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Power Sharing in the Principalship: Nine Principals' Perceptions

by

Gloria Gail Zbryski 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Power Sharing in the Principalship: Nine Principals' Perceptions** submitted by Gloria Gail Zbryski in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

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This work is dedicated with great love and appreciation to the members of my family, those who have preceded me and those who will succeed me:

Robert and Vivian Rutherford

My parents, who instilled a belief that *possibility* is a state of mind manifested by commitment, persistence, and hard work;

Fred Zbryski

My father-in-law, whose enthusiastic support brought encouragement to me;

Bob Zbryski

My dear husband, whose love, patience, and enthusiastic support provided a strong and unwavering foundation for me throughout this undertaking;

Frederick, Gail-Ann, and Roberta

My children, whose encouragement, interest, and support were a source of great strength;

Piper, Gabrielle, Kyler, Alyssa, Tori, and Aaron

My grandchildren, in the hope that they will grow to cherish learning in all of its many forms and be inspired to pursue their own dreams, whatever they may be.

Abstract

The mid 1980s to the mid 1990s found Alberta principals challenged by conflicting expectations regarding the use of power in the role of the principal. This naturalistic inquiry has implemented the interpretive paradigm, emphasizing the characteristics and significance of the human experience as described by nine participants.

The study was undertaken using a self-selected sample of nine principals. The participants represented a cross section of school types, sizes, and community context within two geographically large rural school jurisdictions, one in the south and one in the north of Alberta. The purpose of this research was to discover and describe the understandings and experience of these nine principals regarding the phenomenon of power sharing. Two in-depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out with each participant. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed.

The study supported the view the term *power sharing* may be an ill-conceived term. The study did not support the idea power is shared. It did support the view all of the participants were attempting to implement new collaborative mechanisms. The findings support the view the participants varied in their understanding of power and power sharing.

The findings led this researcher to conclude further study of power assertion in the role of the principal is required. Further research could inform educators serving in the role of principal with ideas to bridge current practice and new recommendations being made by change agents. Specifically, change agents are currently suggesting that conflict, diversity, and resistance be viewed as positive, essential forces for success.

Diverse stakeholders are required to be involved in this highly collaborative and political environment. Therefore, it would be useful for principals to be well informed regarding how power-assertion practices limit or support effective practice in schools. The findings of this study support the view legal mandates directed by provincial legislation (School Act and Alberta Education regulation), school division policy, and perceived superintendent preferences influence the expectations and inform, if not direct, the power-assertion practices of principals. Therefore it is important these individuals and agencies be cognizant of how their mandates and directives impact the power-assertion practices of principals.

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CHAPTER 1

THE QUESTION OF POWER AND POWER SHARING IN THE PRINCIPALSHIP

Introduction

Research since 1960 has increasingly focused on the importance of the leadership role of the principal. In 1960 A. W. Reeves anticipated a dilemma to be faced by Alberta school principals:

> I believe that the principal, in terms of this 'newer' concept, is a local educational statesman, a cultural leader in his school community. First a teacher, then an administrator: a scholar in each. A leader who acts in a dual capacity: a representative of the staff and at the same time a representative of legal authority—the school board. An administrator whose specialty is that of a generalist; a coordinator skilled in human relations; a constant source of inspiration and assistance to teachers. (p. 15)

In the 1980s and 1990s Alberta principals have been charged variously with the responsibility of being visionary leaders, evaluators, professional politicians, role models, mentors, effective leaders, and efficient managers (Aitken &Townsend, 1998; Barth, 1990; Bosetti, 1986; Foster, 1986; Fullan, 1985, 1988, 1993, 1998, 1999; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1994, 1996; Van Tamelen, 1999).

The *principalship* is defined as an administrative position within the organizational hierarchy of the school. The principal is perceived as a manager with a responsibility to meet the organizational objectives of the school district. Therefore, it is in this capacity the principal occupies a position of considerable potential power. Etzioni (1964) stated:

> Administration assumes a power hierarchy. Without a clear ordering of higher and lower in rank, in which the higher in rank have more power than the lower ones and hence can control and coordinate the latter's activities, the basic principle of administration is violated; the organization ceases to be a coordinated tool. (p. 76)

Alberta principals are currently challenged by conflicting expectations regarding their use of power in the role of principal. Specifically, principals are expected at once to empower teachers by sharing power while retaining and exercising control as deemed appropriate with the principal's role (Coleman & LaRocque, 1990; Fullan, 1998, 1999; Holdaway, Thomas, & Ward, 1998; Hoy & Miskel, 1991; Johnson & Holdaway, 1991; Moynes, 1986; Pratt & Common, 1986; Schonberger, 1984; Sergiovanni, 1990b; Van Tamelen, 1999).

The ideas presented by theorists and researchers lead to the question of how the effective practices of principals may be related to a principal's ability to balance these competing demands. We were further led to inquire what factor or combination of factors would lead to this ability. Would a principal's understanding of the phenomena of power and power sharing affect that principal's ability to balance these competing demands?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the following questions:
How do principals understand (make sense of) the phenomenon of power sharing, and how do they perceive that it is reflected in their practice? More specifically, I will examine the perceptions of nine school principals regarding power sharing as it applies to their current practice as principals.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for a variety of reasons. From a macro perspective (for the purpose of this study, the school district level), the study is timely in that it

investigates power sharing at a time when districts and schools are obliged to consider collaborative approaches. This pressure arises from two different sources: (a) management theory, which has turned toward restructuring institutions with a more collaborative management style; and (b) teachers' associations which demand teachers' professionalism be enhanced through more direct participation in decision-making. Cistone (1989), who identified school-based management (SBM) and shared decision making (SDM) as the restructuring strategies being used in schools today, specifically referred to these as the "prominent feature of *perestroika* in educational governance" (p. 263). The following statement from Fennel's (1992) study of a new curriculum implementation clearly exemplifies this new perception of the need for principals to share power:

> Power sharing in school organizations is a key factor in the implementation of new curriculum policies. Principals with the abilities to juxtapose the needs and agendas of teachers and students with their own to create highly collaborative environments appear to be the most successful leaders of implementation processes. (p. 1)

Researchers investigating leadership and school effectiveness, and change innovations have corroborated the importance of the principal as a key player in the school implementation process (Fullan, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Yet, although effective-schools research has consistently cited strong instructional leadership as one of the necessary correlates for success, it has not specifically addressed the power (decision-making autonomy and authority) a principal may assert to exercise the 'strong leadership' that researchers have concluded is necessary for effective and excellent schools. Research has tended to indicate principals have the power (authority and autonomy) to exercise leadership in their school if they choose to do so (Lyons, 1987),

but an understanding of the concept of power and how it may be shared in exercising leadership in their school is lacking.

There have been a limited number of studies with an emphasis on power sharing. Two such studies (Bonita, 1991; Fennel, 1992) were quantitative and specific in nature. For example, Bonita's study focused on the principal's perception of how control is shared in a variety of decision areas reflecting the principal's organizational situation task areas. In contrast, Fennel's study was focused on power sharing in school organizations as a key factor in the implementation of new curriculum policies. The study specifically investigated what the optimal balance of power is between principals and teachers involved in curriculum implementation in schools. While researchers might productively examine these and related questions, the field of educational administration could also benefit from systematically collected empirical descriptions of the actual on-the-job behavior of school principals. Qualitative research could increase understanding of the work of principals and the phenomenon of power sharing. Although descriptions from qualitative research data collection will not by themselves advance theory underlying the study and practice of principals, the availability of such data could provide researchers with a basis for generating theory and developing researchable problems bearing on power sharing in the principalship.

The significance of this study is that it is qualitative and focuses on the principal's understanding of power sharing. In doing so, the study acknowledges the following:

1. The actions of principals are framed by their understandings, values, beliefs, needs, and interests, as well as the multiple demands, priorities, and values operating in their schools and their environments.

2. The characteristics of their schools and their environments shape principals' understandings of and responses to power and power sharing.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

Delimitations

This study was delimited to the following:

1. analysis of the experiences and understandings of nine principals,

2. analysis of the experiences and understandings of nine principals in two rural Alberta public school districts, and

3. analysis of the experiences and understandings of principals in relation to power sharing by those principals.

Limitations

This study was limited by the following:

1. the amount of time available for data collection, the availability and good will of participants, and the cost of the data-collection process;

2. the willingness and ability of the participants to recall, articulate, and share their experiences, beliefs, perceptions, feelings, and reactions;

3. the availability of documents relating to policy regarding authority;

4. the methodology used—nine case studies based on data collected through semi-structured interviews, and document analysis (alternative methodologies would have produced different insights about power sharing); and

5. my skill and knowledge: my ability to develop and maintain an appropriate climate for the interviews; my ability to conduct interviews using open-ended questions; my ability to record accurately the data based on casual conversations and observations;

my ability to analyze the data; and my ability to convey the perceptions, experiences, and understandings of the participants accurately in the report of the research.

Assumptions

The research was undertaken on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. Each principal would understand and experience power sharing differently and therefore might be influenced to act in different ways.

2. Principals would be involved in or have considered power sharing.

3. Contextual factors within a given school or school system would affect the experiences and understandings of the principals as they shared power.

4. A case study design, based on semi-structured interviews and document analysis, was an appropriate method to use to investigate the research question that was the focus of this study.

Organization of the Thesis

This study is reported in six chapters. In Chapter 1 the study is introduced, and a brief rationale for the study is provided. The purpose and significance of the study, the ways in which the study was delimited, the limitations placed on the study, and the assumptions upon which the research was conducted are considered.

In Chapter 2 a review of the literature is presented. First, an overview of the traditional views and theoretical perspectives of power is discussed. Second, is a review of the operational perspectives of power is provided. Last, current trends in social justice, trust, and power dispersion in organizations is reviewed.

In Chapter 3 the methodology used in this research is outlined. The philosophical underpinnings of the research design, the processes used to select research sites and to

gain access to those sites, and participant selection for the study are outlined. Further, the method of the data collection, an accounting of the pilot study, the method of data analysis, and the tests of methodological rigor utilized for the study are discussed, as well as the ethical guidelines adopted for this research.

In Chapter 4 the participants are described in terms of their personal backgrounds in school administration and the characteristics of their schools. This chapter serves to establish the personal and school-level context of the study.

In Chapter 5 the findings of the study are reported; specifically, the understandings and experiences of nine principals. This information is presented in three sections each of which represents the understandings and experiences of the participants in relation to themes emerging from the data.

In Chapter 6 the findings of the study are presented through an interpretation of the multiple understandings and experiences of the participants presented in Chapter 5. The results of the data analysis are summarized and discussed in light of the questions that guided the research. The conclusions drawn are discussed through a review of the analysis of the findings and themes in relation to previous knowledge about power and power sharing as presented in the literature reviewed, leading to a discussion of implications and recommendations for further research and administrative practice and training. The chapter ends with a few reflections on the study from my personal perspective regarding the process of interpretive research and understanding of the power-sharing phenomenon.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature on power and power sharing. The review focuses on various ways of conceiving power, the use of power by individuals within the organization, and the implications of each of these different conceptions for those involved in asserting power or power sharing. The chapter is organized into five major sections. The first focuses on the history of the traditional views and/or theoretical perspectives of power. The second section shifts the focus to conceptual frameworks and the school organization, specifically discussing schools as bureaucracies and schools as loosely coupled. The third section reviews the concept of power sharing and such associated concepts as collaboration and empowerment. The fourth section discusses power and the role of the principal. The final section discusses some of the limitations of current research in relation to power sharing.

An Historical Overview of Traditional Views and Theoretical Perspectives of Power

Concepts of Power

The literature on both personal and organizational power is rich and transcends many academic disciplines, and yet there is still no consensus on an exact definition of this term (Berle, 1967; Blau, 1964; Cartwright, 1965; Dahl, 1957; Foucault, 1977; Hobbes, 1968; Jacobs, 1971; Kaplan, 1964; Kotter, 1978; Lasswell & Kaplan, 1950; May, 1972; Mechanic, 1962; Nettle, 1969; Russell, 1938; Simon, 1959; Tawney, 1976; Weber, 1947; Wolfe, 1965; Wrong, 1979). However, an examination of these varied

definitions reveals three aspects of power. Specifically, they are behavioral response by the power asserter, the relational aspect of power, and power as a personal capacity or ability. The definitions vary according to which aspects have been included.

The concept that power can be measured externally in the behavioral change believed to be caused by the exercise of power is reflected in the definitions of Simon (1959) and Dahl (1957). Simon maintained the assertion 'A has power over B' can be replaced by 'A's behavior causes B's behavior.' Similarly, Dahl asserted, "A has power over B to the extent he can get B to do something B would not otherwise do" (pp. 202-203).

The definitions put forward by Weber (1947, 1964), Hall (1982), Emerson (1962), Jacobs (1971), and Wolfe (1965) are representative of those emphasizing the relational aspect of power. Weber defined power as "the probability (opportunity) that one actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability (opportunity) rests" (p. 117). Hall asserted that power is relational, adding that one cannot have power in isolation. Emerson expanded the relational definition by suggesting that power resides "implicitly in the other's dependency" (p. 7). In other words, two people in a power relationship are mutually dependent upon each other. Jacobs and Wolfe both defined power as a social relationship and not a personal attribute. These definitions, which focus on the relational aspect of power, identify the source or the basis of power as being found either in both entities in the social relationship or in the interaction between the two. Therefore, they support the idea that power is a function of both the power holder and the power assenter.

Russell (1938), Metcalf and Urwick (1965), Tawney (1976), Blau (1976), Kotter (1978), and Kaplan (1964) identified the concept of power as a personal capacity or ability. Bertrand Russell defined power as "the production of intended effects" (p. 12). Metcalf and Urwick maintained, if left unchecked, "power is a self-developing capacity" (p. 100). Tawney defined power as the capacity of an individual to modify the behavior of other individuals in the manner he/she desires, thus combining both the behavioral response and relational aspect of power, as does Russell's definition. Similarly, Blau stated, "[Power is] the ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others despite resistance" (p. 116), whereas Kotter (1979) suggested:

> Power is a measure of a person's potential to get others to do what he or she wants them to do, as well as to avoid being forced by others to do what he or she does not want to do. (p. 1)

Here, Kotter qualified his definition with the understanding power flows in only one direction, with no influence being reversed. Last, Kaplan stated: "[Power is] the ability of one person or group of persons to influence the behavior of others, that is, to change the probabilities that others will respond in certain ways to specified stimuli" (p. 186).

Lasswell and Kaplan's (1950) later work would take this definition, which identifies the concept of power as a personal ability, and move forward into the effect of power by focusing on the process of the power exercise. The definitions of Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) and Bierstedt (1950) do not attend to the three areas previously discussed, but rather focus on this process and the 'internalization' that takes place as a result of it.

Bierstedt (1950) drew attention to the dispositional nature of power when he defined power as the ability to employ force or sanctions, not their actual employment.

He stated, "Power is latent force . . . Power itself is the prior capacity which makes the application of force possible" (p. 730).

Although Lasswell and Kaplan (1950) attended to the process of power, they also introduced the notion of internalization (policy change requiring more than behavioral response on the part of the power asserter). They defined power as "a special case of the exercise of influence: it is the process of affecting the policies of others with the help of (actual or threatened) severe deprivations for nonconformity with the policies intended" (p. 186). To make a policy change, an individual has to be convinced the change should be embraced by him/her, not only now, but also in the future, requiring a change in his/her belief system; thus, the policy becomes internalized.

These definitions embody a whole array of attitudes and convictions about power in society. First, power is assigned to individuals rather than to institutions or entire societies. Second, the definitions attribute power to individuals only insofar as those individuals enter into specific social relationships with other individuals; the power of the individual is then a property of the social relationships in which he/she participates. Last, the power of the individual is manifest in its effect upon other individuals; in other words, in their compliance. Thus power is defined here as 'power over' rather than 'power to.'

There are two concepts of power that are juxtaposed throughout the literature. The first concept presents power as finite, manipulative, and producing winners and losers. The second concept presents power as a shared resource, encouraging people to be involved in the decision-making process without feeling manipulated (facilitative power). In attempts to categorize power, Bacharach and Lawler (1980), Etzioni (1964), French and Raven (1968), and Scott and Mitchell (1976) emphasized the complex relationship

between superior and subordinate and suggested a need to secure compliance with authority in the organization. There are as many perspectives as there are writers engaged in the subject; however, there seems to be one common element among the theorists: They all seem to agree with Weber's (1964) very general definition, which states, "Power might be seen as the probability which an individual has of implementing his will in spite of opposition" (p. 117).

Theorists such as Daudi (1986) suggested implicit to these early theorist definitions is that power is placed within an interaction. These authors seem to have implied the actors show consideration for each other, but still the analysis is aimed towards power *per se*. Power is attributed to an actor as if it was property, and the ambition is the measurability of the phenomenon (p. 186). Further, Daudi suggested:

> Instead of stopping at the definition, there by annihilating the possibility of understanding the abstract dimension, the evasive essence and the identity of power, we carry the discussion further to the premises that might conceivably be related to the phenomenon of power as an abstract idea as well as to the manifestation of the phenomenon. (p. 186)

In this section I have discussed the concept of power as it is presented in the theory of organization. Within this body of literature, power has been viewed as a phenomenon developed alongside legitimate authority and is analyzed as a dysfunction that disturbs the assumed balance in a given system. Theorists such as Daudi (1986) recommended an analysis of the opposition of power, directing the analysis towards the outer territory of power from the perspective of an individual, a group, a coalition, or an organization, depending upon which motives and interests are the strongest at the time and on what the actor experiences as being the most important (p. 215).

Power and Organizations

This section aims to provide a brief overview of the issues of the major developments that occurred in organization theory after the 1960s. First, the identification of significant *theoretical development* occurring in organizational studies spanning the 1970's to the 1990's is provided. The focus is twofold: (a) identification of changes in the way in which *organization* has been conceptualized; and (b) implications for the manner in which organization theory and analysis are presently formulated and practiced. Second is the identification of *organizational forms* in industrial societies. More specifically, tracing the rise of the flexible, network-based configurations of organization from the rational bureaucratic organizational predecessor. Last, *conceptual schemes* providing the impetus for the modernist-postmodernist debate in organization literature are identified.

Organizations: Theoretical Developments

In *Rethinking Organizations* Reed and Hughes (1992) stated, "Since the end of the 1960s there have been very significant changes in the way in which the concept of 'organization' is defined and the practice of 'organizational analysis' conceived" (p. 1). In Reed's (1992) view the 30-year period from 1960 to 1990 was divided into three phases of theoretical change and development during which different conceptions of organization and organizational analysis were dominant. After a thorough analysis of the three identified phases of theoretical development, he concluded, "The underlying intellectual trajectory revealed . . . a direction of increasing diversity, plurality and controversy, as well as the fragmenting dynamic which they have set in motion" (p. 2).

The demise of organizational functionalism (system-theoretic models) has been addressed in whole or in part since the mid 1960s (Benson, 1975; Cicourel, 1964;

Silverman, 1970). Since the end of the 1960s there have been significant changes in the definition of the concept of the organization and changes in how the organization is analyzed.

Reed (1992) suggested theoretical development in organizational analysis of the late 1960s focused on a system-based contingency approach that concentrated on the adaptability of organizational designs to environmental imperatives. (Mills & Murgatroyd, 1991; Reed, 1985; Thompson & McHugh, 1990). The problematic of the 1960s was that of *order*. The focus was on how organizational survival was possible when threatened by environmental forces and pressures which threatened the organization's existence (Thompson, 1967). Ontologically, *organization* was viewed as a distinct entity that depended on maintaining stability and integrating mechanisms to facilitate survival in a potentially hostile environment (Gouldner, 1971).

Alternative formulations to systems-based approaches appeared in the 1970s. These new theories suggested organizations were reproduced and transformed through cultural and political processes. This new systems theory was based on identifying the dimensions of the formal organizational structure and the environmental context (Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981; Strauss, 1978). The problematic centered on *domination*—an emphasis on the social and political processes through which organizational power is mobilized and legitimated (McNeil, 1978). Theory and research moved from concentrating on causal relationships between environmental contingencies and organizational design to the identification of political and ideological manipulations (Clegg, 1975; Pfeffer, 1982).

During the 1980s the construction of organizational reality become the main problematic (Power, 1990; Reed, 1991; Turner, 1990). The new problematic overlapped with postmodernist thinking.

Organizational studies originally developed within the modernist discourse, which was based on the search for rational scientific theories. These studies progressed, overlapping with the current postmodernist thinking which reverses the relationship between theoretical language and 'objective' reality by treating language as the master of 'objective' reality.

The change of direction evident in the 1980s was due partly to the proliferation of alternative frameworks. A significant turning point came with Burrell and Morgan's (1979) proclamation that organization theory was imprisoned in a set of ontologically delimited paradigms, essentially incommensurable paradigms. If this analysis of the field was accepted, then there could no longer be an uncontested orthodoxy; yet neither was there a clear alternative, only a plurality of theoretical options with no apparent discourse to cross paradigms. Further, Morgan (1986) proposed organization theorizations were 'metaphorical' and characterized by complete relativism; thus ways of understanding or imagining organization were a matter of consumer choice. Despite theoretical relativism, 'organization' has not lost its status as a theoretical or substantive problematic; order, control, change, culture, and meaning are concepts still in the service of a 'modernist' project. More important, organization is still a necessary empirical category, though new theoretical developments have clearly rejected the centrality of and focus on 'the organization.' Organizations are now being theorized as being institutionally embedded in social and cultural practices as opposed to *objectivity*. The abandonment of this one

shared critical thread is significant. One can locate the current diversity and incoherence of organization studies by a consideration of theory, organizational form, and problematic. It should be noted although 'objectivity' is generally out of favor some theorists continue to defend (Donaldson, 1985) it and practitioners frequently reproduce it (in most OB/OT textbooks). Further, the 'realist' debates in social theory continue to challenge the scientism upon which organizational 'rationality' rested as never having been fully determined (Bhaskar, 1975; Keat & Urry, 1975). The anthropocentric nature of social theory and epistemological conventions is an important element and focus in 'realist' arguments against positivism. This changes the status of theory and the role of agency and social context in the production of knowledge.

The system-theoretic position has been weak when confronting the paradoxical nature of actor and agency, meaning and interpretation, structure and process, goal and purpose. If this indeterminacy cannot be resolved, then the modernist-postmodernist projects will have limited promise of an incremental incorporation of one by the other (Reed & Hughes, 1992, pp. 1-15).

The tension placed on this shared thread is revealed by the locations of the 'problematic' in organization theory. These theoretical tensions and developments have occurred through disciplinary permeability in attempts to come to an understanding of 'organization.' Despite theoretical changes introduced into organization theory, continuity in the narrative has been maintained through the retention of organization as the theoretical core and problematic. However, with the more recent challenge posed by postmodernist approaches to knowledge, an 'overturning' of modernist thinking, the concept of 'organization' itself is now at issue, though none of the authors writing in this

mode or assessing its impact on organization studies explicitly abandoned it (Hassard & Pym, 1990; Thompson & McHugh, 1990). The vocabulary employed still rests heavily upon 'organization,' but the constitutive elements of the reality it represents seem to be changing from empirical categories to communicative constructs.

The Operational Perspective of Power

Power in Organizational Settings

Most modernist studies of power in organizations have focused on *hierarchical power*, the power of supervisors over subordinates or bosses over employees (Pfeffer, 1981). Applied to organizational settings, power concepts vary immensely. March (1966) stated, "In being used to explain almost everything, the concept of power can become almost a tautology, used to explain that which cannot be explained by other ideas, and incapable of being disproved as an explanation for actions and outcomes" (p. 39).

Most modernist views on power, however, emphasize a relational aspect in which one individual overcomes the resistance of another in order to achieve a desired objective. Nyberg (1981), citing Winter (1973) and McClelland (1975), stated power is not a special individual trait or motive, but implies a relational aspect emphasizing a social, cooperative effort between individuals:

> The minimum conditions for actual or potential power are two people and one plan for action. These conditions mean that power is always partly social, partly psychological, and invariably instrumental. The social aspect is marked hierarchy, delegation and cooperation; the psychological aspect is identified with several forms of consent (including obedience) and the withdrawal of consent. The instrumental aspect is a blend of the pragmatic principles that govern rational problem solving—the exercise of executive abilities in a social context by way of cooperative effort in accomplishing plans of action. (p. 41)

The power of individuals within the organization is fundamentally determined by two factors: the importance of what they do in the organization and their skill in doing it

(Pfeffer, 1981). Perrow (1970) stated, "In complex organizations, tasks are divided up between a few major departments or subunits, and all of these subunits are not likely to be equally powerful" (p. 59).

Thus, the differentiation of assignments or roles by the amount of power each possesses is an inevitable consequence of a division of labor, a characteristic of most organizations, including schools. Here the amount of power an individual possesses is derived from the importance of the activity performed; and in this sense, power can be viewed as a structural phenomenon. Power also derives from the particular skill level of individuals within the organization as well as from the ability of various participants "to convince others within the organization that their specific tasks and their abilities are substantial and important" (Pfeffer, 1981, p. 98).

Although this study was not concerned with the actual outcomes of the exercise of power, perceptions of the power of others was an important consideration, because these perceptions can be a significant factor in how well one individual influences another to accomplish a given task, solve a problem, or achieve a goal. French and Raven (1968) referred to this in elaborating their view of power as a potential influence that one actor could exert on another.

Over a period of time the distribution of power within a social setting can become legitimated and is therefore transformed into authority (Weber, 1947). This transformation of power is important because it addresses the issue of controls within the organization. In this regard, norms and expectations develop which make the exercise of influence both expected and accepted. As Pfeffer (1981) asserted:

> Social control of one's behavior by others becomes an expected part of organizational life. Rather than seeing the exercise of influence within organizations as a contest of strength or force, power, once it is transformed through legitimation into authority, is not resisted. (p. 99)

This is not to say that subordinates have no power. Rather, as Mechanic (1962) stated, "Lower level employees have, in reality, a great deal of power" (p. 349), which is usually associated with particular skills associated with their jobs. Further, Mechanic's findings indicate that in spite of the considerable degree of power possessed by the lower-level employees, those employees seldom attempt to exercise their power or to resist the instructions of their managers. Recent research by Bonita (1991) corroborated this behavior in the school systems he studied. This study reported a strong relationship between principals' perceptions of how the superintendent wanted control to be shared in various task areas and how control was actually shared.

Of equal importance is the theory relating to power and resistance (Barbalet, 1993). Barbalet maintained:

> Power relations imply acceptance on the part of those subject to them. They also imply resistance. This has been regarded as paradoxical, if not contradictory. But acceptance by social actors of the legitimacy of power over them does not imply that they cannot attempt to moderate its effects. That is an acceptance of power does not preclude resistance. Pragmatic or expedient acceptance of power includes a significant resistive element, either because of an absence of interest in the realization of the goals of power, or because of an over hindrance of its proper operations. The distinction implicit here between 'frictional' and 'intentional' resistance raises another matter, namely, the idea that resistance to power leads to conflict. Resistance can take different forms, but none are necessarily associated with conflict. What they have in common, rather, is the fact that resistance imposes limits on power. Indeed, it is through its limitation on power that resistance contributes to the outcome of power relations. (p. 531)

Positional Power

Although the principal occupies a strategic leadership position within the hierarchical organization of the school system, the formal authority of this position is dependent upon others who occupy a superordinate position. Subordinates in the organization may also grant authority to the principal. French and Raven (1968) suggested these subordinates hold the belief that the individual in authority has a legitimate right to prescribe behavior for them. However, Etzioni (1964) maintained that a subordinate's acceptance of the formal authority of the superior does not extend to all zones of organizational life. Principals, for example, who are perceived by staff as having managerial expertise are not always seen as possessing instructional expertise (Roe & Drake, 1974).

Personal factors also influence subordinate acceptance of authority. In addition to positional power, Stimson and Appelbaum (1988) introduced the dimension of *personal power*. Here, *personal power* is derived largely from the personal characteristics of the individual and as a product of the relationship between superordinate and subordinate.

Role expectation and personal factors, then, are significant influences on a principal's behavior. According to the social system model formulated by Getzels and Guba (1957), social behavior is a function of both role and personality.

According to Getzels and Guba (1957), roles are most important and usually defined in part by expectations. Although principals occupy unique positions within the school, they "are not actors devoid of unique needs" (Hoy & Miskel, 1978, p. 49). Although it is possible, at least conceptually, to describe and predict behavior solely in terms of position, it is clear the personal dimension plays an important role and affects

not only the goals an individual attempts to achieve, but also the way in which an individual interacts with others.

School boards and superintendents stress control in order to achieve the goals of education, and it is usually the first-line supervisory managers, the principals, who are held accountable for accomplishing these objectives (Haga, Graen, & Dansereau, 1974; Hagstom, 1967; Hall, 1981). What are the links between a principal's behavior and the strong influence of superiors and other power groups? Or, for that matter, what is the link between teachers' behavior and the strong influence of the principal?

