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GRADUATE COLLEGE

A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF A PARENT-CULTURE'S PERCEPTIONS OF
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

SUSAN ELAINE DEMOSS

Norman, Oklahoma

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A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF A PARENT-CULTURE'S PERCEPTIONS OF
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Jesus Christ, the Finisher. May this dissertation be an example of your grace and love. You have been my strength throughout the journey.

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Abstract

The history of parent involvement within the United States' public schools revealed the evolution of the parent's role in education. As with any evolutionary process, conflict resulted in adaptation. This conflict was also evident within the parent-involvement theory and research. Studies revealed that parent involvement extended beyond volunteerism and decision-making. Unfortunately, many studies exposed the failed attempts of home-school-community partnerships. Yet, the benefits of such partnerships and the force of evolutionary change have demanded that studies probe deeper into the phenomenon. Experience and preliminary investigation on the part of the researcher have found at least in a localized setting, a culture of parents who was involved.

This phenomenographical research studied a culture of twenty-four participants who were involved and examined how and why involvement was happening. Data analysis revealed two conceptions. First, involved parents are motivated to actively pursue involvement within the lives of their children both inside and outside of schools and with their children's friends. Motivational factors included the member's own children, social consciousnesses, crises,

personal backgrounds, public images, and views of self. Secondly, involved parents seek information about their children and their children's schools through various sources. The culture gained information from its children, the school, and other parents.

The study's findings corroborated, expanded, and questioned existing research in the field of home-school-community partnerships. Recommendations based on the data were made for parents, school personnel, and future research.

A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF A PARENT-CULTURE'S PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The tapestry of United States' schools consists of many colorful threads woven together by the hands of school, home, and community. The concept of public schooling is one of the trademarks of United States' culture. Collaboration between school, home, and the community captures the essence of freedom and democracy. Public schools in the United States have been created and shaped by educators, parents, and the community. Each faction continues to contribute a unique and vital component to the educational process.

Valuing the unique contributions of home, school, and community, the conceptualization of public education has evolved. Changes in United States' culture have also influenced the educational process. This evolutionary process within education and society has affected the quantity and quality of parent involvement within public schools. As with any change, there is a cost to the

individuals and to the institution. Likewise, there is a cost to the freedom that allows for change to take place.

The cost of freedom can be seen through current legislation regarding parent involvement. Congressional mandates with regard to parent involvement require educators to redefine their role as a professional (Goals 2000; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Oklahoma House Bill 1017; Oklahoma House Bill 1549). Parents must acknowledge and accept their role in the democratic-school process. Ironically, the very essence of mandated parent involvement is undemocratic. While state and federal levels may boast of legislative mandates to include parents in decision making, the reality of such involvement is questionable (Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Sarason, 1995).

Legislative reformers believe that changes in legislation will effect the involvement of parents and school professionals. However, in a study of inner-city school systems, Lewis and Nakagawa (1995) found that it is the individual parents and professionals who operationalize policies. Rather than mandating a certain type of involvement, policy should set the tone for parents and schools to work together. Unfortunately, policy often has not set a tone of collaboration but of forced cohabitation.

The result of bureaucratic methods failure to achieve personalized involvement is costly to taxpayers, educators, parents, and students. The costs include a loss of time, money, trust and respect.

The failure of bureaucratic methods to achieve personalized involvement has been answered by public cries for accountability and choice. Feelings of isolation and inferiority have resulted in demands for public school accountability. General sentiments of distrust for government agencies and programs have increased these demands. Parents' desire to be heard can be seen in the growing number of students being home-schooled (Hawkins, 1996; Lines, 1995). Charter schools and voucher systems are also a response to parent choice.

Confronted by increased demands for accountability and public dissatisfaction with schools, educators and legislators seek to resolve the crisis in education. The idea that excellence in education cannot be pursued by schools alone has created a paradigm shift (Kimmel, 1983). Thus, the concept of home-school-community partnerships is seen as one solution.

Research on parent involvement reveals that students, teachers, and parents benefit from home- school-community

partnerships. The relationship between a student's academic success and parental involvement has been explored and documented throughout the literature (Carr, 1996; Dixon, 1992; Fine, 1993; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hyde, 1992; Loucks, 1992). Research reveals that when parents, schools, and communities work together, students' academic skills increase and behavior-type problems decrease (Hymes, 1974; Wagonseller, 1992; Zepeda & Langenbach, in press). Researchers have also found that parents play a crucial role in the student's socioemotional development as well (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1983a, 1983b). Parent involvement enhances a sense of pride in the school and the community. Parent involvement also increases the financial stability of the school (Stouffer, 1992). Improved attendance, lower dropout rates, motivation, and self-esteem have been found to be related to parent involvement (Carr, 1996).

Students and schools are not the only ones who benefit from parent involvement. Involved parents form networks with other parents. These associations provide social interactions, improve communication, and provide information about available resources. Parents who are involved in the school have a better understanding of

school practices and an increased knowledge of child and adolescent development (Carr, 1996; Davies, 1991).

Although research has shown that parent involvement is beneficial for students, teachers, and parents, recent studies by critical theorists have shown that true partnerships in which parents and educators have equal value and importance in the educational process rarely exist. Barriers to partnerships include educators' desire for professionalism, token opportunities provided by the school, lack of trust and respect between parents and educators, and parents' failure to accept a more active role in the decision-making process (Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Sarason, 1995).

Critical theorists' research has called for abandonment of the current educational process. While offering profound insights, researchers and critical theorists who call for a restructuring of United States' schools neglect the reality of the entrenched bureaucracy. They conclude that only through a feministic approach or the dismantling of the educational structure are home-school-community partnerships achievable (Henry, 1996; Sarason, 1995). However, the taking/achieving of such drastic measures is not likely.

Despite these barriers and claims, there are some parents who are navigating against the odds and becoming involved without dismantling schools. Experience and preliminary investigation on the part of the researcher have revealed that, at least in a localized setting, a parent-culture is involved, even at a policy-making level. This culture reveals a varied sample of people that extends beyond the female, upper-middle class stereotype. It would behoove us, as practitioners and scholars, to identify a culture of individuals who are involved and find out how their involvement is occurring in order to affect policy and practice.

CHAPTER 2

Historical Background

The purpose of this section is two-fold. The history of parent involvement is intertwined with the theory that describes it. Thus, the first part of this section provides an historical framework from which to understand the perspectives. The second provides a review of the literature in the field of parent involvement. Three theory bases will be presented which will be instrumental in the interpretation and analysis of interview data.

Historical Context of Study

Throughout history, culture, industry, and education have had a dynamic relationship. United States' multicultural heritage, industrial distinction, and landmark educational system are the cornerstones of the culture. The relationship between these three cornerstones epitomizes the best and the worst of democracy. As education, industry, and society have evolved, parents' role within the school has changed. Alvin Toffler (1980) refers to this evolutionary process as resembling ocean waves. As the waves of the ocean ripple and build, America's public educational patterns have also. To speak

of history in three waves is not to speak of specific points of time, rather three distinct eras that have transpired throughout the nation over time and often overlap depending on a certain geographic locations and other external influences. These three eras represent revolutions in American culture.

First Wave. The first wave was an agrarian one, occurring a millennia ago and sweeping across the planet slowly. First-wave practices continued to more recent time. The primary purpose of school during the first-wave agrarian society was to produce educated citizens who appreciated good literature and worshipped a Protestant God (Button & Provenzo, 1989). During this time, most schools were private in nature. Many students were taught in their home or church. There were some community efforts; however, they mainly involved rich families who could afford such a luxury. In the late 1600s, the colonies began to pass acts for education. The first was the Massachusetts Act of 1647, mandating the establishment of reading schools in all towns of one hundred or more families. This legislation was obeyed by some and flouted by others.

In reality, parent involvement during the early years of public schooling resembled complete control. Respect for teachers and education was low. Well-paid masters had fled to the academies. Teacher had replaced master. The concept of teacher was a young woman who was more humble, more proper, and more dedicated than the master. This lack of respect resulted in low wages (Button & Provenzo, 1989). Parental control and lack of respect for educators continued into the second wave (Toffler, 1980).

Parent and community ideology of education transcended into the curriculum and instruction of the public schools. Curriculum and instruction were primarily dependent upon parents' morals, knowledge, and trade. Often, colonial children learned by participating in various chores around the home instead of obtaining a formal education. Girls were taught to cook and weave. Boys were taught ways to provide food and shelter. Reading was taught in the home or in a reading school. However, in the absence of compulsory attendance laws, many children, whose parents did not or could not instruct them, did not learn to read (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Second Wave. The first wave of change had not yet exhausted itself at the beginning of the eighteenth century

when the second wave of change began. The age of efficiency, the industrial revolution and progressive education symbolize the second wave. The New England area was the first to experience the second wave of change in America. At the same time, the western frontier was being settled and introduced to the agrarian wave. As the first wave continued to spread across the western frontier, the second wave began to build momentum in New England. Consequently, the nation consisted of first- and second-wave public schooling ideologies.

Second-wave schools focused on standardization with community support. The quality of education was dependent upon the commitment of the local taxpayers. "Citizens of the district levied taxes, appointed instructors, determined the length of the school year, maintained the school house, and acted as final arbitrators in conflicts between students and teachers" (Button & Provenzo, 1989, p. 102). Students were instructed in whatever the parents would have them learn. Teachers satisfied customers or went out of business (Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Students used textbooks that families had or preferred them to use. The Bible was the most common text. Teachers often lived with a local family. Their classroom and their teaching were

thought of as extensions of the children's parenting (Lightfoot, 1978).

While parents provided logistical support, the failure of taxpayers to effectively support the district schools was a reflection of society's continued beliefs about education. Being a primarily agricultural society, the need for schooling was not seen as vitally important. Expansion of the western frontier required personal initiative, physical strength and shrewdness. Schooling counted for very little (Button & Provenzo, 1989).

Society's beliefs about education, family values, and traditions continued to influence the school's curriculum. The surrounding culture and environment framed the school calendar and practices. Just as schools were considered an extension of the child's parenting, the home was an extension of the child's schooling. As local communities changed, transportation improved; and the nation's government was formed, parent involvement also changed.

In 1852, Massachusetts passed the first compulsory attendance law for public education. As a result, a larger proportion of children attended schools increasing the need for common schools. Church-supported schools continued to be prevalent, as were locally controlled district schools.

Parents chose what schooling seemed best by what they could afford (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

As the common schools movement grew, strong arguments were made for centralized control. Historian, Ellwood P. Cubberly said, "each year the child is coming to belong more to the state and less and less to the parent" (cited in Tyack & Hansot, 1982, p. 103). The development of what Tyack and Hansot (1982) has called, "the one best system" of public education produced a need for more consistent governance of schools. The erosion of parental authority and control over local schools could be seen in the increased power given to state, county, and city superintendents. Local school boards were established, replacing local school committees and city government. No longer were entire communities needed to maintain a school. The quest for "the one best system" placed the future of public education in the hands of a few elite members of the community (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Callahan, 1962; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

United States' public school system began to gain worldwide recognition. During its first century as a nation, the United States had achieved recognition as a major social, economic and political power throughout the

world. Schooling had become an essential part of state and local government. Contrary to earlier beliefs, education was seen as being "far too important an issue to leave in private hands" (Button & Provenzo, 1989, p. 150). By 1920, more than half of the nation's population lived in a city where second wave practices were more predominant. However, there were some rural communities that resisted the transition (Button & Provenzo, 1989).

The reformers of the progressive era pressed for efficiency, social justice, and democracy. Ironically, these goals often were contradictory. The search for efficiency decreased the size of school boards to model after business' board of directors, further limiting the public's voice in educational matters (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Callahan, 1962; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Progressive educational reformers wanted more decisions to be made by experts, as experts made decisions in private business. Consequently, increased responsibility was given to the superintendent, and the city school district organizations were developed. Reformers used business organizations as a model. The centralization of power would eventually become the greatest barrier to future change.

The efficiency movement also demonstrated the need for increased centralized control and power. No longer were families needed to care for the schoolhouse, select the curriculum, or hire teachers; the professionals could efficiently and effectively do more. The increasing professionalism of teachers during the second wave further alienated parents. During the first wave, few education courses were offered in higher education. It was thought that anyone could teach. Progressive reformers rebuked this notion and pushed for degree plans and certifications patterned after business professional preparation programs. It was thought that creating educational expertise could bring about educational reform. Professional educators, however, did not receive the monetary rewards compared to their business counterparts. During the Great Depression, efforts to be more cost-efficient affected many aspects of a public school's community (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Callahan, 1962; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

While teachers struggled to become professionals, their voice in educational matters was also limited. The centralization of power increased the control of administrators. Principals battled for autonomy while carrying out top-down mandates. Seeking to retain some

control and authority, teachers isolated themselves inside their classrooms and shut the door to the public. In many ways, parents and teachers were facing the same alienation but ironically viewed themselves as adversaries (Callahan, 1962; Sarason, 1995).

The progressive era and industrial revolution had granted teachers professional status, increased the standard of living, and standardized student achievement. The deterioration of home-school-community relations was one of the era's casualties. A "we-they" mentality evolved (Henry, 1996, p. 5). No longer was the school seen as an extension of the home, rather the two were seen as diametrically opposed. The child's social development was thought to be the sole responsibility of the family, while the education of the child was thought to be the school's responsibility (Connors & Epstein, 1995; Lightfoot, 1978; Powell & Diamond, 1995). Education was transformed. Formerly, parents and schools had taught children morality and cultural traditions. With the influx of immigrants coming to America, schools no longer represented the cultural and moral values of all constituents, nor did they try. Instead, schools were to assimilate immigrants by separating them from their traditional cultures and

Americanizing them. No longer did parents and the local community control school affairs (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Callahan, 1962; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

During the second wave, parent involvement was also affected by changes in school structure. Efforts to make schools more cost efficient eliminated one-room schoolhouses and small class sizes. Course offerings were reduced so that fewer teachers were needed. With more students in class, teachers had less time to give personal attention to students and families. Efforts to standardize and sterilize human relations of the teacher and child isolated the school from the family (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Callahan, 1962; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

Third Wave. World War II represented the beginning of the transformation from an industrial style of social control to an inclusionary style. Hitler's radical ideology and the Ku Klux Klan's demonstrations forced the nation to look at acts of exclusion and segregation (Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995). The U.S. Supreme Court case, Brown vs. Board of Topeka in 1954, not only represented the end of legalized public-school segregation, but also symbolized the first time a parent brought suit against a school and

won (Sarason, 1995). Until this decision, parents were seen as separate from and many times unequal to educators.

The integration of the public schools sparked the involvement of parents. The United States was confronted with its own prejudices and flaws. In response to authoritarian leadership and governments, democratic leadership and group dynamics became important components of educational thought. The practices of efficiency and progressivism diminished, but with some reluctance. Teachers and administrators sought to retain their professional status and classroom control despite U.S. Supreme Court's rulings and legislative mandates.

During the 1960s the inclusion of the family in the educational process began to gain merit. Parent and community involvement became popular phrases in legislation, but few resources were directed toward its attainment. During the late 1950s and 1960s, federal programs began to force bureaucracies to look at inclusion. Unfortunately, claims of inclusion were not supported by a redistribution of funds. The inclusion of interest groups during the 1960s focused on who was making decisions rather than the substance of the decisions (Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995). Public bureaucracies resisted reform efforts.

Federal programs attempted to bridge the gap between home and school. Head Start, a federally funded early childhood program, was targeted at lower-income families with dependent children. Head Start utilized the principle of participation yielding empowerment. Parents of Head Start children were an integral component in parent education and training. Parents were empowered to have control over factors that affected their children and themselves. The empowerment of parents was believed to lead to the improved lives of children, with one potential result being an increase in educational achievement (Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995). However, initial results of the program's evaluation did not reveal this (Jacobs, 1988; Powell, 1988a, 1988b). Policymakers and early childhood proponents were discouraged by the "presumed failure" (Powell, 1988a, p. 7). Second-wave evaluations, targeted at individual programs and site goals, reported more favorable results (Jacobs, 1988; Powell, 1988a, 1988b).

Programs like Head Start began to pique educators' and legislators' interest in the field of parent involvement. Parents, as well as the general public, became more vocal about the education of America's children. This was especially true of the parents of disabled children. After

intense lobbying, the United States Congress passed the 1975 Education of Handicapped Children Act, dealing with the education of students with special needs in the least restrictive environment. However, it also marked the first time parent involvement in the education process was mandated through federal legislation. Within the law, parents were given the right to participate on an educational team that would determine the appropriate placement of the student (Powell & Diamond, 1995; Sarason, 1995). No longer could educators hide behind the doors of their classrooms. Parent involvement and demands for accountability began to reshape public education.

