: A history of the Wichita Public Schools. Shawnee Mission, KS: Inter-Collegiate.

Wear, B. (1993, September 21). Enrollment in Wichita falls again. The Wichita Eagle, 14-16.

Witte, J. F. (1991). Educational Issues: Public subsidies for private schools--Implications for Wisconsin's reform efforts. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, Department of Political Science and the Robert M. La Follette Institute of Public Affairs.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

My name is Dan Stiffler and I am completing a doctorate in Educational Administration at Oklahoma State University. The purpose for this interview and for my research is to determine the reasons why urban educators choose the schools they do for their own children. Because the information you give me is strictly confidential, your name will not be used in the research. Your feelings and comments are important to me and I'd like to ask you a few questions if I may.

Demographics

1. How long have you worked in the field of education?
2. How long have you been at your current school?
3. Where do you and your family currently live?
4. What are the ages of your children?
5. Where do your children attend school?

Perspectives on School Choice

5. What can you tell me about how your children came to attend _____ School?
   (*private/parochial school name*)

APPENDIX B

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 03-16-94 IRB#: ED-94-074

Proposal Title: URBAN EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL CHOICE: A GROUNDED THEORY

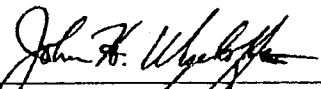
Principal Investigator(s):Adrienne E. Hyle, Daniel L. Stiffler

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.
APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL. ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:  Date: April 7, 1994

Chair of Institutional Review Board

Consent Form

The purpose of this research is to determine the reasons urban school educators choose other than public schools for the education of their own children. It is hoped that this study will provide parents and educators new insights into parental choice as it applies to public and private schools. Participation in the study involves no risk to subjects.

All participants are recommended by word of mouth. They are interviewed in person and the interview is recorded on cassette tape. In rare instances, a second, follow-up interview may be needed in order to probe relevant themes or clarify information. The interviewer is the only person who knows the identity of the participants in the study since pseudonyms are substituted for their real names in the data reporting section.

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty.

I may contact _____ at telephone number _____ should I wish further information about the research. I may also contact Terry Macula, University Research Services, 001 Life Sciences East, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; Telephone: (405) 744-5700.

"I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me."

Date: _____ Time: _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed: _____

"I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it."

Signed: _____

Daniel L. Stiffler (Researcher)

VITA

Daniel L. Stiffler

Candidate for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE SECOND MEASURE OF WORTH: URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS' CHILDREN AND THE EXODUS TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Wichita, Kansas, July 27, 1955, the son of Darrell W. and Kathleen M. Stiffler.

Education: Graduated from Putnam City West High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in May 1973; received Bachelor of Music Education degree from The University of Oklahoma at Norman in December 1977; received Master of Music Education degree from Central State University at Edmond, Oklahoma in July 1981; received Specialist of Educational Administration and Supervision from The Wichita State University at Wichita, Kansas in May 1992; completed requirements for Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1994.

Professional Organizations: Wichita Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Elementary School Principals, Wichita Educators and Administrators Association, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Professional Experience: Edmond Schools Band Director, 1978-1981. Duncan High School Band Director, 1981-1984. Band and Orchestra Director, Music Supervisor in the Putnam City School District, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1984-1988. Secondary Music Coordinator in the Wichita Public Schools, 1988-1992. Elementary School Principal in the Wichita Public Schools, 1992-1994.