A number of researchers have noted the use of different types of power has differing consequences for the relationship between the superior and the subordinate (Etzioni, 1965; French & Raven, 1968; Raven & Kruglanski, 1969). French and Raven, for example, viewed the influence aspect of power as stemming from five sources: *Reward power* is limited to those situations in which the reward is meaningful for the power recipient. *Coercive power* is based on the recipient's perceptions of the ability of the power holder to distribute punishments. *Legitimate power* derives from the consent of the recipients that the power holder has the right to influence him or her. *Referent power* is present when the recipient tries to behave as the power holder. *Expert power* is based on special knowledge attributed to the power holder by the recipient. Bacharach and Lawler (1980) added *access to knowledge* as an additional base. Etzioni (1961) identified three categories: normative, remunerative, and coercive. *Normative power* relates to the ability to allot and manipulate symbolic rewards, especially in areas carrying esteem and prestige. *Remunerative power* is based on the ability of the organization to hand out rewards or resources. *Coercive power* depends on fear of the application or threat of the

application of various sanctions. Etzioni related these bases of power to organizational structure.

Scott and Mitchell (1976), in commenting on the French and Raven (1968) model, stated that these "sources" can be construed as means for achieving compliance with authority in an organization. Similarly, in his theory of compliance, Etzioni (1965) suggested an individual will relate differently to another individual or organization that is exercising control over him or her depending on the type of power used for control, and this response will range from alienation to commitment.

Clegg (1977), Kipnis et al. (1984), and Bacharach and Baratz (1962) have criticized the formulation of the 'bases of power' view of power. Clegg criticized on two counts: first, the *a priori* nature of the formulation; and second, the underlying assumption that particular 'resources' will have the same utility in all situations. Watkins (1989), agreeing with Clegg's criticisms, claimed that the base of power formulations overlooks "the fact that historical circumstances are perpetually in a state of flux and that social sites do not have uniform characteristics but differ in marked ways." Clegg earlier charged:

> The assumption of 'resource' based explanations of 'power' ought also to entail an exposition of how some people come to have access to these 'resources' while some others do not. The prior possession of resources in anything other than equal amounts is something a theory of 'power' has to explain. It may presume equilibrium, but it ought to justify its presumption in some way. (p. 25)

Kipnis et al., in criticizing the limited nature of the power base view, suggested, "the problem here . . . is that this theoretical approach does not have us identify all the strategies actually used by managers—that is, managers use strategies not mentioned by French and Raven" (p. 59). Bacharach and Baratz argued that focusing on bases of power

allows the potential for the issues of dominant groups within the organization to be obscured, because this focus either suppresses or overlooks such issues. Robbins (1993) addressed the closely intertwined concepts of leader and power. First, Robins stated, "Leaders use power as a means of attaining group goals. Leaders achieve goals, and power is a means of facilitating their achievement" (p. 408). Next, he proceeded to answer the question, "What differences are there between the two terms?" (p. 408):

> One difference relates to goal compatibility. Power does not require goal compatibility, merely dependence. Leadership, on the other hand, requires some congruence between the goals of the leader and the led. A second difference relates to the direction of the influence. Leadership focuses on the downward influences to one's subordinates. It minimizes the importance of lateral and upward influence patterns. Power does not. Still another difference deals with research emphasis. Leadership research, for the most part, deals with style. It seeks answers to such questions as: How supportive should a leader be? How much decision-making should be shared with subordinates? In contrast, the research on power has tended to encompass a broader area and focus on tactics for gaining compliance. It has gone beyond the individual as exerciser because power can be used by groups as well as by individuals to control other individuals or groups. (p. 408)

French and Raven (1968) five-category classification scheme is most frequently associated with discussions regarding the source of power or when trying to clarify what it is that gives an individual or group influence over others. However, although the French and Raven classification scheme provides a repertoire of possible bases of power, some researchers (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980; Robbins, 1993) have maintained their categories create ambiguity because they confuse bases of power with sources of power. Accordingly, the proponents viewed *bases of power* as what the power holder has that gives him/her power and *sources of power* as the source from which the power holder gets his/her power base.

The four power bases are coercive power, reward power, persuasive power, and knowledge power. Here, *coercive power* is power based on fear. At the organizational level, A would have coercive power over B if A could dismiss, suspend, or demote B. Similarly, if A assigns B work activities that B finds unpleasant or treats B in a manner that B finds embarrassing, then A possesses coercive power over B (Robbins, 1993, p. 409). *Reward power* is identified as the opposite of coercive power: a power base in which people comply with the wishes of another because it will result in positive benefits. Therefore, one who can distribute rewards others view as valuable will have power over them. *Persuasive power* is the ability to allocate and manipulate symbolic rewards; for example, the ability to hire, control the allocation of status symbols, or influence a group's norms. Last, *knowledge power* is the ability to control unique and valuable information. An individual may be said to have knowledge power when the individual (in a group or organization) controls unique information and when that information is needed to make a decision.

The four sources of power are the position held, personal characteristics, expertise, and the opportunity to receive and obstruct information. *Position power*, one's structural position, is one of the most frequent accesses to one or more of the power bases. (A principal's position includes significant control over symbols.) *Personal power* is the influence attributed to one's personal characteristics. *Expert power* is the influence based on special skills or knowledge. Last, *opportunity power* is the influence obtained as a result of being in the right place at the right time.

Resource Dependency

The idea of relations is fundamental to the concept of organizations. There is an emphasis on relations (interdependence) between and among individuals due to the hierarchical structure. Mechanic (1962; as cited in Manz & Gioia, 1983) suggests a person becomes subject to another's power when he/she is dependent on another's control of access to information, persons, and instrumentalities. Emerson (1962) argued power resides in one person's dependency relationship with another. He specified the power of person A over person B is equal to, and based upon, the dependency of B upon A. Emerson defined power and dependency as the inverse of one another: Individuals hold power to the degree that others are dependent on them to achieve the goals they desire. *Empowerment strategies*, using Emerson's framework, are defined as the actions taken by individuals to reduce their dependency on a more powerful person. The need to gain power, therefore, originates from one's initial dependency (Mainiero, 1986).

Resource dependency plays an important role in power concepts and is seen in much of the literature. Kanter (1977) referred to resource dependency in her definition of power as "the ability to get things done, to mobilize resources, to get and to use whatever it is that a person needs for the goals he or she is attempting to meet" (p. 166). A common thread running through the usual conceptualizations of power is the existence of some dependence on the power holder because of a particular control over needed resources. A general dependency postulate put forth by Emerson (1962), but still being promoted in current organizational behavior and management textbooks, is, "The greater B's dependency on A, the greater the power A has over B" (p. 31). Accordingly, dependency

is inversely proportional to the alternative sources of supply. Dependency is therefore increased when the resource you control is important, scarce, or non-substitutable.

One element of power that has been researched during the past decade is *power tactics* (Case, Dosier, Murkison, & Keys, 1988; Chacko, 1990; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 1990; Kipnis & Schmidt, 1988; Kipnis, Schmidt, Swaffin-Smith, & Wilkinson, 1988; Yukl & Falbe, 1990) The research findings provide considerable insight into the standardized ways by which power holders attempt to exert their power and the conditions under which one tactic is chosen over another. The research findings identify seven tactical dimensions or strategies: reason, friendliness, coalition, bargaining, assertiveness, higher authority, and sanctions. Additionally, I uncovered four contingency variables affecting the selection of a power tactic: the manager's relative power, the manager's objectives for wanting to influence, the manager's expectation of the target person's willingness to comply, and the organization's culture.

Controlling and mobilizing resources are key components in a manager's ability to exercise power. Control tends to interact with other choice options in a synergistic fashion. A focus on the organization's technical core can be assured by centralized control. Control is viewed as demanding regularity, fostering accountability, and providing the conditions to allow for intervention. Daft (1989) asserted, "A basic assumption underlying theory is the need for managers to control the organization" (p. 323).

Arguments in favor of retaining control are reflected in the positive language associated with concepts such as quality control, decisive leadership, a sense of

direction, control of one's self or one's job, maintaining order and numerous others. As Griffiths (1988) stated, "Even empowerment tools are legitimated by reference to the language of control—for example, 'Quality Control Circles'" (p. 27).

As management in organizations seeks to stay in control and specifically seeks to become more efficient and responsive, it can cut costs, improve employee motivation, and increase productivity by empowering its work force. In contrast to early vague definitions of empowerment, the separate works of Morgan and Murgatroyd (1994) and Thomas and Velthouse (1990) provided more focused definitions. Morgan and Murgatroyd defined *empowerment* as:

> the ability of an individual or a team to work in their own way within agreed time-lines and with agreed resources to achieve a goal set by the leadership of the organization, but it is not unfettered freedom to determine what goals the team has for the organization as a whole, or how they would like the organization to be. (p. 17)

They further stated, "Individuals are therefore being empowered in terms of how they can achieve the goals set, not in terms of what the goals might be" (p. 17). Researchers and theorists Thomas and Velthouse explained people are empowered in an organization by being involved in their work through a process of inclusion. They defined empowerment as "a process that increases employees' intrinsic task motivation" (p. 667). Hollander and Offermann (1990) suggested, "To increase employees' intrinsic task motivation, managers must take actions that positively affect *impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice*" (p. 184).

Resource dependency may begin to be viewed differently as organizations employ empowerment as a strategy, thus obligating managers to become facilitators rather than controllers.

School as a Bureaucracy

Schools are formal organizations with many of the characteristics of bureaucratic organizations. Abbott (1965) concluded:

> The school organization as we know it today, then, can accurately be described as a highly developed bureaucracy. As such, it exhibits many of the characteristics and employs many of the strategies of the military, industrial, and governmental agencies with which it might be compared. (p. 45)

The bureaucratic organization includes a definite division of labor, a hierarchy of authority with carefully prescribed responsibilities, a system of rules or policies, impersonality in the interaction of its members, employment based on technical qualifications, and efficiency from a technical standpoint (Blau, 1956). These components of bureaucracy are the basis of the analysis of the organizational structure of the school system.

After summarizing the work of D. A. MacKay (1964), who modified Hall's (1963) school organizational inventory, and considering the works of Kolesar (1967), Isherwood and Hoy (1973), and Abbott and Caracheo (1988), who explored empirically the interrelationships of bureaucratic characteristics of schools, Hoy and Miskel (1991) stated:

> There are two relatively distinct patterns of rational organization rather than one completely integrated bureaucratic pattern. Hierarchy of authority, rules for incumbents, procedural specifications, and impersonality tend to vary together, and specialization and technical competence similarly vary together; however, the two groups are found to be independent of or inversely related to each other. In the school, as in other kinds of organizations, the components of Weber's ideal type do not necessarily form an inherently connected set of variables; instead, there are likely to be two distinct types of rational organizations. (pp. 116-117)

School as a Loosely Coupled System

In light of these findings, it is not a surprising many researchers who were associated with contingency and Weberian views became attracted to alternative perspectives providing a less determinate and rationalized picture of the school as a social system (Tyler, 1985). These theorists have attempted to reconceptualize educational organization in terms more in keeping with ambiguity of goals and uncertainty of technology.

Schools have typically been characterized as loosely coupled (Weick, 1976) and loosely structured systems (Bidwell, 1965), especially around classroom curriculum decision-making (Deal & Celotti, 1980). Griffiths (1988) referred to this structural arrangement as a *disaggregation* and extended its meaning to include a "looseness of coupling among units, people, processes, and functions within an organization and between the organization and its external environment" (p. 19). Weick suggested schools and school systems differ from traditional models of bureaucratic organizations:

> They may lack rules, lack agreement on what the rules are, lack inspection systems to monitor compliance, or lack feedback systems to monitor compliance. Compared with other organizations, schools have less formal and hierarchical systems of control and communication, and the linkages between and among the levels of the organization are much looser. (p. 449)

This looseness, and the semi-autonomy it brings in the classrooms, pose many obstacles to the administrator, especially in the technical area. Teachers in their classrooms have traditionally exercised considerable freedom from administrative authority (Bidwell, 1965; Sarason, 1971; Weick, 1976). This arrangement would be considered dysfunctional if viewed in terms of classical organization theory, because the manager's role has typically been to tighten loose coupling in order to achieve

effectiveness through control, intervention, accountability, and regularity. Organizational theory literature has not seriously challenged the standard view of control in organizations. A representation of current thought is exemplified by Daft's (1989) statement, "A basic assumption underlying theory is the need for managers to control the organization" (p. 323).

Modifications in tight coupling and planned-change strategies appear to have been introduced to account for contingencies that arose in practice, such as engaging in participatory decision making, managing the organization's stance on the specifics of innovations, decentralizing responsibility for particular management functions, and engaging in pilot testing of innovations before widespread diffusion (Griffiths, 1988).

> Simultaneous loose-tight properties . . . is in essence the co-existence of firm central direction and maximum individual autonomy . . . Organizations that live by the loose-tight principles are on the one hand rigidly controlled, yet at the same time allow (indeed, insist on) autonomy, entrepreneurship, and innovation from the rank and file. (Peters & Waterman, 1982)

Should controls, however, be tight or loose? What should the control mechanisms be? Theory presents answers to these questions in terms of the organizational characteristics of size, type of technology, and frequency of innovation. Environmental settings are also a determinant of whether tight or loose control will be employed, and if the degree of centralization, formalization, and complexity will be high or low. Karl Weick (1986) asserted, "Indeterminacy can be organized not just by rules, job descriptions, and *a priori* specifications, but also by such things as shared premises, culture, persistence, clan control, improvisation, memory and imitation" (p. 9). Weick continued:

> In a loosely coupled system you don't influence less, you influence differently. The administrator . . . has the difficult task of affecting perceptions, and monitoring and reinforcing the language people use to create and coordinate what they are doing . . . Leaders in loosely coupled systems have to move around, meet people face to face, and to do their influencing by interaction rather than by rules and regulations. (p. 10)

Empirical studies on the nature of control in schools include those reported by Cohen, Deal, Meyer, and Scott (1979). They described central office as exercising loose control and coordination over school sites in instructional matters and somewhat tighter control and coordination on administrative and logistical matters. Peterson (1984), following Lortie (1969), found controls appear to be zoned, with greater control being exercised over administrative matters and significantly looser controls exercised over matters of instruction, a view that, according to Pitner (1982), is strikingly similar to Hanson's (1976) perspective of negotiated spheres. Peterson (1984) stated:

> The patterns of control and autonomy we find point to a subtle balancing of control and autonomy, with principals constrained through the evaluation of outputs and the mandatory accomplishments of administrative tasks, but permitted considerable autonomy in the selection of means to achieve ends, in the choice of tasks to attend to and in the selection of faculty. (p. 595)

Peterson's ideas echo the earlier work of Peters and Waterman (1982), who proposed tight-loose management seeks to connect people tightly to values, commitments, and purposes, but to free them up so that they are able to choose the ways and means by which these values and purposes might be embodied. Sergiovanni (1991) asserted the leadership required to practice tight-loose management is "to emphasize developing self-management in others and building commitment to ideas" (p. 56).

Power Sharing

Although classical theorists have emphasized the hierarchical concentration of power and control at the upper management levels, with the superiors maintaining a status and power distance between themselves and their subordinates (Weber, 1959), some contemporary organization theorists have abandoned these ideas in favor of a power-sharing thesis (Wood, 1973). Child (1977), along with other researchers, argued the importance of delegating the authority to make specified decisions to the lower levels in the organizational hierarchy. The objective has been to attempt to achieve greater power equality between superiors and subordinates, especially at lower levels in the organizational hierarchy (Argyris, 1962; Greenleaf, R.K., 1977; Goldman & Dunlap, 1990; Johnson & Scollay, 1998; Likert, 1961, 1967; Sergiovanni, T.J., 1992; Short & Greer, 2002; Short, Greer & Melvin, 1994; Wood, 1972).

Reactions to relinquishing control vary but seem to be rooted in the relationship between individual and power needs. Jenkins (1972) asserted all people and all social units seek to maximize, or at least expand, their power in relation to each other. Earlier, Tannenbaum (1962) also viewed power acquisition as an end in itself, either for psychological reasons or simply to be in control.

In general, writings on this subject seem to indicate most organization members attempt to gain and maintain power. Power holders will tend to resist change that threatens their power and will therefore try to maintain control over critical resources within the organization that foster dependency (Manz & Gioia, 1983). Commenting on the difficulties of trading control, Kanter (1983) stated:

> Unlimited circulation of power in an organization without focus would mean that no one would ever get anything done beyond a small range of actions that people can carry out by themselves. Besides, the very idea of infinite power circulation sounds to some like a system out of control, unguided, in which anybody can start nearly anything. (and probably finish almost nothing) Thus, the last key to successful middle management, innovation is to see how power gets pulled out of circulation and focused long enough to permit project completion. But here we find an organizational dilemma. Some of the conditions are contrary to the circulating conditions, almost by definition. (pp. 172-173)

Views of Power as Finite or Infinite

The supposition that power and control are fixed amounts has been supported by research evidence (Abdel-Halim, 1983; Hrebiniak, 1978; Tannenbaum, 1968), which suggests individuals' beliefs in a fixed-pie notion of power appear to be a major obstacle to attempts to develop a more equalized power system in organizations. Specifically, lower level members tend to desire reduced influence or power for upper management levels while desiring an increase in their own influence or power (Abdel-Halim, 1983).

In contrast to this, Tannenbaum (1962) pointed out, if one views influence as constantly expanding, then delegating control does not necessarily lead to a loss of power, but simply to an expansion of influence points within the organization. Griffiths (1988) also supported this view, presenting empowerment as a way to increase activities as it multiplies the points at which action can be initiated. In their integrated model of power and control, Manz and Gioia (1983), although conceding the organizational benefits of increased employee participation, concluded, "The downward relocation of resource control will be resisted by those exercising control over important organization resources in order to prevent the loss of power to a new source" (p. 473). Muth (1981, 1984), in an attempt to develop an integrative theory of power and educational organizations, presented an empirical model designed to address the problem of

conceptual clarity in power studies and to provide an integrative mechanism for explaining divergent outcomes of power acts. Muth (1981) defined power as "the ability of an actor to affect the behavior of another actor" (p. 11). This definition broadens the Weberian definition, which relies on the use of coercion and which explicitly rests on the assumptions of power as relational, latent, and asymmetric. Muth broadened this concept of power, which serves to (a) incorporate common usage, (b) permit definition of behavioral relations that may or may not be symmetrical, and (c) include coercive as well as noncoercive acts. Muth viewed power as relational, potential, and probably asymmetrical. He explained, "*Ability* indicates the resource capacity necessary to exercise power; *actor* signifies any singular or plural body, human or otherwise; and *affect* includes maintenance of prior conditions or changes in them in intended directions" (pp. 10-11). The fact power is viewed as potential led him to conclude behaviors produced by power acts must be defined. He maintained the term *control* is "parsimonious and incorporates the common understanding of a completed act of power. . . Control designates the result of an act of power—it is the manifest acquiescence of one actor to the power of another" (p. 11). Power, however, can be present but remain latent. As a result, Muth differentiated between its latent and manifest aspects by way of a power-control matrix. This matrix illustrates *power* as indicating an ability to do something and *control* as demarcating performance (the degree to which an ability has been applied in the solution of a problem). In this integrative power theory, Muth purposed a full range of power types. Power is presented as a continuum extending from interactions depending on coercion to those that do not use coercion. Muth stated:

> At the coercive end of the continuum, Actor (A) has sufficient resources to compel Other (O) to behave as Actor wants. The Other so compelled may also have power, but it is insufficient to counteract Actor's. At the opposite end of the continuum (influence), Actor still holds the preponderance of resources yet is unable or unwilling to force Other to submit. Other, however, derives power from the ability to accept or reject Actor's power attempt. At the middle of the continuum is authority that, depending on the predominating nature of the relationship, can assume characteristics of either pole (p. 14).

Muth concluded:

> Although coercion and influence occupy the poles, with authority in the middle, none of these power-types exist in isolation. Indeed, all three may be present to some degree in any setting, and movement in any direction along the continuum will increase one type of power while decreasing the effects (although not necessarily the quantity) of the other types. (p. 20)

Power and the Role of the Principal

Structure of the Position

Classical organizational theory provides a foundation for the hierarchical nature of the principal's position. The literature abounds with studies yielding multiple conclusions on the nature of the principalship and, specifically, identifying the responsibilities of the principal regarding management, instruction, communication, and interpersonal relations (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1980; Gersten, Carnine, & Green, 1982; McPhearson, 1975).

The position of principal has been viewed as being strategically important in providing leadership (Nottingham, 1977), establishing school climate (Coleman & Larocque, 1990; Halpin & Croft, 1963), and implementing instructional innovations (Fennel, 1992; Lipham & Hoeh, 1974). One conclusion, frequently drawn by researchers, indicates the principalship is a key and pivotal position and central to the success of a school (Brookover, 1981; Cohen, 1982; Coleman & Larocque, 1991; Edmonds, 1979;

Fennel, 1992; Fullan, 1993, 1999). Wayson (1974) asserted the power that principals possess is the result of their pivotal position in the education system. Further, he maintained, although principals are not the *cause* of everything that happens in a school, they are the *catalysts* for bringing out either the most productive or the least productive occurrences in a school. Leithwood and Montgomery (1982) reported, "Considerable data support the contention that the principal's role is inherently ambiguous and complex. Both characteristics represent what might be the most significant set of problems faced by incumbents" (p. 309). Role ambiguity was identified as significant in studies carried out by Blumberg and Greenfield (1980), Rosenblum and Jastrzab (1980), Lorzeau (1977), Houts (1975), Goldhammer and Becker (1971), Wolcott (1978), and Dow and Whitehead (1980). Ambiguity manifests itself as a lack of clear expectations for the role and conflict about responsibilities. Frequently among the findings reported, there was no viable rationale for the duties assigned to the role and no defensible criteria for assessing principals' performance according to their success in implementing policies and procedures formulated at the district level (Houts, 1975).

Research has revealed that role complexity and role ambiguity are interdependent sets of problems. Crowson and Porter-Gehrie (1980) suggested complexity is a function of the number of different people with whom the principal must interact, each potentially the bearer of problems. Further, these problems may vary considerably in importance, but few are clearly "musts" for the principal to deal with; principals have a great deal of flexibility in their decision making and little guidance regarding priorities.

Changes in the Position

Research on restructuring initiatives in Alberta occurring during the 1990s revealed that the role of the principal has changed (Baskett & Miklos, 1992; Townsend, Penton, Aitken, & Gowans, 1997; Van Tamelen, 1999). Townsend et al. stated, "Principals are expected to perform their duties in a system transformed by externally-mandated reforms aimed at increasing accountability, achieving economies of operation and relocating some of the primary mechanisms of decision making and governance" (pp. 3-4). Aitken and Townsend (1998) investigated restructuring initiatives (site-based decision making, school councils, etc.) in Alberta. The findings of this research identify a perception by the respondents that their role had significantly changed. The research respondents specifically identified increased responsibility, school councils, school-based budgets, and expectations for collaborative decision making as factors that made their role of principal more complex (pp. 1-5).

The restructuring of education in Alberta was initiated in the context of provincial fiscal restraint measures. However, the restructuring was in keeping with more global educational reform efforts beginning in the late 1980s (Holdaway & Ratsoy, 1991; Montgomerie, Peters, & Ward, 1991). The reform movement began to focus on restructuring schools in the early 1990s and introduced the concept of site-based management to facilitate change. Goldman and Dunlap (1990) contended that at the core of site-based management is power sharing: "Outsiders—district officials and boards—share power with insiders; administrators share power with parents, students and the public" (p. 4). The sharing occurred through the approach initially known as the Scanlon Plan (McGregor, 1960). Joseph Scanlon maintained that this was a management

philosophy. However, the plan did provide a format for involving workers in decisions and the changes brought about by those decisions. This plan for self-managing work teams provides the philosophical underpinnings for the *quality circles* later described by Ouchi (1980).

A second concept arising from the participative decision making tradition was the empowerment process. Empowerment here is interpreted as power being an infinite commodity and, thus, available to accomplish the goals and mission of the organization. Involvement by additional persons in the decisions of the school increases the power to accomplish the school's mission. Short and Greer (2002) asserted, "Authentic leadership of a school has relevance to creating empowered schools" (p. 27). This concept has its roots in the concepts of stewardship and servant leadership (Duignan & Bhindi, 1997; Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf stated:

> a new moral principle is emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader. (p. 10)

Central to Greenleaf's belief is the understanding that servant leadership is the means by which leaders can receive the necessary legitimacy to lead. Greenleaf explained, "As the leader provides a sense of direction, this gives certainty and purpose to others who may have difficulty in achieving it for themselves. But being successful in providing purpose requires the trust of others" (p. 15). Further, both Greenleaf and Sergiovanni contended that people's confidence is strengthened by their belief that the leader makes judgments on the basis of competence and values, rather than self-interest. Sergiovanni (1992) proposed that servant leadership could be more powerful than other forms of leadership (p. 117).

New Perspectives on Organizational Change and Development

The debates of the late 1980s and into the 1990s (Ackroyd, 1992; Aldrich, 1992; Burrell, 1989; Clark & Starkey, 1988; Clegg, 1990; Donnellon & Scully, 1994; Gordon, 1994; Heckscher & Applegate, 1994; Heckscher, Eisenstat, & Rice, 1994; Konsynski & Sviokla, 1994; Lane, 1989; Reed, 1991, 1995; Reed & Hughes, 1992; Whitaker, 1992) focused on the theoretical foundations of organizational studies dominated by controversy. The debates emerged out of an awareness of the substantive changes in the organizational forms that were sites of research and analysis.

Comparative research on organizational forms revealed inherent limitations and inadequacies in the rational bureaucracy (Clark & Starkey, 1988; Clegg, 1990, 1998; Lane, 1989). The continuing debate now centers on two issues. First, is there a new phenomenon? Is this phenomenon the emerging post-bureaucratic organization or organizational variants of a bureaucracy? The question then is one of organization as a matter of contingency or a new evolutionary development (Heckscher et al., 1994). The second issue being debated involves the relation of hierarchy and equality (Donnellon & Scully, 1994; Ford, 1994; Klein, 1994; Krackhardt, 1994). These issues are intertwined with another dimension of difference: the relevance of human values, including participation and democracy.

Issue One: Empirical Development

Heckscher (1994) described the post-bureaucratic organization as "interactive," promoting an organization *in which everyone takes responsibility for the success of the whole*. Organizational development is one of a set of empirical developments that have tended to undermine the pillars of bureaucracy. Heckscher and Donnellon (1994)

identified a set of empirical developments. Further, they maintained these developments have been around for the past decade and are quickly moving from the periphery to the mainstream of corporate management. Most of these developments were described by Burns and Stalker (1961) as characteristics of "organic" systems and were at that point limited to a few high-tech companies. These researchers maintained, "Today almost all large corporations are at least testing the concepts in some way" (p. 3). These empirical developments include:

1. worker participation efforts, such as problem-solving groups on the factory floor; self-managing work teams with responsibility for scheduling, discipline, and quality; and cooperative union-management efforts seeking increased quality and productivity;

2. cross-functional task forces and teams in managerial and professional ranks, breaking across the 'walls' of functional organization;

3. mechanisms of "parallel organization," operating on the basis of multilevel consensus, often functioning side by side with traditional bureaucracy;

4. information technology that facilitates much denser networks of communication than in a traditional bureaucracy;

5. organizational development concepts and practices that seek to build the decision-making capacity of peer groups;

6. the opening of formerly closed organizational boundaries; for example, the formation of partnerships between different companies, the elaboration of networks of relationships with suppliers, and the willingness to lay off managerial employees and, conversely, to bring in "outsiders' when necessary;

7. sharing of information that was previously held only at the top of organizations;

8. recognition of the importance of negotiated solutions as opposed to solutions determined from above; and

9. new explicit managerial roles: task force leader, change agent, coordinator, boundary basher (Burns & Stalker, 1961, pp. 3-4).

Heckscher and Applegate (1994) suggested:

> The generic similarity among these developments is they put increased emphasis on relations of influence rather than relations of power. Or, to put it another way, they seek to build agreement among people with diverse knowledge and interests not through reference to a higher "level" but through direct discussion and persuasion. The common feature is the development of teamwork. (p. 3)

Issue Two: An Example of Current Practice: Organizational Development

In the current dynamic and changing environments of the 1990s, organizations are required to adapt, to manage planned change. A change agent's use of planned change provides for change activities that are intentional and goal oriented. The change agent of today may be a manager, another employee, a team, or an outside consultant. Change agents change one or a combination of the structure, the technology, or the people to bring about the intended change. Within the realm of changing people, current practice includes *organizational development.*

Organizational development is not an easily definable single concept. Rather, it is a term used to encompass a collection of planned-change interventions, built on humanistic-democratic values that seek to improve organizational effectiveness and employee well-being (Robbins, 1993). The organizational-development paradigm values human and organizational growth, collaborative and participative processes, and a spirit of inquiry (Brown & Covey, 1987). The change agent may be directive in organizational

development; however, there is a strong emphasis on collaboration. Concepts such as power, authority, control, conflict, and coercion are held in relatively low esteem among organizational development change agents. The following briefly identifies the underlying values in most organizational development efforts (Robbins, 1993, p. 685):

1. Respect for people: Individuals are perceived as being responsible, conscientious, and caring. They should be treated with dignity and respect.

2. Trust and support: The effective and healthy organization is characterized by trust, authenticity, openness, and a supportive climate.