Educational skepticism was a reflection of society's growing distrust in government. Vietnam and Watergate chipped away at the public's support of government and government agencies. Educational reports such as the "Coleman Report" (1966) and "A Nation at Risk" (1983) added to the demise of public education support. The public continued to use the judicial system to be heard on educational matters.

The 1980s signified the revival of parent involvement (Carr, 1996). The age of accountability was countered with the 1980s call for cooperation. The very essence of

accountability placed constraints on schools' collaborative efforts such as site-based management and home-school-community partnerships. Teachers' need for professionalism was threatened by calls for a return to first wave parent involvement practices such as complete community control. Sensing resistance, parents and communities used grassroots methods to place pressure on local, state and federal legislatures.

During the 1990s, legislative mandates increased. Legislation called for national standards, standardized testing, and school-home-community partnerships. The effectiveness of such mandates was questioned by some. (See, for example, Henry, 1996). The idea that "gemeinschaft" (personalized school-home-community partnerships) objectives can be achieved using "gesellschaft" (depersonalized bureaucracies) means was deemed ineffective. Of the instances found to be successful, it was the individuals who made the difference (Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995).

The idea of individuals making a difference within a bureaucracy represented a combination of first- and second-wave ideologies. Toffler's third wave represented society's struggle for collaboration despite demands for

accountability. The ineffectiveness of bureaucratic means to yield personalized relationships is clear. Likewise, it is evident that America's public schools were firmly entrenched in bureaucratic, second-wave philosophy. This expression of conflict within home-school relations was evolutionary. Consequently, efforts of collaboration must adapt as within any evolutionary process. This study examines the ways a culture of involved parents adapted to the challenges of parent involvement in the 1990s.

Theoretical Perspectives

As the history of parent involvement has evolved through three waves of ideology and methodology, research has as well. Selected literature from three theory bases is illustrative. These theories represent three perspectives: ecology, separation and social-organization.

Ecological Perspective

The first theory is an ecological perspective. Ecological theories are dynamic, taking into consideration the external influences that affect the capacities of families to foster the learning and development of their children (Bronfenbrenner, 1979,1986; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Dym, 1988). Likewise, children bring to school their

experiences and their identities from home. This theory exemplifies first-wave ideology.

Bronfenbrenner 's (1979, 1986) model illustrates a child's development as embedded in microsystems and macrosystems. Microsystems refer to the settings in which a child is presently participating, while macrosystems refer to the government, culture, policy, values, and community that influence a child's development.

Consequently, the school and the family are mutually embedded. Viewing the life of the school and of the family as one continual system, an action taken in any part will affect the entire system (Henry, 1996). As the components and relationships change, the system continually adapts both within and to the broader environment (Dym, 1988).

Using the ecological model, parent involvement cannot be viewed in isolation (Comer & Haynes, 1991). Parents provide a natural link to the community, especially when the teachers do not reside in the community in which they work. Parents also provide the school with valuable information about their child's development and previous educational experiences. The school can offer the home information and support about its child and community resources. This ecological perspective can be seen in Head

Start's parent education component. Through providing parents with vocational training and parenting classes, the child's academic success improves (Smith, 1995).

The ecological model is useful; however, it does not address teachers' need for professional autonomy. Nor does the ecological model address the parents' values that may differ from the public school's values. The concept of being mutually embedded does not allow for critical distinction to be made between home and school. The need for autonomy is addressed in Lightfoot's (1978) theory of separation.

Separation Theory

The second theoretical perspective is separate responsibilities. This theory argues that the family, the community and the school have separate responsibilities with respect to the learning and development of children (Lightfoot, 1978). This philosophy was seen in the early part of the 20th century when schools began to distance themselves from the home and community. This philosophy exemplifies second-wave ideology.

One reason for this distancing was educators' quest for professionalism. As industry had influenced the structure of America's public schools, it had also

influenced its relationships. Seeking the same respect as businessmen and women, educators sought professional status (Button & Provenzo, 1989; Callahan, 1962; Henry, 1996; Sarason, 1995; Tyack & Hansot, 1982). Through teachers' unions and tiered administration, educators began to emulate many of the practices of the business community. By increasing the education requirements, a line of distinction was drawn between twentieth-century educators and those of the past.

This pursuit of professionalism produced a division between the school and the family. This division is referred to as "'we-they'" (Henry, 1996, 5). Litwak and Meyer (1974) found that optimal distance is achieved when the "experts" (teachers), handle uniform tasks and the "non-experts" (parents), perform non-uniform tasks. This system breaks down when one of the groups tries to perform a role not in his/her domain (Powell, 1991; Powell & Diamond, 1995). This theory yields the responsibility of a child's social development to the family and places the school in charge of education (Connors & Epstein, 1995). By segregating responsibilities, the theory ignores the social aspects of education and the opportunities to learn within the home.

In the separation theory, a division exists not only among responsibilities, but also among educational goals for children as well. A dichotomy exists between parents and schools. Schools view students and student achievement more objectively and dispassionately. Schools view students in comparison with others. On the other hand, parents' emotional attachment to the student yields a more subjective perspective. Parents are inclined to see each child as him or herself (Hymes, 1974; Lightfoot, 1978).

Occasionally parents have sought separation. As both parents became more involved in providing for the family outside of the home, the school was seen as the child's primary source of education. Year after year, schools have been asked to assume more responsibilities which were once those of the family. The school's acquisition of some of these roles has brought about, in some cases, powerful parental resistance. For example, sex education courses and outcomes-based education have caused some parents to abandon the public school system. The concept of home schooling has arisen out of the public's perception that the school is too controlling.

These voices of disagreement and acts of abandonment do not represent all parents. Research has shown that

parents do not necessarily want decision-making responsibility. In fact, some parents have no desire or time to be a part of the school (Fine, 1993; Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995). Consequently, those who adhere to the theory of separation are not only some educators, but also some parents.

Overlapping Spheres

Epstein (1987) broadened Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) ecological model by creating a theoretical perspective known as a social-organizational perspective of overlapping spheres as shown in Figure 1. Within this model there are two overlapping spheres (family and school). The amount of overlap is dependent upon time, age and grade level (Force A); experience/philosophy of the family (Force B); and the experience/philosophy of school (Force C). The internal structure represented by a rectangle containing multi-directional arrows represents the interpersonal relationships and influences of the family and the school (Epstein, 1987). This pictorial image incorporates components of Lightfoot's (1978) and Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) theories through the concept of the overlapping spheres. Dependent on chronological attributes, the spheres may be worlds apart. However, the

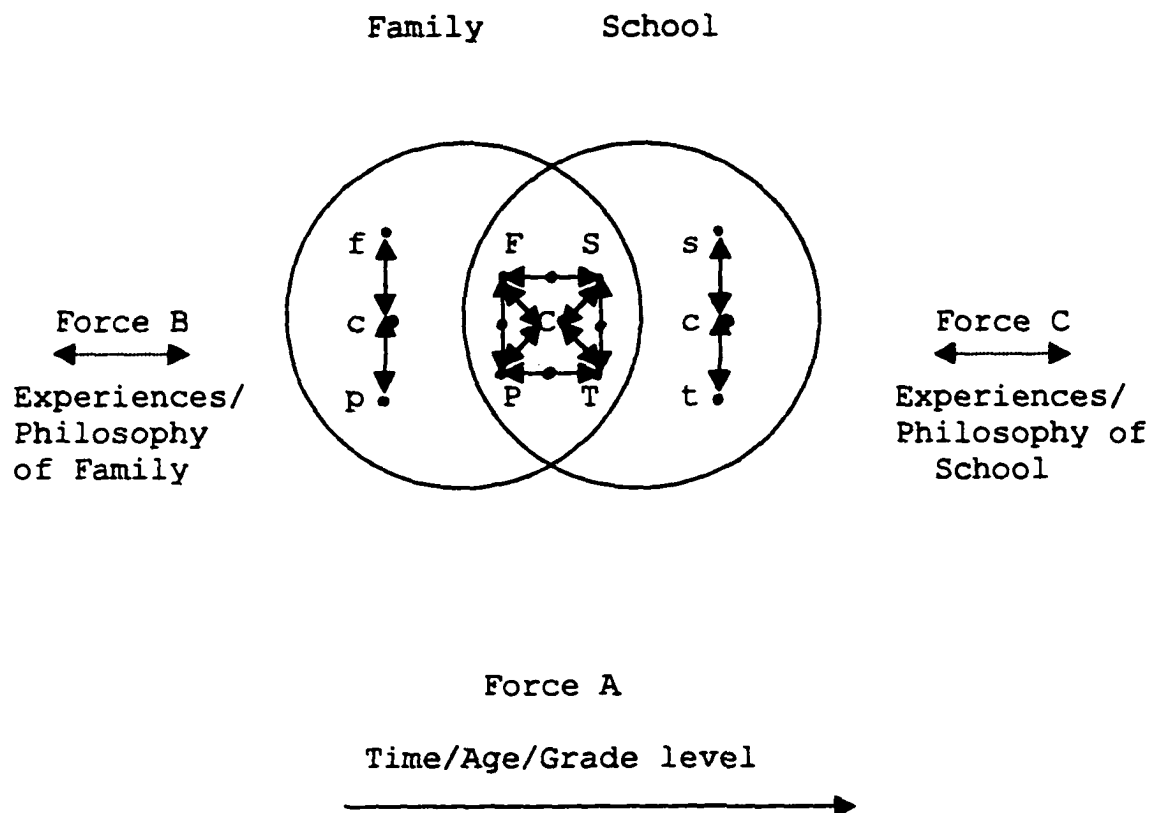


Figure 1: Model of overlapping spheres of influence of families and schools (Epstein, 1987, p. 127).

Key:

Intrainstitutional interactions (lower case)
 Interinstitutional interactions (upper case)

f/F = Family
 s/S = School
 c/C = Child
 p/P = Parent
 t/T = Teacher

spheres represent a dynamic system, which is dependent upon internal and external forces. Epstein (1992) incorporated community into her framework. Consequently, a community component was not formally addressed in the 1987 model.

By taking time, age, and grade level into consideration, the model addresses the psychological needs of the child while also addressing the needs of the educator and parent. The overlapping spheres model incorporates the family's desire for autonomy. The model also addresses the educator's need for professionalism.

While some aspects have been incorporated from other sociological theories, there are others that differ. Lightfoot (1978) argues that parents and educators have different educational goals for children. She believes the family and the school are natural enemies of each other (Henry, 1996; Lightfoot, 1978). Epstein (1987), however, believes that though parents and educators may have different backgrounds, the educational goals for children are the same.

In 1992, Epstein utilized the term partnership to describe parent involvement within this framework. Parent involvement places the focus on the parent's

responsibilities not the school's, whereas partnership refers to a collaborative effort (Crotta, 1994). The concept of collaboration illustrates Toffler's third-wave of U.S. culture.

Within the framework, six major types of involvement emerge. These six types of involvement have been used to integrate social research and school improvement. They have also served as the model for school-family-community partnerships in America's Goals 2000 (1990) and other legislation. This framework of involvement will be used for this research. Therefore, a brief overview of each type will be presented here.

Type One focuses on parenting and providing help for families in this process. It is important for school personnel to remember that they are not the children's parents. However, schools may help parents establish a home environment that supports the child as a student. Some examples of Type One activities are providing parent education workshops, making home visits, coordinating services with outside agencies, and organizing neighborhood meetings (Carr, 1996; Dym, 1988; Epstein, 1987).

Type Two represents communication from the school to the home. Parents' attitudes toward school improve when

they know what is going on, even if they do not agree (Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995). One of the primary barriers to home-school relations is communication. Lack of communication and superficial communication prohibit understanding (Hymes, 1974). Schools must provide more opportunities for participants within the partnership to be heard. Often, quick remedies are proposed by one or two voices because of the lack of time. When everyone has an opportunity to speak, meaningful solutions are reached (Hymes, 1974). Thus, communication is vitally important to school improvement and school governance, both internally and externally. Communication may include newsletters, phone calls, radio and television announcements, web sites, e-mail, work folders, memos, report cards, and other communication. It also may include multilingual forms of communication addressing the needs of school patrons (Carr, 1996; Epstein, 1995).

Type Three is volunteering; parents serving as volunteers in a variety of ways to help students, teachers and administrators. Homeroom parents and PTA volunteers fall under this category. Utilizing a parent resource room for parents to use as a place to work and gain information

is also a Type Three activity (Carr, 1996; Dym, 1988; Epstein, 1995).

Type Four is learning at home. In this category, schools provide learning packets for students to invoke parent participation at home. This includes the traditional example of homework, but also extends the learning by actively involving the family. This type of involvement has had the greatest impact on student achievement (Carr, 1996). Involving parents at home in the learning process also improves the child's and parents' attitudes toward school (Henderson, 1993).

Type Five is policymaking. Sarason (1995) refers to the involvement of parents in meaningful policymaking as the political principle. The political principle is that anyone who has a stake in an organization should have a voice in its governance. Many states have tried to adhere to this ideal by mandating parent involvement in decision making. For example, Standards I and II of Oklahoma's House Bill 1017 require that parents be involved in the development of a school's philosophy, mission statement and goals (Carr, 1996). Oklahoma's House Bill 1549 (1996) requires teacher preparation coursework in the area of parent involvement. While formal authority can be mandated

through legislation, "de facto" authority cannot. Henry (1996) refers to this phenomenon as "gemeinschaft" objectives trying to be achieved using "gesellschaft" means. Parents, who are in leadership positions within the school, still must struggle with perceptions about what role they are to play in school. Many times, the committee ratio of teachers to parents is highly inequitable and the gesture of inclusion is mere tokenism. Likewise, parents rarely have the necessary resources to gain power in the school (Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995). Consequently, personalization of bureaucratization takes time and likely will not occur through bureaucratic mandates.

Type Six is community. Schools and community agencies form partnerships in a variety of ways. For example, with state-mandated immunizations, many schools and county health departments are teaming together to help parents immunize their students. Local counseling services and social workers also work closely with the schools to provide needed services for students. The concept of full-service schools is a primary example of schools and communities working together to meet the needs of the family. Where full-service schools are not in place,

schools still provide parents with information about community services such as: extra-curricular activities, mental health services, and public assistance options.

The conflict present throughout the history of parent involvement can be seen within the theory that describes the phenomenon. This study will examine the ways a culture of involved parents has adapted to the challenges of parent involvement in light of theory.

Literature Review

During the past thirty years, many articles have been written on parent involvement. The majority of literature on parent involvement reviews the literature, critiques implemented programs, or suggests ways for improving parent involvement within the schools.

Attempting to synthesize and analyze literature on parent involvement, many articles have been written which review theory and incorporate other areas of research. Within the body of parent involvement literature, Lightfoot's (1978) worlds apart theory, Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) ecological model, and Epstein's (1987) overlapping spheres model have been widely recognized (Comer & Haynes, 1991; Connors & Epstein, 1995; Dym, 1988; Henry, 1996; Kaplan, 1992; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Zepeda &

Langenbach, in press). Many researchers have also adopted Epstein's (1992) framework of involvement (Batey, 1996; Carr, 1996; Connors & Epstein, 1994, 1995; DeMoss & Maiden, 1998; DeMoss et al., 1996; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Henderson, 1993; Henry, 1996; Miller, 1986; Oklahoma Education Association, 1995; National PTA, 1997; Steele, 1994; Zepeda & Langenbach, in press).

Many articles have been written for the purpose of synthesizing theory and documenting the need for further research. For example, the idea that parents and parent involvement are the keys to educational reform has been addressed (Crotta, 1994; Davies, 1991; Epstein, 1992; Gallagher et al., 1997; Henry, 1992; Lagemann, 1993; Lewis, 1995; McCaleb, 1994; Meadows, 1993; O'Grady, 1995; Powell, 1991; Pryor, 1995; Riley, 1995; Steele, 1994; Swap, 1993; Wilkinson, 1988). Other articles have been written which preview emerging areas of research in the field (Epstein, 1996; Powell, 1988a; Slaughter, 1988).