3. Power equalization: Effective organizations de-emphasize hierarchical authority and control.

4. Confrontation: Problems should not be swept under the rug. They should be openly confronted.

5. Participation: The more that people who will be affected by a change are involved in the decisions surrounding that change, the more they will be committed to implementing those decisions.

According to Robbins (1993), "Organizational development can be thought of as a road to empowerment. By that we mean that organizational development interventions can provide the change vehicle for making people more accepting and comfortable with empowerment" (p. 685).

Summary

Current planned change focuses on mechanisms of integration among peers, thereby reducing the role hierarchical superiors play in managing decisions (Brown & Covey, 1987, Kanter, 1991; Macey, Bliese, & Norton, 1991; Wellins, Byham, & Wilson,

1991). The debates range from positions of the status quo of hierarchy (Krackhardt, 1994) to the pursuit of radical egalitarian visions (Donnellon & Scully, 1994). Regardless of the positions taken, there is acknowledgement that alternatives to the use of authority are increasing, and there is uncertainty regarding how the extremes will exist/co-exist when the current changes reach a final position.

Present Trends in Theories of Social Justice, Trust, and Power Dispersion

Research findings reported in the social justice literature (Bierbauer, Leung, & Lund, 1994; Brockner & Weisenfeld, 1994; Brockner, Weisenfeld, & Martin, 1996; Daly & Geyer, 1996; Lind, 1994; Schaubroeck, May, & Brown, 1996; Tyler, 1998) provide a basis for understanding the role of trust in ongoing social relationships. This research of the 1990s evaluates the interactive effects of distributive and procedural justice on a person's reaction to a decision. Of significance to this study is Brockner and Siegel's (1996) review of 20-plus field studies in which participants were involved in ongoing relationships with another person or institution. All of the studies yielded an interactive relationship in which procedural justice moderated the impact of distributive justice on individuals' reactions to a decision. When procedures were unfair, people responded much more favorably when distributive justice was relatively high. When procedures were fair, however, distributive justice had much less of an impact on individuals' reactions. The studies were carried out in three countries. Further, Brockner and Weisenfeld stated, "The fact that the interactive relationship has been observed in many diverse studies attest to the construct validity of the findings" (p. 189). A second consideration is the perceived benevolence of an actor's intentions as a crucial aspect of trust. According to Folger (1993), procedural justice and distributive justice interact when

people use procedural information to make inferences about the benevolence of an actor's intentions. When such an interaction occurs in the context of an ongoing exchange relationship, it is likely to be explained by how procedural fairness shapes individuals' beliefs of the other person's/group's future behavior.

Recently, Tyler (1998) attempted to understand why people comply with organizational rules. Specifically, Tyler examined why people voluntarily defer to rules and to decisions made by organizational authorities, even when those rules and decisions are not in their self-interest. Tyler reported one important reason people defer to authorities is they have internalized values telling them deference is the morally appropriate thing to do. An example of one type of internalized value is the judgment regarding organizational authorities as legitimate and therefore entitled to be obeyed. A finding across recent studies (Bierbauer et al., 1994; Brockner et al., 1994; Brockner et al., 1996; Daly & Geyer, 1996; Lind, 1994; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996; Tyler & Lind, 1992; Tyler & Smith, 1998) suggests both legitimacy and deference are related to judgments about the fairness of procedures used by organizational authorities when making decisions. The procedural justice effect includes influencing the willingness to defer to decisions, evaluations of authorities, and subsequent willingness to follow organizational rules. Last, it shapes organizational commitment and future extra-role behavior. These findings have important organizational implications, because they suggest this is a mechanism through which organizational authorities can effectively bridge differences among the individuals and groups within their organization.

Smith and Tyler (1996) also demonstrated a link between judgments of status and social identity. They reported:

> Status judgments influence both personal and collective self-esteem. Collective self-esteem is particularly relevant because it reflects the status that people attach to the groups to which they belong. Interestingly, personal self-esteem is influenced by respect but not by pride. That is, personal self-esteem is more strongly linked to status within an organization than it is to the status of that organization. (p. 259)

The most striking finding across this new research is the limited role of resource evaluations in shaping people's behaviors in organizations. These findings demonstrate "the primary issues shaping authority relations involve questions of status" (p. 259).

It is important to note why social justice theory and trust research are explored in a study on power/power sharing. The study of power in organizational studies was particularly vigorous in the early 1970s during the development of resource dependence (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) and strategic contingencies (Hickson et al., 1971). However, the literature of the 1980s and 1990s was lacking in new or updated research or theory relating to power coming from the area of organizational studies. Negotiation was the theme of the 1980s and 1990s in organizational studies. Pfeffer (1997) suggested:

> Power as a topic suffers from the problem of being politically incorrect. As noted in the discussion of views of control, we prefer a voluntaristic, choice based conception of action. Considerations of domination and force, of getting one's way against opposition – which is, after all, a part of most definitions of power- perhaps are better left out of sight or discussion. The field's increasing embeddedness in an economic, rational conception of behavior is nicely coupled with its renewed emphasis on the individual as contrasted with the situation. Both rationality and a focus on the individual in isolation more easily permit neglect of issues of interpersonal influence. (p. 155)

In 1996 Stanford University Graduate School of Business held a conference, "Power and Influence in Organizations." Kramer and Neale (1998) stated, "The goal of

the conference was to bring together leading scholars in organizations theory who were interested in exploring new perspectives on the role of power and influence in organizations" (p. ix). The compilation of presentations at a 1993 conference on negotiations led to awareness that other forms of social influence in organizational settings were not receiving serious scrutiny regarding both theory development and empirical investigations. In *Power and Influence in Organizations* (the compilation of papers presented at the 1996 conference), scholars in organizational behavior theory and research presented new perspectives on the phenomenon of power and influence. Specifically, Tom Tyler's work on trust in authorities related to themes emerging from the findings of this research.

Summary

In the debates peculiar to power, there are no conclusions. There is no definitive research on power or power sharing. In attempting to explore ideas about the role of power and influence in organizations generally and in schools specifically, a multifaceted database was gathered. First, the definitions and thoughts of the major contemporary intellectual pioneers in theory and research on power and influence in organizations were presented. Because the behaviors and perceptions of the participants of the research were in the context of an organization, organizational behavior theory and research related to themes of power were reviewed. Next, because all participants were principals of schools, the body of literature relating to schools as organizations and principals in their role as manager, leader, facilitator, and decision maker has been included. Further, new perspectives of organization development and organization learning were reviewed. Last

was a review of current trends in social justice, trust, and power dispersion in organizations.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction: The Design for This Research

This chapter includes a discussion of the general nature of the study, site and participant selection, access to participants, methods of data collection, observation, and data analysis.

An important aspect of this study was the focus upon gaining insights into power sharing by interpreting the descriptions and meanings relayed by principals. To obtain these insights, participants in the study were encouraged to discuss their individual experiences, thoughts, beliefs, values, philosophies, and activities in their own words. Such a search for understanding or meaning required the employment of an interpretive rather than a positivistic paradigm. The interpretive paradigm afforded a focus upon context, meaning, and social interaction. In an attempt to derive insights into power sharing, I inquired about the circumstances of the participants' actions in their roles as school principals. Within the interpretive paradigm, or as an interpretive approach, naturalistic inquiry places an emphasis on the characteristics and significance of the human experience as described by the participants and then as interpreted by me at various levels of abstraction.

Research Design

The selection of a research design is determined by how a particular research problem is shaped, by the questions that it raises, and by the type of end product desired. According to Merriam (1988), "A research design is similar to an architectural blueprint.

It is a plan for assembling, organizing, and integrating information, and it results in a specific end product" (p. 6).

Erickson, Florio, and Buschman (1980; as cited in Borg & Gall, 1989) suggested that qualitative methods are best when seeking answers to these five questions:

1. What is happening in this field setting?

2. What do the happenings mean to the people involved in them?

3. What do people have to know in order to be able to do what they do in the setting?

4. How does what is happening here relate to what is happening in the wider social context of this setting?

5. How does the organization of what is happening here differ from that found in other places and times? (pp. 406-407).

Erickson et al. (1980; as cited in Borg & Gall, 1989) claimed that in much of the educational research we overlook the fact that events appearing the same may have distinctly different local meanings. They therefore recommended the qualitative method as an appropriate method of inquiry to use to discover these local meanings.

Naturalistic Inquiry

Through sociology, anthropology, and other social science disciplines, naturalistic inquiry evolved "as a way of 'understanding' people and the meaning behind their activities" (Williams, 1986, p. 1). Owens (1982) specified two concepts are basic to understanding the meaning of naturalistic inquiry. The first concept is the *naturalistic-ecological hypothesis,* which stipulates the contextual environment is so vital in influencing human behavior "that regularities in those contexts are often more powerful

in shaping behavior than differences among the individuals present" (p. 5). The second concept is the *qualitative-phenomenological hypothesis,* which reflects the assumption human behavior can be understood only within the framework of the individuals' interpretation of their environment, which "can best be understood through understanding their thoughts, feelings, values, perceptions, and their actions" (p. 5).

Naturalistic inquiry has its philosophical base in idealism and existentialism. This philosophical perspective is apparent in the assumptions underlying the five axioms and methodological implications of an interpretive mode of inquiry.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have identified five salient areas useful for a researcher when establishing the appropriateness of using naturalistic inquiry for a specific study. They have provided this set of underlying assumptions of naturalistic inquiry in the form of five axioms. Although this set provides a structure for this discussion, it should be noted, underlying assumptions of naturalistic inquiry are not limited to this set of five axioms. The following discussion focuses on the ontological and epistemological assumptions as the axioms apply to this study.

Axiom 1: The nature of reality (ontology)

> There are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically; inquiry into these multiple realities will inevitably diverge (each inquiry raises more questions than it answers) so that prediction and control are unlikely outcomes although some level of understanding (*verstehen*) can be achieved. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37)

Here, then, Lincoln and Guba have suggested that social reality does not exist outside of an individual's perception.

Merriam (1988) also asserted there are multiple realities, the world is not an objective thing out there, but a function of personal interaction and perception. Merriam's

position is summarized thus: "It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring. Beliefs, rather than facts, form the basis of perception. Research is exploratory, inductive and emphasizes process rather than ends" (p. 17).

In this study I have attempted to gain an understanding of the realities constructed by principals regarding power sharing, rather than seeking to clarify an absolute position with respect to issues related to power sharing by principals.

Axiom 2: The relationship of knower to known (epistemology)

> The inquirer and the "object' of inquiry interact to influence one another: knower and known are inseparable. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37)

Lincoln and Guba noted the interaction between researcher and participant shape the behaviors of both individuals during a naturalistic inquiry.

The implications for this study are twofold. First, I acknowledge that my past experiences related to power sharing in the principalship may have influenced the development of the study. To limit the effect of these beliefs and experiences, Denzin's (1989) recommendation to bracket has been followed. This technique involves confronting the data on their own terms by temporarily suspending preconceptions and treating all data of equal value. The process has five steps: (a) discovering within the transcripts personal experiences or key phrases that relate specifically to the phenomenon being studied, (b) interpreting the meanings of these statements or phrases as an "informed reader," (c) acquiring the participant's interpretations of these statements or phrases, (d) searching for the "essential, recurring features of the phenomenon being studied," and (e) tentatively defining or describing the phenomenon based on those features discovered in step (d).

Second, there is a need to consider the relationship between the participants and me. In attending to the need for positive reciprocal relationships to be established, I addressed the concern addressed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in their statement, "human research is impossible without the full understanding and cooperation of the respondents" (p. 105). Prior to site visits it was vital I establish the role I would be maintaining while interviewing the participants; as well as, the relationship I would maintain with superintendents and teachers (Whyte, 1984; Wolcott, 1988).

Axiom 3: The possibility of generalization

> The aim of inquiry is to develop an idiographic body of knowledge in the form of "working hypotheses" that describe the individual case. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 38)

Here, the researcher is to discover a working hypothesis that will describe the relationships in that particular time and context and which would "be tested again in the next encounter and again in the encounter after that" (Guba, 1981, p. 76). Lincoln and Guba (1985) asserted, "Only time and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements) are possible" within the naturalist paradigm (p. 37). This third axiom supports the importance of representing the nature of truth statements (the multiple constructions of reality) of the nine participants adequately.

There is a further implication for this study regarding the cross-case analysis and the conclusions drawn from this analysis. These conclusions, at best, may advance a general hypothesis (as opposed to universal laws) relating to principals' perceptions and understandings of power sharing and how it is reflected in their work; more specifically, how power sharing is reflected in their work at a time when Alberta Education personnel were mandating changes in administrative practice. These changes were implemented in

various ways and to different degrees by Alberta school boards as these, were not accompanied by a new or updated philosophical statement from Alberta Education.

Axiom 4: The possibility of causal linkages

> All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping so that it is impossible to distinguish causes and effects. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 38)

Lincoln and Guba argued that a deterministic view of causality is not tenable. They viewed causality as "multiple factors and conditions, all of which interact, with feedback and feed forward, to shape one another" (p. 242). Patton (1990) referred to that which is being studied as "a complex system that is comprised of complex interdependencies rather than simple cause-effect relationship" (p. 235).

Therefore, in keeping with the intent of interpretive research, I searched for patterns that would assist in making sense of the phenomenon being studied (rather than seeking deterministic cause-effect relationships). From the nine stories, I could only infer an explanation based upon a holistic view of factors, events, participants, and context of any given activity or behavior.

Axiom 5: The role of values in inquiry (axiology)

Inquiry is value bound in at least five ways, captured in the corollaries that follow:

> *Corollary 1*: Inquiries are influenced by *inquirer* values as expressed in the choice of a problem, evaluand, or policy option, and in the framing, bounding, and focusing of that problem, evaluand, or policy option.
> *Corollary 2*: Inquiry is influenced by the choice of the *paradigm* that guides the investigation into the problem.
> *Corollary 3*: Inquiry is influenced by the choice of the *substantive theory* utilized to guide the collection and analysis of data and in the interpretation of findings.
> *Corollary 4*: Inquiry is influenced by the values that inhere in the *context.*
> *Corollary 5*: With respect to corollaries 1 through 4 above, inquiry is either *value-resonant* (reinforcing or congruent) or *value-dissonant* (conflicting). Problem,

> evaluand, or policy option, paradigm, theory, and context must exhibit congruence (value-resonance) if the inquiry is to produce meaningful results. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 38)

The implication for this study is the nature of this inquiry is inevitably value bound. The inquirer's values pertain to those derived from upbringing, education, and experiential opportunities. In particular, the selection of the research problem of seeking insights into power sharing in the principalship was a specific value influencing the study. Selecting a naturalistic approach from the interpretive paradigm also imposed a value orientation to the study. The inquirer sought understanding of, rather than explaining and predicting about, the phenomenon of power sharing. Due to the complex nature and the inconsistencies of various understandings and conceptions of power, the inquirer attempted to gain insights into the phenomenon of how power was shared by school principals by focusing upon examples provided by the principals. Values were further imposed upon the study by the method of obtaining data, that of in-depth interviews with nine participants. Finally, values were related to the context—those values which derive from the nature of the setting, the purposes of groups, the relationships of individuals within the groups, and the relationship of the inquirer to the participants.

Summary

This discussion was intended to explain my understanding of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying my choices for this study. A discussion of the specific methodology follows.

Methodology

Case Study Designs

Merriam (1988) suggested discussions of case studies as a research methodology are embedded within the growing body of literature on qualitative research and naturalistic inquiry because "the logic of this type of research derives from the world view of qualitative research . . . [where] the paramount objective is to understand the meaning of an experience . . . to understand how all the parts work together to form a whole" (p. 16).

When to Use Case Studies

Bromley (1986) maintained the case study is particularly useful as a research design when the objective is to understand the *meaning* of an experience, for it allows researchers to "get as close to the subject of interest as they possibly can, partly by means of direct observation in natural settings, and partly by their access to subjective factors (thoughts, feelings, and desires)" (p. 23).

Merriam (1988) asserted case studies have four essential characteristics. They are *particularistic* in that they focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon; they are *descriptive*, because the end product is a description of the phenomenon under study; they are *heuristic* in that they can illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon; and they are *inductive* in that new relationships, concepts, and understandings emerge from the data (pp. 12-13). Thus, Merriam has argued the case study is an appropriate research design when researchers are seeking an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit.

Yin (1994) suggested there are four different case study design types: single case studies with a single unit of analysis, single case studies with multiple units of analysis, multiple case studies with a single unit of analysis, and multiple case studies with multiple units of analysis.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how principals understood power sharing and how it was reflected in their work. A multiple case study design with multiple units of analysis was used.

Research Design

The case study approach was taken for several reasons. First, as revealed in the review of the literature for this study, principals as key members of the management team in a given school district affect overall governance of their individual schools and the school system alike. However, principals are experiencing a role change (Aitken & Townsend, 1998; Van Tamelen, 1999) and, seemingly, a constriction of power as teacher autonomy and central office constraints increase, respectively, while at the same time experiencing an expansion in accountability as the system restructures with the principal as the focus of the site-based operation. Changes to the role of the principal have occurred as a result of a contextualized social process as different school districts have attempted to modify the present bureaucratic system with the management style emerging from the concept of participatory democracy. Therefore, it is expected that different interpretations and different responses are likely to occur in different schools. In order to develop an understanding of the principals' interpretations and responses to the shift in power, information concerning the individual principals, their schools, and their contexts was collected from different school sites. The study focused on the questions of 'how'

and 'why' individual participants understood and experienced power/power sharing in their role as principal. I sought to discover and interpret individual participant perspectives while absorbing situational and interacting forces that create unique realities and to describe that unit of analysis "in depth and detail, in context and holistically" (Patton, 1990, p. 54).

Therefore, because the study sought *meaning and understanding of a contextual process*, the shift in power as a balance is found between a bureaucratic management style and a participatory management style. This research shared the features of case study research as outlined above in four ways. Specifically, it was particularistic in that it focused on power sharing; it was descriptive in that the end product of the research is a series of case studies describing the understandings and experiences of principals as they strive to reach a balance; it is heuristic in that the analysis of the individual cases and the cross-case analysis have the potential to illuminate a reader's understanding of the power-sharing phenomenon from the perspective of each of the different units of analysis; and it is inductive in that any propositions, concepts, or hypotheses regarding power sharing are the result of the inductive reasoning based on the data examined as part of the analysis of each of the cases and during the cross-case analysis.

Given the individual realities of each of the participants in their respective unique organizational context, each participant was conceptualized as a single case. It was assumed each participant's understanding and experience was unique to the specific context, and therefore they were not generalized to the school district. Each principal has been considered a "case" for the purposes of this research.

Site Selection, Access, and Participant Selection

Site Selection

Statistical generalization was not the goal of this research; therefore, purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) was an appropriate way of selecting the two school districts that were the focus of this research in that their principals were allowed to participate. This method of sampling required I establish the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation and then find a sample that matched these criteria. For the purpose of this research these criteria included the following:

1 The schools were in the province of Alberta.

2 The schools were K to 12.

3 The schools were of varying sizes.

4 The principals were willing to be involved in the research.

5 Each school district was self-defined as collaborative.

6 Each school district currently employed site-based management.

7 Each system had a standard of advanced training for their principals.

Access and Participant Selection

Access to the three school districts and 11 school principals involved in this research was gained in the following manner. Initial contact was made with each of six superintendents of school districts meeting the research criteria listed above. The study and timelines for the study were reviewed briefly over the phone. If the superintendent was interested and willing to request permission or grant permission, whichever was in keeping with the school-district policy, then a one-page summary of the study was faxed

or mailed to the superintendent. This summary outlined the nature of the research and sought formal permission to conduct the study in each school district.

Six school districts were approached. Three of the six approved the request for the study to be carried out. The school district with the smallest number of participants (two) was used as the pilot, and the school districts with three and six participants were used as the study group.

Having received confirmation of approval from each superintendent, I sent a letter to the superintendent, who distributed it to all principals in his/her school jurisdiction (in all cases at a principals' meeting). This letter provided the principals with an outline of the study, which included a description of the need for the study, the research design, and the data-collection methods to be employed; the timeline for the study; the level of commitment required by the participants; the nature of the final report of the study; how issues of anonymity and confidentiality would be addressed; the right of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time; the University of Alberta guidelines of observing ethics in research; my background in education; and my involvement in the study.

The principals were self-selected in that principals interested in being participants submitted their names to me. One district with two principal participants was used as the pilot for the interview questions. The other two school districts, one with three participants and the other with six, were used for the collection of data for the research.

After receiving the names of principals who wished to participate, I contacted each by phone to establish a date and time convenient for each principal for the first interview. Both during the first phone call and at the first interview, the principals were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses throughout the study.

Two interviews were conducted with each participant. Each of the 22 interviews was 45 minutes to one hour in length. Twenty-one of the interviews were held in the office of each participant during the school day at a prearranged time. The one exception was a phone interview, which was held as the second interview for one participant who was not available on site for the second interview.

A critical element in selecting and working with an individual in a study is the development of a trusting relationship. The researcher sensed a positive reception throughout the whole data-collection process. The first interview provided an opportunity to enhance the development of a trusting relationship as we shared our background information, enabling both participant and researcher to get to know one another.

None of the 11 participants (2 pilot, 9 research) appeared to hesitate in sharing their beliefs, thoughts, values, views, or comments throughout the two interviews. Each participant paused to reflect on some questions before responding, at times making comments such as "That's a tough question," "I never thought about that; let me think," or "I haven't considered that before." Two participants asked for more time to respond to one question because they thought it was important and wanted to be able to give an articulate answer and examples. One deferred answering until later in the same interview; the other deferred answering until the second interview.

Data Collection

In accordance with the naturalistic research design, multiple data sources and methods of collection were planned from within the natural settings of the study. Data were collected during the period of March to June 1993. Interviews were the primary data-gathering technique, with some data being collected through document analysis and

early observation. Observation was limited to two attempts. The researcher decided this was not a useful technique for this particular inquiry.

The interviews served to gather data pertaining to the principals' perceptions regarding power sharing in their school. Documentary analysis provided role descriptions and policy and other documentation that defined and explained system expectations of teachers, principals, and superintendents. The researcher, following instruction from Owens (1982) and Patton (1990), endeavored to establish a rapport with principals encouraging them to share their experiences and understandings of power sharing in the position of principal without contrived bias. Owens asserted it is important to understand the multiple realities of participants uncluttered by the imposition of governance parameters and expectations:

> One cannot understand human behavior without understanding the framework within which the individuals under study interpret their environment, and . . . this, in turn, can best be understood through understanding their thoughts, feelings, values, perceptions, and their actions. (p. 5)

Interviews

According to Patton (1990), the purpose of interviewing "is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 196). Three different types of interviews are suggested for qualitative case study research. Structured interviews are used to collect common socio-demographic data from participants. Semi-structured interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored. Unstructured interviews tend to be used for exploratory purposes. According to Merriam (1988):

> Neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time, and so the researcher is able to respond to the situation at hand, the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to the new ideas of the topic. (p. 74)

Further to this, Merriam recommended, "researchers combine all three types of interviewing so that some standardized information is obtained" (p. 74).

Patton (1990) identified six types of information that various types of interview questions can elicit: experience/behavior information, opinion/value information, feeling (emotional response to experience and thoughts) information, knowledge (factual) information, sensory-response information, and background/demographic information.

The intent of the interviews was to have the participants describe their understanding of power sharing in their school and how it was reflected in their practice. The interviews were semi-structured, an interview guide was prepared, and the following procedure was used. The first question was factual in nature to allow time for the participant to establish a comfort level. The second question was general and open ended to allow the participant to take control of the direction of the interview. My task as researcher/interviewer was to reflect comments back to the participant and to ask for clarification and/or additional information about topics the participant introduced. After each topic introduced by the participant had been pursued to the point where the participant had nothing else to add, I returned to the interview guide to determine if all areas had been addressed. However, although the interview guide consisted of questions or issues to be explored, neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions was determined in advance. The interview schedule (Appendix A) was used only as a guide. The researcher encouraged principals' personal perspectives and priorities in understanding this phenomenon. Although the majority of the questions were asked of all interviewees, not all of the questions were. I reframed questions to allow for expansion by a participant of the particular perspective that he/she was explaining. The use of this

approach encouraged the participant to construct his/her realities in unique ways without question or interviewer-imposed bias. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981), "The interview provides for continuous assessment and evaluation of information by the inquirer, allows him to redirect, probe, and summarize" (p. 187).

Each of the 22 interviews was recorded by audiotape with the permission of each participant. The researcher also took notes during the interview, then recorded or wrote down as much as could be remembered immediately after the interview. According to Merriam (1988), researchers must write down or record their reflections on the interview immediately following the interview, because these notes allow the researcher to monitor the process of data collection as well as to begin to analyze the data itself. Conducting multiple interviews and mailing the first transcribed interview to the participants prior to the second interview provided an opportunity for the participants to clarify or verify information conveyed during the first interview and to address emergent data.

Observation

Merriam (1988) and Patton (1990) both addressed the importance of fieldwork in naturalistic inquiry. Both indicated the multiple advantages of using observation as a method of data collection. Both identified the following elements as important in the observation process: the setting, the participants, the activities and interactions, the frequency and duration, and subtle factors. Further, Patton suggested this firsthand experience enables the researcher to be "open, discovery oriented, and inductive in approach," therefore having "less need to rely on prior conceptualizations" (pp. 203-204).

Patton (1990) also identified as a concern the fact information may escape the conscious awareness of participants and staff or may not be discussed for other reasons,

suggesting that observation will permit the researcher to develop a personal understanding from direct experience and facilitating the need to move beyond the selective perceptions of the participants.

Merriam (1988) specified observation as a research tool when it (a) serves a formulated research purpose, (b) is planned deliberately, (c) is recorded systematically, and (d) is subject to checks and controls on validity and reliability (p. 88). Merriam also suggested observations are made by a researcher using one of the following four ways:

1 complete participant—the researcher is a member of the group,

2 participant as observer,

3 observer as participant, and

4 complete observer.

Originally, it was my intention to be a complete observer in specific activities of the participants. The original reason to collect these data was to provide triangulation, providing an important element in a situational analysis in which the observation of behavior *in situ* would supplement the interviews with the participants. However, after two early attempts with two different participants, observation as a useful research tool for this study was abandoned. Specifically, the research study focused on the questions of 'how' and 'why' individual participants understood and experienced power/power sharing in their role as principal; therefore, without a clearer focus of this understanding, there was no guide for my activity of observation. The continuation of its use would have amounted to a never-ending 'pilot study.'

Field Notes

Merriam (1988) suggested the researcher should also keep a journal containing his/her ideas, fears, mistakes, confusion, and reactions to the experience. The field notes included the following information: the date, time, and place of the interview or observation; who was present; a description of the physical setting; what social interactions occurred; and what activities took place. The field notes also contained my feelings and reactions to the experience (of frustration, the struggle to understand the information overload, the need to cope with being in the role of a researcher); reflections about the personal meaning and significance of what occurred and what did not occur; and any insights, interpretations, beginning analyses, and working hypotheses that I had developed during the data-collection process. The collection of these data provided contextual information for this thesis. The significance of the data was substantiated by Yin's (1994) description of field notes as 'the fundamental data base' of case studies and qualitative research.

Documents

Documentary data collection is beneficial when using a qualitative case study approach because these data can ground the investigation in the context of the problem being investigated. Guba and Lincoln (1981) maintained analysis of this data source "lends contextual richness and helps to ground inquiry in the milieu of the writer. This grounding in real-world issues and day-to-day concerns is ultimately what the naturalistic inquiry is working toward" (pp. 109, 234). Documentary data, according to Merriam (1988), are particularly good for qualitative case studies because they "can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated" (p. 109).

For the purposes of this study, I sought documents describing the expectations of how power was to be used in each system under investigation. Policy statements, school handbooks, and documentation designed at the school level to track or facilitate staff work were collected. These documents provided information regarding district procedure and role descriptions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of the type described by Rubin and Rubin (1995), Miles and Huberman (1994), Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Delamont (1992), Patton (1990), Merriam (1988), Yin (1993, 1994), and Lincoln and Guba (1985) has been used to analyze the data collected during this research.

Simultaneous Data Collection and Analysis

Data analysis occurred at a number of different times throughout this study. Merriam (1988) suggested, "Simultaneous analysis and data collection allows the researcher to direct the data collection phase more productively, as well as develop a data base that is both relevant and parsimonious" (p. 145). Therefore, in keeping with Merriam's suggestion, the first phase of data analysis took place while those data were being collected, with interview transcripts being analyzed and summaries of the key ideas and themes in relation to each participant's perceptions, experiences, and understandings of power sharing being generated. These were used to assist in focusing subsequent data collection by asking participants to clarify or expand on ideas presented by the participant at an earlier interview or regarding interactions in a setting other than the interview (e.g., my observation of a staff meeting).

Transcription

The first step in this simultaneous process was to transcribe the recorded interviews into print form. This was done within as short a time span as was humanly possible after each interview. All of the interviewees edited the transcription, most involving sentence-construction corrections, additional information, and clarification of a point explained but not to the satisfaction of the interviewee.