Analysis of theory has generated connections to other bodies of research. For example, the relationship between parent involvement and changes in the family has been discussed (Duncan, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Lonborg & Leavitt, 1983; Kimmel, 1983; Wanat, 1992; Zepeda

& Langenbach, in press). Issues of school governance and the restructuring of schools have also been viewed in light of parent involvement (Apple & Beane, 1995; Boyd, 1992; Foster, 1992; Henry, 1996; Jackson & Cooper, 1989; Mitchell, 1992; O'Callaghan, 1993; Radd, 1993; Revenaugh, 1992; Sarason, 1995).

Program Critiques

Searching for answers in response to calls for educational reform, many schools throughout the nation have implemented programs that involve parents in a variety of ways. Early childhood programs, such as Head Start, have been at the forefront of reform. As a result, several articles have been written which critique the innovative programs (Hauser-Cram et al., 1991; Pfannenstiel et al., 1991; Pfannenstiel & Seltzer, 1989; Powell & Diamond, 1995; Saintz, 1991; Smith, 1991, 1995).

State initiatives and local programs at the elementary and secondary levels have also been critiqued. Nardine and Morris (1991) reported on the country's commitment to parent involvement throughout the states. Individual initiatives in California, Florida, Nebraska, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington DC have been presented (Berner, 1993; Comer &

Haynes, 1991; Connors & Epstein, 1994; Epstein, 1993; Epstein & Connors, 1994; Donahue, 1988; Edwards, 1991; Fine, 1993; Fisher, 1994; Gibbons, 1989; Jackson & Cooper, 1992; Jenkinson, 1994a, 1994b; Miller, 1991; Roesener, 1995; Southwest Educational Development Lab, 1986; Spring, 1993; Warner, 1991; Wasley, 1993; Wood & McMaster, 1973).

Critiques revealed a sense of autonomy amongst interstate and intrastate programs. While many of the programs incorporated all or a portion of Epstein's framework, implementation strategies varied. Program guidelines and government mandates frequently lacked enforceable language and defined expectations. As a result, programs did not incorporate evaluation methods (Nardine & Morris, 1991; Smith, 1991, 1995).

Of the programs evaluated, parents' knowledge of child development and child performance increased (Epstein & Connors, 1994; Hauser-Cram et al., 1991; Jackson & Cooper, 1992; Pfannenstiel et al., 1991; Pfannenstiel & Seltzer, 1989; Smith, 1991, 1995). In addition, parent satisfaction with the program or school also increased (Epstein & Connors, 1994; Jackson & Cooper, 1992; Pfannenstiel et al., 1991; Pfannenstiel & Seltzer, 1989; Smith, 1991, 1995.)

Suggestions to Improve Parent Involvement

The last body of literature on parent involvement offers suggestions to practitioners on ways to involve parents. For example, efforts to improve communication could include telephone calls, notes home, newsletters, and progress reports (Batey, 1996; Belcastro, 1991; Berla, 1992; Campbell, 1992; Coulombe, 1995; Dismuke, 1994; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Gallagher et al., 1997; Garrett, 1985; Loucks, 1992; Moles, 1996; Oklahoma Education Association, 1995; National PTA, 1997; Powell et al., 1990; Slusser, 1982; Storm, 1982; Stouffer, 1992; Wheeler, 1992). Another suggestion is to involve parents as volunteers (Batey, 1996; Coulombe, 1995; Gallagher et al., 1997; Granowsky, 1984; Greenwalt, 1988; Moles, 1996; Oklahoma Education Association, 1995; National PTA, 1997; Tomlinson, 1987; Wakefield, 1984; Wheeler, 1992). Offering parent education courses is another way of involving parents (Batey, 1996; Bell, 1994; Loucks, 1992; Moles, 1996; Pfannenstiel et al., 1991; Pfannenstiel & Seltzer, 1989; Powell et al., 1990; Smith, 1991, 1995; Wagonseller, 1992). Also, involving parents in decision making is another option (Batey, 1996; Delvin-Scherer & Delvin-Scherer, 1994; Dixon, 1992; Gallagher et al., 1997; Moles, 1996; Oklahoma

Education Association, 1995; National PTA, 1997;

Rubenstein, 1994; Rudnitski, 1992; Sanders, 1996; Shepard & Rose, 1995; Stouffer, 1992).

Areas of Research

While occasionally offering profound insights through literature reviews and suggestions for improvement, this literature fails to constitute research. Likewise, program critiques oftentimes fail to constitute research.

Researchers and critical theorists who call for a restructuring of the U.S. school system usually neglect the reality of the entrenched bureaucracy (Henry, 1996; Sarason, 1995). Of the research done, few studies report more than descriptive statistics, usually in the form of percentage data.

Epstein's work has primarily consisted of surveys and reporting percentage data relating to teacher practices and home-school perspectives (Epstein, 1983a, 1983b; Epstein & Dauber, 1991). In 1982, Epstein and Becker reported teacher comments to a survey regarding teacher practices and parent involvement. Other researchers in the field (Brian, 1994; Pryor & Favorini, 1994) have corroborated Connors' and Epstein's (1994) work with secondary parents, teachers, and students. While Epstein has developed a

useful typology and provided insightful preliminary diagnostic results, they do not go far enough. The use of percentage-reporting surveys fails to acknowledge the entrenched bureaucracy's effects on parents' and teachers' perceptions of home-school-community partnerships. Moreover, results do not deepen our understanding of home-school-community partnership dynamics but only provide evidence that conflict exists. For example, Connors and Epstein (1994) found that over "90% of parents and teachers agreed that parent involvement was necessary at the high school level" (p.8). While the majority of parents wanted to be more involved, only a small minority of teachers felt it was their responsibility to involve families (Connors & Epstein, 1994). Many times teachers assumed parents, especially working class and minority parents, were not interested in the children's education, however, studies have found the contrary to be true (Connors & Epstein, 1994; Epstein & Connors, 1994; Schneider & Coleman, 1993).

Some researchers have examined the conflict within home-school-community partnerships. Henry (1996) performed an in-depth ethnographic study on a suburban community. Lewis and Nakagawa (1995) used qualitative methods to report perspectives of participants from large urban school

systems using an empowerment model. Their research accentuates the hopelessness found in many home-school-community-partnership initiatives. While providing a needed view of select urban and suburban reform efforts, recommendations for restructuring were often unrealistic and failed to acknowledge the success of individuals who are making a difference.

Other studies have examined the type and amount of involvement occurring within schools. Miller (1986) conducted a log-linear logit analysis of survey results obtained from parent participants K-12 examining the effect of gender, education-level of parent and student grade level on visitation to school, participation in PTA and attention to school issues. Powell and Peet (1992) conducted surveys and follow-up interviews of parents of elementary-aged students in lower-income urban areas examining parents' perceptions of their student's future and type of home-learning environment. Schneider and Coleman (1993) utilized data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 in a regression analysis to report the type and amount of parent involvement across various ethnicities. DeMoss et al. (1996) conducted a phenomenological study of parents' perceptions of their

long-term involvement in their students' schooling. Carr (1996) wrote her dissertation on middle school principals implementing parent involvement utilizing the Concerns Based Adoption Model. DeMoss and Maiden (in progress) conducted a multiple regression analysis of the educational level of the student and type of parent involvement. Of these studies none focus on who is making a difference and how parent involvement is happening. Instead, these studies primarily rely on percentages and statistical methods to generalize about a phenomenon that other studies (Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995) have found to be situational-dependent.

The history of parent involvement within the United States' public schools has shown the evolution of the parents' role in education. As with any evolutionary process, adaptation is a result of conflict. This conflict is also evident within the parent-involvement theory and research. Studies of this conflict reveal that parent involvement extends beyond volunteerism and decision-making. Studies have also shown the failed attempts of many home-school-community partnerships. Yet, the benefits of such partnerships and the force of evolutionary change demand that studies probe deeper into the phenomenon.

Future research is needed not to redocument failure or the need for parent involvement because the case has already been made. Instead, experience and preliminary investigation on the part of the researcher have found that at least in a localized setting, some parents are involved. By selecting a culture of individuals who are involved and examining how it is happening, recommendations for future research and policy development can be made.

Statement of the Problem

Why and how is a culture of parents in a localized setting involved in schools?

CHAPTER 3

Design of the Study

The idea of a parent culture was built upon Spradley's definition of culture which stated a culture is an "acquired knowledge people use to interpret and generate behavior" (as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 38). By selecting a culture of parents who were involved in a localized setting, it was possible to examine how involvement was happening through categorization of the culture's conceptions and ways of understanding. In other words, the ideas of conception and ways of understanding were not seen as individual qualities. Rather, conceptions of reality were seen as categories of description that were used to facilitate the understanding of concrete cases of human functioning i.e., parent involvement (Marton, 1981, 1982; Hasselgren & Marton, 1982; Svensson & Theman, 1983). This process of conceptualizing a culture of parents' perceptions of their involvement into categories utilized the research design, phenomenography.

Ference Marton (1981) developed phenomenography approximately twenty-five years ago. It was deduced from phenomenology with aspects of ethnography (Marton, 1981).

Thus, phenomenography could be considered a hybrid of phenomenology and ethnography. Consequently, to understand phenomenography, a review phenomenology and ethnography was needed.

Phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon through the viewpoint of the participants involved (Langenbach et al., 1994). Phenomenology questions the assumptions taken for granted in quantitative research. It seeks to clarify the meaning of the positivistic world (Haney, 1994). Thus, the ontology of phenomenology is perspective-seeking in nature. "Researchers in a phenomenological mode attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 34).

Through searching for reality as it is seen by the parent culture, the researcher does not assume to know how or why parents become involved. Instead, an understanding of involvement is obtained through the culture's perceptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Langenbach et al., 1994). In phenomenology, participants view themselves in part by how others view them. Thus, how the culture defines itself in the context of the existing school bureaucracy

and surrounding community is crucial to the interpretation and analysis of interviews.

The researcher's search for reality through the use of phenomenology dictates the methodology. "A phenomenological study by design provides an in-depth view of a select sample of a population" (Robinson-Hornbuckle, 1991, p. 9). Most phenomenological studies consist of five to fifteen participants. This sample size is often used because patterns usually emerge at this point within the data (Tesch, 1988, 1990). The primary methodology is the open-ended, semi-structured interview. The participants being interviewed need to be or have been involved in the phenomenon. The researcher must be aware of her participation in the research as to not bias the data (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Haney, 1994).

Like phenomenology, ethnography is a qualitative, perspective-seeking research design. However, ethnography usually seeks perspective about the culture of individuals, not the perspectives of all the individual members of the culture (Langenbach et al., 1994). Ethnography seeks to describe the culture or aspects of culture within an historical, a cultural, and a sociological context (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Langenbach et al., 1994).

Describing the culture allows the researcher to analyze the effects of the historical, cultural and sociological contexts. "Many social scientists believe that human behavior is significantly influenced by the settings in which it occurs" (Wilson, 1977, p. 249). Ethnographic researchers believe that it is essential to study psychological events in everyday contexts (Wilson, 1977). This is achieved through observing the culture's behavior in everyday contexts, examining relevant documents and participating in informal conversations. The ethnographic researcher does not seek to classify or categorize perceptions. Instead, the purpose of ethnography is to describe a culture in raw form free of bias (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Conceptualizing a culture's parent involvement perceptions into categories utilizes both phenomenology and ethnography. Thus, the term phenomenography was coined. Phenomenography utilizes phenomenological methodologies such as interviews and categorization of data to understand a culture of individuals, which is an ethnographic approach. Also, individuals provide the only source of data. It is not the purpose of phenomenography to describe the culture within its natural setting, as is the case in

ethnography. Nor is it the purpose of phenomenography to describe the individuals of the culture as is true in phenomenology. Instead, the purpose of phenomenography is to view individual's perceptions as representing a culture and conceptualizing perceptions into categories that represent the culture, not its individual members.

A conception represents a relation between the participant culture and a part of the world (Svensson & Theman, 1983). In this research, the relationship consists of the culture's involvement with schools and school children and the thinking of the culture regarding its involvement. In describing the conceptions, the researcher is conceptualizing categories of description expressed through the culture's actions. The conceptualization involves differentiation, organization, and synthesis of data (Marton, 1981, 1982; Hasselgren & Marton, 1982; Svensson & Theman, 1983).

To describe conceptions in the form of categories demands that the analysis of data focuses on "what the most fundamental characteristics of conception are" (Svensson & Theman, 1983, 38). Phenomenography extends the process of categorizing used in phenomenology conceptualizing themes. The categories of description represent a more abstract

level of description of the phenomenon compared to that of phenomenology and ethnography, which focus on specific content. The purpose of phenomenography is to create a picture of the phenomenon, not a picture of the culture (ethnography) experiencing the phenomenon (phenomenology).

Participant Culture

The scope of this study included interviews with twenty-three parents in a southwestern state. The state consisted of a smattering of small towns and suburban developments. Each of the cities had a population of less than one million. All the participants resided within the same county. The county represented rural and suburban developments which was representative of the state. A state university was located within the county.

The participant culture consisted of a selective sample of individuals representing a multivaried population. As noted in chapter 2, nationwide parent involvement is limited. Consequently, in order to understand how and why involvement could occur, the researcher's intent was to select parents who were involved in their children's education.

The researcher drew upon eight years of experience in public education, which included seven years as a high

school mathematics teacher and one year as a middle-school administrator. The researcher's personal experience enabled some parents who were involved in schools to be selected for the study. The researcher also asked school administrators for the names of parents who were actively involved within their schools. During several of the interviews, other parents' names were suggested.

In addition to selecting via personal experience, several of the participants were randomly selected. In the spring of 1996, for a pilot study of parent involvement the researcher distributed a quantitative survey within one suburban district within the selected county. There were one hundred and thirty-two people who volunteered to participate in the study. Out of this pool, nine participants were randomly selected from a subgroup of involved parents to participate in a qualitative follow-up study.

Instrument Formulation

A one to two hour interview was conducted with each of the parents. The interview included a life history, which focused upon family involvement in the participant's education and rearing. A questionnaire was developed and used as a blueprint for content of the interview (Appendix

A). Epstein's (1992) framework of involvement was used to be consistent with the literature. However, the central purpose of the questionnaire was to answer the research question, not to re-describe types of involvement. Permission to conduct interviews was obtained from the University of Oklahoma Institutional Review Board. Each participant was asked to sign a release form before the interview. A conversational tone was used in conducting the interviews to develop rapport and encourage spontaneous remarks (Robinson-Hornbuckle, 1991; Svensson & Theman, 1983). The researcher only asked questions as needed to ensure that the information was significant to the questionnaire. Other questions were formulated and posed as the interview developed. The order of questions varied with participants. Their responses were probed for clarity and extension. Personal analysis of self-perceptions was encouraged.

Data Collection

Interviews were tape recorded for accuracy of data. An experienced typist and the researcher transcribed interviews. Fictitious names were created to protect the participants' anonymity. The researcher verified the transcription's accuracy by listening to the audio tape

while reading documentation. Initial analysis of the data followed Hyncer's (1985) model. The researcher's personal feelings toward the data were bracketed. Notes were made throughout the data regarding nonverbal cues such as posture, eye contact, and voice inflection. Once the data were prepared, categories were identified within the culture.

The interviews were aimed at revealing conceptions about the culture's involvement with regard to the localized setting. The participant's statements referred to concrete experiences or contained abstract descriptions of involvement. Svensson and Theman (1983) refer to these abstract statements as starting-points. The statements referring to concrete experiences were used as a background against which the researcher could test the interpretations of the meaning of the more abstract formulations (Marton, 1981, 1982; Hasselgren & Marton, 1982; Svensson & Theman, 1983). In other words, the abstract categories were based on the statements concerning specific aspects of the participants' involvement. Color-coding was used to keep track of categories and eliminate redundancies. Data were placed within a grid and patterns analyzed. After

categories emerged, themes were determined and a summary of results was written.

The researcher and a university professor experienced in qualitative research reviewed the transcriptions and summaries. The trustworthiness of the data was determined by the extent that it reflected participants' lived experiences. Each researcher identified categories of description and specific statements supporting conceptions independently and discussed "all the data at length, seeking validity through consensus between the two researchers and the subjects interviewed" (Robinson-Hornbuckle, 1991, p. 32). The fact that participant perceptions are usually not accessible outside the mind of the participant made it difficult to triangulate results (Svensson & Theman, 1983; Tesch, 1988). However, during the interviews, participants were asked to confirm and/or correct interpretations made by the researcher. On occasion, the researcher made follow-up phone calls to confirm and/or correct findings.