Organizing and Coding

The second phase of data analysis involved organizing, analyzing, and interpreting the data. During this phase a preliminary list of coding categories was generated by repeated reading of all the transcripts, field notes, and documents in order to identify the key themes, ideas, behaviors, and events that were descriptive of each participant's experiences and to understand power/power sharing and how it was reflected in their practice.

The process began with the organization of the data. Interview transcripts (coded on colored paper), documents, and field notes pertaining to each principal were placed in binders; there were two binders, one for each district. The data were coded and duplicated for use in the data-analysis process.

Next, a rereading of the data contained in each category was completed with the express intent of identifying patterns or themes within that category. Last, a comparison and contrasting of the themes that emerged was undertaken to identify how they may be related (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, pp. 175-183; Delamont, 1992, pp. 149-162).

In keeping with Yin's (1994) suggestion that each participant can be viewed as a separate case (pp. 22-25), the data in this study concerning each principal were analyzed

separately. Themes and patterns were identified for each case. Next, a cross-case analysis was completed.

The significance of much of the data was not always recognized at the time of collection, but in many instances it was realized during the rereading of field notes and transcripts.

Unitizing

The third step was to identify units of information that would serve as the basis for defining categories. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended a unit be heuristic in that it provide information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the information provided. The unit must also be interpretable within an understanding of the context of the study, without additional information (p. 345).

This was accomplished in the following ways: by rereading the data, writing notes and comments, and observing throughout the rereading. This procedure is in keeping with suggestions by Goetz and LeCompte (1984). They maintain such a procedure, "serves to isolate the initially most striking, if not ultimately most important aspects of the data" (p. 191). Next, all interview transcripts, documents, and field notes were reviewed to identify what Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as *units of information.* These units—words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs—contained "information relevant to the study . . . which could be interpreted by themselves in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry was carried out" (p. 345). Each unit was coded (a) according to the principal from whom the data were collected (individual color of paper), (b) according to the source of the information

(transcription information: both the page number of the typed copy and the tape number and side of the audiotape recording), and (c) with a unit label assigned.

Developing Categories

This involved coding the units through an identification of recurring regularities in the data and the development of conceptual categories or typologies that interpret the data. Merriam (1988) suggested that this is largely an intuitive process, one which is systematic and informed by the study's purpose, the investigator's orientation and knowledge, and "the constructs made explicit by the participants of the study" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 191). The researcher adhered to the four guidelines for developing comprehensive and illuminating categories suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1981): (a) the number of people who mention something or the frequency with which something arises in the data, (b) the categories determined by the audience to be important, (c) categories which stand out because of their uniqueness, and (d) the categories which highlight areas of inquiry not otherwise recognized (p. 95). Guba and Lincoln also recommended the following as useful to determine whether or not a set of categories was complete: (a) a minimum number of data items not assignable, (b) relative freedom from ambiguity of classification, and (c) category plausibility relative to the data. (p. 96).

Merriam's (1988) criteria were adopted; therefore, (a) all categories constructed were congruent with research goals and questions, (b) all relevant items were capable of categorization, and (c) each unit was assigned to one category (p. 136).

All data collected from observation, interview, and document analysis for each participant were independently assorted into broad thematic classifications. These thematic classifications addressed the research questions. The process included

establishing the first category as the first unit; after that, units from all interviews were checked to determine whether they were part of this category or formed a separate category. The process continued until all the units of information had been assigned a category. At this point the clarity of differences between the categories was checked; in addition, all items in a single category were checked to ensure that they were similar.

Organization of Data

The data were organized by adopting a modified approach to the index-card strategy proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1981). This involved coding each unit of information as described above. This long process was necessary because it facilitated the identification of the patterns and themes running through the data.

Standards of Rigor

The trustworthiness of the data collected during this research was verified using the four criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (pp. 289-331). A number of techniques were employed during the study to ensure trustworthiness so the reader could believe what he/she was reading. The following identifies the techniques and strategies employed to ensure compliance regarding these suggested criteria.

Credibility

Credibility is defined as the extent to which findings and interpretations are identified as credible by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). This research was considered credible when participants and other readers could identify with the themes I had identified within the data. Credibility checks occurred throughout both the

data-collection and data-analysis phases by having participants check my summaries of their interviews to ensure all of the relevant themes had been identified.

Dependability

Dependability is the requirement that one researcher can be tested for consistency by a second researcher, who, after examining the work of the first, can conclude, "Yes, given that perspective and those data, I would probably have reached the same conclusion" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 124). The dependability of this research was determined by how well the themes and ideas related to each participant's perception, experience, and understanding of power sharing were supported by the data. To enhance the dependability of the findings, the discussion of the themes has to include quotations from the participants. In addition, the research report includes extracts taken directly from my field notes and from any documents collected. Also, efforts to ensure dependability of the data occurred during data analysis by asking two colleagues (fellow graduate students) to review samples of the data and my interpretations of these data. Further, the original data of the study have been kept in permanent record form, including the original audiotapes, the computer disks, and the printed transcripts. Field notes in various forms, which also constituted evidence for the study, have been retained. Verbatim participant quotations, documented in Chapter 4 of the dissertation, are clearly identified on the original transcripts. Collectively, this evidence base provides confirmability and dependability in the study as well as accessibility to data for further analysis if required.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the extent to which the data used in the study were confirmed from other sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 300). The data collected during this study

were confirmed through the use of "within-method triangulation" (Delamont, 1992, p. 160) and member checking. Within-method triangulation involves systematically collecting and incorporating various data sources in the research design. This method allows the researcher to acquire information about something from several different sources. Interviews, field notes, and documents (school division policy statements, school handbooks) were utilized in order to facilitate confirmability in this study. Member checking involved providing the participants with transcripts of the interviews and the researcher's analysis to determine the extent to which these were confirmed by the participants.

Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which findings apply in contexts other than the one in which they were derived (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 297). The transferability of the findings of this study will be determined by any reader of the dissertation on the basis of how well he/she can use the descriptions of the participants and their perceptions, experiences, and understandings of power sharing as reported in this study. Further, to comply with the criterion of transferability and to be consistent with the elements of naturalistic inquiry, the dissertation is written in ordinary language, and it is plausible and carefully documented, provides corroboration from multiple sources, and is fair and ethical in that it safeguards the rights of the respondents (Owens, 1982, pp. 16-17).

Ethical Issues

The standards set by the University of Alberta for the protection of human research participants were followed; therefore, the following procedures were adopted:

1. Approval by the Ethics Committee to conduct the study was obtained.

2. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from each superintendent and from each principal.

3. The study's purpose was clearly explained to the participants prior to each interview or observation.

4. The participants were assured of the exploratory rather than judgmental nature of the study.

5. All information collected during the research, whether collected during interviews or during periods of observation, has been treated as confidential.

6. All names, whether of persons, schools, or districts, have been assigned pseudonyms to ensure that anonymity is preserved.

7. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time.

8. Transcribed interview data were made available to participants so that inaccuracies, errors, omissions, and inclusions could be identified and corrected.

9. Data, whether in the form of audiotaped interviews, field notes, transcripts, or documents, are kept in a secure location to which only I have access.

Every effort has been made to ensure the protection of collective and individual anonymity. Further, every effort was made to protect individual confidences during the study by my willingness to omit data that could prove damaging to any participant or district. In addition to adhering to ethical guidelines for this study, each participant was offered either a copy or an executive summary of the study, and each will be provided with the dissertation format that they have chosen.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the context of the study. The participants are described in terms of their personal backgrounds in school administration and the characteristics of their schools. The purpose of providing this information is to assist the reader in determining the relevance of the findings subsequently reported to the reader's situation or interest.

The gender-neutral pseudonyms used for the participants have purposely been chosen to ensure the promised anonymity of each participant. Because this study was not designed to establish or inform us about the different conceptions that a male or female participant held of power sharing, the gender of the participant is not significant. However, the identification of the gender of a participant in a district could reveal his/her identity. Therefore, it was viewed as imperative to anonymity that gender-neutral names be used.

Overview

The pilot study and main study combined resulted in a cohort of 11 participants. The pilot study was carried out in an urban setting. The school divisions for the main study were located in rural settings, with one being in the south region and the other in the north region of the province. Their system enrollments were not particularly large, both being under 10,000. Each encompassed large areas of territory with a variety of different types of locations for their schools (small towns, hamlets, and religious sect sites). The school division in the north was in a region encompassed by both agriculture

and natural resource industries, whereas the school division in the south of the province was predominately in an agricultural region.

The participants were all experienced educators, ranging from 18 to 26 years of service. As school administrators, their experience ranged from 2 to 17 years of specific experience as school principals, and from 1 to 12 years as principals at their current school sites. There was one participant in the first year at the current site and three participants with two years at the current site. Two of these four participants had been principals at different sites within the same school division, and two had been vice principals at different sites within the same school division (see Table 4.1 for the main characteristics of the participants and the contexts within which they worked). The main study cohort comprised eight men and one woman. The proportion of their assignment devoted to administration varied from .5 to 1.0. A substantial majority of the participants, eight of nine, maintained some teaching duties, typically one or two classes. They indicated this was to keep a teacher's perspective and teaching status as perceived by staff members. Each of these eight had administrative time allocations in the order of .8 to .9.

The participants' schools ranged in size from 90 students to 500. The schools were (a) a traditional high school with Grades 10 to 12, (b) a high school with Grades 9 to 12, (c) a junior-senior high school with Grades 7 to 12, (d) a middle school with Grades 6 to 8, (e) three K to 12 schools, and (f) an elementary school with Grades K to 6. The study represented schools in seven different communities.

Table 4.1

Description of Participants and Context

Pseudonym	Experience as vice principal	Experience as principal at different site	Experience as principal at this site	Total years in admin.	Years as educator	Enrollment	Number of teaching staff
Chris	4	0	6	10	21	350	17
Dale	1	0	3	4	22	250	15
Lee	0	10	2	18	26	90	6
Jamie	5	0	1	6	12	160	9
Pat	0	0	2	2	19	160	9
Terry	0	8	9	17	24	350	18
Stacey	2	0	6	8	26	200	8
Taylor	1	9	2	12	22	500	25
Kelly	0	0	12	12	24	200	13

School Divisions

The nine schools represented in this study were from two school divisions. This subsection provides an overview of each school division and a context for the participants.

South Rural School Division

Three of the participants, Dale, Chris, and Lee, were principals in this division.

In 1990 the South Rural School Division, under the guidance of a new superintendent, developed a new strategic plan. This strategic plan addressed staff development, programs and services, finance, transportation, and facilities. The school division was in the third year of implementation when this study took place.

The development of this new strategic plan for the South School Division was a collaborative process involving community members, parents, students, school board

members, and all school division employees. The strategic plan was developed over a period of six months. This collaborative approach was in keeping with one of seven belief statements published in the division policy handbook; specifically, "Education is a cooperative process among home, community, and school." All initial decisions made in this strategic planning process sought total (100%) consensus of all the participants. Ongoing committee work was required to accomplish the objectives set out in the strategic plan. The committees were made up of members from the original stakeholder groups identified above. All teachers and principals were expected to serve on a division committee during the school year. There was an expectation by the superintendent and board that this collaborative approach, accompanied by consensus decision-making, would be duplicated in the schools. Therefore this collaborative planning and consensus decision-making were distinguishing characteristics of this division.

The new superintendent initiated the school division's new teacher evaluation policy. This policy made it the school principal's duty, rather than that of central office personnel, to evaluate teachers in their school. However, the hiring of all teaching staff continued to be carried out by central office personnel. Shared normative experiences for these three principals were (a) participation in the implementation of the new division strategic plan at the division and school level; (b) responsibility for implementation of the mandated consensus decision-making process at the school level for school decision making; (c) participation in teacher evaluation, which in this district, due to new policy, was now carried out by principals; and (d) a delegation of administrative functions by central office in the form of school-based budgeting.

North Rural School Division

Participants employed by this division were Jamie, Pat, Terry, Kelly, Taylor, and Stacey.

Changes in teacher evaluation, the implementation of a new policy regarding school curriculum, and school-based budgeting were three significant, shared normative experiences for these principals. The school division was in the second year of adapting these practices at the time of this research.

The new superintendent initiated the school division's new teacher evaluation policy. The significant change was to assign the school principal the duty of evaluating teachers in their school, rather than assigning central office personnel to complete the evaluation, as had been the previous practice. However, the hiring of all teaching staff continued to be carried out by central office personnel.

The policy addressing school curriculum change was created by a newly elected school board with a stated intent of 'articulated accountability' within the district.

Shared normative experiences for these three principals were (a) participation in the design and implementation of the new curriculum at the division and school level; (b) participation in teacher evaluation, which in this district, due to new policy, was now carried out by principals; and (c) a delegation of administrative functions by central office in the form of school-based budgeting.

The Participants

Chris

Chris served 21 years as an educator in the same school division and in the same town. Chris taught for 11 years before becoming a vice principal at the junior high in this

town, next serving three years as vice principal and then six years as principal of the high school.

Chris's long-term tenure in this system afforded the participant familiarity with the administrative context of the system and both historic and present circumstances of the community.

The school had a teaching staff of 17 and a support staff of three positions. Teaching .15 of the time allowed Chris .85 administrative time. Chris's teaching assignment was always scheduled first thing in the morning, making the rest of the day free for administrative duties.

The school was located in a large southern Alberta town associated primarily with agriculture. The school served students in Grades 9 to 12. The student population included students who were residents of the town, as well as those from the rural areas adjacent to the town.

The school was a large two-story structure, with several one-story appendages that were added at different times. Walking in the front doors, one was immediately greeted by a student-painted mural; on an adjacent wall hung the school's mission statement.

The principal's office was large, with the furniture arranged to project an atmosphere of openness. In one corner of the room, Chris's desk was placed against the wall, with the chair opening to the center of the room providing no obstruction between the principal, Chris, and guests entering the room. In the center of the room were a sofa and chair with a coffee table, creating a comfortable setting for meetings.

The implementation of consensus management and collaborative strategies in use in this school came as a result of the new district strategic plan. The new strategic plan and committees in this school were both in line with the district management style and emulated it. Chris reported a marked change in management style from the initial style used as a beginning principal. Chris informed me this new management strategy had started with the school division's changes, which Chris referred to as *collaborative leadership*. Chris further noted this new management style was solidified through master's program courses and reading current management literature.

Consensus management was encouraged in this school division as a direct result of the newly devised and recently implemented school division strategic plan. In turn each school staff was responsible to develop a school strategic plan. Administration and teacher committees developed all new issues, objectives, and action plans for the school strategic plan. In Chris's school, procedures were in place to accommodate work by these strategic plan committees. Procedures implemented in this school included collaborative planning and consensus of decisions regarding actions to be taken. Each teaching staff member was on a committee of his/her choice. The committee members studied, researched, debated, and proposed solutions to the problems assigned to them by the staff. They reported back to the complete staff with new recommendations. Once consensus was obtained, the staff set about creating an action plan and operational timeline. The action plan steps included the following: (a) action was identified in an action statement, (b) key quality indicators or critical success levels were established, (c) required resources were identified, (d) those staff members who would be responsible for enacting were identified, (e) timelines were established, and the procedure began. Each

staff member received an action plan that clearly delineated all of the above. Not reaching consensus meant the plan would go back to the committee to be revised. Revision would be based on the input of the staff during the discussion of the plan at the committee meeting. The revised plan would be brought back to another staff meeting.

Words frequently used by this participant identified as significant to staff interactions were *responsibility, accountability, effectiveness*, and *consensus*.

Dale

Dale had been with the current school division for nine years, serving one year as vice principal at the high school in this town, and was currently in the third year as principal of the middle school. Dale taught in a large Alberta urban school district for 15 years before moving to this large southern Alberta town to teach. Dale's teaching was a mixture of junior and senior high social studies and physical education. Dale was also proud of seven years of teaching in a special education program for high school students, describing it as "an offshoot of the resource room which was common in the 1970s and '80s." This principal's current administrative time was .85, with .15 scheduled for classroom teaching.

The large town in which the school was located was associated primarily with agriculture. The school served 250 students in Grades 6 to 8, with a teaching staff of 15. The student population included students who were residents of the town, as well as those from the rural areas adjacent to the town.

Upon first entering the school, one was welcomed by a border display of pictures of each and every student in the school. Certificates for improvement in academics, citizenship, and sports hung below the pictures. Earning three certificates provided the

student with a ribbon hung below the certificates, creating a streamer effect. Student leadership was encouraged and visible by display.

The implementation of consensus management and collaborative strategies implemented in the school division through the division strategic plan were modified in this school. The school division's strategic plan mandated representation on each school division committee by teaching staff. Teachers were required to sit on committees in their own school as well. Dale encouraged the staff to participate in division committees. However, in keeping with Dale's concern regarding the extra work load for teachers, Dale took the responsibility for being the school's designate on division committees without a teacher representative from their school. Further, Dale's school did not have committees aligning with the school district committees. The school had a strategic plan, but issues and objectives were specific to the school. Teachers were not mandated to serve on committees; rather, committees were made up of teachers interested in working on a specific issue. The decision-making process used in the school was not by consensus, but rather was adopted from Dale's understanding that some people are more *influential* in the decision process. Therefore, when Dale had an idea or a need for change arose in the school, this principal would start out with two or three people who were identified as "influential" and to whom Dale referred as "the cornerstone of our community." Change was initiated through a core group; those who did not wish to be involved in the design of the change could decline but were required to be supportive of the change when it was implemented.

This participant's management style and decision process complied with the school-division model of using committees but did not emulate the consensus model with collaborative strategies or full-staff consensus for decisions being made.

Words that were identified as significant to staff interactions for this participant were *cohesive, timely decisions, expectations, staff 'input,'* and *accountability.*

Lee

The senior of this study's participants, Lee had a perspective that was different from those of the rest of the study's participants, because this principal's administrative background was more diverse. Lee had been a principal for 10 years in various school settings, which included a traditional high school, Grades 10 to 12; a junior/senior high school, Grades 7 to 12; a rural school, Grades 1 to 12; and the current school, Grades 1 to 9. Lee had two majors, English and physical education, and served as department chair in each area in different schools early in his career. Further, this participant had been both an assistant superintendent and a superintendent in a major western Canadian city. When Lee returned to Alberta, it was to an urban school district as a member of a central office curriculum department. Last, Lee returned to teaching and being a principal in schools, which Lee termed "getting back to some reality. Lee was currently the principal of a K to 9 school. The school had a population of 90 students and a teaching staff of six. The hamlet in southern Alberta was predominantly associated with agriculture. The school, a one-story building, shared an attached library space with the community. Upon entering the front doors to the school, one encountered a bulletin board of student achievements.

The school division had recently implemented a division strategic plan. Collaborative planning and decision making with consensus were used in the

development process of this new plan, and there was an implication these strategies would be duplicated at the school level. Lee made an effort to emulate the model at the school level but experienced staff resistance, noting the use of these strategies was not being "totally accepted by all staff members." Lee believed everything was "basically" open to discussion in the school. When consensus was not reached, the staff went with a majority vote. However, if there was strong opposition or a strong minority, then this principal did not act immediately but preferred to table the issue. Due to the variation in the extent to which teaching staff would commit to working on the school strategic plan, Lee currently found it advantageous to work actively with those who "have bought into the system." Lee believed this investment would pay off because other staff members would join once they saw and heard about the benefits of the new way of thinking and working.

Lee's focus was on improving staff commitment, supporting individual teacher growth, and facilitating an environment for that change. Words identified as significant to staff interactions for this participant were *facilitate, commitment, growth*, and *consensus decisio- making.*

Jamie

Jamie had been an educator for 12 years, serving as principal for 6 years in three different schools. This was Jamie's first year as principal of this junior/senior high located in a small town in northern Alberta. The school served 160 students, with a teaching staff of nine. The student population included students who were residents of the town, as well as those from the rural areas immediately adjacent to the town.

The school's structure was in good condition, having recently been renovated. The principal's office was immediately accessible upon entry into the school. Jamie's office was arranged in the traditional layout, with the principal on one side of the desk and the visitor in a chair facing the principal's desk.

The school division had recently set five new district goals. All principals were busy working with their respective staffs to initiate strategies to complete these new goals. Other new initiatives were school-based budgeting and teacher evaluation by the site principal.

Jamie maintained a commitment to a team approach. Everything, with the exception of timetabling, was completed through teacher committees. The committee structure was in place when this participant arrived at the school. Jamie viewed this as fortunate and indicated it was in keeping with the belief teachers must recognize certain responsibilities over and above their teaching responsibilities.

Words identified as significant to staff interactions for this participant were *responsibility, teamwork*, and *servant leadership.*

Pat

Pat was a veteran teacher of 19 years, serving the second year as principal of an elementary/junior high school. Pat's school was located in a hamlet in northern Alberta. The school served approximately 160 students, with a staff of 11. The student population was predominately from a fundamental religious sect, and the hamlet was located in a predominantly agricultural area.

The school was an aging building but was very well maintained. It was typical of many rural schools that started with two classrooms and underwent additions of office

space, gym, and library when the demand was apparent and the school division capable of funding these additions. The principal's office was immediately accessible upon entering the building. It was arranged in a traditional layout, with the desk in the center and chairs on the opposite side for the guests. The staff room was cozy, and the atmosphere was warm and welcoming.

Pat was in the second year as principal at this site and was working diligently with the staff to establish site decision-making procedures. In keeping with the school division's policy change in 1991-92, these staff members were in their second year of working with a school-based budget. Whereas budgeting was completed with the involvement of all teachers, timetabling was completed by individual teachers at the elementary level and by the group at the junior high level. Pat viewed the new division goals and site-based budgeting as positive division initiatives.

Words identified as significant to staff interactions for this participant were *collaborative decisions*, *reflective practice*, and *servant leadership*.

Terry

Terry was in the 24th year of a career in education. Seventeen of this principal's 24 years had been served in administration spanning K to 12, with this being the ninth year as principal of this junior/senior high school.

The school was located in a middle-sized town in northern Alberta. The school served 350 students in Grades 7 to 12, with a teaching staff of 18. The students were from the town and the immediate adjacent rural area. This area was mixed agriculture and logging. The student population was predominated by students belonging to a fundamental religious sect.

The school was a large, well-kept facility. The large staff room was filled with notice boards reflecting the emphasis on the school's professional development activities. Terry's office was a comfortable size, with the desk set up against the outside wall and a grouping of chairs arranged at the doorway for guests, projecting a welcoming and open atmosphere.

The school division was engaged in the formulation of new curriculum goals and four other new objectives. School-based budgeting was in the second year of operation. Terry indicated difficulty "letting go of the budget," suggesting the reason might have been "most of the staff here are young people." In past years Terry prepared the budget, shared it with staff, and requested concerns or comments. This principal currently completed the timetable and provided the proposed timetable to the teaching staff, asking for teacher input and then completing the final product. Terry was currently concerned with the notion of collaborative decision making with high school students and believed the students of today "feel they should have more say as to what goes on in school." Terry noted it was currently a struggle, "not so much on my part," but rather, a widening of differences in values between those of the students and those of their parents. These value differences created conflict. As a high school principal, Terry found it very difficult to "juggle the outcomes of decisions" due to the impact of the two opposing value systems.

Words identified as significant to staff interactions for this participant were *staff participation, trust*, and *reflective practice*.

Stacey

Stacey taught for 18 years in a classroom prior to becoming a vice principal. Stacey spent two years as the vice principal in an elementary school and changed elementary schools six years ago when the opportunity to become a principal presented itself.

The rural school was located in a small northern town with a population predominantly composed of a large fundamental religious community. Primarily a farming community, the secondary industries were logging and lumber. The school provided education for approximately 200 students in Grades 4 to 6, with a teaching staff of eight.

The school foyer was very open and inviting, with the administration office adjacent to this foyer. The principal's office comfortably held a large desk placed in the traditional fashion facing the office door, with the principal behind the desk and the visitor on the door side of the office. The desk had many stacks of material, suggesting the many projects Stacey had on the go.

Words identified as significant to staff interactions for this participant were *effectiveness, responsibility, shared responsibility*, and *collaboration.*

Taylor

Taylor had been an administrator for this school division for 12 years, 11 as a school principal. The school was located in a mid-sized northern Alberta town and provided education to 500 students, with a teaching staff of 18. The school was a very large, well-kept facility that was currently being remodeled, and the ongoing construction provided challenges to the daily school program.

Taylor had spent five years as a classroom teacher, four in a different province and one with this school district. This participant became vice principal of a junior/senior high school in the second year of employment with this district, holding the position for one year. Next, Taylor was the principal of a large K to 4 (400-plus students) for nine years and was currently in the second year as principal of a Grade 5 to 12 school located in the same town. Due to the size of the school's population, this participant had one vice principal and was a full-time principal. Taylor's cumulative administrative experience in this town provided both historic and current knowledge regarding the context and circumstance of educational change in this community. This was important to Taylor as a new principal in attending to the school's current challenges of student attendance, student discipline, and the morale of staff.

Words identified as significant to staff interactions for this participant were *responsibility, trust, expectations, input*, and *team.*

Kelly

Kelly had been the principal of this 200-student K to12 school for 12 years. Prior to that, this participant had been a teacher in a school jurisdiction outside the province of Alberta. Kelly's teaching background was in vocational high school. Kelly was the sole administrator in this building, yet maintained some teaching duties, with .6 of the position being allocated to the administrative role. There was a teaching staff of 13. The school was located in a remote northern location in a town with a population of approximately 1,200 people. The population was described as extremely transient. The town was established and had existed for the main purpose of housing the families of the natural resource industry personnel. The school had recently been completely renovated, and an

addition had been built to accommodate the new technology needed to offer the programs in the high school by computer.

Words identified as significant to staff interactions for this participant were *input, democratic, responsibility*, and *team*.

Summary

This chapter describes the participants in the research project and the school environments and community contexts in which their experiences are rooted. The main characteristics of the participant group are summarized in Table 4.1.

There were nine participants from two separate Alberta school divisions; specifically, three from the same southern Alberta school division and six from the same northern Alberta school division. Although participants in the same school division shared the same school board, superintendent, and policy, the participants reflected differences in the descriptions of their schools and the community context characteristics, which are based primarily on geographic location.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter contains a description of the understandings and experiences of nine participants. As described in Chapter 3, data were collected through formal and informal interviews, document analysis, and field-note taking. Following a brief description of the shared normative district experiences for each set of participants are the accounts of the participants' understandings of power sharing.

This chapter is presented in three sections, each of which represents the understandings and experiences of the participants in relation to themes emerging from their responses to each of the 14 guiding questions used in this study. These responses were given during the two interviews held with each participant. Each section includes a summary and discussion.

Section 1: Participant Perception of Power Sharing

A brief summary of the shared normative experiences for each school division is provided first. Presented second in this section is the summary by school division of the participants' answers to the first question:

What is your perception of power sharing in the principalship?

The initial response of each participant is recorded, followed by any subsequent responses.

South Rural School Division

Summary of Shared Normative Experiences

In 1990 the South Rural School Division, under the guidance of a new superintendent, developed a strategic plan addressing staff development, programs and services, finance, transportation, and facilities. The school division was in the third year of this endeavor at the time of the data collection for this research.

The strategic planning for the school division was a collaborative process involving parents, students, school board members, and all school division employees. This approach was in keeping with one of seven belief statements held by this system: "Education is a cooperative process among home, community, and school." All initial decisions made in this strategic planning process sought total (100%) consensus of all the participants. The collaborative approach and consensus planning and decision-making were distinguishing characteristics of this division.

Shared normative experiences for these three participants were (a) participation in the development and implementation of the new division strategic plan at both the division and school level; (b) responsibility for implementation of the mandated consensus decision-making process at the school level; (c) participation in teacher evaluation, which in this district, due to new policy, was now carried out by principals; and (d) delegation of administrative functions by central office in the form of school-based budgeting.

These participants viewed the new teacher-evaluation procedure as very progressive. They cited a report from the ATA to the school division as support of this belief. Specifically, teacher evaluation was formative to enhance teacher development

and summative only when a teacher was to be certified or if there was a concern regarding performance or preparation for termination of employment.

In regards to school-based budgeting, it is of interest to note the operational budget is committee based at the school level, whereas capital items are to be submitted to the school board for final approval.

Summary of Participants' Answers

The first question asked each of these three participants was "What is your perception of power sharing in the principalship?" The following are the responses of these three participants.

Chris, the principal of a secondary school, responded:

> I think your choice of words is interesting—power sharing. I'm not sure how much power we've got. It's like in a classroom situation, you know, if the truth were known, the teacher hasn't got much power. The teacher has authority, but the kids have the power . . . In actual fact, the power in the school, as far as the staff is concerned, will rest with the staff. That's where the power is.

Dale, the principal of a middle school, responded thus:

> People that are interested and willing to participate in power sharing, as you call it, should be given that opportunity. There are people that don't want to be involved in decisions, and I don't think they should be forced into it . . . I think the bottom line is that a decision has to be made.

Lee, the principal of a hamlet K-12 school, held this view:

> The only belief I have worked with is that the only power I have is the power that is granted to me by the people that work with me. I cannot assume power like I cannot assume respect. I've always believed that authority is something that is granted to me, not by divine right. The position doesn't grant you authority or power.

The variety in these responses immediately leads one to the realization power or power sharing does not have a shared meaning among these three administrators.