Limitations to the Study

In phenomenography, the researcher is recognized as the key ingredient. The interpretation and analysis of data is somewhat intuitive (Kockelmans, 1994). Tesch

(1988) refers to this process as the ability to read between the lines. The researcher's ability to perform the necessary tasks is a limitation to the study. The use of a co-researcher and participant feedback addressed this limitation.

It has also been said that for a researcher to write about "human beings in their social capacities" (Peshkin, 1986, p. 19) without revealing themselves is impossible. Consequently, the interaction between the researcher and participants did have an impact on the data. However, this influence did not invalidate data; instead, personalizing the interview made the participants feel at ease. As a bond of trust was established, richer text was recorded for analysis.

Most qualitative researchers acknowledge the limitation of generalizing results. The formalizing of categories of description "is not an exact reproduction" (Svensson & Theman, 1983, 8). The validity of descriptions is dependent upon the relation between the categories of description and the specific content (Marton, 1981, 1982; Hasselgren & Marton, 1982; Svensson & Theman, 1983). It is therefore the responsibility of the researcher to recognize the limited generalizability of the study. However, some

conclusions and recommendations were made if they appeared and in light of the history of and literature on parent involvement. It is the reader's responsibility to determine if the categories of description "ring true" (Tesch, 1988, p. 4).

CHAPTER 4

Description of the Culture

As noted earlier, phenomenography is the study of a phenomenon through the viewpoint of the participant culture (Langenbach et al., 1994). The purpose of phenomenography is to create a picture of the phenomenon, not a picture of the culture experiencing the phenomenon, as in phenomenology and ethnography. However, the participants' interview statements were not made in isolation but within the context of a culture. Consequently, the researcher presented the participants' statements in relation to the phenomenon (parent involvement), or the collective lived reality (Marton, 1981, 1982; Hasselgren & Marton, 1982; Svensson & Theman, 1983). Consequently, before phenomenographical patterns and analysis of the data were introduced in chapter 5, an ethnographic description of the culture was needed.

The idea of viewing individual perceptions as representing a culture is rooted in ethnography. The purpose of ethnography is to "teach the reader how to behave appropriately in the cultural setting" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, 38). Believing that human behavior is

significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs, ethnographers contextually examine the culture under study (Wilson, 1977). Similarly, phenomenographical research describes and interprets a culture in context.

Recognizing the impact of the participants' settings and wanting to hold true to methodology, the researcher described the culture's demographics. In addition, the researcher provided individual vignettes of each participant (Appendix B).

Participants represented as many aspects of diversity as possible. For example, gender, self-reported socioeconomic status, number of parents living in the home, educational level of the parent, and grade level of the student were varied.

Age

The participants' age ranged from late twenties to early fifties. The median age of participants was mid-forties. Of the twenty-four participants, three were outliers: one female in her late twenties; one female in her mid-thirties; and one male in his early fifties.

Educational Background

Of the twenty-four participants, twenty-three had received a high-school diploma. Eighteen of the

participants had attended a college or university. Of the eighteen attending a university, sixteen had received bachelor's degrees, in areas such as accounting, education, journalism, nursing, and public relations. Eight participants had attended graduate school with seven receiving a master's or terminal degree, including counseling, educational administration, nursing, law, and theology.

While the culture's educational background varied, the middle and upper middle class participants emphasized education. This emphasis was evident throughout the culture and was seen in the participants' attitudes and academic pursuits. The focus on the importance of education could be seen throughout the culture's lineage, even among those participants who were not college or high school educated. Acknowledgement of the importance of homework and studies was common.

The focus on education could further be seen in the culture's aspirations for the next generation. Education was viewed as a necessity for increased opportunities. The long-standing tradition of educational importance could be seen in the culture's view of higher education. While high school graduation was expected without question, there was

a great deal of emphasis placed upon post-secondary education. This culture of parents had predominately more formal education than did their own parents. Even those within the culture who had not attended a university placed a great deal of value on college attendance. This level of importance was a reflection on the participants' own experiences and the surrounding society's attitude toward education.

While the culture's emphasis on education did not differentiate between genders, the pursuit of education did. Cultural norms with regard to gender and educational attainment were seen in the percent of men and women who had received bachelor's and master's degrees. Sixty-two and a half percent of the men within the culture had not only received a bachelor's but also a graduate degree. While 66.6% of the women within the culture had received a bachelor's degree, only 13% held a graduate degree.

Marital Status and Dependents

Marriage and multiple dependents were accepted norms within the culture. Marriage within the culture was predominant. Nineteen of the twenty-four participants were married. Of those not married three were men, and two were women. While the researcher did not purposely seek more

single men than women, it should be noted that this was not typical of the larger region from which she selected participants.

Family size within the culture varied and reflected individual backgrounds to some extent. While three participants had only one child, the majority had at least two. There were eleven participants who had more than two children, ranging from three to six. Each of the families was basically nuclear with no grandparents, aunts, or uncles within the household. One family had reared its niece during her teenage years.

The grade level of the children varied. At the time of the interviews, fourteen of the students attended an elementary school, grades kindergarten through fifth. Twenty-nine attended a secondary school, a combination of grades sixth through twelfth, and sixteen of the students had graduated from high school. Twelve of the high school graduates were enrolled at a junior college or university. Two of the children had graduated from a university.

Socioeconomic Status and Type of Employment

The researcher used a combination of factors to determine the participant's socioeconomic status. As mentioned in chapter 3, the researcher had obtained the

self-reported socioeconomic status of the majority of participants. In addition, individual surroundings and occupational status were considered. The greater contextual setting also influenced categorization. For example, a very small percentage of the population within the southwestern state selected were considered upper class by national standards. Consequently, no participant within the study self-reported or was categorized by the researcher as upper class.

The relationship between socioeconomic status and type of employment within the culture was representative of greater societal norms and stereotypes. The majority participants comprising the culture were a part of dual-income, middle-class families. There were three participants who were categorized as working class; two were single mothers; and one was a married mother. Of the three participants who fell into this category, all but one worked outside the home.

Seven of the participants were classified as upper middle-class. Of these seven, two were men who worked outside of the home. Of the remaining five women, two worked full-time outside of the home, and the remainder, usually, did not.

Race and Religion

While the majority of the culture was Euro-American, the culture was comprised of individuals from three racial backgrounds. The racial composition of the parent culture was comprised of 19% minority. African-Americans represented 9% of the parent culture, one male and one female. Two American Indian male participants with membership in the Cherokee and Yuchi tribes represented 9% of the culture. Although the culture of parents was selectively sampled to represent racial differences, not every race is represented within the context of the society. However, the parent culture was representative of the larger culture. Within the southwestern county, 12% of the population was minority with 4% African- American and 5% American Indian (Equifax National Decision Systems, 1990).

The moral and ethical beliefs of the culture were predominately Judeo-Christian. The majority of the culture attended church regularly, and a number of the members participated in other church-related activities.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis and Conceptualization of Data

Oftentimes phenomenographical research is used to define a phenomenon and conceptualize the relation between the participant and the phenomenon. As mentioned in chapter 2, within the field of home-school-community partnerships, Epstein's (1992) definition of parent involvement is generally accepted. Thus, it was not the researcher's intent to redefine parent involvement. Instead, through analyzing the data, the researcher sought to conceptualize the relationship between the culture and phenomenon of involvement within schools.

The intent of this chapter was to paint a portrait of the culture and the culture's experience within the phenomenon of parent involvement. Like all cultures, unifying characteristics existed to knit the culture together. Diversity also existed within the culture. Thus, within the analysis, characteristics common throughout the culture were noted as were those which were representative of a subculture.

Recognizing the intent of phenomenography to represent a culture's perceptions and faced with the issue of

diversity within the culture, the researcher chose to use pseudo names for the participants. The use of pseudo names allowed the researcher to personalize the culture and increase readability. Short vignettes of each participant are available in Appendix B.

In the analysis of the interviews, the focus was on how and why parents were involved with schools and students. Within the culture, two conceptions emerged. This chapter will address them and their validity as found within the culture's experience of the phenomenon. The two conceptions are the following:

1. Involved parents are motivated to actively pursue involvement within the lives of their children both inside and outside of schools and with their children's friends.
2. Involved parents seek information about their children and their children's schools through various sources.

First Conception: Motivation for Involvement

As mentioned in chapter 3, the participant culture was comprised of parents who were involved in their child's schooling. Thus, the question posed was how and why is a culture of parents in a localized setting involved in

schools? The members of the culture viewed parent involvement as a component of parenting responsibility. Within the culture, parent involvement was not seen as tasks to be done. Instead, like parenting, it was a continual process in which to actively participate. Stephen explained:

I didn't know you weren't suppose to be involved. ... I thought if you had them you were suppose to raise them, you know (laughs) and I didn't know ... [you] were just supposed to have them and leave them alone - I didn't know there was any other option. I just thought they were ours and we gotta do the best job raising them could possibly do, so when - they face the real world they'll know how to handle it. I think being involved at school with them or at church or at 4-H ... or whatever they're doing. I mean you're expected to do that. ... That's something you have to do as a parent.

Michael agreed:

I think ... to be a successful parent and to have your kids turn out the way you hope and pray they will you have to be involved with them. They don't grow up by osmosis. You ... have to be involved with them. I say

they don't grow up by osmosis that's not exactly true because most of what they pick up ... from you. It's not so much what you tell them, as it's what you show them. But, ... you've got to be involved with them in order to show them something.

The pursuit of involvement by the culture was motivated by several factors. The areas of motivation for the culture's involvement were the members' own children, social consciousnesses, crises, personal backgrounds, public images, and views of self. While some of the motivational factors and types of involvement were prevalent throughout the culture, some were more socioeconomic class specific, such as public image and homework assistance.

Along with the factors that motivated the culture to become involved and stay involved, the members' views of themselves affected this process. The participants' empowered self-perceptions and their role with school and school children led the culture to be actively, if not aggressively, involved.

Motivational Factors

Own Children. When speaking of motivational factors, it is important to note that what might motivate one person

might not motivate another. Motivation may be internal or external. Motivation can take the form of someone or something. Consequently, while some motivational factors were common throughout the culture, others were not. As noted earlier, those motivational factors, which were not consistent throughout the culture, were related to class.

The participants' own children were the predominant motivating factor in the pursuit of involvement. Evidence of this could be seen in the culture's beliefs about education and the subsequent decisions about involvement.

Most of the participants' educational goals were formed by past experiences. Participants who had graduated from college wanted the same for their children. Similarly, those participants who had not attained a college degree insisted that their children complete high school; in this case, college attendance was left up to the child. Michelle, one of the working class, single parents explained:

It was a foregone conclusion that you're gonna graduate from high school, no dropping out. You're gonna; you know I can't put my input on you going to college, ... but when you get home it is a foregone conclusion that you are going to graduate - no even

thinking about it- As long as you're mine, you're going to finish (laughs) high school for sure.

Melissa, she's already doing what she's wanting to do, but I talked to Melissa; and she wants to go to school. I told her if she really has intentions of going, talk to your counselor and find out everything you need to do. Don't wait around until the last minute ... I said to Nicole (other daughter), 'You need to talk to your counselor. I guess she had her own goals set to do it, and she just didn't; it's hard out there.

Michelle realized, as did the entire culture, that education opened doors for opportunity. "You've got to get every little advantage you can."

Patty, a high-school dropout, desired more for her children than she had achieved. "I never graduated from high school. This is something I knew my kids would do. I am real proud of them."

Many middle and upper-middle class members viewed college as part of their children's education. Michael said, "I grew up [knowing] that college was just part of life and my dad encouraged me to go to law school ... I

believe we've pretty much done that with our kids. We've told our kids - college is definitely a part of life."

Billy, a middle class male participant, reminisced about his daughter's college experience:

We got ready for college; we gave her the opportunity.

She came back (from visiting other schools) and decided [on] the one that we all spent our time at which was IU (smiles). We were very happy, but we didn't force her there... And we stayed very much up with her academics in college.

Judy, an upper-middle class female participant, spoke of the frustration she had with her daughter who was a college freshman. " [She is going to major in the] easiest and quickest thing she can. She decided that after two weeks. We go, 'Oh dear, oh dear, both parents are college graduates, oh dear.' "

While class and personal educational achievement helped shape the culture's specific educational goals for its children, the importance of education was classless. The culture's valuing of education inspired selfless attitudes. Sacrificial giving and service were commonplace. The parents' personal needs and aspirations were often shelved for their children. For example,

Stephen, a middle-income parent, accustomed to upper-middle class standards, sacrificed his standard of living to spend more time with his children. After his divorce, Stephen sold his company and decided to spend more time with his second wife and children. Stephen said, " I made that mistake once before. I have been given a second chance. I am not going to blow it again." Scott also reevaluated his involvement with his children. He said,

At the time, I felt I was too busy with other stuff. I find myself doing more 'school things' with Sally (his daughter) than with the others, probably because I understand the "big picture" better now.

Laurie, a former lawyer, also gave up her career to spend more time with her children. As a single parent, Patty made many sacrifices for her three children.

Patty responded:

That job is not that important; that money is not that important. Your child is the most important thing in your life. Spend your time and your efforts on your kids. I would much rather sacrifice for my children and my family that will be there than a job that may not be there twenty years from now. ... [As a single mom] I worked a minimum wage job so I would be with

kids, and I don't regret it for one minute. I've owned my own business, and I love that; but I did that after my kids were out of school. And if I had to do it all over I'd say go back and work minimum wage to have that time with my kids to have that closeness. And it's paid off as far as my kids' education and stuff I think.

Gene, a single-parent male, recalled one of the sacrifices he had made while still married. Not wanting to place his children in daycare, "...I stayed home during the day and worked at night."

The married female participants who did not work outside of the home were from the wealthier classes. In all cases, the participants' children were the rationale for the decision. Judy, an upper-middle class participant, quit work to volunteer within the school. Likewise, Frances, an upper-middle class participant and mother of four, left the teaching profession after five years to rear her family.

Others postponed their own education to meet their children's needs. Diane postponed her college education while her children were young. After both of her children were in school full-time, she went back to school to get

her education degree. When asked if she regretted her decision to delay her education, Diane said, "Well, not really...I have no regret." Betsy, a middle class parent, chose to return to the work force after she and her husband's children were in elementary school, but not before she stayed home for ten years to "raise my children before they went to school."

While some participants chose to stay at home with of their children, others worked to provide for them. This was especially true of the single parents and working class participants. Gene, a single father, had to juggle his career and his family while trying to finish his degree. Even though his schedule was hectic he made time for his children. "I (would) come home ... by 9:00 p.m. or 9:15 p.m., and spend an hour with them (his children) before it was bedtime." Before Patty remarried, she also recalled making time for her children,

...When they'd come home we'd discuss school everyday.

You know, a part of our day was to take time to do that. When I was single, though, we had time where we sat and talked about what they did at school and go [sic] over papers and things.

Amy, a female participant, had become pregnant as a teenager. She did not work for a time because she received welfare for a while but was dropped after she decided to marry the father. Continuing to struggle financially, Amy continued to provide for her children. She found that by working a couple of extra hours each week, she could afford the thirty-dollar registration fee for her son to play soccer. "I want him to be in something," she said.

Sally, a middle class mother, spoke of her need to go to work after her husband had lost his job and the impact it had on her family.

I hadn't worked in all those years. Suddenly no one had a job. Bob (her son) would come home and say things like, 'I hate being poor.' And I would say, 'The day your dad sits in that chair and drinks is the day we are poor. Things are hard. We are not poor.' I began to work half time at my children's preschool so they could continue to go to pre-school.

The type of school involvement in which parents engage was also dependent upon the children's activities. For example, cheerleading, academic teams, sporting events, and field trips engaged the participants. Parents were also involved with their children outside of school. This

parental support was an example of Comer's and Haynes' (1991), Level Three involvement. Transporting children to events and watching children perform were commonplace within the culture.

Billy's children were active in many activities. He recalled:

We really stayed up with our kids' activities. Our kids participated in a lot of things. And we went to everyone. One of us was there all the time and most of us was [sic] there the majority of the time.

[Debra], the daughter, was a pom-pon member. She was in drama. She was a dancer. I mean she just did a lot of things in school activities.... My son was in band, and music, and athletics.