The one common element that came through in the interviews was in fact a discomfort with the word *power*. Each participant used some alternative term or disclaimer. Chris and Dale at first did not respond to the term in reference to their role as principal, but rather as words that I chose for the purposes of the study. Yet, they both indicated early in the interview their position held "authority." Lee explained the position of principal did not inherently have power or authority. In fact, Lee maintained, "Power and authority are given to me by staff members; neither is innate to the position."

Interestingly enough, each administrator at some time during the course of two interviews made a statement about final judgment and action. Chris related:

> When there is a problem or a challenge, it's not, "What are *we* going to do about this?" It's "What are *you* [the principal] going to do about this?" They [the teachers] certainly look to me for some leadership, support, and resources sometimes. It is true principals have some power in a sense perhaps, but School Acts and policies guide this, such as, "This is what you have the right to do," or decisions you have to make and be accountable for them.

Dale noted, "I think the bottom line is a decision has to be made. The decision-making process revolves, but there has to be a time when someone has to be responsible." Dale willingly took responsibility for making final decisions or being held accountable for joint decisions. Dale explained, "I understood when I took the position, that as far as the school goes, whatever decisions are arrived at, even if several people are involved, the buck still stops at my door."

Lee's decision-making strategy was represented thus: "You lead from modeling. That's how you attain authority, position, or whatever you want to call it . . . I suppose the buck stops here." Therefore, I first heard from each participant a statement of doubt regarding having power, followed later in the interview with a statement suggesting each may hold power.

North Rural School Division

Summary of Shared Normative Experiences

Changes in teacher evaluation and the implementation of a new policy regarding school curriculum were two significant shared normative experiences for these principals.

The new superintendent initiated the school division's new teacher evaluation policy. This policy made it the school principal's duty, rather than that of central office personnel, to evaluate teachers in their school. However, the hiring of all teaching staff continued to be carried out by central office personnel.

The policy addressing school curriculum change was created by a newly elected school board, with a stated intent of 'articulated accountability' within the district.

Shared normative experiences for these three principals were (a) participation in the design and implementation of the new curriculum at the division and school level; (b) participation in teacher evaluation, which in this district, due to new policy, was now carried out by principals; and (c) delegation of administrative functions by central office in the form of school-based budgeting.

District administrators were both demanding and supportive of their respective staffs. Schools were autonomous but accountable for funds allotted through school-based budgeting. These funds covered both capital and operational allocations. Principals were important figures not only at the school level, but also in the operation of the district. The level of principal involvement in, influence over, and accountability for the implementation of the new curriculum policy was a distinguishing characteristic.

Summary of Participants' Answers

All six participants were asked the question, "What is your perception of power sharing in the principalship?" Jamie responded, "I guess I see it as building a team. Each team works better if they are cooperating and not working in an authoritarian atmosphere. People feel they have significant input into decisions and policies, and a sense of ownership." Pat said:

> Well, I never think of power, to be very honest with you. I know principals certainly have an awful lot of influence . . . They have the single most influential position when it comes to getting things done in school and allowing things to happen . . . Power is not really a word I think of.

Terry, a junior/senior high school principal, commented, "I believe it is not me that runs the school. I am here to facilitate and help, knowing at the same time I say that, the buck stops at my door." Taylor, also a junior/senior high school principal, replied, "I think sharing your power . . . depends on who you work with." Kelly stated:

> Well, if you are going to operate from the given that a principal has power . . . I don't consciously use the word *power* in day-to-day operations . . . There is probably not too much that goes on in this school where it is affecting staff or students that is not discussed either through virtue of staff meetings, or one to one, depending on who it is. As a result, if you are talking about power sharing, about increasing the quality of your programs, running the place day to day, I like to get other people involved. But there are persons who don't want to get involved in those situations as well.

Stacey, an elementary principal, replied:

> Well, first of all, I really struggle with the word *power*. To me, it has connotations of things like dominance or domineering or putting it over on or pushing people around . . . I have never felt that anything I have done in administration, or for that matter in teaching, has to do with power.

Four of the six participants overtly denied power had any legitimacy in their role as principal. One participant covertly denied this legitimacy by framing the new context

as *a team*. This participant proceeded to use the term *team* interchangeably with two other terms, *shared power* and *shared decision-making*. Only one participant, Taylor, acknowledged power and specified when one would choose to *share* that power. What is not discernible from these six descriptions is a specific definition of power or power sharing. However, in the beginning of the interview process, with the exception of one participant, there was a concern by all the NRSD participants with the word *power* being connected to their role of principal or being designated to the principal personally. The word did not have a neutral value for the participants, but rather a negative value with identifiable negative traits (for example, domineering, pushing people around, like a general). Further, there was a need by each participant to explain although *power was not exerted,* indeed, *final decisions* were being made. The implication was power, as force, was not used; yet, there was *control* in the situation, final decisions were made, and work was completed. In fact, all participants used the word *influence* with greater ease to indicate it was an acceptable term of reference regarding their behavior; influence is legitimate. A principal can be seen as having influence, even substantial influence. Initially, each participant discussed influence with regard to position rather than personal influence. However, in the second interview all participants acknowledged it was their personal influence they exerted *to guide* staff in collaborative processes. One participant, Pat, described the position of principal as being "the single most influential *position* in the school." Descriptions in the dialogue between the participants and researcher never clearly revealed whether the participants' understanding of influence was as power, or a type of power, indicating varying degrees, or whether it was a different phenomenon, something different than power that allows for finality in decision making the same way

that power might. It is interesting Taylor, the one principal who acknowledged the use of power, clarified the understanding of the concept this way:

> When you say the term *power sharing* . . . I'm not interpreting it in the same manner as, say, a general in the army. I think where I'm intertwining it is in between two ideas: one of responsibility and in the many areas where the buck would stop here.

Taylor further explained, "I'm not looking at power in the purely autocratic dictatorial sense, but I was looking at power in the educational sense." The educational sense for Taylor was embedded in responsibility:

> One of my responsibilities should be that the kids have the best kind of learning environment that we can possibly set up for them. So I look at the power I have; ultimately, it is up to me to arrange that as best I can.

To provide the best kind of learning environment, Taylor employed the following strategy: "You get advice from teachers; you ask some of them to come up with a decision in an area, and we adopt it." However, Taylor stated, "Whatever concept I'm describing, I don't look at power."

Summary and Discussion

All nine participants were uncomfortable with the term *power*. Eight of the nine participants first denied having power. They all reconsidered this position and later in their first interview or at the beginning of their second interview acknowledged holding power and described the parameters of this power in their role as principal. One participant immediately acknowledged holding power in the position as principal.

Section 2: Power Sharing and Collaboration in the Principalship

The purpose of this section is to present the findings related to the second question:

How do you believe power sharing is used in your practice?

Four themes emerged from the participants' responses. Thus, the subsections reporting their responses are arranged by these themes: (a) leadership, (b) decision making, (c) timetabling, and (d) staff involvement and staff commitment.

Leadership

Throughout the interview process the nine participants discussed their leadership from various points of view as it affected their attempts to share power with their respective staff.

South Rural School Division

While commenting on the role of the principal, Chris recalled a statement made by Sergiovanni that indicated that running a school is not like running a train schedule, with everything being precise. Chris concurred and then described the process as being more like an amoeba, shifting one direction, then another. "The principal's job is to herd it in a direction, but this is not easily done." Chris declared:

> It does not work perfect and does not work well all the time. That's probably the most difficult thing about being an administrator, is not having absolute control, power, and influence to create a situation where everything works effectively and predictably all the time.

Chris noted the high stress a new principal would suffer if he/she believed that he/she could walk into a school and make it work all the time; Chris concluded by stating, "It is just not that way. You must be flexible and understand things don't work that well all the

time. You must be prepared for the unpredictable. In this day and age it's a different game. It really is."

Dale described how both positional and personal power affect the role of the principal. Dale believed that there is position power in the role of the principal, explaining, "By the position itself, the student population would take it as the end of the road, when one gets sent to the principal's office. That would be regarded as power." Dale also observed that staff looked to the position as one of influence and stated, "There is, by connotation, a real power attached to it." Dale further observed that because of the many social changes taking place, the community was looking to principals for answers. All of these observations brought Dale to conclude that there is a type of power just because of the position itself. However, Dale believed that the personal power of a principal is equally important to position power. Caring, being interested in the individual, listening, and being patient are all behaviors Dale believed are important for a principal to have and use. For Dale an application of these skills would be demonstrated by the leadership decision of not demanding strict adherence to a committee structure for planning at the school level. Dale was attempting to provide the discretion that the teachers needed to function autonomously to accomplish the school goals.

After suggesting that the power conferred by the position of principal was rarely enough "to get the job done," Lee reflected on strategies that would "help close the gap." Specifically, Lee identified the principal's modeling and use of persuasion, then explained:

> One does not try to coerce a teacher, but there is an effort of persuasion in some instances. As principal you say, "Try this and see how it goes," but the end decision is yours. However, "Why don't you try this?" Then you also facilitate recommending a visit to a classroom using the technique or program or attending

> a workshop. It is an effort to effect change, but only through the teacher's own choice.

Lee maintained that by asking teachers to look at different alternatives for teaching practices, the principal uses a personal power in the form of persuasion or influence. Sometimes Lee used the strategy of playing the devil's advocate even when agreeing with the new technique or program the teacher wished to implement. Lee viewed this as an important leadership role to ensure teacher growth and commitment. Lee identified building trust between the teacher and the principal and assisting in building the self-confidence of teachers to take risks as other important leadership activities.

North Rural School Division

Although leadership style was unique to each principal, four of the six participants in the North described their leadership as employing a servant-leadership approach.

Jamie's leadership objective was to maximize the potential of the teacher and the students in the learning situation. Jamie stated:

> I came in with the basic philosophy that the administrator is the servant of the teacher . . . My position primarily is, if I can ease the tension and make it better for the teacher to teach and for students to learn, then the best way to facilitate this is by taking roadblocks out of the way of the teachers, or helping them in whatever way or in any opportunity.

Jamie also maintained, "The mandate of leadership is to designate or delineate responsibilities to the staff." Jamie asserted, "I came in first with the philosophy that I want to be their servant, but at the same time I am the person who will ultimately make the final decision."

Pat believed power is shared with teachers, community, and students through open communication and a setting of mutual standards. Pat acknowledged the principal's position does have authority but focused on the more important aspect of the relationship the principal holds with staff, parents, and students. When discussing relations with parents, Pat stressed the importance of communication, such as phoning on a regular basis when things were going well. Pat stated:

> The parents know me and they know I know their children. They don't mind my phoning, and they don't mind phoning me. That is power in itself. They feel comfortable in talking to me. If we share ourselves, we end up sharing power too.

As for students, "The power shared with them stems from our observation of students being able to handle themselves and their situations; and as they address us as human beings, we respond in like fashion." Although Pat was very cognizant of being responsible for the educational results in this school, this participant reported trying to transcend this by taking risks and giving teachers room to take risks and to choose the processes that work best for the teachers and the students. The school division was working on the new education plan emphasizing skill accomplishment at specific grade levels, but Pat maintained teachers should not be asked to completely change how they teach. They should be accountable for the results and be able to establish the process. Pat summarized by stating, "I think that is power sharing; that's what sharing power is. They control themselves, too."

Last, Pat believed principals must be visionaries, stating specifically:

> The principal has to be able to see what he or she wants. This is important both in power sharing and in bringing meaning to the teacher's job. One must know what you want to see happen to be able to share your power.

Pat indicated, "*vision* has many facets to it". One facet of vision for Pat is the responsibility of making sure the public knows the effective job the teachers of this school are carrying out. Pat stated:

> Schools are under such terrible attack. We have to provide a sound platform on which teachers can operate. Principals must provide this by having a clear vision. They need to keep people and negative situations off their teacher's backs. Providing a clear vision and clear communication to the public about the effective teaching occurring in the school allows the teachers to have a vision about what they want for their students and to try new ideas and have a chance to make it happen.

Terry's self-identified *servant leadership* approach accommodated the frequent practice of delegation employed in the school. Terry noted changing from predominantly using committee work to using delegation of tasks to specific teachers or a small group of teachers, because the committee work was often viewed as too time consuming by some of the teachers. Terry wanted teacher input, and many teachers wanted to provide input. Terry's primary concern with committee work was "keeping quiet and not trying to run it or take over." Terry indicated this carried into delegated tasks too, stating, "My philosophy and my actions are not always synchronized. I have a strong feeling that delegation must be here; yet as the principal running the place, I sometimes find myself grabbing control in committees." Terry then reflected on why this occurred:

> I believe the administrator is a role model in the school just as the teacher is in the classroom. If I see something happening that I perceive as being inappropriate modeling of leadership, I end up intruding even though I know I should let them carry out their task and provide feedback rather than interfering.

Kelly maintained that leadership success depends on trust. First the staff members have to trust the principal. They need to know the principal will be there for them when there are difficult situations or difficult decisions to make. Kelly provided an example of

each. A difficult situation may be a teacher requiring certain standards of work and a parent objecting and complaining about the teacher. Here Kelly would have a meeting with the teacher and parent and would not let the teacher deal with this alone. A difficult decision might be when a call needs to be made to Social Services to protect a child. Kelly believed it would be the responsibility of the principal to make the call, to be the leader and be responsible.

Stacey was also an advocate of servant leadership, expressing an interest in showing, challenging, and encouraging teachers to be more effective at the business of education. Stacey found identifying and then using the specific expertise of staff members was useful in creating leadership density in the school. Stacey believed these practices are examples of power sharing in the school. Stacey summarized:

> I would characterize my whole philosophy of administration as one of sharing power. There is seldom a time I have to say enough is enough or draw a line or have to step in because the collaborative process becomes too cumbersome.

Taylor's leadership involved a straightforward approach consistent with all staff. Taylor believed that a team approach with the idea of working together toward a common goal is vital to having continuity in the school. Taylor also believed teams have captains and indecision should not be a part of the school climate. Leadership for Taylor was taking responsibility and moving action forward. Taylor stated, "Let's work cooperatively, once again understanding that we won't always get our way, we won't always agree, and there are compromises to be made. I think you can create a trusting atmosphere if you are upfront from the beginning." From this position of leadership Taylor was able to ensure quality changes were made in the school while allowing teacher expertise to lead where appropriate. Taylor related:

> I think teachers have valuable information to share. I respect their views and information. I know I do not have all the answers and my way of thinking is only one way. I am willing to bend, to give their ideas a whirl, to support them and see how effective they are.

Taylor did have criteria for this action, stating, "Teacher's with expertise and commitment to the job are staff members I would lend this type of trust to."

Summary and Discussion

As the participants discussed their leadership, the elements of position power and personal power in this leadership role were illuminated. All participants discussed the leadership strategy of servant leadership. Overall it was presented as a collaborative, supportive, and facilitative strategy. However, although the expressed intent was to facilitate and share power, it was not clearly demonstrated this had become the primary leadership style employed by these participants. Rather, servant leadership was a strategy used in specific situations. Although the nine participants reported being more consultative with staff, they also noted there are parameters for "trust." They collectively maintained *trust* is important to effect change. The staff has to trust the principal to support new initiatives, and, just as important, the principal needs to trust the staff is capable of carrying out an initiative. The participants collectively recognized there would be some failure and they would be held accountable; therefore they did in fact employ strategies to control the at-risk factor for themselves. This fine line of trust and accountability led the participants to discuss how they employed personal power or influence to control the decision-making process. All participants clearly indicated their respective staffs understood they could support any and all initiatives but also had the right to veto. The reported leadership practices reflect an endeavor for a more collaborative practice and a sharing of power and/or responsibility, but with a clear

statement regarding the principal's right to retain control over decisions he/she deemed significant at the school level. All nine participants described and asserted a belief that personal power is more useful and effective than position power.

Decision Making

South Rural School Division

Addressing a principal's power to make a final decision Dale stated, "If all else fails, the principal is *responsible* for that decision." Chris stated, "It does get dicey sometimes because if you are being held responsible by some people, they are monitoring, and they are serious about holding you accountable." Lee pointed to the aspect of risk to the principal by offering trust to staff:

> I suppose that the buck stops here. I have to trust my staff to do the right thing and support them. And if things don't work out, then I am the one who has to carry it. I have no qualms about that and have to recognize it exists. That it is another part of the risk taking.

Although trusting the staff is important, Lee also noted, "But if I am the one who is ultimately responsible, then I have to be the one who has to make sure they are doing a good job, so I am not exposed to too much risk."

All three were ambivalent about exerting power and attempted to explain why they had to be like 'that' (*that* referring to decisions being made while influence, control, or power is exerted by the principal). Each explained this exerted behavior occurs because someone will be held accountable; in this case, specifically they themselves.

Chris explained most of the power and authority is defined by decisions of varying types: "My day is spent making decisions. All this influence is positional power, by virtue of the position. There is a perception of some kind of power that goes along with the position." Chris continued:

> I guess sometimes, just because you are a principal, people respond to you because somehow there is the perception there is power in your position. I haven't thought of myself as being a powerful person in the sense that I have a reservoir of power that I can use or employ in various circumstances. I guess I have always thought about it as a *responsibility*, and an awesome one, I have to admit.

Chris clearly explained why decisions must be made: "We want to make decisions that are in the best interest of those children who we serve here, and to do that we need to have different perspectives and different ideas, collaboration, and cooperation." Chris further specified, "Somehow it is my *responsibility* to bring all this together and have those decisions made that are in the best interest of this place."

The theme of responsibility continued throughout the interviews. The word *responsibility* was often used as a synonym for the necessity for overt action. It was viewed as the point at which someone was held accountable for a decision; therefore someone needed to be responsible and decide what action would be taken. A committee, a teacher, or the principal may hold the responsibility for a decision. At this point all three participants introduced what they viewed as their parameters for responsibility. Chris explained the School Act and/or district policies provide guidelines for making decisions within a school and further emphasized principals are held accountable for these school-based decisions.

Dale stated:

> I think eventually there are times when a decision has to be made. If there is ever a time . . . if there is a difference or a split, then I think it has to come from this office as well. I don't think you just let things drop because there is a split.

When speaking about the principal's legal responsibility, Lee stated, "The flip side of this [the legal mandates] is that when principals make decisions, it is

responsibility; while when teachers make decisions, someone is *sharing power* with them, *empowering* them."

Further to this, there seemed to be a desire or need to explain the choice to be responsible for making the final decision. The focus of all three principals was the student. Lee addressed it this way:

> If you don't establish a structure, then you can't complete the work . . . You know, it has to be open, trusting, and honest. Everyone has to be willing to listen to the other as long as we don't risk the kids.

Lee identified the parameters within which this participant would allow a teacher to make a decision. Here, the parameters for empowerment are not only the discretion needed to function, but also one's responsibility to the community, "as long as we don't risk the kids."

Two of the three principals' references to empowerment linked the concept to 'leader as servant.' This servant leadership style was preferable to using overt power or influence. Here, there was an implication the combination of the empowerment of teachers and servant leadership by principals when guided by shared values could lead to a sharing of responsibility and thus a sharing of power. The researcher probed to find out, first, at what point each participant could or would decide to share power with a teacher. The terms *trust* and *trustworthy* were used by all three participants. Therefore, I probed to establish how a participant would decide who was trustworthy, or whether all teachers were trustworthy. This line of questioning was completed with all nine participants. Each participant had some criteria for when power sharing would take place (see Table 5.1). However, it is interesting to observe that as participants explained with whom they would

Table 5.1

Participants' Perceptions of Power Sharing & Criteria for Sharing Power

Participant	Perception of power sharing 1st interview	Perception of power sharing 2nd interview	Intent	Criteria for sharing	Areas of exception
Chris	I'm not sure how much power principals have; teachers have authority; tasks to be done. I delegate these tasks to be done; I delegate this responsibility	Collaborative decision making A partnership , consensus; everyone participates and is responsible	To improve school effectiveness	Basically any teacher here who wants to take the ball and run with it, could do it	Division, provincial policy
Dale	The bottom line is a decision has to be made; we can't wait for consensus. I will make a decision.	Work with cornerstone people Give all staff input The buck stops at my office	Accountability Commitment	Use key teachers: They have credibility and influence, ideas spread	Parameters set by Alberta Ed. and Division policy
Lee	The only power I have is the power Granted to me by other people.	May use persuasion / right to risk brings responsibility to do a job and prove to me it is going well	Influence more kids by influencing adults Better school, better education, better kids	I have to trust my staff to do the right thing. I must make sure they are doing job well so I'm not too much at risk.	School Act Division policy
Jamie	I see it as building a team. People feel they have significant input into a decision and have a sense of ownership.	Delineate staff responsibility Use committees for input Deal with final decision when necessary	Servant leadership Maximize potential for teacher, student, learning situation	Committees to motivate Ownership	Legal conflict
Pat	I don't think of power. I know principals have an awful lot of Influence. They have the single most influential position when it comes to getting things done and allowing things to happen in schools.	Provides far greater & more effective power base, leader density, more people taking responsibility for what's happening in the school	Effective teachers Effective practice Effective school	Teacher mature enough Can formulate plan and carry out with best interest of children in mind	Legal issues Division policy
Terry	I believe that it's not me that runs the school. I am here to facilitate and help, knowing at the same time the buck stops here.	Delegate, give them responsibility and trust; they will do it. Grow, develop intrinsic worth, better teaching	Teacher ownership Provide opportunity Assign to job of choice Avoid area of difficulty	Delegate and trust Being a principal is a risk	Legal Division policy

(table continues)

Participant	Perception of power sharing 1st interview	Perception of power sharing 2nd interview	Intent	Criteria for sharing	Areas of exception
Kelly	I really struggle with the word *power*. I have never felt that anything I have done in administration or for that matter in teaching had to do with power	Division level principal responsible/ accountable; classroom, kids, curriculum, joint responsibility	Assist teacher in becoming more effective in the classroom	Staff member expertise Trust	Legal Division policy
Taylor	Sharing your power depends on who you work with	Principal responsible/accountable Teacher input; some collective decisions	Creates better work environment	Teachers with expertise Teachers I trust	Division policy
Stacey	Well, if you are going to operate from the given a principal has power, I don't use the word power in day-to-day use. I like to get people involved, get input.	Bottom line, no matter what happens I am responsible, yet you are asked for the whole process to be democratic and get teachers more involved	Responsibility Accountability Excellent teacher	Those with good idea of what I want done	Division policy Alberta Education regulation

share power, the term *power* was replaced with *responsibility*; thus each used the term *shared responsibility.*

Dale stated, "You share with those that want it." With respect to the act of shared responsibility and shared commitment, when they discussed the decision-making process, both Dale and Lee described a situational approach which specifically addressed the differences among the teaching staff regarding involvement in any decision-making task. Dale reported success in change and implementation of new programs by working through "the people that control the dynamics of your building." Everyone has an opportunity to have input.

Neither Dale nor Lee emulated the committee structure being used by their school divisions to accommodate consensus. Dale consulted with staff, used 'catalyst' committees, and made final decisions when consensus or majority agreement could not be accomplished in a timely manner. Lee employed modeling, consulting staff for input, meeting as a complete staff, and working "as long as it took to complete a staff-created and -owned plan"; Lee used a majority vote rather than consensus only on matters that had to be completed within a time frame for the district. Chris, on the other hand, ensured the school emulated the consensus committee approach currently being used by the school division.

North Rural School Division

The theme of decision-making emerged again and again throughout the interviews of these six participants. Four of the six participants discussed how decision-making was affected by their use of a servant leadership approach to management in their respective schools. Also, as in the South, all six participants of the North used the term, *shared*

responsibility interchangeably with *shared power*. Summarily, the concern for these participants is represented in Terry's words: "I have the responsibility to make a final decision; to be held accountable for that decision; to take that decision to the next level; to explain, defend, or be accountable for that decision." Terry elaborated: "So the responsibility is here, and while I can say the buck stops here, I fully realize it doesn't stop here all the time."

All six participants were cognizant of the recent expectation by division office of having staff involved in decision-making tasks, especially budget or school-based operational decisions. However, they also shared the view that while this was developing, they were responsible to make and be accountable for decisions made at the school level. Taylor explained, "At the school level there are some decisions that benefit from being made collectively as a staff; however, sometimes the principal must make the final decision for the team."

Each participant also noted two other variations of decision-making that may occur. First, sometimes decisions are made at the division level and must be accommodated at the school level. Second, sometimes decisions that are made at the school level are not accepted at the central office level. Taylor described this power sharing ebb and flow thus:

> We also share power with central office. We bring our decisions to them and sometimes they overrule, and I have to respect that. Also, sometimes there are decisions that come down from central office that the principal must tell teachers, "We are not going to have input on this, and this is the way this directive will be handled."

Kelly described the power base found in the job of the principal through a summary of decisions principals can make autonomously based on the district policy

statements: "I do know I have power to make certain decisions. I can cancel school. There are a lot of things I can do, and I suppose one has to use one's good judgment."

A statement regarding the dichotomous action of "seeking teacher input" and "making final decisions"—"because the buck stops here"—was repeated in the interviews by all participants.

Late in the first interview, Jamie contrasted the view of principal as 'overseer' with the concept Jamie held when first becoming a principal: "I came in first with the philosophy that I wanted to be the teachers' servant; but at the same time, I am the person who will ultimately make the final decision." Pat, Terry, Kelly, and Stacey held similar views regarding making final decisions. Pat stated, "They [the teachers] fully understand that I have the ability to say yea or nay on things. I don't have a problem with that." Terry revealed:

> I think the staff understands the legal authority and accountability designated to principals in the School Act. They feel they have an input, and yet it comes up all the time. The teachers say, "But we understand it stops at your door. You have the final say." They may not always like it, but the recognition is there that that's where it stops.

Kelly related:

> The bottom line is no matter what happens in the building, as much as I might not like it, I am responsible . . . The teachers know the principal is the ultimate authority. I think I have a pretty good idea about what I want to see done.

Stacey explained:

> I see the need for the system to be the way it is designed, to have people in charge. Ultimately, there is somebody that has to sign that form. I am not happy with a lot of those things, but there is a person that has to fill out that school program, and there is somebody who has to be responsible, be accountable.

Taylor held a strong commitment to decisions made by the team (staff), but conceded:

> You are never going to come to a decision that will satisfy everyone; therefore you try to satisfy the majority, all the time reminding ourselves our decision must reflect we are here for the students, and what we decide must be in their best interest.

Jamie indicated by being included in "the mid-management" level of decisions, it had become clear why the principal should make a more concerted effort to involve the school staff in as many decisions as possible. Jamie also explained the need to advocate for teachers to implement programs they believe are right for their students. Two issues surfaced. First, Jamie explained:

> Many times, since we are in the place where the buck stops in the school, you want to do what you feel is best in those situations by getting staff input. If the teachers are comfortable with something, then it is hard for them to blame or to point the finger and say, "it's administration's fault; they chose it. We wanted to do different." It just doesn't work that way.

Second, Jamie maintained a principal cannot be in all rooms at the same time and exclaimed, "I have to trust! I feel my teachers would never want to do something that they know I wouldn't like—not because of anything other than just to be found doing that would be something really bad." I probed to establish this participant's view on teachers' perceptions of being required to use what the principal *liked* as the criteria for educational decision in the school or classroom. Jamie responded:

> When you talk about power here, there is no domineering, dominant power here. I am not that kind of a person, but I will set people straight if I have too. It is not that kind of thing. That is still not coercive power; that is just setting things the way they have to be.

Jamie noted that as a teacher, there had been discomfort in being dictated to when in the role of a teacher; however, this participant recognized there is a different feeling that comes with involvement in decision making as management. Jamie related the experience in this way: "When you are actually involved in decision making with management, you

almost feel good, because there is that feeling of power, and perhaps the ego is involved and takes over at some time."

Pat indicated one consideration for allowing a teacher to be part of the decision-making process was to know the teacher was "mature enough as a person." Stating, "I need to know the teacher can formulate a plan, carry it out, and do it for the best interest of the children, while keeping within the standards of our community," Pat provided an example of staff being allowed to collaborate. In hiring a new teacher aide, Pat and the two teachers who would use the aide's services were the hiring team. The teachers were the primary interviewers of the applicants. Pat pointed out these teachers had identified specific skills the new aide would require to carry out the job. It was a way for Pat to understand and verify these teachers were thinking about the needs of the students. Pat relayed this as a typical type of shared activity, further stating:

> The staff here have a lot of say. They fully understand I have the ability to say yea or nay on things. I don't have any problem with being able to do that; however, I don't go into activities consciously thinking about being able to say yea or nay.

Kelly discussed the district emphasis on being more democratic and having teachers involved in decision-making. However, Kelly also indicated," time is a negative factor in the process". Teachers are involved in many cross-grade activities. Also, many of the high school activities require travel time, and teachers have to leave before or immediately at dismissal time. "Trying to establish time for teachers to have meetings for committee work on school goals, handbooks, or the new strategies for the division goals is difficult. The time factor is a heavy one for me," Kelly stated.

Stacey addressed the expectation of the principal's being the instructional leader in the school as it relates to decision-making in this school. Stacey first indicated the

principal must be held accountable for the decisions in the school; however, the principal should also know when to employ joint or shared responsibility in matters of curriculum. Stacey stated, "I use the person with the most expertise in any given area; they become the leader. Or sometimes we pool our collective expertise. Then we collaboratively work out a plan or strategy for what we are working on." Stacey is comfortable with employing collaborative decision making for academic concerns; however, this is not generalized to all areas. Stacey openly offered the following:

> I am very cognizant of legal parameters and legal responsibilities. I don't allow much collaborative decision making when it comes to covering my backside on these matters. An example would be supervision. I have a legal responsibility for the students' welfare; therefore I set expectations for teachers to follow.

Stacey endeavored to "stay sensitive to staff and to the community" and include them in the decision-making process in "real ways." This concern of staff input being real was also an issue for Jamie, who commented:

> To share power and have school committees' input used is important if you want staff to continue caring and working on things. It is also important that their input is presented at the next level with support. That's why, ultimately I would see one person, the principal, take that responsibility.

Summary and Discussion

All nine participants provided descriptions of their disposition to approach decision making in either a collaborative or a directive way, depending on the situation. Only one participant reported endeavoring to use collaboration and consensus consistently. However, even this participant acknowledged the need to assert direct control in some situations. A primary factor cited by all the participants in deciding the degree of direct control or collaboration over a decision is legal accountability. There were variations among the participants. Again the decision by a participant for teacher

input was situational. Therefore, sometimes teachers were asked to help develop alternatives to be discussed or reviewed and commented on by staff, and sometimes these alternatives were created by the principal and then discussed or reviewed by the staff. All participants had endeavored to address budget and timetabling using a collaborative approach as required by site-based incentives being introduced to their systems. However, there was no confirmation from the data of a change in governance to a complete power-sharing strategy. The data did confirm all participants believed they were attempting to have staff more involved in the decision-making process. All participants declared legal responsibility and legal accountability as prime factors for the need to assert varying degrees of power regarding final decisions at the school level. This legal responsibility and accountability led to a clear understanding they held veto power, even if no one among them had opted to use it yet. In summary, these participants were exploring and attempting to use more consultative processes for decision making in selected areas. They had in essence retained substantive power and control over decisions they deemed as significant or decisions with legal implications for them.

Budgeting/Timetabling

All of the nine participants gave an example of how power sharing occurred in their school. The examples provided varied and included the development of the budget or the timetable.

South Rural School Division

Chris indicated the committee process created a partnership. Using the analogy of a marriage, Chris related:

> When married partners disagree, someone has to break the deadlock. Who really has the power or upper hand? Who is the dominant one? The husband and wife might say that neither one of them has the power—it's a partnership.

Chris maintained, "at this point, in working with the various communities in the school, that's what it has been—a partnership." When discussing the possibility of a difference of opinion between the principal and a committee regarding budget decisions, Chris framed the process thus:

> When I've met with the budget committee, we've never yet hit an impasse where I have had to say that I just can't go along with this. However, I guess I have given them some information that would help them make a decision. It's very much a partnership.

Chris suggested there needs to be a mindset change regarding the current belief that someone has to make the final decision and that people cannot work collaboratively without someone being able to have the real power or final say. Chris maintained, "For the most part we, principals, don't; and we can't have the final power." Chris was concerned this concept was not understood by the board and cited as an example the financing process for major purchases such as copiers being discontinued. In the past the board had financed such purchases and allowed the school to pay the debt back over five years. The practice had been discontinued, according to the superintendent, because one principal might decide to use the finance for a capital item, creating indebtedness for the school that might not be the priority of a new principal. Chris indicated the principals of the district asked, "What makes you think it is the principal's decision?" Chris continued:

> It is a staff decision to make a major purchase. When the new principal comes in, he/she is just another member of the staff that lives with that staff decision. The days of the principal determining what to buy, those days are gone.

A second example of a request from staff arose during their decision-planning meeting. The staff requested a more flexible timetable. The timetable created by Chris was sufficient by Chris's standards. However, Chris commented, "This concern was brought up by staff as an 'objective,' and therefore I recognized I needed some help with the thing." Chris continued:

> One fellow, a mathematician, said he was hoping to do it. Another fellow, a more creative, artsy guy, said he would help. Now the three of us are going to sit down and work on the timetable for next year. That's how it goes.

Dale recounted how the timetable was changed at their school:

> When we changed our timetable a group of teachers and myself created the basis for the change based on research and theory for the middle school phenomenon. We went to the rest of the staff, and a lot were excited and wanted to join in the process and add to the changes. There were some that didn't want anything to do with the process of planning. We didn't jump all over them; however, we insisted that once the plan for change was completed, everyone would be supportive and share in the workload for implementation. We had total agreement for doing it that way. The focus was changing the timetable to suit the needs of the students of this age. This is the process we use for changes in our school.

North Rural School Division

The schools in this division started site-based budgeting two years prior to the study; therefore the participants most often commented on this process. Jamie recounted:

> We find we are far more responsible for the money . . . knowing and having more involvement in the process, the teachers are definitely able to see ends and limitations a lot better . . . Therefore it is very easy to maintain budget limitations, because people know a certain amount is there, and we can only divide it so many ways. However, capital items are still a concern. We vote on what our priorities are for capital items. Teachers presently involved in a specific subject area and who have expertise will present items for consideration.

Last, Jamie noted, "I haven't had to step in with heavy hands and say, 'No, we can't get that.'"

When it came to planning the budget, Pat viewed the collaboration process as "a continuum," stating, "This school hasn't arrived yet; I haven't arrived yet as the administrator. We are still in the process of working on agreement, especially in the area of capital items."

Due to the small number of staff at this school, the process was completed by the whole staff rather than having a committee. Establishing the classroom and subject area operational budget was easier than establishing the capital purchases in a five-year plan. The most important aspect of this process for Pat was teachers' being able to understand the time they spent on this process was important. "There is no power sharing if the teachers' deliberations don't come to fruition."

Pat noted the timetabling at the elementary level was straightforward and was completed by the individual teachers using the Alberta Education guidelines. The junior high timetable was completed with the junior high staff sitting down and planning it out while using a computer program. Pat explained, "There is a lot less complaining, and now teachers realize limitations that exist."

Terry discussed the conflict involved in wanting to have a school committee for budget as encouraged by central office and requested by the teachers in this school. The conflict came from two sources. First, teachers often requested a committee but did not want to take the time to participate. Terry's experience had been teachers asking for the budget to be prepared, and they would review it and make suggestions. Second, Terry held a specific view about being accountable for the money spent by the school. In accordance with this view, money was not to be spent unless it was necessary. Terry stated, "All budget requests were honored if they were worthwhile and supported the

program for the students." Terry noted the budget was difficult to give up because many of the teachers were young, beginning teachers, and they tended not to stay longer than a couple of years. Therefore, inexperience and continual staff turnover kept this process from changing quickly. The timetable was a continual challenge because teaching duties crossed over between junior and senior high school classes. Terry set the timetable with input from key teachers, and then if problems arose, the teachers worked out the changes with colleagues. Terry commented:

> This has been great. I love it because they can see things I don't see. When I was teaching you would never ask for the schedule to be a different way. The timetable used to be set by the principal, and it was accepted. Now they come in and ask for changes, and it's great.

Kelly described the budgeting process for the past two years as having been completed by a teacher committee. The teachers decided how the budget would be handled and how it would be divided. However, this year the teachers indicated they would prefer to have a budget report and they would not like to be involved with the budgeting process. The primary reason was time. Kelly explained a school with K to 12 has teachers participating in many diverse activities, with a lot of cross-grade involvement. Most of the teachers had worked with it for the past two years, were satisfied with it, and did not believe they needed to modify it this year.

The budgeting process at Stacey's school has become a more formal process:

> Concerning budgeting for capital items, the procedure would require staff to identify needs. These are all listed and handed out to staff. Next, at a staff meeting these items would be prioritized. Last, the budget is set. The operational budget is set by classroom and grade level. The grade-level teachers meet and decide how to allocate the money. I am involved only in signing the forms.

The timetable was set around the requirements of the special-needs programs. This was supported by teachers; the philosophy arose from Stacey's understanding of the frustrations staff had experienced while trying to accommodate the needs of these students. A great deal of collaboration was demonstrated when homeroom teachers collaborated with the special-education teacher. Stacey facilitated this process by covering homeroom teachers' classes during their planning sessions with the special-education teacher, eliminating before and after school meetings.

Taylor's staff opted to divide the instructional money up equally by teacher, with each teacher being given a budget line and being responsible for the money. They received a budget summary monthly to keep them informed of their balance.

A new format for timetabling was being worked on by the staff. There were some difficulties with the format used by the previous administration, and the staff was working in collaboration with Taylor by identifying problem areas and suggesting ideas for dealing with these problems.

Summary and Discussion

The budgeting process was limited in the SRSD to the instructional budget. The capital budget was to be approved by the board. The budgeting process in the NRSD included both instructional and capital budgets. The budget for maintenance and staff salaries was the responsibility of central office and the respective school board for both SRSD and NRSD. The budget procedure in the SRSD was similar across the three schools in that all staff was involved, and consensus was sought. However, for two of the school staffs the majority was acceptable if they were unable to reach a consensus. The practices described by participants of the NRSD varied. Three variations were described

as follows: (a) full staff decided how funds were deployed; (b) the principal set the budget and submitted it to the staff for their input and approval; and, (c) the instructional budget was divided evenly among the teaching staff, with the full staff deciding on the capital budget deployment. All of the NRSD participants noted that the capital budget was still the most difficult to deal with, and they often exerted more influence here on decision making.

The participants generally described attempts to change the timetable process to a more collaborative process but also indicated staff preferred receiving a completed timetable, with the opportunity to have input on changes before it was finalized.

Staff Involvement and Staff Commitment

South Rural School Division

The participants related information regarding their beliefs about why their teachers were willing to participate in the new district committee structure. The district committees worked on system goals rather than school goals. Every teacher in the district was *required* to serve on one of the committees. The committee work addressed the goals that had previously been established by all stakeholders in the district through a consensus decision-making process. Teachers were also required to participate in the development and implementation of school goals. The participants differed in how they approached the development and implementation of school goals.

Chris's school emulated the district committee structure, but Dale and Lee used different approaches to accommodate the implementation of system goals and the development and implementation of school goals. They worked with individual teachers or independently formed groups. Although the structures contrasted, some of the

concerns and benefits were the same for all three principals. When explaining the teacher involvement, Chris pointed out:

> Some people are not motivated or turned on at all about what a committee is doing. They look on it as drudgery or an extra assignment. The critical thing is to match the individual to the task where that task will provide the motivation itself. Where we can match the individual to a task that they are interested in or have some curiosity about or they want some responsibility or power for, then they will do just incredible amounts of work.

Further, Chris identified the superintendents' modeling as important: "They are energetic, enthusiastic, good educators; and there is an unwritten expectation others will do the same. I think their modeling is motivating for some administrators and teachers." However, Chris added almost as a caution:

> We have to be cognizant of that [motivation via superintendent modeling]. Not everybody wants to have as much involvement; everyone has different degrees of involvement or degrees of power they want to have. If we start to force or coerce people to take on an assignment, . . . then it is going to be counterproductive. You can't do that. The well being of staff is critical, because that translates into results for kids.

Chris discussed a concern echoed by the other two SRSD participants. The degree of involvement in these activities and the responsibility of the classroom teacher to develop these goals must be within the power of the teacher to decide, because it will affect the classroom and the educational product. Further, all the participants of the SRSD acknowledged the teacher's major duty is teaching. They maintained this should not be hindered by other assignments or commitments. Chris said, "That is why when we talked first of all regarding to what degree do we share this power, I responded, 'It is basically to what degree you want it.' I mean it. If you want to take it and do it—" Next, Chris emphasized, "But the second a staff member says, 'I don't have the inclination, interest,

or the time,' their major assignment still is in that classroom with those kids. That's their focus. They have limits. We have to respect that."

While describing actions employed to bring about a decision effecting a change or changes they considered necessary or desirable, the participants also related information about staff involvement and commitment. Chris indicated:

> I have found when we do this [share the decision making and the responsibility] as a staff, and when power is shared, then it seems to work out better. I think it is because of the commitment people give to the organization as a whole when they are involved.

However, not all staff are as involved as others. Chris related two reasons they might not be interested: "I found that some staff don't want to be involved in the decision making process because they don't want the responsibility that goes with it," and "They are not interested in administration." Chris noted there were staff members who wanted to be involved and learn more about administration. Chris further indicated involvement was up to the teachers: "The extent of involvement they want, they get." Chris clearly believed teachers could opt into the decision-making process to whatever level they wanted and teachers were satisfied with the range provided. From Chris's point of view the only restrictions imposed on participation were imposed from outside of the school:

> I don't think they want more of this power or are feeling they can't get it, although they may feel they want more in the area of curriculum. Here they have to accept the provincial guidelines. Also, there are guidelines in the area of policy at the board level. Here again, they might feel a bit restricted.

When the participants spoke of involvement, the theme of commitment always came up. Chris observed:

> It increases the commitment of people to the organization and the goals of the organization. I am thrilled to be here and to be involved with the staff because, after all these years, they are really working very well together. They have a common purpose and focus.

Chris also spoke to the nature of energy, indicating energy appears to be both finite and infinite. Questioning where energy comes from led Chris to question, "What factors impact the capacity to do things, to be enthusiastic or to be motivated?" The discussion centered on Chris's observations over time as to how the same teacher could exhibit different levels of enthusiasm, energy, or motivation for basic teaching tasks at different times and in different situations in a career: "It is amazing to me what people will commit to do, and the level of energy and work they will put into a project they are motivated to do. That motivation has to be intrinsic." Chris expanded the idea, noting interest and empowerment are factors that seem to lead to a person's motivation and his/her energy level expanding, suggesting this is why we cannot coerce staff into being part of power sharing if they do not want to be: because it will be counterproductive.

Dale was not concerned about teachers who did not wish to participate in the decision-making process. Rather, Dale was concerned about implementation: "There is no difficulty in the decision-making process. It is the action plan of the decision that is important. The problem comes in if you have the non-decision makers not doing anything with the decision." Dale pointed out this was a time period when staff had been reduced, thereby increasing teachers' workload. This situation was further compounded by the extra demands of the collaborative process. These issues made it imperative for everyone to complete his/her share of the workload.

For Lee, ownership, responsibility, and trust all played a role in teacher commitment and involvement. Lee believed it is important to throw open the doors and

allow staff to recommend alternative ways of solving problems or developing strategies for objectives: "Providing opportunity to implement a recommendation allows them to know they have that power. Then they know the power is not just in the principal's office." Lee indicated the experience with the staff in the school had been a visible demonstration of ownership and the energy being expended by staff members became more observable because they now trusted the principal would support them. Lee noted if a project does not work, a principal must not blame the teacher and, if need be, must demonstrate they will take the blame if criticism comes from a higher level:

> Part of growth is risk. If we are going to power share, we have to be willing to have people take risks, and we must encourage them, like we do the students. You don't grow unless you risk. That is part of it. The whole notion of power sharing for some people is one big risk.

For Lee the "energizing effect" comes from ownership: "It is just like the owner of a business as opposed to the employee. The owner puts in more time typically because he has ownership."

North Rural School Division

Jamie provided insight into staff involvement and commitment while discussing how work in this school was approached as a team. Jamie maintained, "To accomplish a set number of goals, . . . I think you will find the best way to achieve them is with a greater number of stakeholders involved in actively pursuing and working toward the objectives." However, while the concepts of *team* and *servant leadership* were viewed as important to the leadership of the school, Jamie held some reservations about who would set *expectations*. Specifically, Jamie was concerned with the issue of respect between the teacher and principal and how this affected their respective "zones of influence" (teachers deferring to administrators' decisions concerning matters outside or transcending

classrooms, and administrators deferring to teachers' professional autonomy within the classroom). Jamie explained: "I think I have always dealt with professional people who achieve standards. You [the principal] set those standards. You have high expectations at the beginning, and people demand rights and fulfill certain responsibilities."

Pat was firm about a more collaborative atmosphere being more effective than an authoritarian one: "It is effective and positive to allow trained professionals to make informed decisions." Pat maintained, "Collaboration is helpful to me as the teachers have to open up to me, to tell me their ideas, and how they are proceeding with implementation. They cannot just sit back. This process brings communication full circle." Pat elaborated: "The problem now is people overdoing and getting fatigued . . . Some of my staff wear themselves out, and I have to say, 'Look, you are doing too much.'" Pat reported this was a better situation than having teachers whom you had to "beg" to provide programs for students. Last, Pat maintained teachers participate more if they are allowed to try new and varied approaches and to have some ownership of the programs in their classroom. Pat referred to this as encouraging teachers to dream. Referring to a quotation from *When the Legends Die*, Pat stated:

> When the legends die the dreams end; when the dreams end, there is no more greatness; and if people cannot dream, they cannot become great people. Teachers need to be able to dream. A teacher cannot be limited by a plan the principal sets out or the Board of Education has set out. Teachers need to be able to respond to their students' needs and be able to feel free to try new approaches, to dream about the possibilities. If they can't dream, then greatness for that institution is gone, because it's those things that fuel the whole process. We need teachers to make decisions and to be responsible for those decisions.

Terry advocated empowering staff by giving them a job and authorizing them to complete it without interference. This creates ownership in the school for projects or areas that need to be improved. Then staff members know it is not "the principal who is

looking at this situation and is going to improve it but the staff. It becomes ours, not mine." Terry maintained this was as important when dealing with in-service of staff as it was with daily teaching and administrative tasks: "In-service training, who decides? If I see a weakness in staff and determine we are going to have an in-service and impose, I might as well forget it. They haven't bought in. It comes from the top down again." Terry noted many of the most productive in-service training sessions in the school were planned and carried out by the teachers. These created ownership and enthusiasm, and follow-through was documented, often leading to new staff development, such as their peer-coaching program. At odds with Terry's efforts to empower and share power with staff was a reality that had to be dealt with daily by this participant. Specifically, Terry shared:

> I hear so much about people wanting to be involved, but what it really comes down to is if they really want to be responsible for what happens after being involved. They are the ones who made the decisions and took action. However, in reality many still find it easier to sit on the outside, saying, "I want input but I don't want the responsibility."

Kelly was concerned about asking teachers to be involved in administrative tasks as it divided their already strained time:

> The teachers are extremely busy with activities for the students and a multitude of activities across the grades, so to ask them to work on goals, handbooks, and other administrative tasks, sometimes I think too much is being required. I am concerned about if too much is being shuffled off to the teachers.

However, Kelly noted being involved is a great motivation for some teachers: "This is something you have to watch, because some of the teachers load up on all these opportunities. You have to limit them so they don't burn out."

Stacey expressed a firm belief teachers must be involved in identifying the needs of the students and, thus, the program needs for the school, and in setting the expectations for new practices or programs. Further, Stacey declared, "Yes, this creates an energy, and teachers work hard to get results. Also, this is where you see change in teachers in terms of seeing them try new approaches and widen their teaching expertise." However, Stacey noted there are those who prefer to teach a different way, which is acceptable as long as the results are in keeping with the set expectations. Stacey summed up by stating, "Staff commitment is not everyone marching to the same drum."

Summary and Discussion

The participants suggested increased staff involvement in decision-making leads to increased staff involvement in other areas. They also recognized and noted increased staff commitment. There was divergence in the approaches employed by participants to elicit increased involvement and commitment by staff. The most frequently reported approach was collaboration, which allows for more decision-making authority to be delegated to the staff. There were varying degrees of success with this approach. The two participants having the least participation from staff had reverted to a consultative approach, during which the principal would create the position paper, budget, and so on, and then pass it on to the teachers for input. The principal retained control of the decision process by defining the parameters of an acceptable outcome. The principals having full staff participation were divided in how they proceeded. Two principals worked with the complete staff, dividing the work up by committees. These committees reported back to the staff, and then the staff voted on all final decisions. The five other principals worked in one of two ways. One approach involved using self-selected committee members, and

the principal chaired the committee. The second approach was to choose the committee members and then monitor as a member of the committee. Principals reported when using the self-selected committees they tended to assert personal influence, or use their philosophical position to indirectly influence the direction of decision making; whereas, they were able to choose teachers who met the criterion of "trustworthy' for committees they created. However, they reported using personal influence here as well. It should be noted that all nine participants used the input method for some decisions in their school, made decisions on their own, and enforced the practice and implementation of decisions made at the division level.

Although the participants were enthusiastic about increased teacher involvement and commitment, they collectively noted two areas of concern. First, many teachers become too involved and overextend themselves. Second, the principal is required to deal with the added 'risk' of new, innovative programs. However, they all expressed optimism about continuing to employ strategies of collaboration for two reasons: (a) increased programming for students, both academic and extracurricular; and (b) a belief held by all nine that better decisions are made if they are focused on the student.

Summary and Discussion

The participants all related circumstances requiring them to engage a leadership style and decision-making process that encourage staff participation and collaboration, specifically in the areas of timetabling and site-based budgeting. This has required a shift in leadership from a directive style to a more facilitative style. There was a reported attempt by all nine participants to employ strategies incorporating elements of servant leadership. Although the participants reported on their various circumstances, ranging

from a required 100% consensus to a modification of a more collaborative use of teacher input, they also identified and described new strategies and compromises they employed to ensure a retention of control over site-level decision making. These participants reported being more collaborative and consultative with staff, but they also were clear about the parameters for decision making in their school. All participants were concerned about their legal accountability while trying to accommodate their respective school division's request for staff members to have a significant part in decision making at the site level. It is of importance to note that all participants used the terms *shared power* and *shared responsibility* interchangeably as they discussed decision making in their schools. All acknowledged that they had 'veto' power in their school and noted the staff understood this. Last, there was an optimism among the participants that using more collaborative methods was leading to better student-centered decisions and would lead to school improvement.

Section 3: Responsibility and Accountability in the Principalship

In an examination of the nine participants' responses to research questions and the unstructured conversation delivered during the interviews, a primary focus was revealed. All nine participants were concerned about the Alberta provincial government's impending changes in governance of educational institutions. They all pondered to what extent the now bureaucratic structure would be altered. There was a shared view procedures and practices requiring higher levels of collaboration with stakeholders were pending. The participants held varying views regarding the philosophical underpinnings of these changes. However, all agreed they were reflective of new trends coming from current management theory. The participants identified three changes in practices and

procedures within their respective school divisions to address the impending changes. Specifically, both school divisions were changing practices and procedures in the areas of site-based budgeting, teacher-evaluation practices, and site-based decision-making. The nine participants held two common concerns. First, they expressed a concern regarding staff perception of the new practices as meaningful opportunities for their participation. A second concern was making sense of their authority and accountability within the framework of a bureaucratic structure as it related to this move toward power sharing in areas such as site-based decision-making. Themes emerging from responses in the interviews that contributed to this section include system and personal role expectations, accountability measures, personnel management, and teacher evaluation.

Expectations: System and Personal

The participants pondered why governance was changing. They often suggested it was to create a more effective organization. What did *more effective* mean in this context? There was no common definition of the term *effective* among the participants. They did not have a precise definition of effectiveness for themselves. There was, however, an implication that effectiveness would be defined by educational product. However, at this time they were all in the process of investigating and identifying the criteria to be used to confirm a shift in school effectiveness in the present void of provincial criteria. To this end the participants explained governance changes at their schools, highlighting collaborative processes emerging to accommodate the requirement of staff involvement in site decisions. All nine participants viewed these collaborative strategies as power-sharing strategies and commented on how they were evaluating progress without an official evaluation plan being in place to provide data regarding the

impact the new process might be having on the educational product (student academic results). All nine participants discussed their present dilemmas of not being able to substantiate any view they might have regarding the impact of the new procedures on effectiveness in their schools.

In the SRSD two of the participants were gathering information informally. They believed these data would be useful in making decisions about continuing the new procedures (power sharing/participation/consensus decision making). The views varied. Lee reported reflecting on information obtained from staff, parent, and student questionnaires and informal talks with persons from each of these groups regarding the school. The information, specifically from teachers, was used to answer the question, "What kind of things could I have done that would have enhanced their job and made things better for them?" Chris surveyed parents and children. Staff members were surveyed on a one-to-one basis through informal discussion about whether they liked their work, whether they enjoyed coming to work, and whether they were happy. If not, how could they be helped to change that state? Chris reported:

> I guess there are a variety of sources of feedback involved in this. We get feedback from parents, students, trustees, superintendents, and teachers. We have an efficient operation now compared with the past. We have compared in a kind of an analysis the number of programs we offer and extracurricular involvement.

Through relaying a critical incident, Chris highlighted the importance of what this principal referred to as "comparing experiences." Specifically, at a staff meeting this is what occurred:

> In a year, we say, "Okay, we will have ten dances this year, one each month. Here are the dates. Can I get some volunteers to help supervise these functions?" We fill it in, in about two minutes. We are done. I sit back and think, This is wonderful?

Chris compared this experience to that of seven or eight years ago, "when we asked if someone would or could do this, no one would want to. Some would say, 'No, I'm not going to do this. It is not part of my duty.'" Chris's change in voice spoke to the excitement now being experienced:

> I now have staff members anxious to provide more extracurricular programs for kids. They set up clubs or whatever they can establish to help students, whereas in other situations I could not beg a person to take on any other responsibility.

Chris judged effectiveness in terms of student benefits. Chris summed up this example by stating:

> My major task right now is keeping the exuberance and enthusiasm of volunteers in check rather than dragging them kicking and screaming. I compare that and think we have come thousands of miles here. I think that's partly because they look at the school as being *their* school . . . That is the biggest reward for us, because those kinds of feelings benefit kids.

Chris believes these positive behaviors serve as an example of what can be elicited by the power of ownership. All nine participants commented on the concept of ownership. Identified in the participants' responses was a concern regarding the staff's perception of power as opposed to the reality of power afforded by the new procedures. A comment and concern echoed across the responses was one of making sure the new procedures provided meaningful decision-making opportunities for the teaching staff.

Participants of the NRSD reported the change in governance to a more collaborative approach at the school site was being driven by directives from central office to collaborate specifically on the budget and timetable. Several NRSD participants believed they had been sharing power prior to these directives. They observed their personal beliefs regarding how to work with people to motivate them led them to use collaborative decision-making. They also reported a strong belief this collaborative

approach encourages high staff participation. The participants did not have quantitative data or a specific formal evaluation to collect results to substantiate changes caused by the implementation of the new procedures. The NRSD participants' comments were based on observations and informal and formal discussion with staff members as well as responses from questionnaires given to parents to establish their satisfaction with the school.

Pat indicated using a power-sharing approach provided "a far greater and more effective power base as well as greater leadership density" in the school. As with other participants, Pat was observing increased staff participation, stating, "The problem now is people overdoing and getting fatigued . . . Some of my staff wear themselves out, and I have to say, 'Look, you are doing too much.'"

Terry believes servant leadership is a way of sharing power, further stating, "You empower the teachers and authorize people to do the job. Teachers that want a say want to be responsible." Terry also observed not everything had changed over to a shared situation: "I look at the philosophy of sharing power, and we say a lot of nice things, yet we are all different personalities. It is the mix of the people on your staff that will make it work or not." The most important factor was the responsibility for the education of the students. Therefore, for Terry, sharing power could work as long as it did not compromise the final outcome.

Kelly did not believe there had been a shift in the school in terms of governance because involving staff had always been part of this participants' leadership style. Further, Kelly noted:

> The teachers know that the principal is the ultimate authority. I think I have a pretty good idea about what I want to see done, based on my experience and on experience dealing with parents. However, if you asked my staff about power sharing, you would get varying degrees of affirmation, depending on the teacher.

Stacey identified the school culture as better than in the past, stating, "This is a qualitative judgment." However, when it comes to effectiveness of this change, Stacey pointed to quantitative data collected as they proceed in developing programs that accommodate the needs of the students. Stacey explained, "The process was collaborative, with the staff identifying language arts as the area of need. Baselines were set with test data. Next, improvement standards were set. We have been successful at all of these."

Taylor described the school's present situation as focused. The staff created a mission statement the previous year and were currently working collaboratively to address four goals they had identified and developed to improve learning in this school. These goals addressed student-learning and parent-involvement issues. Taylor described this year as demanding, due to the necessity of working a lot with teachers one-on-one to clearly understand what each teacher's view was regarding each of the goals. Taylor believed it was too early to produce quantitative results but was already able to identify a cohesiveness and willingness by staff to work collaboratively on grade-level projects not visible before. Taylor also noted improved parent participation. Last, informal feedback from parents and staff was encouraging at this time.

Summary and Discussion

The participants' responses suggested the changes in governance were signaling a need to document the results to date of the changes being implemented. All nine participants noted involvement of staff in shared decision-making required more

meetings; this in turn required spending more time collectively on administrative activities rather than instructional planning. As discussed in the leadership subsection, the participants were employing varying approaches and cited varying degrees of support of the delegation of administrative decisions to be carried out by the new collaborative procedures. Therefore leadership strategies were changing from directive (authoritative) behaviors toward facilitative (power-sharing) behaviors at varying paces. The participants noted both their adaptability and the adaptability and trustworthiness of staff members affected the rate of change.