Betsy stated, "Alice (her daughter) loves sports, and that gets us involved because we go to all her track meets and basketball [games]." Kelsey's involvement was also affected by athletics and her children's other extra-curricular activities:

Most of the things they (her children) participated in (in junior high) revolved around sports because they were both involved in playing basketball. So, we

(Kelsey and her husband) involved ourselves there in going to all the basketball games.

Diane's children had come to expect she and her husband's attendance. "Jason (her son) called at seven in the morning from basketball camp to see if we could come watch him scrimmage. They are just not used to one of us not being there," she said.

These parents also were involved in their children's activities outside of school. Billy recalled his daughter's involvement in church and Brownies:

Sara was involved in things at her church. And so through the seasons, it was Christmas time, Easter time, she participated in things, had little parties. You know, we always participated and were involved in that. I always felt very comfortable dealing with my daughter. I never had a problem, you know, well it's a girl thing or anything like that. We've never done much of that. And so I always felt comfortable at going to her stuff... She was a Brownie for a short period of time. I... had no problem with picking the Brownies up, having the Brownies at the house, taking desserts ... to the Brownies. I always felt very comfortable with that and my relationship is very

comfortable now. And I think it is because all the way from the beginning I was involved.

Francis supported her children's church activities, "We have what's called family clusters.... You go every week with your child." Gene sought music lessons for his daughter upon moving to a new town. He said, "I ... immediately got Anna (his daughter) involved in music here at IU. I found a head of the department at IU to teach her flute."

Volunteering, Epstein's (1992) Type Three involvement and Comer's and Haynes' (1991) Level Two involvement, was usually in direct response to children's needs at school. Parents were comfortable being at the school. Parents visited the school and volunteered frequently. Kelsey responded:

In high school, we got more involved because our son ... [was] the president of student council. And because of that, we were in extra-curricular activities like being chaperones and things like that.

Parents also volunteered to chaperone field trips. Michelle stated, "I ... volunteer a lot ... - go on field trips. Like if Jennifer's (her daughter), [activity] is out of town like to the zoo, I'll go." Jo, a single

working class mom, stated, "And when they have a field trip, if I am available, I would go on those." Scott recalled, "When my children were in elementary school, I sponsored a trip of students to the zoo." Judy went "whenever there's a form sent home to go on a field trip. I like to do that."

Parents also volunteered for homeroom activities. Eight of the female participants were homeroom mothers. All but two of these participants did not work outside of the home during the time they served as a homeroom parent. Betsy explained, "When Kyle was in elementary school, I attended all his parties and all the homeroom mom's meetings and everything I could be involved in with school. Since I didn't work that was very easy for me to do." Judy stated, "At elementary age ... I wasn't as involved then when they (her two oldest daughters) were in elementary school (because of her work). But with my son, I liked to be homeroom mother or co-chair it with somebody else."

Some parents who did work outside of the home still found ways to help with homeroom activities. Kelsey explained:

I was never able to attend their parties they (her children) would have at school whether it was at

Christmas or Valentines or whatever because that was always a conflict with the parties I was having as a teacher at my school. And that's something I really hate that I never got to participate in; but I always sent stuff for the parties. I remember driving all over town searching for little green shamrocks to put on Hannah's (her daughter) cupcakes for her birthday - with green sprinkles (laughs).

Similarly, Patty recalled, " I tried to be involved in some way even if I couldn't be there by bringing stuff to the school." Jo also donated cokes for events.

Homeroom activities and field trips were not the only opportunities for which parents volunteered. Patty and Keith, her spouse, coached their children's academic team for the school. "As they (her children) got into junior high, we were involved in OM which was Odyssey of the Mind." Natalie, who had two daughters on the cheerleading squad, "worked with the cheerleaders." Kelsey and Betsy were both "prom moms" for their children's junior and senior proms.

David frequently stopped in at his youngsters' schools to check on them. One day while at school he asked the teacher if he could "have a minute with your class." He

began to tell the class a story. Several times, he was asked to tell stories at school, as many as "six classes in one day." Gene also recalled making class presentations. "I would go and take my hunting gear and do presentations. and take my stuffed ducks and stuff like that. The kids loved that."

Oftentimes parents volunteered at school activities, which did not directly relate to their own children. Scott volunteered at "a concession stand." Barbara, a working middle-class mother

volunteered in his (her son's) classroom a lot. I've done a lot of things at home. The teachers will give me things to take home so I can do at home ... - tear out pages [from school math workbooks]... I typed up some certificates for her... This year I made some letters for a bulletin board; I did some cookies... I volunteered to take food for parent-teacher conferences for the teachers.

Natalie volunteered two days each week "Xeroxing" papers for the staff. Judy "chaired the dance committee... We did a lot of decorations and that was fun."

Just as parents supported their children's activities outside of school, they also volunteered for them.

Michael, father of five boys, spoke fondly of coaching his sons in little league baseball and soccer.

I've made it a point to coach one of my son's teams every year. What I've done is I've coached their first two years of baseball every year... One, 'cause, I liked baseball and it's a great sport. And another, I just wanted to make sure who it was that was dealing with the kids.

Frances served as a committee member for the Boy Scouts, "... Advancement Chairman. That person is involved with merit badges and advancement." Nikki volunteered at church by working with her children's "youth group."

Oftentimes, participants' children would volunteer them for various activities. Kelsey recalled:

Craig (her son) would volunteer our house for everything. He would volunteer our house without telling us. I remember the night we were having a party at our house and we didn't know about it (laughs)... But he knew our home was always open, and we would rather have them at our house than someplace else. So he was always saying, 'Well, my folks'll do that.' Or you know, 'You can come do that at our house.' He knew that was true.

Betsy had a similar experience with her son. She stated:

Kyle had functions here (in the home) like student council things but we always knew ahead of time. He wanted the house pretty cleaned up before ... we had company.... He did know that anytime he wanted to have something here that was fine because I'd rather have them here than anywhere else.

Within the culture, homework, Epstein's (1992) Type Four involvement, was addressed in a variety of ways. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, education's importance was classless. The "intentions" of homework were also classless; however, the "extensions" of homework were not (Svensson & Theman, 1983, p. 8). In other words, while the culture viewed homework as important, parents' participation with homework was somewhat class specific.

Middle and upper-middle class parents found more ease than did other participants in assisting their children. Cheryl, an upper-middle class mother, stated:

Every night I make sure that their homework is done. They usually start their homework before I get there ... With my oldest daughter (learning disabled) ... we (she and her husband) still pretty much assist her every night. She was taken out of special education last

year, and she is doing great. I do believe that she is at the place she is because of constant work at home.

Scott recalled, "Sally (his daughter) had a hard time in school. I spent time reading with her; and as the kids got into upper math in high school, I found myself helping them more." Betsy recalled prompting her daughter to get her homework done. She said, "She's not the 'come home get it done' type person. She's the one who needs a lot of encouragement to get anything done before she goes to bed."

Middle and upper-middle class parents who had children in college continued to help with homework. Billy recounted:

We stayed up with our kids' grades, and this continued all the way through college... My son has a test today (smiles). And I know exactly what time the test is, and I know what the test is over and I know the subject matter and I know ... what the review sheet said on it.

Judy stated, "I think we have helped our college freshman more since she has been in college than the whole time she was in high school." Kelsey, an upper-middle class

educator, continued to help her daughter who was also studying elementary education in college. Kelsey stated:

It's pretty easy for me to do because she's in my major, so it's not as difficult. And it's kind of neat because, she's doing what I would like to do, so it's kind of fun to help her. You know give her some ideas. I still don't help Craig (her son) except to type for him.

Time and personal educational achievement were barriers to working class parents. Jo had to juggle being a single mom, going to school, and rearing her daughter. She found that appointing a specific time to study helped. She said, "It will be study time...; we will be studying, and that takes time." Michelle stated, "Well in the elementary - some of their math I don't understand, and I'll say, 'Go ask your big sister.' Linda helps Jennifer with hers, since Linda's a year older." Jack, a single, working class parent, explained:

Involved I guess as any parent, single parent, is when they've got a child in grade school - try and help a little with homework, without actually giving them the answer ... - it is becoming more difficult now. Yeah, I have got to admit, I don't remember as much, but I

think a lot of it [is] in [the] terminology... I was never great in English and some of the terminology that is used - I didn't like it when I was taking it myself... I am not sure what they are talking about, is the problem. It may be simple mathematics; but ... I don't understand... [Children are] getting ... into things that I didn't get involved in, at least not, in school. Computers... computers today, I didn't learn that in school.

Social Consciousness. The culture had an acute awareness of its surrounding community. Unlike some parents, the culture was able to look beyond its own children. Stephen explained:

Parents are too narrow sighted. You have a tendency to think about your own and not the other 685 that happen to be in that school building. And you're thinking what's good for mine, you know. It's hard to get people to think differently.

Diane agreed:

A potential problem with parent involvement is that you can't separate parents from their own children emotionally... They are reasonable people in many areas of life. You get along with the ones next door to

you.... But when it comes to their children - they get irrational.

Participants also viewed other children as their own. This motivation was seen through various types of involvement. Some types of involvement were class specific. This community focus could be seen in a variety of informal and formal ways. Participants placed their children before themselves; they also placed others before themselves.

This "I'm third" mentality could be attributed, in part, to the culture's religious roots. Katrina explained, "Well for me that comes from God. ... I think I have a heart of a servant. I just love kids. I'd take them all over here if I could." As mentioned in chapter 4, the majority of participants held Judeo-Christian views and regularly participated in church activities. The practice of placing others first and self second was a fundamental principle of their Protestant faith. For example, one time a friend of Katrina's daughter had been in an automobile accident and

He had no where else to go....He was in the hospital for two days, and that was when Misty (her daughter) was dating him. And his parents said, 'I hope you can spend the night cause we gotta go home. We can't stay

up. We can't take this.' I said, 'We can't leave him here, and you can't stay here by yourself. I'll stay here with you.' They (the boy's parents) didn't show up to pick him up from the hospital. [We] tried to take him home. We couldn't get anyone to come to the door, [so we] brought him over here. He, like, laid on the couch for two days. Nobody ever called to check on him.

Not only did Katrina have a selfless attitude but David, her husband, did as well. She said, "He's got the most giving heart, and once he forgives, he forgets. He says, 'Whatever we have is given to us by God.'

Other parents' children viewed the participants as parent-figures. The participants' homes were frequently gathering places. Michael, another parent, affirmed the importance of "making their friends feel welcome in your home so that they are inviting friends over and having them in your house." Kathryn rejoined:

On any given night there could be a lot of kids over here. ... I don't need this house. When we built, we got like a game room upstairs with a pool table and several games in it with the intent that we would open our house to kids that needed to be over here. [We]

try to have someplace for them to go so they wouldn't be out running around, getting in trouble... I don't know how many people will be [here] for dinner. I really don't mind ... I usually plan for ten or twelve. Similarly, Patty recalled attending a wedding where her daughter's friend was getting married.

They (bride and groom) were taking family photos and he said, 'Patty, and Keith come stand up here - you're family.' He (the groom) said, 'You're my only family here.'... And that meant a lot to me because he felt that way. So there again, I think you know even a friend can be a family so, that's, that's important.

Sometimes participants' concern for other children motivated them to be proactive on issues. The type of involvement was somewhat class dependent. Feeling his Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) son was misunderstood and fearing other ADHD children were too, Jack donated two books on ADHD to his son's elementary school.

I gave one of the books to a teacher who had a daughter who was ADHD and had to be teaching Walter at the same time, and she wanted some information. Before she gave it back, she asked if another teacher

could read it because they had expressed an interest. And it was about seven weeks before I could get hold of the book again. But I finally said, 'I would really like the book back, because I wanted ... re-read it the second time myself.' But I bought another copy just to trade off with them.

Some of the parents were involved in decision-making and/or held an elected position on a school committee, an example of Epstein's (1992) Type Five and Comer's and Haynes' (1991) Level One involvement. The motivations for this type of involvement varied. Those participants whose motivation was social consciousness will be presented here. Other participants who were motivated by other factors will be presented later in the chapter.

All of the participants who participated in this category were of middle or upper-middle class income. The majority of parents were members of a parent-teacher organization. Seven participants had served as an officer. For some, social consciousness was the motivation. Sally, a middle class mother, was an active supporter of her children's parent-teacher organization but desired more involvement:

...frustrated with PTA because all it was, was sunbathing. The national PTA organization, they have got committees on policy; they have committees on safety; they have committees on all kinds of meaty issues that deal with children. All they (local PTA) wanted to know is, 'are we going to sell candy bars or bunny rabbits, and when are they going to do it, and who is going to do it, and how are we going to pay for the computer?' ... And then, I ended up running for school board, and I am on the board of education for help with policy, to get involved in policy decisions ... Basically you involved yourself with the kids - respond to problems ... And then it grew to, 'we are not just talking about my kids.' It grew to, 'I can take care of my kids. I could teach my kids if I had to. My kids will do fine. What about these other kids?' That is a lot of why I do what I do.

Stephen, a middle class parent, explained, "I don't care if anyone knows my name or what committee I am on. I just do this because I want to do it." Frances, an upper-middle class mother, explained, "I'm probably doing more ... what I want to now and ... not so compelled to think I have to be there."

Many middle and upper-middle class parents participated in community events. The participants' interest in their community could be seen in their actions and attitudes. Cheryl said:

Last year, being involved in Healthy Youth, where we (she and her co-workers) went out to the schools and screened... We did ear, nose, and screening, height and weight, blood pressures, scoliosis screening, hearing and vision, and physicals - then worked with the kids to get follow up care...Ultimately you want to improve the health of your community.

Natalie helped organize a parent organization at a local mid-high school. She said, "for many years we didn't have one (a parent organization), and ... just have some sort of support group for the kids is real important." Serving on the county 4-H foundation board for six years, Stephen, a middle class parent, noted, "I think 4-H is a very good program for kids."

Crises. Oftentimes parents were involved with the schools and their children's lives as a result of a crisis. Whenever participants' children had difficulty academically, parent involvement increased. There were several reasons for these academic struggles. One reason

was that certain children had learning disabilities. Parents of disabled children found themselves in a support/advocate role for their children (DeMoss et al., 1996). Cheryl spoke of her experience. " My oldest daughter ... has learning disabilities. So I have, by necessity, needed to be an advocate for her through the years." During her daughter's fourth grade year, Cheryl became frustrated with the child's teacher who was not incorporating special education techniques in the regular education classroom. Cheryl and her husband phoned the teacher, set up conferences with the principal, and initiated conversations with the school board. As a result, the decision was made to place Cheryl's daughter back into lab classes. Cheryl recalled:

With multiplication tables, when they were doing that, we know from her tests that she is an auditory learner. When she is learning these skills, I can put it on tape for her. But she (regular education teacher) needs to be taped. And she (teacher) said, 'We don't do tapes.' That year, we (Cheryl and her husband) basically taught our child at home. Anything that she didn't get done in her lab time, she just brought home, because she didn't understand it.

Jack's son has ADHD. Entering middle school, the child had difficulties adjusting to multiple teachers and increased responsibility. Jack began to initiate conversations with his son's teachers about ADHD. He said:

I realize in the past, sometimes, that was the attitude of the educational system, 'put the bad eggs in the corner, and we'll try and teach the good eggs.' That is ...I think you have to try to teach them all. ... And right now, I am trying to either make the sixth grade teachers aware of the situation, or help with them, or find out that they are somewhat aware.

Two parents, Michelle and Frances had autistic sons. Seeking support, Frances said, "For many years I was quite involved with that group (Autism support group)."

Parents also initiated involvement when their children struggled in a class. Kelsey evidenced:

In high school, I did go to have a conference on conference day with a math teacher because of some problems that Hannah (her daughter) was having. But I instigated the conference, not the teacher. That same teacher her (Hannah's) daddy called and had conferences with him on the telephone. But there

again it was from our calling him not him trying to reach us.

Andy recalled his experience of being told Paul, his son, was going to be placed in transition. He said:

When they tested him for this transition, I thought it was terrible. I thought they were telling me that my son was stupid. They were telling me, 'he can't go on to first grade after kindergarten.' when I know he is a bright young man... I finally saw the light after talking with the teacher and talking with my wife, too ... They, (Paul's elementary school) have a parent's meeting every year, ... I am invited to speak about my kid who was in transition.

Laurie was involved in policy making after Cathy's, her oldest daughter's, school decided to neglect gifted education. Laurie, along with several other parents of gifted children formed a support group. Members of the group "spend twenty hours a week, and some people in the group more than that time involving themselves in the school lives of their child to try to make the gifted experience in the public school system a quality one." As a result, Laurie arranged protests, spoke at school board meetings, and met with the site principal and various

central office personnel. Becoming frustrated by the principal's lack of commitment and support, Laurie "and another mother called a meeting of parents and students." A letter was drafted to the principal and Laurie "hand delivered" it. Still gaining no support from the principal resulted in a

... mass blitz of the superintendent getting faxes and phone calls from lots of parents saying we object to her (the principal's) decision, and we want him (the superintendent) to meet with us to talk about this and other larger concerns.

Personal Background. Participants were asked to describe their own parents' involvement. Their parents' involvement or lack thereof was a motivation for the culture's commitment to their children's lives. Andy's mother was very active in the PTA, and his father was supportive of whatever "we had planned." Andy said, "I do believe that the way you are as a parent is highly influenced by the way your parents parented you."

Not only was Katrina's mother involved, but her father was too. She stated, "Dad went to everything." David's parents were not formally involved with the schools but

played an integral part in the home. He reflected on his working-class parents' influence:

Mom and Dad taught so much on the spiritual side of life - what was, and what is and the possibilities of life. I'll never forget on Friday nights, especially in the wintertime - and we didn't have a TV - we had some wood burning stoves you know, on Friday nights. And it was cold - and light from nowhere so it was dark. And the only thing we'd say, 'Mom and Dad, tell us some of those old stories.' And we sat there with no distractions and - pictures burned in my mind.

Just as the participants' parents served as role models for involvement, some participants were challenged to change the pattern of noninvolvement modeled by their parents. Angela reflected:

I bounced back between three cities in high school. And parent involvement, my dad really wasn't there, so my mom, she wasn't into it... When I got older, she pretty much let me do what I want[ed]. That was another thing of why I did stray. She let me do whatever I want. So I skipped school. But I still passed and everything. I didn't flunk anything. I knew my limits.... Caleb (her son) will go to school,

or he is going to be grounded all the time. His father didn't graduate. There are statistics on if one graduates and the other doesn't then the child ... he is more likely to not graduate, ... so we are going to be stiff on him.

Being the last child of three, Jo's parents' involvement waned. She said:

I think I was the youngest of three, and I think by the third one it dwindled down. They don't have many baby pictures of me. And actually, I don't think they went to that many sporting events or things like that. There is a lot more interest, I think for kids ... - Christmas parties, little sporting events, spirit day or something like that, ... we (she and her daughter) go....

Michael, who had coached his sons' baseball teams for ten years, recalled, "I can remember thinking I would never coach one of my kids because I didn't have that example for myself."

Public Image. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, some of the participants involved in policy making were motivated by social consciousness. Others were motivated

by public image. Participants within this category were upper-middle class. Judy exemplified:

I was going to say without PTA and knowing what was going on, I don't know if the 'regular parent' would know anything that was going on ... I don't think I'm an average parent, because I probably spend more time on this stuff than the average parent, although I have a lot of friends who are very, very active in all of this too. Maybe a group of us are not average, but we don't work and we can afford to do that.

Michael was a member of a citizens' taskforce for the school district. When asked if the committee was representative of the community, he responded:

There aren't any minorities on there ... It is only somewhat representative of economic class. And the reason I say that because when you're scouting around as an administrator or principal for people to be on this, you want to choose someone whose got a reputation for responsibility and some degree of intelligence. And someone who's going to be thoughtful and someone who will take the time to do it. Without trying to sound ... - there's economic snobbery, when you start saying, 'This is the type

person that I want.' I think what you're going to find is - say if you pick a school from the east (poor) side, the principal is going to say, 'Alright, who fits this? Who am I gonna pick here?' So what you've got is people that kind of fit a certain profile [from the wealthier side of town].

View of Self. The participant culture's view of self also directed the pursuit of involvement. The participants viewed themselves as responsible for their children and their children's education. This view of empowerment allowed parents not to rely on the school to involve them. Instead, parents oftentimes initiated involvement. When asked how she became involved, Judy replied, "I seeked [sic] it out."

When Natalie's oldest daughter entered mid-high, there was no parent organization established. She recalled:

I had mentioned something about helping out or if you need help... I got a list of every kid that was going to come over for the ninth grade, and we (the school) sent out a letter to each one of them telling them about the organization...

Sally became concerned that elementary school children did not have any four-square balls to play with at recess.

Wondering how her child's school money was spent, Sally confronted the administration. She explained in an interview:

You can easily find out what PTA does with its money; they are over budget. But you couldn't find out what happens to the money that was given to the school or earned under the auspices of the school - picture money... It finally occurred to me that 'hmmm, what are they going to do with that money?' [So, I went] ... to school, and knock[ed] on the principal's door, [and said,] 'What happens to that money?'

Married participants' view of empowerment and level of involvement was strengthened by their spouses. Spouses supported participants' involvement by sharing in the responsibilities. As noted earlier, after Diane's children entered elementary school, she pursued a degree in education. During that time, her husband was "very helpful." She said, "In fact, I wasn't at a lot of their activities as much as my husband." Frances' husband served as a Boy Scouts leader for their three sons and participated in various school and church activities. Michael described his involvement as a partnership with his wife. He said, "Mom and Dad together... I think it is a

partnership. Mom and Dad together has [sic] to decide on who's going to fill what role and how you're going to divide up the responsibilities."

Single parents did not have that support from the home. Having sole responsibility for their children left little time for themselves. After going to school and rearing her daughter, Jo did not have much time to attend school events. She said, "If I am available, I would go ... I am just so tired all of the time." Jack concurred:

I am not any different from anybody else. I had a hard day at that office or whatever and come home and you want a little let down or something else - a transition period for yourself. And sometimes I don't get it. I would love to have a partner to help me out here but I don't.

Contrary to much of the literature (DeMoss & Maiden, 1998; Eccles & Harold, 1992; Jackson & Cooper, 1992; Stouffer, 1992), the culture's view of empowerment was not affected by adolescence. Participants continued to be involved even when their adolescent children requested them not to be. Kelsey stated:

They (her children) didn't want Mom to be around.

They didn't want Dad to be around; they wanted to ...

get their own identity. It was a time of severing the apron cord. Anytime you would ask them a question about school, you were infringing on their territory - you know, invading their space. They didn't like for you to do that - ask a bunch of questions ... I think they finally just decided [that] she's going to ask us those anyways [sic] so we might as well answer them and shut up, get her to shut up (laughs). I think they started realizing that about the end of junior high that she's always going to ask, 'Where we're going? What we're going to do? Who we're going to be with? What happened at school?'.

Other mothers reported similar stories during their children's adolescence. Betsy said:

Kyle (her son) in junior high went through a spell where he did not want us around. It was a time when he was finding himself, and we were infringing on his space ... This year Amy (high school student) did not want us to go to open house, I mean that is not cool for parents to go to open house, but we went anyway. They knew we cared; that's why we were involved.

Despite cries of termination, statements of appreciation followed involvement. Laurie said,

"The crisis with Cathy's school has really brought about kind of a closeness. I mean having gone through the typical adolescent mother-daughter conflict when she was a young adolescent, [but] that seems to have endeared [us to each other]."

Betsy remembered helping with Kyle's (her son's) after prom party. She stated, "Things like the prom, I would have thought Kyle would not have wanted us to be at the prom, but I think he was glad that we were there, and I think he was a little bit proud." Similarly, Scott stated, "I truly believe they enjoy our (Scott's and his wife's) involvement. It shows them that we care."

Many times parents who were active within the school were chosen to be on decision-making boards as a result of actively pursuing other avenues of involvement. It was as if the parents had gained a right-of-passage into the schools' decision-making process. Participants recognized that these committees were skewed and did not represent the entire population. Diane said, "You pick the ones that ... go with it and make it easier." Sally stated:

You don't reach out to those who aren't like you very much, and that is a big concern ... Even at Kingswood (Elementary School) we have some mixed families. I

mean, they are in this area right here. It is very nice housing ... I can almost say that those parents who are asked to be on committees are the ones who go with the flow, not the ones who want to be seen differently.

Sally, realizing the bureaucracy, also recalled being assertive with a school official who would not answer her questions.

I know I don't seem like somebody who would tuck your tail and walk out ... and not tell him. I didn't say anything. I got him fired ... Now that I am on the school board, ... I get my questions answered a lot more reasonably than I used to.

Others in the culture were frustrated with the bureaucracy. Laurie stated, " They (school officials) don't want anybody to rock their boat. They don't want anybody to question what they're doing ... They just want to roll on and draw their salaries, and draw their pensions..."

While volunteering, some parents felt this division. Cheryl stated:

I think teachers have various levels of comfort with parents. I think you hear a lot about how parents aren't involved, but I think there are times when

teachers aren't completely comfortable in being involved either. It makes you feel like you shouldn't be there.

After serving on the citizens' taskforce for five years, Stephen quit as a result of the school board not accepting the taskforce's recommendations on a transfer policy. He explained:

I won't be on it again... I spent every Thursday night plus all of the other time that ... it took to get all of that stuff done for nine months. And then to go up there and they (the school board) just come with some off-the-wall thing that they thought they wanted to do, ... - I don't need to - ... I can do other things on Thursday night. So consequently, I think most of the officers felt the same way. I don't think anyone on this year's council was an officer last year because we spent a tremendous amount of time trying to get ready for the meetings, and conducting the meetings, and, and compiling all of the information from the meetings, and all that kind of thing. And then we got up there, and they (the board) kind of went off of the wall and did something ... that we had recommended they not do at all.

Second Conception: Communication

Involvement from the participants within the culture was a result of knowledge. Participants within the culture sought information about their children and their children's schools from a variety of sources. These sources included the child, the school, and other parents. Within the culture, participants did not solely rely on others to inform them of ways to become involved within the school. Participants were proactive in seeking information.

Information from the Child

While trying at times, the participant culture reported having positive relationships with their children. Each participant took time to speak with his/her child about the day's events as well as upcoming opportunities. Communication between the participants and their children included homework, friends, grades, and volunteering opportunities. Participants capitalized on available time and child-initiated conversations. Trying to prepare his daughter for college, David spent "fifteen minutes a night" with his daughter. Michael explained:

You kind of catch those times - sometimes you'll ask them and sometimes they'll just start talking - take

those times and you just kind of go with them as long as you can go. As long as they know that anytime they want to they can come talk to you. Every now and then if you just check with them, let them know you're still interested - ... We do try to the extent we can to have dinner together. And if we do, we always try to talk and find out what's happening.

As adolescence began, participants reported a resistance from their children to share openly. Natalie stated, "My girls, of course that's probably all girls go through this, come to a point where they are not - well, communicative. They don't talk very well, and you just have to work through that. They'll pass through that, and you'll kind of get to know them a little better." Frances stated, "There are some things that the boys go through adolescence I can tell they kind of hold back on as far as telling the "mom" (laughs) about. They kind of hold back - mom's advice isn't very cool."

Children's silence was not seen as a barrier within the culture. Instead, information received from their children was only one source of communication. Parents sought other avenues of communication.

Information from School

Participants received and requested information from the school periodically. Information was obtained from schools through a variety of media. Elementary schools sent home each Thursday a folder containing information about upcoming events, examples of the child's homework, and community information. Many participants mentioned the usefulness of the "Thursday folder". Judy said:

The Thursday folder in elementary school - the teacher usually writes a weekly letter to let the parents know what's going on in class that week, what they are studying and any activities coming up. That was the main form of communication in grade school.

Michelle stated, "The teachers let me know if he (her son, Micah) had homework. They'd send home a weekly folder and I had to let them know I saw it."

In fact, Scott mentioned his desire for other grade levels to utilize this technique and their difficulty in letting the concept go. Scott said, "It was nice to have that coming home with student papers and announcements. Starting in middle school, the schools expect the student to take on some of this responsibility. I understand, but it was hard to give up the Thursday folder."

School conferences were also opportunities for parents to gain information. Having to juggle her personal education with her daughter's education, Jo recalled the teachers' flexibility in scheduling conferences.

They worked around my schedule. I think originally, we thought about five o'clock Friday but she (teacher) was out of school Friday, and I was off that afternoon. We were going to - help take care of my mother. She had knee surgery, so she (teacher) called me from school, and we ended up making it like Thursday evening. They're really good.

Billy and his wife also attended conferences. He said, "We never missed a parent conference and I can remember going to them the whole time - to talk with the teachers and to ask questions."

Sometimes, the school would call parents to solicit support. Many participants responded that the school knew who would be willing to help. Kelsey stated, "We (Kelsey and her husband) got to know the teachers and coaches and so they would just bypass the kids and the teachers would just, you know, come direct to us and ask for things." Stephen said, "I've been doing it so long everybody knows me ... Just tell me what you want me to do."

Volunteer and decision-making opportunities were often publicized to those parents who came to Back-to-School nights, enrollment, or open house. Parents who came to such events were given the opportunity to sign-up for various events or join a parent group. Scott recalled, "In elementary, at the beginning of the year during enrollment, there was a form that you filled out asking you what you would like to be involved in - homeroom mother, PTA, sponsor a field trip, etc." Jo stated, "They (the school) would send me flyers home. Sometimes at the beginning of the year as you are going to enroll them (children), they will give you little things and have you sign up right then for them." Amy said, "All the time, they (her son's elementary school) asking you to do something."

While the school initiated some communication, parents still reported a lack of communication especially at the secondary level. Andy said, "They don't like to have you at the school at the middle school level. Then they did not. I don't know about now. That was six, seven years ago. They didn't invite participation." Diane agreed:

In the middle school level, I was not at school very much. It is an awkward age ... A lot of times they (the school) would call and say things like, 'could

you just send money or could you send a gallon of orange juice.' It was like they didn't want me there, but could you send.

The number of students per teacher at the secondary level also was a factor in communication. Jack recounted: Parent conferences were five to seven - there was a line of people. I believe I saw three ... I didn't really go with the intent of trying to meet every single one of them. There were three teachers that I specifically wanted to greet, and I did see them. It took me all night to do it. That is a little bit frustrating. Partially because I realized that on the other side of the coin, they are sitting there, and they have seen 70-80-90 maybe 100 parents. How would you remember? They are not sitting there taking notes. And I am sure they have a fairly good memory, because they are teachers. Some information, I am sure, gets lost.

Billy stated, "I always said that ... the secondary teacher probably had more students to deal with."

The participants also reported a lack of follow-through by school personnel. Amy said:

I always sent something. I wasn't really one to help run it. But I sent Rice Krispies treats or sent the money to do something. I tried to do that international food festival every year. And they (the school) would say, 'Oh we will send you a recipe.' And I never got one.

Unfortunately, Amy wasn't alone. Cathy stated:

I volunteered to do popcorn because I could do that on my lunch hour but I never got called to do that. You know, after awhile if you don't get called (laughs), you quit volunteering. So, I didn't do much at mid-high as far as volunteer work.

Stephen stated, "It concerns me though that as a parent, if I wanted to get involved I probably couldn't because there wouldn't be anybody to call me to start with."

However, lack of school-initiated communication and follow-through did not inhibit the parent culture from obtaining information from the school. Participants called the school to receive clarification of policies or circumstances. Many participants found it easier to contact the school if they knew the policies and knew whom to contact. Diane stated, "And a lot of times, if it is policy, and I know it is policy, then I will call and take

care of it." When Alan's son was in the third grade, he had difficulty learning his multiplication tables.

Frustrated by the teacher, Alan said, "I was able to talk to the 'right people' at the school. I didn't talk to her (the teacher), but I was able to talk to the 'right people', and she was approached in the 'right way', and she then changed that one little thing."

Information from Other Parents

Parents created networks. These networks provided support for parents. Barbara relied on friends for information when her children entered high school. She said, "Secondary - there were things that came in the mail but other than that my kids never - I usually learned from someone else's child or from another parent what was going on because they (her children) weren't good at letting me know." Betsy recalled her son wanting to run away during adolescence. She said, "I was glad to have friends who had older children so they would help understand what was going on."

Not only did networks provide emotional support but also practical support. Michael, a father of five, had to juggle many schedules during soccer season. He explained, "of course we have good friends on ... all the teams, and if

we have to call people and ask for a ride, ... that's not a big deal. Almost everybody has to rely on other people for rides."