The change to site-based budgeting with staff decision-making regarding the deployment of funds was being accepted as a mandate and was being implemented with varying degrees of staff participation. All nine participants recognized and discussed a need to document and try to discern the effect these new collaborative procedures were having on the school's effectiveness and, specifically, on the school product. However, they also indicated frustration with not having a definition of effectiveness or an evaluation tool. A provincial accountability framework was at the discussion level at the time of this research. All the participants shared a concern regarding the time and effort being used in the implementation of procedures that may require change again in the near future. Seven of the nine participants cited school division requirements as responsible for changes in their role and leadership style. One maintained these changes occurred due to personal philosophical changes regarding management, and one maintained there was no change because the new collaborative procedures were already being used in this school.

Personnel Management and Teacher Evaluation

South Rural School Division

The new teacher evaluation policy required the principal to carry out evaluations. Chris referred to the policy as enlightened, but there was also an observation some teachers were worried about the summative evaluation portion. All teachers had formative evaluations. Specifically, they were charged with determining strategies to improve their teaching and the implementation of these strategies. Summative evaluation was for temporary contracts, for those teachers about whom the principal had questions or concerns about the quality of their teaching performance, or for a staff member who asked for a summative evaluation. Chris stated, "Some teachers are very worried about a summative evaluation" and further indicated this 'worry' stemmed from a concern that under the new policy a summative evaluation could signal the first step in a termination. Chris's observation of teachers in the school led to an understanding many teachers viewed summative evaluation as having the potential of being a negative experience. Chris explained, "I don't use this as a coercive method. I have never said, 'You've got to do this, or else I will do a summative evaluation.'" However, Chris was still concerned specifically about the perception held by teachers, "this principal has the power to initiate a summative evaluation."

Dale did not believe teachers would view either the formative or the summative evaluation as negative or coercive. Dale stated:

> I suppose the summative process could be viewed as coercion, but I believe that is a very remote possibility. It is a helping tool. Teachers were part of the policy development. We have developed a philosophy that we all believe in, and the staff agrees or they wouldn't be here. I firmly believe that.

Lee noted teachers worked on the committee to create the new evaluation policy. Equally important to Lee was the underlying assumption teachers are professionals and do a good job. Lee believed the teachers considered the policy an improvement, and the principal carrying out the evaluation was not a concern. Lee stated:

> Our evaluation is most essentially a *formative evaluation process*. The only people who undergo summative evaluations are looking for permanent contracts. After that, as long as the formative process indicates you are doing a good job, you may never undergo a summative evaluation for the rest of your career.

North Rural School Division

All six participants were in agreement the teachers viewed the changes in procedure for teacher evaluation as positive. The new policy required the school principal, rather than central office personnel, to carry out all teacher evaluation. Collectively, the participants maintained teachers were pleased to have someone who observed their work on a regular basis evaluate them, rather than a central office person who might observe them only once or twice for the evaluation.

However, the participants also recounted their individual observations and voiced concerns they held regarding the new evaluation procedure. Jamie shared a concern brought up by teachers after a recent round of teacher evaluations had been completed. Jamie explained, "Some of the teachers were shocked about certain things I said in the report." Jamie was still trying to determine why the teachers were shocked or concerned about comments that clearly addressed professional behavior and went on to note, "no teacher had been caught off guard." Jamie's present concern was teacher evaluation in

this school may cause conflict or hinder running the school as a *team*: "Maybe at times within the team they've let down their guard a little to much and believe there is not a demand for professionalism in all areas of the school at all times."

When Pat requests a teacher to make changes in order to be more effective this request is expected to be met with compliance by the teacher. Pat indicated if a teacher chose not to work on these changes, then a more "muscular" approach would be taken, providing the teacher with exact expectations and a timeline in writing with a date for completion and the probable end result if this was not followed. This was not viewed as a coercive action by Pat, nor did Pat believe the teacher would view it as a coercive action, because "administrators have the authority and in fact the responsibility to do this."

Terry was trying to make teacher evaluation more shared by implementing a peer-coaching program. However, Terry noted the final evaluation by policy is still provided by the principal of the school. Terry believed the teachers were cognizant of the principal's final say on the evaluation; however, a dissatisfied teacher could ask for an evaluation by the superintendent. Further, it was noted there was no sense of teachers viewing their principal-as-evaluator as negative; rather, quite the opposite occurred. Terry explained:

> At first teachers were upset with principals in the classroom, but now they want you in there all the time because they want feedback. If we tried to go back to the superintendent coming in, we would have a big problem.

Kelly shared the same belief regarding teacher evaluation as all other participants of this division held. Specifically, they viewed teachers in this school division as having a positive view of teacher evaluation being completed by the school principal. Kelly stated, "The teachers here have always viewed the new evaluation procedure as very positive. I

haven't had a bit of problem—very positive. The teachers tell me they are more comfortable now."

Stacey believed the new policy accommodated the system's legal and policy obligations for providing a summative evaluation for the first year of a contract, and after the second year for permanent certification. Stacey clearly identified the two different views held by teachers. Stacey provided an overview, stating, "I know our staffs are much happier with the principal doing teacher evaluations. Staff have expressed that on many occasions." However, Stacey was also cognizant teachers receiving summative evaluations may have concerns: "There is a kind of fear, or they look at us as if, 'Here is a person who is holding my career in their hand.'" Stacey was adamant that a clinical approach with pre- and post-conferences and with several observations is important to keeping good rapport with staff. The cyclical evaluation of permanent staff, although summative, tended to be more collegial in the process and therefore not so daunting for staff.

Taylor held the same positive view of teacher evaluation the other participants had describe, stating, "Teachers feel we know them on a more personal level and observe them every day. They report feeling a lot better about this whole evaluation process." Taylor noted, as two of the participants colleagues had, there was tension when a staff member's contract was not renewed. Last, Taylor shared this view: "It has certainly increased our workload, but I think it is a much fairer situation for the teachers."

Summary and Discussion

The nine participants viewed the change to teacher evaluation being carried out by the school principal as positive. All participants maintained they were receiving positive

feedback from teachers, with the most frequent teacher observation being an appreciation for being evaluated by someone who knew them and had a history of their work. However, although all of the participants acknowledged a tension regarding summative evaluation, only two of the participants believed the teachers would view summative evaluation as a type of coercive power. Several participants expressed concern this new procedure would add to their workload by requiring them to become more involved with providing strategies to improve inadequate teacher performance. This, coupled with the amount of time to complete each evaluation, was a concern for all of the participants in terms of the added time it would take to complete this new responsibility.

Section 4: Fostering Power Sharing: Facilitating and Limiting Factors

Seven themes emerged from the data and contribute to the participants' understanding of facilitating and limiting factors of power sharing. Specifically, the themes included in this section are: change, principals at risk, confidential information, staff preparedness, nonparticipation, staff turnover, and recommendations.

Change

When discussing facilitating and limiting factors for fostering power sharing, all of the participants expressed a concern about the perception by staff of the reason for a change to a collaborative format. The participants were aware the hierarchical aspect of the bureaucratic structure in place was having an impact on the collaborative process they were being asked to implement. As they were trying to lead their respective staffs to be partners and collaborators, they became concerned about staff perception. Although the participants did not want the staff to perceive this as manipulation, the legal accountability made it difficult to share power in all instances. Even the concept of

ownership was double edged. All nine participants referred to improved staff participation and staff ownership in decisions. They provided examples of improved staff commitment and participation and referred to the reciprocity between participation and commitment/ownership. However, they all addressed a concern regarding staff perception of this 'ownership.' Specifically, it was noted staff became more committed because of the sense of ownership each member developed seemingly through the participation process. Although all participants acknowledged the positive aspect of participation, they also noted the possible negative aspect. When they discussed this negative aspect, they used the term *buying in* and expressed apprehension some staff might view this participative process as manipulation. In trying to explain, the participants often explored whether power sharing was indeed a structural or a mechanistic change. The participants expressed their concerns and views of the interplay between the concepts of ownership and accountability and between risk and trust as they recounted their varying strategies of change aimed at a more collaborative process.

South Rural School Division

Lee related:

> I think it is a mechanism, a modus operandi, really. I don't think the structure itself is going to change that much. We still have the provincial goals for school and education. We have the things happening that stem from those, but I think in order to change those, *we are sharing more*. The province is doing *something*, I think. They are saying something now with the dismemberment of regional offices right now; they are withdrawing more and more from many activities they have done as a sort of top-down thing. I suppose economics is driving some structural change. However, I think the real change, the fundamental change, are driven by people. These people have realized if you don't power share, you don't get the job done. People simply do a job. I think it is a way of operating that achieves more than would normally be achieved.

Lee was aware a fundamental change at the department level was impacting the way business was being done at the division level and thus at the school level; yet for Lee and the other participants, the 'why' of the change eluded them. Whether the change was structural or mechanistic seemed to revolve around some question of intent. Chris's words are helpful for us to understand the crux of the confusion. When discussing whether power sharing was a structural change or a mechanism, he identified the factor of *motive*. Chris responded, "I can't speak for anybody else, but with regards to my own situation here, there have been some motives. Power sharing has taken place in order to improve effectiveness." Chris continued:

> I was thinking back to when we initiated this [collaborative and consensus decision making] and got more and more involved in this power sharing. Was it because we thought we would be more effective, or was it because of our commitment to it as an administrative structure, as a process? Probably both. I don't know if I could say exclusively that this was why it is happening.

Chris elaborated on why it was important to be accountable for a school's effectiveness, specifically as it related to the new Alberta Education direction:

> Education has become so results oriented. The province is talking about how they will measure or evaluate schools and evaluate kids, or anything else, based on the results. The process isn't so important, or at least not more important than the results. They [Alberta Education] are giving us freedom in process; however, they say this is what they want to have evolve as a product.

Chris questioned, "Is this a mechanism or a structural change? Is it a strategy of power sharing?" Chris noted this is the same strategy being used at the school level and suggested:

> As long as it is effective, which it is, then we will continue to use it a great deal, because it is very important to us . . . We will refine it and will learn a lot more about it and how to deal with it more effectively. We will probably make a lot more mistakes. All those things will impact on this process. I think it becomes part of our repertoire, and we accept it as such.

Dale presented a view that suggested a minimum of structural change; the system is still bureaucratic:

> Our jurisdiction works within the parameter set by the Department of Education. The jurisdiction then sets the parameter for our division. The parameter is used by the schools to set internal parameters. However, all the parameters are set within the initial parameters set by the Department of Education. There is definitely a gang force. There are parameters and we stay within them. There are decision-making processes within the parameters.

Dale identified shared-value setting as the shared element in this process:

> There isn't a lot of outreach [on the part of the department]; the parameters are pretty narrow . . . I believe each jurisdiction is trying to find out what their community wants and what best suits that community. It is a structure of value setting, a facilitating of shared values. Facilitating shared values among our staff is a way to become a more effective school district.

The values elicited from the community, with those dictated by the province, suggest facilitating (sharing power/empowerment) will be within the parameters of these shared values. No clear understanding emerged from the responses of the principals as to whether power sharing was considered a structural or a mechanistic change. The relevance seemed to be in the exploration. It was important and significant to the participants to clearly define the structure to ensure there would be no misunderstanding of power because misunderstanding has the potential to affect practices that require risk and trust. These participants were concerned about staff perception of the present changes. It was important the staff perceive the change to collaborative decision-making, collaborative responsibility, and the development of shared values as legitimate and not as manipulative. All three participants expressed the view the collaborative measures implemented in their districts had been implemented to ensure a more effective school.

North Rural School Division

Jamie provided three reasons to share power as a principal. First,

> I think there is tremendous pressure on the principal to share power. If you are not, teachers may feel the rights of teachers are being usurped. They will scoot around here to the division office . . . They will get their message through. It is a very political position for the principal to play too many roles at the same time.

Second,

> Teachers and administrators have come up with the standards for the new division's educational goals. I think the division office is demanding of us and asking for input, spreading out authority, using the expertise of as many people as we can.

A third reason this participant chose to share was because of an integral part of the participant's belief in principal as servant. Having described this role as one in which the principal facilitates staff teaching and student learning by removing roadblocks, the participant further explained:

> Teachers know what is best in their classroom areas and their courses . . . I think they have a better feeling and better appreciation of involvement in the school from all our committee work. I think the way we approach everything with a team concept is important. However, you always have one person that will ultimately disagree with the decisions made, but generally I think you will succeed far better and have a happier staff and better working environment if you approach it from a point of view of trying to facilitate staff needs. Helping and trying to maintain that atmosphere instead of being the one who sits back with the iron fist and dictates. People don't work well under a system of fear.

Pat summarized:

> I'm sure those principals that are asking teachers to work with them are finding this more collaborative-type atmosphere is actually more effective than just telling people what to do or doing most of it yourself. As far as the leadership end goes, I think they're finding it is a far greater and more effective power base to operate from; a lot more intelligence and probably a lot more leadership density too, and there's a lot more people taking responsibility for what's happening in the school.

Pat then identified the benefits at this school:

> As far as myself, I just find my school works well . . . In how I share power, I find it to be very effective to allow trained professional people to make decisions, to be responsible for those decisions, to have to be open to me, as well. They have to come and share their ideas with me, let me know what's happening; so they can't just sit back. Of course, it brings communication in a full circle. It's just a really positive thing to let highly trained people use their training and their common sense and their abilities and dream a little bit and make the place better.

Principals at Risk and Confidential Information

Principal risk and confidential information were identified as limiting factors to fostering power sharing. Chris discussed the potential for power sharing to break down when a principal is the one completely accountable: "If the case were to come where we just could not, in all good conscience, and knowing we would have the legal responsibility and be held accountable, we may not be able to go along with what others want." Chris compared the principal's decision-making process to that of an MP, indicating ultimately an MP may not vote on all issues the way the voter would. Chris stated, "We must remember we chose them and we trust them to make those informed and intelligent decisions. Only they can do this because of the knowledge and information they have." While discussing this breech in the power sharing, Chris elaborated on the importance of confidential information held by the principal. Chris revealed:

> Even though we have power-sharing going on, much of what goes on around here is confidential. Much of it is difficult stuff. I don't want to burden other people with this. You just have to do a lot of things on your own just because of the nature of it.

Chris explained that information having to do with Social Services, teacher evaluation, and personal issues shared with an administrator by students, parents, teachers, and other

staff members would be among the information one could not share with others in the decision-making process.

Lee maintained and stated several different times that growth requires risk. However, Lee was also concerned about the risk a principal was taking by encouraging a teacher to try new ideas. Here, Lee's strategy included being clear about the teacher's responsibility in this event. Lee stated, "The right to risk brings with it the responsibility to do the job and really prove to me what is going on is in fact as positive as the teacher thought it would be." There continued to be a tension between trying new ideas to improve teaching and learning and the repercussions if the new implementation did not go well. For Lee, not only was the principal at risk but also, and perhaps more importantly, the element of trust the principal worked hard to establish with the staff could be compromised or completely destroyed.

Terry also noted the importance of trust: "First you must build a trust relationship. Second, you must not waffle, even if you have made mistakes, because if they see you waffle, the staff is not going to work with you on anything." Terry noted teacher/principal trust was continually at risk in this community when trying to deal with value issues due to the population's belonging to predominantly one religious sect. Pat noted similar problems because of the same situation. The problems occurred when Terry or Pat delegated a task to a teacher but had to step in and not allow the teacher or students to do what they planned. Terry related:

> When I delegated the organization of the graduation, it became a problem. The teacher was persuaded by the students to have a dance. This teacher, as most of the others, comes to this community from a different culture and so think this is acceptable, but the parents say "No." Here I have to say "No." I have shared responsibility but not power because I have to intervene.

Terry indicated these experiences are problematic in trying to encourage staff to be more collaborative and it is also problematic with the student population. Terry explained:

> High school students want more say in what goes on in the school. Right now it's a struggle with a conflict between the values that the students hold and the values the parents hold. I am caught at times because I have to say, "The parents are the ratepayers and they have a say." The students are saying, "The school is for us, not for them."

Terry noted a different type of trust issue related to dealing with confidential matters that need to stop at the principal's office. Terry was concerned with matters the principal *absorbs*: "At times you get criticisms about teachers, particularly from the public, that need to be absorbed and not passed on to the teacher." It was this participant's belief sometimes unwarranted comments passed on could cause undue stress and concern. This could then undermine the teacher's work. Terry asserted, "Here the teachers have to trust my judgment."

Staff Preparedness and Nonparticipation

Chris identified the theme of staff preparedness while discussing the effectiveness of power sharing. Chris maintained power sharing itself was not a good thing unless it resulted in positive benefits for the people the organization served. Chris then noted two important issues: staff preparedness for power sharing and nonparticipation. Chris maintained there is a readiness factor for staff to be involved with power sharing. This involves trust on both sides of the equation, from the teachers and the principals. Chris identified a staff member requesting a specific action to be taken based on a personal agenda as problematic. Here if the principal in all good conscience does not believe this would benefit the student/s there is room for conflict. The issue for Chris is the readiness

factor of the teacher and being able to trust the teacher's judgment. Chris suggested power sharing must first begin with areas of trust:

> You could share power in some areas where you felt confident in the staff. It is like families with kids in the school. We involve them more in decision-making and give them more responsibility, as we believe they have the maturity and wisdom to exercise it in a positive way. It is the same with staff. Staff members are not always collective. I believe there has to be a level of trust established in order to be successful.

Dale was concerned with the pressure to have all staff members involved: the pressure on them and the pressure involvement placed on bringing a task to completion. Regarding time constraints, Dale stated, "I think everybody needs input. However, there still has to be a pace set." Although trying to accommodate individuals by being "cordial enough to give them time to think it out," Dale also adhered to setting deadlines for responses. There was also the concern of pressure placed on staff to participate. Here Dale recommended patience. Specifically:

> Knowing the staff and understanding what they are comfortable with is important. You can encourage them in a direction, but you should not break them. The level of expectations must be set out, but the level of collaboration used by each teacher will vary. The principal and other staff members as well must be patient with each other. Everyone has to work to accommodate the various rates of acceptance of collaboration.

Lee observed principals attempting to share power must have patience with staff members learning the process and warned forcing the issue will lead to its being ineffective:

> It is not going to work well if it is forced. Also, there will be no carryover because there is no ownership. It is going to stop when that classroom door closes, because it is owned in the office, not the classroom.

Lee also recommended the principal provide an environment allowing risk and offering good feedback and time for staff to change. Lee pointed out, "For many of the teachers the responsibility of making decisions is too great in the beginning, and they need to adapt to it at their own pace."

For Pat, governance in the school was changing in a collaborative way by providing opportunity for teachers and being patient in working through the changes. Two issues recurring were time and safety. Pat noted time is often viewed as a concern. "However, some of the problems I've had to deal with have taken a great deal of patience as well as time. You can only be effective if you take the time, whether it's teachers, parents, or students." A second persistent issue was the safety of staff, students, and parents. Pat pointed out when collaborative decisions are made, it is a must to make sure no one is being compromised; further indicating, emotional, physical, and mental safety should be considered before proceeding. Taking care of the safety of all concerned can also be time consuming, but is essential for the process to work.

Terry was concerned about the problems arising from trying to empower and share power on a task when it is mandated. Such a problem arose when the new school board created a document referred to by the staff as the *Board's Education Plan.* The board developed the objectives, and administrators had input before the plan was finalized. The document was now at the schools, and staff members were being asked to create strategies that would accomplish the objectives. However, Terry was witnessing a negative reaction from staff members. Earlier these staff members wanted input but were now making negative remarks about having to spend *their time* writing up a program and implementation procedures for a plan into which they had no input. The confusion for

Terry was these same teachers did not argue with the objectives. Terry was seeking to understand at what point staff members should be involved in a decision to encourage a positive development and implementation process.

Stacey noted an important procedural change at the division level was providing opportunities for principals to share power and implement more collaborative methods in decision making at the school level. The procedural shift made principals responsible not only for the results in their school, but also for the processes used. Stacey observed the new superintendent's philosophy of "hiring you to do a job and trusting you to do it and not limiting our work with regulation or budget has enabled or empowered us to determine how our school will be run and to make decisions."

Taylor was concerned about power sharing when it came to those staff members "who refused to buy into group decision, planning, or a team approach." Taylor had no problem being directive with these staff members but questioned how this affected the trust level of the group. Taylor also noted the amount of time consumed trying to "encourage or sometimes having to prod" these members to participate.

Staff Turnover

Five of the six participants from the North Rural School Division noted the challenge of power sharing with a staff that changes frequently. These participants explained they had many beginning teachers who stayed for only one year, or sometimes for the two years it took to become certified. Then these teachers left to seek employment in a larger community. The concern was twofold: the number of beginning teachers and frequent staff turnover. Kelly had staff members who were in their fourth or fifth year and had no apparent interest in leaving. Kelly explained the importance: "They have

started breaking the old paradigm of leaving at the end of the first year. So this community is experiencing some continuity, something we have never had in this school before."

Participants' Recommendations for Principals

All nine participants identified four practices important to facilitate power sharing: specifically, *communication*, *trust, listening*, and *patience*. Terry's following statement exemplifies the focus of all nine participants: "Of all things I have talked about, communication has to be number one." Each participant made a statement of this type, specifically referring to the need for an increase in frequency of communication and the quality of communication as they worked toward a more collaborative organizational structure. Second, the participants repeatedly discussed the need for trust between principal and staff. It was important for staff to trust the guidance of the principal, and it was equally important for the principal to trust the staff. The participants identified the need for the principal to believe the staff had the ability to make decisions maximizing the educational benefits to students and minimizing the risk of the staff and principal if the change failed. Seven of the nine participants emphasized the importance of listening to your stakeholders. Specifically, they indicated a need to be more discerning about the feedback they received from staff regarding the effect changes were having on individual staff members and school programs. All nine participants indicated, the principal must be patient with all parties involved, including themselves.

Summary and Discussion

There was no process in place in any participant's school or in either school division that monitored or assessed the complex change process in which they were engaged. Therefore it was not possible for these participants to confirm "effectiveness" regarding power-sharing practices. All participants were actively engaged in learning how power may be shared in a collaborative decision-making setting. They all viewed principal risk, access to confidential information, staff preparedness, teacher choice of involvement, and staff turnover as potential limiting factors in the implementation of power-sharing practices. Last, all nine participants recommended principals embarking on a change of this nature develop communication practices, listening skills, the ability to trust, and be patience.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings that emerged from the interviews with the nine participants. The data represent the responses of the participants in the areas explored by the specific research question, How do principals understand (make sense of) the phenomenon of power sharing, and how do they perceive that it is reflected in their practice? Fourteen questions (Appendix A) guided the interview. Specifically, there were eight in the first interview and six in the second that were probes to assist in focusing participants' responses on power sharing and allowed them to reflect on how it applied to their current practice as principals. As indicated in Chapter 3, I encouraged the participants' personal perspectives and priorities of understanding the phenomenon of power sharing. Although the majority of the questions were asked of all participants, not

all participants answered all the questions. The emphasis was on the participant's constructing his/her reality without question or interviewer-imposed bias.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to apply information from the literature to the study data concomitant with presenting my insights on the study topic gained over the course of the research process. First an overview of the study is used to restate briefly the research problem and review the main features of the study's methodology.

The findings of the study are presented through an interpretation of the multiple understandings and experiences of the participants presented in Chapter 5. The insights and recollection of experiences provided by the participants generated multiple interconnected themes. Fundamental issues of power sharing in the principalship emerged in this research in relation to definitional clarification, context, and factors influencing power sharing either as a facilitating or a limiting force. The results of the data analysis are summarized and discussed in light of the questions that guided the research.

The conclusions drawn are discussed by a review of the analysis of the findings and themes in relation to previous knowledge about power/power sharing as presented in the literature reviewed, leading to a discussion of implications and recommendations for further research and administrative practice and training.

The last section of this chapter provides reflection on the understandings and learning I acquired about the process of interpretive research and the phenomenon of power sharing.

Overview of the Study

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research was to discover and describe the understandings and experiences of nine principals regarding the phenomenon of power sharing. In Chapter 5 the understandings and experiences of the nine principals were expressed in the quotations from the participants themselves about the use of power, decision-making, leadership, responsibility, accountability, their perception of how they understood and applied both theory and new management techniques, and their perception of how these were applied in their daily practice. These understandings and experiences were the summary of responses made to the following specific research questions:

Primary Question

What is your perception of power sharing in the principalship? How do you believe it is used in your practice?

Guided Interview Questions

1. When did you begin the practice of power sharing?

2. How did power sharing come to be a practice in your school?

3. What results were you expecting? Did the results live up to your expectation?

4. In what ways have you found power sharing to be useful?

5. In what ways have you found power sharing to be a hindrance?

6. Are there any specific limitations you could identify that were due to the use of power sharing? Could you identify and further explain these limitations?

7. Are there specific constructive aspects that have arisen due to the use of power sharing? Can you identify and further explain these constructive aspects?

8. Is/Are there an instance/s in which you encountered a conflict with your staff due to the use of the power-sharing strategy? Were there instances in which you did not agree with the decision that had been arrived at by the staff member or members when using a power-sharing strategy? How did you handle this instance?

9. Are there areas of administrative practice where power would not be shared? Do you have specific criteria for when you will or will not share power?

10. Do you believe there is a difference between how you view power sharing and how your superintendent views power sharing?

11. Currently, there is a call for schools to be more effective. Have you collected data allowing you to establish whether the use of power sharing in your school has made it more effective? Can you expand by providing an example of how you believe it has become more effective?

12. The importance of personal power or position power is often mentioned when discussing school leadership. How would you rate the importance of personal power to that of positional power in relation to your present position as principal? (Personal power here used Kanter's characteristics of charisma, political skill, verbal facility, and capacity of articulate vision.)

13. From your experience, what one piece of advice would you like to pass on to principals embarking on power sharing in their schools?

14. Is there any issue regarding power sharing that we have not explored on which you would like to comment now, or any that we covered on which you would like to expand or review?

Perception

Johnson (1987), investigating the complexity of the phenomenon of perception in an educational context, stated: "Social behavior in educational settings is guided not merely by an assumed objective reality but by actors' individual perceptions and by the factors that shape and distort those perceptions" (p. 209). The perceptions held by the nine participants in this study were influenced by factors such as organizational structure, decision-making procedures, district policy, personality, and prior experiences. The intertwining of these structures, procedures, and experiences generated behavioral-relationship structures, shaped governance patterns of the divisions, and in turn directed school activities and practices.

This study was based on participant perception, perception being the process in regard to the action decisions a person is likely to make in regard to the courses of action evoked and their perceived consequences. Specifically, the study focused on individual participants' understanding (perception) and noted experience (practice) of their power assertion in their role as principal (Figure 6.1).

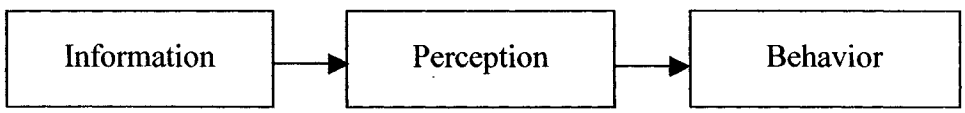


Figure 6.1. Perception process.

Method and Design

The study focused on participants who were principals primarily in geographically large, rural school jurisdictions in northern and southern Alberta. The study was conducted from an interpretive paradigm perspective. The methodology was based on the assumptions of naturalistic inquiry.

The pilot study was undertaken using a self-selected sample of two principals. The interviews from these participants assisted in developing the interview schedule. Three school divisions with similar geographical parameters agreed to participate in this study. This school division was used for the pilot because it provided the smallest number of participants. The data from the pilot-study interview were not incorporated into the main study data.

The study was undertaken using a self-selected sample of nine principals. These principals were self-selected in that principals interested in being participants submitted their names to me. Each volunteered after the study proposal was handed out at a principals' meeting in their respective division. This letter provided the principals with an outline of the study, which included a description of the need for the study, the research design, and the data-collection methods to be employed; the timeline for the study; the level of commitment required by the participants; the nature of the final report of the study; how issues of anonymity and confidentiality would be addressed; the right of the participants to withdraw from the study at any time; the University of Alberta guidelines of observing ethics in research; my background in education; and my involvement in the study.

The range of school administrative experience among the participants was 2 to18 years. There was a representation of small and large, and elementary and secondary school settings from a variety of socioeconomic contexts.

Data were collected mainly through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Other information was acquired from school handbooks, budget documents, the strategic plans action planning documents, division policy statements, and similar artifacts provided by the respondents. Documentation for this study included my field notes and recorded reflections.

Findings and Observations

In presenting the findings, (a) commonalities in themes emergent from the understandings and experiences of nine principals in the two school divisions are identified, and (b) themes unique to an individual principal are noted and examined. The findings are described in the form of answers to the questions directing the research:

How do you as a principal perceive the phenomenon of power sharing, and how do you perceive that it is reflected in your practice?

Context-Specific Realities

The researcher set out to answer this question in isolation from other questions but discovered the findings were inextricably linked to understandings and experiences described in answer to other areas of the inquiry. For example, most of the participants initially denied having power. Listening and exploring the multiple realities of the participants' personal experiences as principals provided insight into the values that appeared to shape understandings, attitudes, and experiences about power. These understandings were found in participant response to other probes about their practice.