Networks oftentimes facilitated involvement. Barbara served as secretary of her sons' high school PTA Board as a result of a friend asking her. She said, "She's a good friend of mine, and she'd been on it the year before. And she's real good at getting people to do that sort of thing (laughs)." After helping a friend coach a little league baseball team, Michael decided that he too, could coach. He said:

I went to his practices and ... helped out and saw the guy that was coaching was a good friend of mine, and I saw his involvement and saw that he wanted to be involved and that he took it seriously and that he thought it was important. It kind of challenged my thinking. So I said, 'Yeah, I can do this.' So I did and it was very rewarding and a lot of fun. And I think it has helped me develop my relationships with my sons in a way that I probably wouldn't have.

Networks also promoted exclusiveness. Natalie utilized previous networks to form a "support group" at the mid-high. She said, "It was time to - ... a support group

started as we just called on different people, ... everybody I knew at Oak (Middle School) that would be coming over here, and we just kind of got together that way."

Working outside of the home, Barbara also acknowledged this idea of only a few parents participating. She said, "There is a core group of parents that do not work and do everything, and there's a lot of ones that volunteer but they're never called on and after awhile they don't. They quit volunteering." Stephen agreed:

All of the other schools that I've been through, I tend to see the same faces at the meetings all the time... I worry about this considerably because the people like us who have been doing it for ten years as our kids progress on we're going to be off and gone, you know. If you haven't at that point found somebody like us to replace us, you're going to be there with nobody.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reported the results of the phenomenographical study. Two conceptions were found. First, involved parents are motivated to actively pursue involvement within the lives of their children both inside and outside of school and within their children's friends'

lives. The members' own children, social consciousnesses, crises, personal backgrounds, public images, and views of self motivated the pursuit of involvement. The second conception was that involved parents seek information about their children and their children's schools through various sources. Parents gained information from their children, schools, and from other parents.

Chapter 6 will present the researcher's interpretation with respect to the culture's actions. Theoretical links to the study will be discussed. Issues that expand or question theory will also be presented. Recommendations for parents, school personnel, and future research will be made.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study examined a culture of parents who were involved in schools in a localized setting. Data analysis showed areas of the research, which corroborated, expanded, and questioned previous research. This chapter addresses these areas. Recommendations for parents, school personnel, and future research will also be made.

Corroboration of Theory

The culture's involvement represented a partnership between home, school, and community. Epstein (1992) created the term home-school-community partnership to represent a multi-directional relationship. The culture's involvement consisted of parent responsibilities such as carpooling and attending extra-curricular events. Parents communicated with their children, the school, and other parents. The members of this culture volunteered at the school and in the community. Homework was regularly discussed. Four parents were involved on decision-making boards. These areas of involvement corroborated Epstein's (1992) framework for involvement and Comer's and Haynes' (1991) levels of involvement.

The culture's involvement represented a dynamic relationship. Types of involvement depended upon the children's interests, crises, view of self, level of communication, and public image. Demographic variables also affected involvement, such as marital status and socioeconomic level. These external and internal factors that influenced the culture were "amenable to growth and change over the period of a parent's own adult development" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Bronfenbrenner (1986) uses the term chronosystem to describe the dynamic nature of these relationships over time.

The culture's view of self and definition of its role as a parent created a feeling of self-efficacy. Higher level self-efficacy increased parents' efforts to be involved. Data analysis supported Hoover-Dempsey's and Sandler's (1997) model which defined three constructs to parent involvement. The constructs were parent's construction of parental role in child's life, parent's sense of self-efficacy, and general invitations, demands and opportunities.

Previous literature documented demographic influences on parent involvement. Married participants found support from their spouses to be involved. Single participants had

less time and support to pursue involvement (Lonborg & Leavitt, 1983; Wanat, 1992). In addition, socioeconomic status affected the type of and motivation for involvement (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; DeMoss & Maiden, 1998; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Miller, 1986; Schneider & Coleman, 1993; Steele, 1994). Parents with high socioeconomic status "generally had higher levels of education, were more likely knowledgeable about their child's schooling and were apt to communicate with the school" (Steele, 1994, 37-38). Parents with higher levels of socioeconomic status were more likely to be involved in "formal" activities such as, policy making and volunteering. Working-class parents oftentimes sought supportive roles (DeMoss et al, 1996; DeMoss & Maiden, 1998; Schneider & Coleman, 1993).

The culture's involvement persevered despite barriers. The existence of barriers to parent involvement was established in the literature (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Henry, 1996; Hymes, 1974; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Oklahoma Education Association, 1995; Rudnitski, 1992; Sarason, 1995). Parents overcame these barriers by actively pursuing involvement with their children and their children's friends, inside and outside of school. The culture viewed involvement as a natural and essential component of its

members' parenting responsibilities. Consequently, parents sought opportunities for involvement. The culture gained information and understanding regarding school practices from various sources.

The culture's involvement was met with some resistance from the school. Participants occasionally found school administrators unwilling to listen to ideas or to answer questions (Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Sarason, 1995). Although the culture experienced discouragement, parents did not give up. Instead they viewed it as an opportunity and challenge to share their ideas. Sarason (1995) wrote, "...when you accept and respect that want in others, life is never smooth. It is not that you have opened a can of worms but a can containing dilemmas and opportunities in equal proportions, assuming you are lucky or God is on your side" (p. 18).

Bureaucratic safeguards limited the proportion of decision-making opportunities for parents. Participation oftentimes represented an "enablement" vs. "empowerment" model (Lewis & Nakagawa, p. 152). Parents often were asked to support school practices, instead of being asked to help form solutions. Parent participation on site-based management committees often gave the appearance of control

but allowed the power to remain with the school. School administrators held key roles (Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Sarason, 1995). Laurie stated,

Site-based management ... is a sham; it's a joke. The site-based management committees have no power or authority. All they do is talk to each other. And then the principals do whatever the hell they want. Now, it's been okay at our school because we had a principal who was more than willing to share power.

Formal participation on a decision-making board was a result of a school-initiated invitation (Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Sarason, 1995). Oftentimes, crises motivated informal participation, which had an effect on decision-making. In these circumstances, parents vocalized concerns and ideas to multiple school officials.

The corroboration of previous research strengthened the validity of the literature. Parent involvement occurred in many different forms. Parents' views of self and definition of their role as a parent affected involvement. Barriers to involvement existed inside and outside of schools.

Expansion of Theory

The participants actively sought involvement within the lives of its children both inside and outside of schools and with children's friends. Epstein's (1992) framework, which included six types of involvement, primarily focused on the school's responsibility to engage parents. While this framework has broadened the vision of parent involvement within the schools, it has failed to recognize involvement outside of school. This omission has neglected to recognize parent involvement within the home and community of home-school-community partnerships.

The culture's primary involvement was parenting. Participants transported their children to extra-curricular practices. Parents attended school functions and extra-curricular performances. The members of the culture also encouraged its children to have other children in the home. As seen in chapter 5, the culture and its children viewed these activities as involvement. With reference to Epstein's (1992) Type One involvement, parenting, should be broadened to include parenting activities, which occur outside of the school.

Epstein's (1992) Type Two involvement, communicating, challenged schools to create more effective forms of

communication. While members of the culture obtained information from schools, they also used others sources. In this study, parents validated the need for more effective forms of school communication. Participants characterized some forms of school communication as sporadic and sometimes nonexistent. Parents did not depend solely upon their children for accurate information because of past negative experiences. Parents also gained information and support from other parents. Parents increased their involvement by utilizing multiple information sources. Thus, Epstein's (1992) Type Two involvement should be expanded to include other informational sources.

Volunteerism occurred in a variety of venues. Participants served as homeroom parents, chaperones, speakers, and event coordinators within the school. Participants also provided support for school functions by providing supplies for events, such as sending food or drinks. The culture's involvement was not limited to school activities. Participants coached athletic teams, taught Sunday school, and coordinated community events. Realizing that the majority of the culture volunteered regularly for school and community events beacons

researchers to expand the definition of parent involvement beyond the school's realm and into the community.

As mentioned in chapter 5, parents were motivated to be involved out of a genuine concern for the community. The researcher referred to this as social consciousness. Many parents were members of community organizations such as 4-H, Junior League, and Optimist Club. Church attendance and involvement in church activities were commonplace. The resulting sense of community thus motivated involvement. Consequently, parent involvement ought to be broadened within the home-school-community model.

The researcher found that parents' involvement was not limited to the school. Seeking a model to represent the dynamic relationship of the home-school-community partnership, the researcher modified Epstein's (1987) model. See Figure 2. The researcher does not claim to have originated the link between the home and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Epstein, 1992) however. Rather, the researcher's intent for the model was to depict parents' community involvement that occurred outside of the school and family.

Within the model there were three spheres: family, school, and community. The amount of overlap was dependent upon time, age, and grade level (Force A); experience /philosophy of the family (Force B); experience/philosophy of the school (Force C); and immediate and surrounding environments (Force D). The latter represented Bronfenbrenner's (1986) mesosystems and exosystems. The microenvironment consisted of community organizations, agencies, and leaders. The macroenvironment consisted of governmental institutions and elected representatives. The internal structure represented by a cube containing multidirectional arrows represented the interpersonal relationships and influences of home-school-community partnerships (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Epstein, 1987). Each vertex of the cube represented a different facet of the three spheres. Visibility and clarity did not allow the researcher to connect the vertices. However, it should be stated that each vertex was interconnected. Using this parent involvement model, the child was placed between each vertex serving as the focal point for involvement (see Figure 1).

Within the model, parent involvement could occur within the community outside of the school as seen in the culture. The culture's involvement in community organizations and little league were examples of this. Other researchers have also noted similar involvement. Parent support for children's extra-curricular activities such as music lessons or computers would be represented (Schneider & Coleman, 1993).

This study showed that parent involvement occurred within the home, school, and community. Epstein's (1992) and Comer's and Haynes' (1991) definitions of involvement and research efforts should be expanded to address all areas of involvement and not just that of parent involvement within the school.

Questioning of Theory

The purpose of this study was to examine a culture of parents who were involved within a localized setting. Areas of expansion and data analysis revealed several areas that questioned existing research.

Parents were involved within the home, school, and community. Unfortunately, present definitions of involvement did not formally recognize the majority of efforts. As mentioned earlier, definitions of involvement

need to encompass parental efforts beyond school. For example, many of the working class participants were involved in activities which extended beyond the traditional definitions of involvement. Research that has failed to recognize this type of involvement might have viewed the working class as less involved. The researcher did not discount vast research done on the connection between socioeconomic status and involvement (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; DeMoss & Maiden, 1998; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Miller, 1986; Steele, 1994). Instead, she urged researchers to examine more closely the definition of involvement and the motivations for involvement.

By expanding the definitions of involvement and understanding the motivations for involvement, researchers ought to examine single-parent fathers and male involvement. As mentioned in chapter 4, three of the five single parents were men, but this was not typical of the larger region from which she selected participants. Research has found that mothers are primarily involved (Hoover-Dempsey, 1997; Steele, 1994). It was not the purpose of the researcher to compare gender involvement. However, after selective sampling involved parents, several

married and single-parent fathers were found. Further research should focus on males, both married and single, who are involved and examine how and why this involvement is taking place.

The researcher also acknowledged that not all parent involvement would yield positive results. In a few cases, parents recalled instances where relationships were broken within the home-school-community partnership. Occasionally, parents found school personnel uncooperative. Several times, parents reported volunteering for school activities but never being called. Several parents viewed the selection process for decision-making committees as biased. Consequently, participants oftentimes felt frustrated, however, they continued to be involved.

The researcher also found that some of the culture's attributes could have negative implications. For two upper-middle class participants, public image was a motivational factor. Motivational factors such as public image might limit the involvement of others instead of fostering more diversity. Parents who were motivated by public image did not question the lack of involvement by working class parents. Oftentimes they assumed that working parents were unable or unwilling to be involved.

More research needs to be done to address the quality and quantity of involvement. Research needs to encompass working class efforts and results. While negative instances are inevitable in any dynamic situation, more research should be conducted to understand how and why parents and school personnel are overcoming feelings of resistance in all circumstances. Researchers should not continue to dismantle efforts of involvement by focusing solely on the failures.

This study also questioned the literature on parent involvement at the secondary level. Previous research has documented a decrease in parent involvement at the secondary level (DeMoss & Maiden, 1998; Eccles & Harold, 1992; Jackson & Cooper, 1992; Stouffer, 1992). However, as in Schneider's and Coleman's (1993) study of eighth graders, their parents, teachers and school administrators, these parents did not report a decrease in involvement. Although the participants' type of involvement was dependent upon their children's grade and interests, members of the culture did recount instances where its communication with its children was difficult. Despite their adolescents' cries "not to be involved", parents continued their involvement and probed for information.

DeMoss et al. (1996) found that in some instances parent involvement increased at the secondary level; yet more research is needed at the secondary level to examine parents' motivations for and perceptions of involvement.

Recommendations

Previous research has demonstrated the need for and benefits of home-school-community partnerships (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Carr, 1996; Davies, 1991; Dixon, 1992; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 1983a, 1983b; Fine, 1993; Hymes, 1974; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Hyde, 1992; Loucks, 1992; Stouffer, 1992; Wagonseller, 1992; Zepeda & Langenbach, in press). Unfortunately, governmental mandates and school reform efforts aimed at achieving parent involvement have not always produced productive participation (Henry, 1996; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Sarason, 1995). Results of this study showed that a culture of parents in a localized setting was involved in schools. In light of this study, recommendations should be made to parents, school personnel, and future research.

Parents

Participants viewed involvement within the lives of their children both inside and outside of schools and with their children's friends as a natural extension of

parenting. Involvement was not seen as tasks to be done but as a process to be pursued.

The culture sought ways to become involved in the lives of its children. Some examples of involvement were more formal, such as coaching a team, volunteering for events, and chairing a committee. Others were more informal; for example, car-pooling, attending performances, and helping with homework.

The terms formal and informal were created from the culture's view of involvement. The culture spoke of traditional (formal) involvement as volunteering and decision-making. Commonplace, everyday events such as helping with homework and attending performances were viewed as informal. Both types were seen as equally important and vital components of parenting.

Thus, parents should seek ways to become involved with their children. School events and children's extra-curricular activities provide many opportunities for parent involvement. Parents should also not discount the importance of informal types of involvement. Encouraging children to invite friends into the home gives parents the opportunity to know children's friends.

As children entered adolescence, parents' involvement changed, as did avenues of communication. Due perhaps to a lack of education and adolescent resistance, some working class, single parents' involvement decreased. However, the majority of parents continued to be involved. Middle and upper class parents were not affected by their adolescents' pleas to not be involved. And ultimately many of these parents' actions received approval from their children.

Consequently, parents of adolescent children should continue to pursue involvement. As adolescents mature, the need for autonomy increases. During this period, the culture did not abandon its role as parent. Instead, the participants continued to seek ways to support their children and their children's activities.

While parents should seek multiple forms of communication at all times, this is especially true during adolescence. School conferences provide valuable information. Forming a network of other parents also provides needed information and support for parents.

The culture viewed involvement and the attainment of information as their responsibility. Many of the participants had experienced a lack of follow-through by the school. However, the culture did not relent on its

quest to be involved and to gain information. The culture was resilient. Even when school personnel fail to communicate, parents should continue to seek avenues of involvement and sources of information.

School Personnel

The culture's experience also has implications for school personnel. Governmental mandates have forced school personnel to address the issue of parent involvement. Cries of accountability and negative experiences with parents have caused some school personnel to cringe (Black, 1998). However, the establishment of charter schools and the increase in home schooling has caused educators to examine parent involvement possibilities.

Opportunities for parent involvement should be genuine. First, schools should seek ways to involve more parents. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, participants noted the exclusiveness of parents involved. Several Parents reported volunteering for events but never being called. Participants were also keenly aware of the "hidden agenda" when being selected. Participants reported school personnel as usually selecting only those who would "go along with the school," corroborating the research of Lewis and Nakagawa (1995). Selection for decision-making

boards was also based on socioeconomic status. While always using the same parents established familiarity, repeated use limited the longevity of support by discouraging parents and damaging perceptions in at least some instances.

Opportunities for involvement should embrace diversity. Schools ought to find ways to involve single and working class parents. School committees should represent the greater community, both racially and economically. Expectations and defined roles for involvement ought to be publicized prior to solicitation (Black, 1998; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995). Parents who are chosen to serve on committees should be empowered to make decisions, not just forced to be enablers of the status quo (Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995).

Once schools have requested parent support, follow-through is imperative. Participants recounted instances of arriving at school and feeling as if they did not belong. Partnerships need to be personalized and not ruled by "gesellschaft" i.e., bureaucratic techniques (Henry, 1996). The culture has shown that parents were willing to help and assume leadership roles. To enter into Toffler's (1980)

third wave, schools must reciprocate this spirit of collaboration.

Collaboration is dependent upon communication. Knowledge of how to be involved typically precedes involvement. The culture sought multiple sources for information. Unfortunately, many parents do not have the means or chose not to pursue information as actively. For example, the researcher asked Stephen, "How could a parent become involved if he/she did not have a phone, own a car, or take the newspaper?" He replied, "You'd be out of luck." Schools should seek other forms of communication (Carr, 1996; Epstein, 1995, Henry, 1996). Using tools such as, "Thursday Folders" provided parents in this culture with frequent information about their student's academic performance and general school news.

Future Research

While this research studied a culture of parents that was involved in schools in a localized setting, more research is needed to examine other cultures. Future studies, which corroborate, expand, and question the conceptions found in this research, are crucial. The paradigm for looking at home-school-community partnerships should continue to shift from "what isn't working" to "what

is working." Often research has focused on the barriers to parent involvement (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Henry, 1996; Hymes, 1974; Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Oklahoma Education Association, 1995; Rudnitski, 1992; Sarason, 1995). Understanding how parents and school personnel overcome these barriers would increase the understanding of partnerships.

Future research which seeks to go beyond the stereotype of the "European American, upper-middle class female" is crucial. While this study was representative of the larger community, racial diversity was limited. Researchers ought to break new ground in the areas of minority, working class, and male involvement. Similarly, studies which focus on parent involvement at the secondary level are needed.

Qualitative research is needed to examine administrators' perceptions and practices regarding involvement. Often research has placed administrators' and teachers' responses together. Others have focused solely on teachers' and teachers' practices (Epstein, 1983b, 1987; Epstein & Becker, 1982; Shumow & Harris, 1998). Realizing that the roles and influences of teachers and administrators differ, more studies highlighting school

administrators and home-school-community partnerships are needed.

Conclusion

This study examined a culture of parents in a localized setting involved in schools. Twenty-four parents were selectively sampled to participate in the phenomenographical study. Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews and transcriptions.

Data analysis revealed two conceptions. First, involved parents are motivated to actively pursue involvement within the lives of their children both inside and outside of schools and with their children's friends. Motivations for involvement included the members' own children, social consciousnesses, crises, personal backgrounds, public images, and views of self. The second conception was that involved parents seek information about their children and their children's schools through various sources. The culture gained information from its children, the school, and other parents.

The study's findings corroborated, expanded, and questioned existing research in the field of home-school-community partnerships. Recommendations based on the data

were made for parents, school personnel, and future research.

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Appendix A
Questionnaire

1. Where are you from, what is your age?
2. What is your:
 - a. Race?
 - b. Religion?
3. Are you married? If yes:
 - a. How long?
 - b. How many times?
4. How many children do you have?
5. How old are your children?
6. In what grade are your children?
7. Please tell me your life story beginning with childhood.
Tell me anything that you would consider significant
about growing up including:
 - a. What were your parents' occupations?
 - b. How many brothers and sisters did you have?
 - c. What were your parents' perceptions of education?
 - d. What were your perceptions of education?
 - e. Did you enjoy school? Were you a good student?
8. What happened after high school?
 - a. Did you attend college or a trade school?
 - b. How long did you attend?
 - c. What diplomas or degrees do you hold?
9. What is your current occupation?

10. If married, what is your spouse's occupation?
11. Which socioeconomic status best describes your family:
 - a. Lower b. Lower-middle c. Middle
 - d. Upper-middle e. Upper
12. Tell me about your own involvement in your student's life including:
 - a. How do you create a learning environment within the home?
 - b. How many parenting workshops have you attended?
 - c. How often do you transport you student to school-related events or extra-curricular activities?
Please name events.
 - d. In what ways do you communicate with the school?
 - e. In what ways have you volunteered at the school?
 - f. How often do you help your student with homework or other home-learning activities?
 - g. In what ways have you been involved in policy-making?
 - h. Have you participated in community services offered through the school?
13. How did you become involved?
14. Why did you become involved?

Appendix B

Personal Vignettes At the Time of the Study

Amy - Amy, a white, working class female in her twenties, grew up in a suburban community. After her parents divorced, Amy "bounced between three cities." Growing up Amy's parents were not involved in her education. In high school, Amy became pregnant with Caleb. She worked at various fast food restaurants while pursuing a degree in special education. Eventually, Amy married Caleb's father. They had two children. Caleb was in elementary school. Josh was a newborn.

Andy - Andy, a white, middle class male in his mid-forties, grew up in a suburban community. He was an only child. Andy's parents were very supportive of his education. Andy received a degree in English education. He held various jobs before becoming a high-school English teacher. While he was teaching, his wife filed for divorce. At various times following the divorce, Andy received custody of the children. His oldest daughter, Jaime, and son, Paul, were out of high school. His youngest daughter, Karen, was in middle school.

Barbara - Barbara, a white, middle class female, grew up in a rural community. She had two older brothers and one younger brother. Growing up, Barbara's parents were "very involved in our lives, but they worked, so they weren't involved in school much." Barbara was in her forties. She worked as a church secretary. Barbara had been married for 21 years. She and her husband had three sons aged, nine, 16, and 18.

Betsy - Betsy, a white, middle class female, grew up in an urban community. She had one older sister. Betsy, 46 years old, recalled that her parents were parents active in her education. Betsy graduated with a degree in education. While her children were at home, Betsy did not work outside of the home. After her children entered school, Betsy taught at an elementary school. She had been married 25 years. She and her husband had one son, a junior in college, and one daughter, a freshman in high school.

Billy - Billy, a Native American, middle class male, grew up in a suburban community. He had one brother. Growing up, Billy's parents were involved in his education. Billy, a former minister, had two master's degrees, one in theology and the other in secondary administration. Billy,

age 49, was an assistant principal in a suburban mid-high school. Billy had been married 30 years. He and his wife had two children. His son was 21 and his daughter was 25.

Cheryl - Cheryl, a white, upper-middle class female, grew up in a suburban community. Her parents had three girls of which Cheryl was the middle child. Cheryl recalled:

My mother was always real involved. She was always a homeroom mother, always worked and always there during homework time. You did homework before you played. She was always real involved in education. My dad worked out of town. He was never there.

Cheryl attended a small state university where she received a bachelor's and master's degree in nursing. She worked for a hospital as the Director over Women's and Children's Services. Cheryl had been married for 18 years. She was in her forties. Cheryl and her husband had three children - three, eight, and 13.

David - David, an African American, upper-middle class male, grew up in a rural community. He was one of nine siblings from a working class family. David's parents were not formally involved in school but were very supportive. David graduated from college with a degree in journalism

and went on to play professional football for several years. David owned two companies. He and Katrina, another participant, had been married 20 years. They had four children, a high school senior, a junior, a freshman, and a seventh grader.

Diane - Diane, a white, middle class female, grew up in a rural community. Growing up, she had two brothers. Her mother was "very involved". My dad was not because he worked; but on Sunday nights he always helped us with homework." After her children entered school, Diane earned a degree in education. She taught science at a local high school. Diane had been married 21 years. She and her husband had one daughter, a freshman in college, and one son, a sophomore in high school.

Frances - Frances, a white, upper-middle class female, grew up in an urban community. She was one of four siblings. Frances' mother was involved in "Brownies and Girl Scouts and teaching religious classes at church." Her father was "on the road a lot so de didn't." Frances received a degree in special education. Frances chose not to work outside of the home. She was in her forties. Frances had been married nineteen years. She and her

husband had four children, three of whom were boys - 18, 16, 13. They also had one ten-year-old daughter.

Gene - Gene, a white, middle class male, grew up in an urban community. He had one older sister. Growing up Gene's parents were not involved in his education. He recalled having everything he needed except for their "inner personal involvement." After Gene's divorce, he was awarded custody of their two children. His daughter was in middle school and son attended high school.

Jack - Jack, a white, working class male, grew up in a suburban community with his brothers and parents. Jack did not recall his parents' involvement. After retiring from the military, Jack returned to his hometown where he worked at an appliance store. After returning home, he and his wife divorced. Jack had full custody of his 12-year-old son.

Jo - Jo, a white, working class female, grew up in a rural community. Jo was the youngest of three children. Being the third child, Jo recalled that her parents' involvement had "dwindled down." Jo was in her thirties. She was pursuing a degree in radiology. Jo was a single parent of two girls. One of her daughters was in pre-kindergarten. The other daughter was ten.

Judy - Judy, a white, upper-middle class female, received her degree in nursing and worked in an operating room before staying home with her children. She had been married 22 years. Judy and her husband had three children, two of whom were girls age 17 and 19. Her son was nine.

Katrina - Katrina, a white, upper-middle class female, grew up in various communities. She had one older brother. Katrina's parents were involved in her education. She earned a bachelor's degree in Journalism. After graduating, Katrina married David, also a participant. They had been married 20 years. Katrina chose to stay at home with their four children, a senior, a junior, a freshman, and a seventh grader.

Kelsey - Kelsey, a 47-year-old, white, upper-middle class female, grew up in an urban community. She was an only child. Kelsey's parents were very involved and continued to be involved in her life. Kelsey graduated from college with an elementary education degree. She taught at an elementary school. Kelsey had been married over 25 years. She and her husband had two children, Hannah, who is twenty-one, and Craig, who is twenty-two.

Laurie - Laurie, a 46-year-old, white, middle class female, grew up in an urban community. Her family was upper-middle class. Growing up, Laurie and her two brothers attended an elite private school. Her parents' idea of involvement was "that you send kids to an exclusive, expensive, school, and that's what you're paying the people who work there to do - is to educate them. And you don't interfere." Laurie received a law degree and practiced law before marrying. She chose to maintain a middle class lifestyle and stay home with her children. After her children were in school, Laurie received a degree in nurse mid-wifery. She owns her own practice. Laurie and her husband had two daughters. Cathy was a junior in high school and Beth was a senior in high school.

Michelle - Michelle, an African American, working class female, grew up in a rural community. Michelle worked as a teaching assistant for many years before staying home with her children. She was a single-parent of six children. Two of them, a son and daughter, had graduated from high school. One daughter was in high school. Her two youngest daughters, Jennifer and Linda, along with her youngest son, attended a local elementary school.

Michael - Michael, a white, upper-middle class male, grew up in an urban community. He was an only child. Growing up Michael's mother was a homeroom parent. His father worked a great deal. After graduating from college, Michael attended law school. He and his wife had been married twenty years. They had five sons, fifteen, thirteen, eleven, ten, and seven.

Natalie - Natalie, a white, middle class female in her forties, grew up in an urban community. She had one older sister. Natalie described her parents' involvement as such:

My mother didn't work when we were going to school.

So, she was always around to help ... homeroom. She was like a homeroom mother in elementary school. She was always there, and then Daddy was always one of those that drove us everywhere. You know, if you needed to go to the first football game, we would pile in the car and ... he took us. They were always there.

Natalie received a degree in foreign language. She worked part-time as a Spanish assistant for a school system. She and her husband had two daughters, 14 and 17.

Patty - Patty, a white, middle class female, grew up in a rural community. She was the oldest of three girls.

Growing up, Patty's mother was "very involved in school activities and school functions, and things like that - Brownies ... I can remember my dad working a lot." Patty dropped out of high school and married young. After having three children, Patty got a divorce. She remained a single parent for many years until her youngest son was in middle school. She had one son, Keith, age 21 and two daughters, Allison, age 19, and Sharon, age 18.

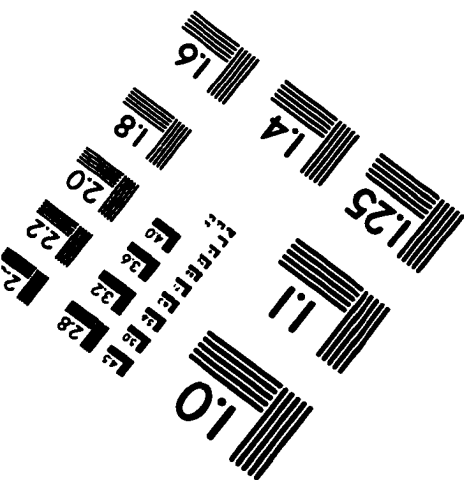
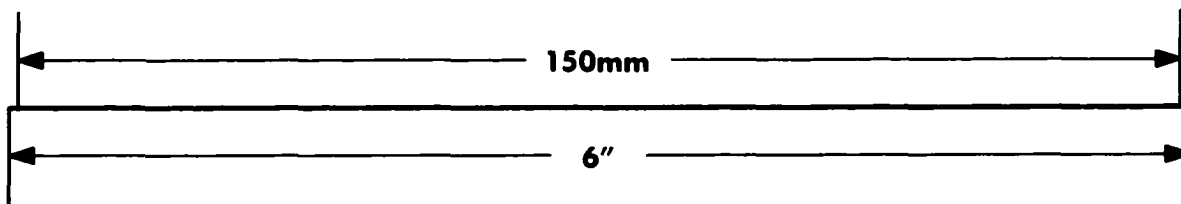
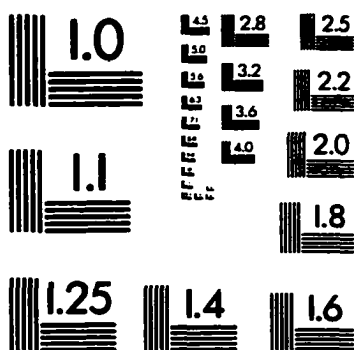
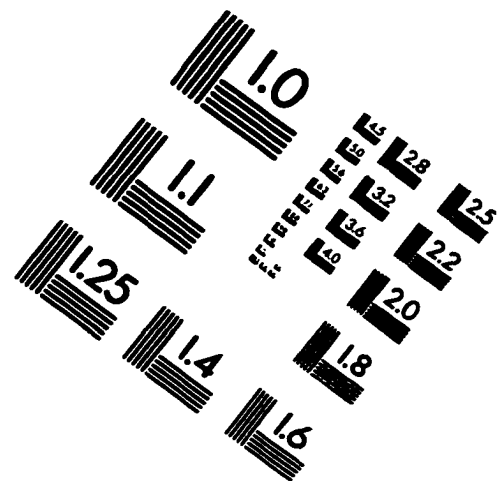
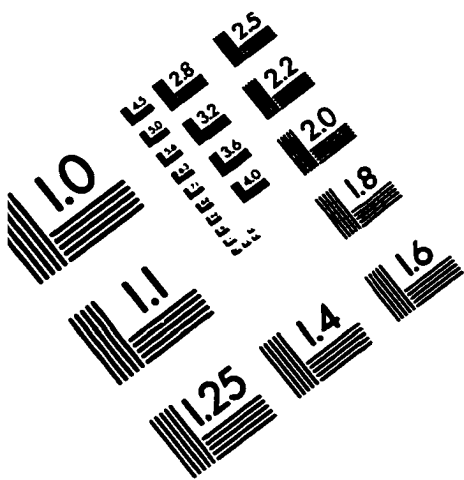
Sally - Sally, a white, middle class female, grew up in a rural community. She was the oldest of three girls. Sally did not remember any formal involvement by her parents but recalled that they were interested. Sally earned a degree in journalism. For many years, Sally did not work outside of the home. After her husband lost his job, she began to work part-time at a small art center. Sally was in her mid-forties. She had been married 25 years. She and her husband had three sons, a junior, a freshman, and a sixth grader. They also adopted a girl who was a fourth grader.

Scott - Scott, a Native American, middle class male in his mid-forties, grew up in a suburban community. His parents "supported my efforts in school but stayed pretty busy making a living." Scott taught electronics and

woodworking at a high school before receiving his degree in counseling. He had been married twenty-five years. He and his wife reared three children, a niece and a son who graduated from high school and a daughter who was a sophomore in high school.

Stephen - Stephen, a white middle class male, grew up in an urban community. He was the oldest of three children. Growing up, Stephen's mother was a homemaker and his father finished upholstery. Neither of his parents was extremely involved in his education. Stephen owned his own company, which sold a paint product. Stephen and his wife had been married 18 years. They had two children, a sixth grader and a sophomore. He also had one son 28 years old, from his first marriage.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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