Initially, only one participant overtly claimed to hold power. One participant claimed to share power, but was not sure it was sharing power. All other participants started out by expressing a lack of power and ended by confirming they had authority and were influential in decision-making situations. All participants identified what *influential* meant to them. They all described behaviors they viewed as being unacceptable influential behavior and clearly identified the behaviors they did not use. Therefore, participant understandings of power sharing could not be separated from understandings and experiences of being a principal, the role of the principal, and the organizational structure in which each principal worked. Consequently, answers to the questions related to power sharing in their context are presented as inseparable concepts in the findings to the research question.

Process Realities

The themes of leadership, decision-making, responsibility, accountability, and trust all dominated the stories of the participants about sharing power. The responses of the participants indicate they were trying to establish how they were to carry out the tasks of their role as principal in the context of recent educational reform and within the context of specific changes in their school divisions. This reform effort emphasized restructuring. The debate on the restructuring of schools has centered on the issues of empowerment, accountability, and learning (Fullan, 1993, 1999). Each participant identified strategies he/she was using or implementing to address these issues of restructuring. Further, current literature and theory directing school-based management (SBM) have suggested a significant advantage of implementing SBM is to increase the productivity of schools. Other advantages would be demonstrated by increased student

learning, decreased costs, and improved satisfaction of stakeholder groups. However, the responses of the majority of the participants reflect varying ideas about the management change regarding how it is conceived, how it works, what they are trying to attain, and how it is attained.

The participants all reported circumstances requiring them to engage a leadership style and decision-making process that encouraged staff participation and collaboration, specifically in the areas of timetabling and site-based budgeting. This required a shift in leadership from a more directive to a more facilitative style for all nine participants. They all reported exploring servant leadership in an attempt to become more facilitative as an administrator. Of interest was how the participants used the terms *shared power* and *shared responsibility* interchangeably. The findings illuminated a high frequency by participants of interchanging these terms as they described decision-making practices at their school. The data support the view the participants employed purposing and empowerment strategies to enable them to set parameters for deciding which teacher or committee would make a decision. Vaill (1994) defined *purposing* as building from within the school a center of shared values transforming it from a mere organization into a *covenantal* community. Sergiovanni (1991) maintained empowerment derives its full strength from being linked to purposing. Everyone is free to do what makes sense, as long as people's decisions embody the values shared by the school community. The emphasis for empowerment for these participants is not only the discretion needed to function, but also one's responsibility to the community "as long as we don't risk the kids."

All of the participants linked the concept of empowerment to the concept of 'leader as servant.' This leadership style was to be embraced by the principal, rather than using overt power or influence. Sergiovanni (1992) suggested, "Servant leadership provides legitimacy partly because one of the responsibilities of leadership is to give a sense of direction, to establish an overarching purpose" (pp. 124-125). There is a sense that empowerment of teachers and servant leadership by principals, when guided by procedural justice, could lead to a sharing of power. This led the participants and researcher to explore at what point they, in their role as principal, could or would decide to share power and how they would decide with whom to share it.

Each participant had criteria for sharing power (see Table 5.1). At various points, the principals revealed with whom they would share power or provide an opportunity to share in decision making, and the form to be used (committee, consensus, designation, input). Eight of the nine participants identified trustworthiness and experience as attributes of staff members who were chosen to minimize 'principal risk.' The reported leadership practices explained the ongoing endeavor by these participants to create a more collaborative practice by sharing power and sharing responsibility with teachers. All nine participants also provided a clear statement regarding their right to retain control over decisions they deemed significant at the school level. They stated they had veto ability. All nine also described and asserted a belief that personal power, as influence, was usually more useful and the preferred power-assertion strategy. The findings support the view although all participants expressed intent or were endeavoring to facilitate and share power, it was not clearly demonstrated by the data this had become the primary leadership style or decision-making strategy employed by these participants.

All nine participants provided descriptions of their disposition to approach decision making in either a collaborative or a directive way, depending on the situation. Therefore, eight of the nine principals regarded their decision making as usually situational (Hersey and Blanchard, 1982), whereas one reported endeavoring to make decision making collaborative, with final decisions being by consensus. A primary factor cited by all the participants for deciding the degree of direct control or collaboration over a decision was their legal accountability. The data support the view these participants had retained substantive power and control over decisions they deemed as significant or decisions with legal implications.

The findings confirm eight of the nine principals modified their power/power sharing practice as it related to school-based budgeting mandated by their respective school division policy. The new policy required teachers to be involved in this process. However, the degree of collaboration with teachers was a decision each principal made. The data support the view there was variation in the school-based budgeting process. Specifically, four of the participants provided opportunity for the full staff to decide how funds would be deployed; five participants set the budget, submitted it to the staff for input, and modified it on the basis of this input; and one participant divided the instructional budget evenly among the teaching staff, with the full staff deciding on the deployment of the capital budget.

The findings illuminate two patterns regarding participant practices for involving teachers in decision-making. The findings support the view seven of the nine participants were attempting to initiate collaborative decision making, thus allowing more decision-making authority to be delegated to teaching staff. There were varying degrees of success

with this approach. Three of the participants reported noticeable increased staff involvement and commitment, and four of the participants reported a variation of increased staff involvement and commitment, noting some staff members did not wish to participate at all. Two of the participants reported limited staff involvement and had reverted to a consultative approach. Among those seven experiencing an increase in staff involvement and commitment there were the noted concerns. These seven cited staff over-commitment and risk of failure to implement new innovations or changes as problematic. The data support the view, regardless of the strategy being used by the participants, all nine believed teacher involvement in site-based decision making made for better decisions that were focused on the student.

All nine participants viewed the impending changes in governance as an attempt to regulate accountability. They believed new teacher evaluation policy and practice in their divisions were part of this accountability endeavor.

The nine participants reported viewing the change to teacher evaluation being carried out by the school principal as positive. All of the participants maintained they were receiving positive feedback from teachers, with the most frequent observation being an appreciation for being evaluated by someone who knew them and was aware of their work. However, all nine acknowledged a tension regarding the summative evaluation of teachers. Two of the nine reported a belief teachers would view summative evaluation as having a potential for coercive power. Several participants expressed a concern regarding the added workload that might be required through providing strategies to improve inadequate teacher performance. All of the participants reported a concern regarding the added time it would take to complete the teacher evaluations.

All of the participants reported the change in their leadership strategies from directive (authoritative) behaviors to facilitative (power sharing) behaviors was developing at a varied pace. The participants reported their adaptability and the adaptability and trustworthiness of staff members affected the rate of change. They collectively identified principal risk, access to confidential information, staff preparedness, teacher choice of involvement, and staff turnover as potential limiting factors in the implementation of power-sharing practices.

Finally, the data support the view all nine participants believed communication practices, listening skills, the ability to trust, and patience are of primary importance in fostering power sharing and all collaborative endeavors at the school site.

Summary

The findings and observations discussed in this chapter relate to the research questions in different ways as they emerged in different ways through principals' accounts of their perception of power-assertion practice. Emerging from the data was a set of factors identified by the nine participants as affecting their power-assertion practices. Some of these would be applied to several changes, whereas others would apply in limited areas. Table 6.1 summarizes these relationships.

Conclusions

The findings of the study support the view these nine participants were initially unsure whether or not they held power in their role as principal. They were also apprehensive about their own power assertion. All nine participants identified exerting authority and control as legitimate acts for principals. Further, the findings of the study support the view these participants themselves determined acts of power assertion at

Table 6.1

Factors Identified by Participants Affecting Their Power Sharing

	Factors Affecting Power Sharing					
Reported areas of school division planned change	Legal accountability	Division policy	Principals' perception of superintendent's view on power assertion	Principals' responsibility, accountability	Teacher experience	Teacher trustworthiness
Preparation of budget		x	x		x	x
Timetable			x		x	x
Collaborative decision making	x	x	x	x	x	x
Teacher participation		x	x	x	x	x
Teacher evaluation	x	x	x	x		

work. The nine participants identified legal accountability, division policy, staff trustworthiness, the superintendent's perception of power assertion, and their own perception regarding responsibility to students as factors affecting their power assertion. The findings of this study did not support a view that collaborative practice and power-sharing practice are synonymous. However, the findings do support the view the participants perceived the term *power sharing* as indicative of a collaborative practice.

Further, the findings support the position that power assertion by these participants took different forms, depending on the task and staff member involved. The form of power assertion was mediated by perceived teacher trustworthiness, teacher experience, and teacher responsibility. Emergent literature and theory consistent with the findings supported an emergent framework (Muth, 1988).

The findings confirm the participants perceived themselves as working in an atmosphere of uncertainty. One participant, Lee, attributed this uncertain atmosphere to a perceived paradigm shift by Alberta Education. Although changes were occurring, a statement of the underlying philosophical underpinnings was not forthcoming. Therefore the participants described anticipated changes and current changes in the management practices of their respective schools within the context of the current mix of practices from both the old and the new (yet to be revealed) educational paradigm. The nine participants attributed their change in practice as a response to both external mandates (Alberta Education) and internal mandates (policy changes regarding teacher evaluation and school-based budgeting). The experiences and current understanding of the concept of power/power sharing relayed by the participants of this study indicated their belief the

principal's power base was changing. They also attributed these changes to measures being implemented by Alberta Education and their respective school divisions.

All nine participants in this study identified their current teacher evaluation policy as a change in both their role and their practice. The findings confirm all nine participants held a positive view regarding the change in the procedure for teacher evaluation. The findings support the view these participants believed teachers did not view the teacher evaluation policy through a lens of potential coercive or reward power. However, two of the nine participants viewed this policy as having a potential for conflict between teacher and principal. Further, the findings support the view the participants did not believe their teachers perceived the teacher evaluation policy as leading to power assertion by a principal involved in this procedure.

The new policy for school-based budgeting required a change in planning and decision-making practice. Specifically, the policy required a more collaborative practice to include the teaching staff. The participants viewed the new practice as not having substantially changed their practice or their role.

The findings reveal a concern regarding time, workload, and effectiveness. The concern held by all nine participants was twofold: first, regarding teachers; and second, regarding themselves. Statements by all nine principals indicated concern regarding teachers having enough time to plan adequately to provide quality education. Specifically, the concern centered on classroom planning time being co-opted by collaborative meetings aimed at planning and decision making for tasks more usually considered administrative. They also questioned how shifts in workload would affect teacher wellness and teacher participation in extracurricular activities. The second

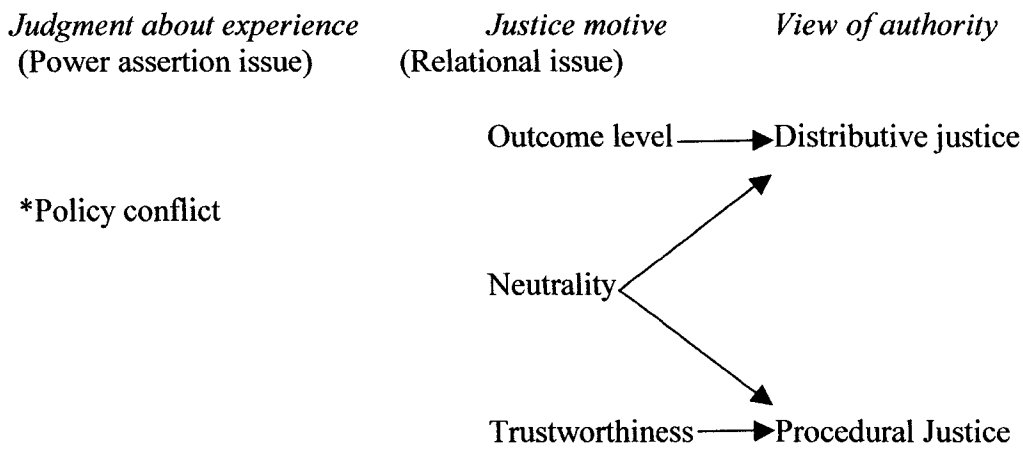
concern regarded the change in the principal's time with added administrative tasks; new management strategies to research, learn, and implement; and an impending change regarding principal accountability for the effectiveness of the school. There was a varying degree of concern among these principals regarding accountability for the effectiveness of the school. Factors affecting principals' concerns were their personal view of school effectiveness, the superintendent's view of school effectiveness, definitions of school effectiveness found in the literature on school reform, and new policy by their school division. The findings support the view all nine participants held concerns regarding their accountability for the effectiveness of their school. The themes of accountability, collaboration, and trust emerged from these data. The participants were being asked to encourage collaboration in decision-making procedures to allow for more teacher involvement. However, the legal parameters set out by the Alberta School Act and division policy did not change the accountability by the principal for the decisions and action on decisions made in their schools. The nine participants displayed varying degrees of trust in teachers' ability to make decisions in a collaborative way. Each participant identified a concern regarding "being at risk" due to decision outcomes made through a collaborative procedure in their school. In addition, all nine participants declared they would be the ones accountable for any decisions made and implemented in their school. Consequently, all nine participants viewed accountability for decisions as a key function of their role. The findings support the view these participants believed the most effective form of power assertion when working with collaborative procedure is personal influence. The findings also support the observation some of the participants

believed the expectations/standards they set should be used and adhered to by teachers in collaborative decision-making.

The findings support the view all nine participants experienced different levels of staff participation. In the south sample, two of the three participants supported the right of teachers to decide whether they would participate in collaborative planning and consensual decision-making. In the north sample, all six principals supported the right of teachers to opt out of the collaborative decision-making process for budget and timetabling. Further, all nine principals identified a dilemma facing them; specifically, the resolution of how to deal with the perceived inequity identified if a teacher decided not to participate in this process. Current theory in social justice (Tyler et al., 1997) supports the findings of this study regarding variation in participation. I considered this dilemma through the lens of social justice theory, which led to the development of an emergent framework (Figure 6.2). This emergent framework is presented as a line of inquiry that may assist in clarification and, subsequently, strategy development to resolve such a dilemma.

The findings support the view all nine participants perceived they were already practicing in a collaborative way. Further, the findings confirm these participants were grappling with issues directly challenging their current power-assertion practices. The challenging issues included teacher participation, principal accountability, responsibility to the students, principals at risk, responsibility of teachers, and time required to implement the new procedures and practices. The results support a view these participants were concerned these changes would increase principal and teacher

responsibility, require more time than was available, increase principal accountability, and increase the demands on the principal's already demanding role.



*Policy conflict is one example. Each of the * terms could be inserted under the *Judgment about experience* column. * *Policy Conflict, Routine Conflict, Evaluation Conflict, Organizational Effectiveness*

Figure 6.2. A modified and integrated framework of Tyler's (1994) two models.

The findings support a view the participants believed there was an emerging tension between educational leadership and educational management in their current role as a principal. Currently, these participants were charged with the responsibility to be the 'instructional leader' in their school. They viewed this responsibility as being part of school leadership. They also identified collaborative/consensus planning and decision-making, site-based budgeting, and teacher evaluation by the school principal as responsibilities they were charged to carry out. They perceived these later responsibilities as management tasks focused on principal accountability for an effective school. The

emerging tension for these participants centered on the *intention* of the new practices. The findings support the view these participants believed the intention of the new practices was directly affecting their power-assertion practice. The participants' perceptions of the intention of collaborative planning and decision-making directly affected their decisions regarding the issues of when and to what level teachers would be held accountable to participate. Therefore, the findings support the view the understanding by the participants regarding their function in these management changes directly influenced decisions about their power assertion.

There were varying degrees of stated concern or apprehension by all nine participants regarding the uncertainty of the impending changes. The participants identified these issues as follows:

1. Were these changes going to become more extensive and involve more stakeholders?

2. What structural changes were going to be mandated by Alberta Education?

3. Were the current changes being made in their school division going to be in line with the impending changes by Alberta Education?

4. Would the definition of effectiveness and accountability come from Alberta Education or individual school boards?

The findings support the view these nine participants were currently challenged by conflicting expectations regarding their use of power/power sharing in the role of principal. Specifically, these participants were expected to simultaneously empower teachers through collaborative planning and decision-making, and to retain and exercise authority and control as deemed appropriate for the principal's role as designated by the

Alberta School Act and respective school division policy. The findings support the view these nine participants were challenged regarding their present power-assertion practices. They were concerned about how future changes would affect these practices. The findings support the view participants identified a multiplicity of factors contributing to the fostering of power sharing. A consideration of these factors identifies two levels of questions to be asked regarding power sharing. The first level addresses power understood as a simple transfer of power. The second, and more comprehensive understanding, illuminates the change site based decision making requires in roles. These findings support the view this change in roles may require extensive change. Further, these role changes require the development of new skills and capabilities by both teachers and principals.

Implications

The qualitative nature of this research has limited the generalizations that could be made; therefore it might be best to follow Merriam's (1988) instruction in this regard: "The findings of the study are best interpreted in light of what was previously known about the literature" (p. 73).

In designing this study, care was taken to ensure the data collected would reflect the understandings and experiences of the nine participants. Although a set of interview questions was prepared, these questions were not designed to set the parameters of the data collected, but only to guide it; as a result, the findings represent the range of issues and experiences the participants themselves deemed to be important in relation to their experience or lack of experience with power sharing in their role as principal. The

objective of this section of Chapter 6 is to discuss the implications in the context of relevant and current thinking in the literature reviewed.

My interpretation of the understandings and experiences related by the nine participants illuminated a range of interactive forces conceivably affecting the contextual and organizational relationships. Lebot (1972) provided an overview of these dynamics: "The educational system cannot be understood simply as a formal institution of legal dispositions and organizational charts. Of greater significance is the relationship of power, force, and influence between diverse centers of power and pressure groups" (p. 112).

Although it has been emphasized in this study each participant would have unique understandings of and experiences with power sharing, there were a number of dynamics identified as spanning the nine participants. They include (a) perception of power assertion, (b) role conception, (c) organizational structure, (d) governance perspectives, and (e) changes in mechanisms of control.

This study reports a set of factors identified by the principals as affecting their power-assertion practices. However, these factors are in the specific context of the practice of these participants during a time of fundamental changes in how education is organized in Alberta; in fact, at a time when the guidelines for these changes were still forthcoming. Therefore, the fundamental changes carried out by the two school divisions were based on anticipated changes by Alberta Education as related to the current effective schools and reform literature.

The fact is the current literature has proposed that change is the future. Fullan (1999) stated, "We will see that breakthroughs occur when we begin to think of conflict,

diversity and resistance as positive, absolutely essential forces for success." (p. ix). Complexity theory (Stacey, 1996) and evolutionary theory (Ridley, 1996; Sober & Wilson, 1998) provide researchers with information which informs collaboration and resistance; evolutionary theory by raising questions of how humans evolve over time, especially in relation to interaction and cooperative behavior; and complexity theory by addressing learning and adaptation under unstable and uncertain conditions. These theories may prove useful to principals in Alberta during this time of change.

Principals will continue to have criteria for their power-assertion practices, and they will continue to be context specific. The implications are legal mandates directed by provincial legislation (School Act and Alberta Education regulation), school division policy, and perceived superintendent preferences influence the expectations and inform, if not direct, the power-assertion practices of principals. Therefore it is important these individuals and agencies be cognizant of the implications of their decisions and required changes because they may require changes in the practices of principals' power assertion.

Emerging Conceptual Framework

Concepts relating to power assertion and social justice may prove useful in future studies investigating power assertion and organizational effectiveness. The concept of power assertion will be addressed first. Here the term *power assertion* has been used rather than *power sharing* because I believe this study has demonstrated it would be prudent to investigate the continuum of power behavior. Muth (1981) investigated a synthesis approach to investigating conflict and consensus as measurable outcomes of power behavior. Muth's power-control matrix conceptually separates the discrete aspects of a power relationship. The power-control matrix addresses both the latent and manifest

properties of power-related, interactional behaviors. From this, Muth theorized a continuum of power interactions extending from coercive aspects, those in which force of some kind is used, to those situations in which coercion is nonexistent. Muth stated:

> Each component of the power continuum was an ideal type. Therefore, coercion was completely separate from both authority and influence and from each other. However, all three fall on a continuum with coercion and influence being polar opposites and with authority falling at the midpoint. None of these power-types exists in isolation, then, because movement in any direction on the continuum increases one type of power, thus decreasing other types. (p. 13)

Muth (1981) defined *conflict* as any disagreement on the outcome of behavior in a relationship. Conversely, he defined *consensus* as agreement on the outcome of behaviors in a relationship. The results confirmed coercion and influence are inversely related, coercion and conflict are positively related, and influence and consensus are positively related. In addition, authority relates positively to both coercion and influence, to conflict to the degree it is viewed as coercive, and to consensus to the degree it is seen as influential.

The value of adapting the power continuum model for research (see Figure 6.3) lies in its greater heuristic and empirical capacity to explain a wider range of power types and associated variables. A study for Alberta could investigate a correlation of influence, authority, coercion and policy conflict, routine conflict, evaluation conflict, and organizational effectiveness. Each of the intersect points represents a theoretically possible instance of a power behavior resulting in a degree of either conflict or consensus. Muth's research findings support the idea power is relational.

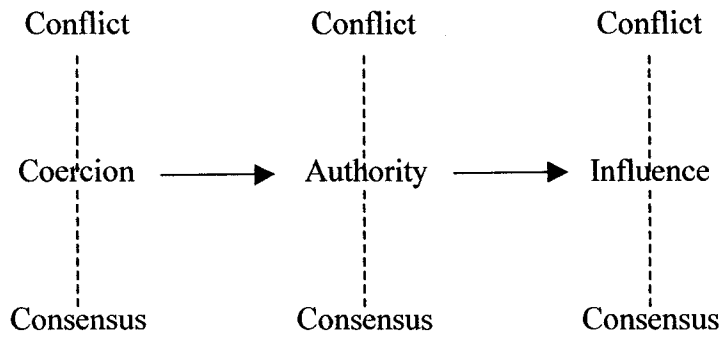


Figure 6.3. Power continuum model for research (adapted from Muth, 1981).

The theme of teacher participation, trustworthiness, and principals being at risk guided me to investigate the psychological perspective of the justice motive. The theory in the body of social justice, known as social identity-based theory, provides information that, if investigated, may provide insight into the above themes. Identity-based theories suggest people interact with others because they use their experiences with others to help them define their own identities and assess their self-worth. This perspective emphasizes people's desire to belong to positively valued groups. The pride people feel in memberships in those groups positively enhances their feelings of self-esteem. This enhancement occurs both intrinsically and through favorable comparisons with other groups (Tyler, Huo, & Smith, 1995). Social-identity theory has been applied to the justice area in the group value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Based on social-identity models of the person, the group-value model argues people use evidence they are receiving distributive, procedural, and retributive justice as indicators of the quality of their social relationship to the group and its authorities (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992). Knowing that one is a valuable and worthy member of the group

has positive implications for self-esteem and feelings of self-worth (Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996; Vermunt, van den Bos, & Lind, 1993). According to the group-value model, justice is connected to people's feelings about their group membership, social status, self-worth, and self-concepts (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992).

Tyler et al. (1997) stated:

> The centrality of relational concerns—neutrality, trustworthiness, and status recognition—to procedural justice explains the important role of procedural justice in shaping judgments about authorities and institutions. Authorities and institutions embody the cultural and social values of the group. Their actions speak for the group. Political theorists (Lane, 1988; Rawls, 1971) recognize that self-respect is affected by assessment about how one is treated by authorities. In fact, such assessments are especially strongly affected by treatment by political, legal and managerial authorities. (p. 333)

The group-value model refers to the motivations underlying people's concerns about justice. Tyler and Lind (1992) extended this model to include the antecedents of support for social authorities and rules. This model is referred to as the *relational model of authority.* This model supports procedural justice as the key antecedent of judgments about authorities and rules. A significant implication (Tyler et al., 1997) of this research is people can accept social support instead of actual influence or control over desired resources (p. 191).

People are affected by three relational issues (Lind & Lissak, 1985; Pruitt et al., 1993; Tyler, 1988, 1990): (a) their evaluation of the neutrality of decision-making procedures—the degree to which they are unbiased, honest, and make decisions based on evidence; (b) relational issues involving the assessment of the trustworthiness of others in the relationship, particularly authorities; and (c) the relational dimension of status recognition reflecting the degree to which people's social status is respected.

The centrality of trust to reactions of authorities demonstrates two paradoxical findings found in procedural justice studies. First, when people encounter treatment considered unfair, they sometimes do not interpret that behavior as unfair (Tyler, 1990). Tyler suggested this finding is explained by including motive attributions in the analysis. If people believe the authorities have 'their heart in the right place,' they focus less strongly on their actual behavior in making fairness judgments. Conversely, people do not rate procedures that appear to be fair as fair if they believe those creating or implementing those procedures are not motivated to act fairly.

The application of Tyler's (1994) *Psychological Models of the Justice Motive* and *Psychology of Legitimacy* as applied to power assertion may inform principals, allowing them to regulate power assertion when accommodating relational issues in an informed, authentic manner leading to effective practice. Using a modified and integrated framework of Tyler's (1994) two models, an investigation of power assertion could be assessed as it relates to the specific Alberta Education issues of policy conflict, routine conflict, evaluation conflict, and organizational effectiveness (Figure 6.2).

Further Research

This study was exploratory and interpretive in nature, and as such does not support generalization. However, it may be worthwhile to pursue further the insights provided from the understandings and experiences reported and discussed here. Conceivably, this could involve further interpretive approaches with larger groups and in different contextual situations. Different methodologies could be employed to try to apply findings one could generalize.

Questions about the nature of power underlie much of this study. A clearer understanding of what constitutes power assertion and the effective use of power in the contemporary principalship may be worthwhile pursuing. I assert the findings of this study would support the view *power sharing* is ill-conceived terminology. The findings also support the view the term *power sharing* was perceived as being collaborative. A clearer understanding of these seemingly contradictory views might result from further investigation of power assertion as a continuum. Perhaps there is no contradiction, but rather, the future lies in understanding *power shifting*—understanding how the continuum may work; understanding how the shifting of power assertion may shift to a person or committee, providing them with the required authority to be accountable for a given decision or result. This seems to be an important consideration, as it could have significant implications for a principal's perception of power assertion. This in turn might have significant implications for a principal's effectiveness in this highly political educational arena. Of equal importance is a consideration of the view supported in the findings indicating participants used shared power and shared responsibility as synonyms.

A notable finding of this study is the reluctance of the participants to acknowledge the use of power. What is of equal significance is my difficulty in addressing these findings with supportive theory. At this time I believe there are two plausible reasons for the difficulty in the search for theory to address these findings. First, the plethora of conceptualizations of power has in many respects served to restrict our understanding and, thus, has limited us in our investigation of power. Second, in the context of functionalist organization theory, power vested in hierarchy is considered

'legitimate,' formal, and functional. Therefore the research addressing dysfunctional/ illegitimate power has been investigated outside the organization. Also, due to the understanding of power as 'legitimate,' formal, and functional, power assertion forms and effectiveness in collaborative settings have not been investigated. Critical theorists have investigated 'domination'. Thus, the result of power studies and theorizing until now has left us with a limited conceptualization of power where in we know more about the way power works *on* us and less about how power might work *for* us. In a time when we are called "to think of conflict, diversity, and resistance as positive, absolutely essential forces for success"(Fullan, 1999, p. ix), it maybe reasonable to consider a principal's understanding of power assertion could have significant implications for management style and subsequent effectiveness. It is important for research and theory to guide principals in useful, effective strategies to address their concerns regarding communicating trust, encouraging risk taking, communicating information, and facilitating participation in power-sharing efforts associated with site-based management. Last, the findings reveal principals' questioning of the effects of the impending educational paradigm shift by Alberta Education. Research such as the following may provide significant findings to inform the practice of principals working in the rapidly changing Alberta environment: (a) a study to establish current views on task centrality and power assertion practices of Alberta principals, (b) a study to establish the relationship between a principal's perceived view of the superintendent's conception of task centrality and subsequent power assertion as to the principal's current practice, and (c) a study to establish measures of effectiveness of the current power-assertion practices

of principals as these relate to establishing alliances among diverse parties inside and outside the school.

Researcher Reflections

In this final section I have reflected upon two particular aspects of the study: (a) the process of undertaking interpretive research, and (b) the phenomenon of power. Accordingly, I have addressed the question, "What did I learn from completing this research?"

Interpretive Research

At the onset it became clear gaining access to participants is an important step, but not an easy one. One committee member cautioned me that due to the pejorative nature of the word *power*, there might have been reservations on the part of school principals to become involved. I do not know how many principals were dissuaded by the word, but I was not allowed to gain access to participants from one jurisdiction "due to the nature of the study." I can remember the feeling of both relief and gratitude when I received permission from the three superintendents and elation when I actually had eleven names of participants.

The participants were very generous, presenting their understandings and experiences with power and power sharing and trying to engage in the pursuit of an understanding of this phenomenon. At the end of each first interview, I remember feeling in awe of that participant's effort to deal with the questions of this study, to struggle with confirming power was part of his/her administrative existence, and to decide whether he/she could, should, would, or did hold power; and if so, with whom did he/she share power (staff, students, parents, superintendents)? How did he/she make that decision?

What did it look like in practice? Which examples would demonstrate the practice to me? I wondered, if someone had come to my school and asked me this question, how would I have answered?

The two rounds of interviews were both exhilarating and exhausting. It was exhilarating because each answer led to a piece of the picture of a refinement of what the question should be and why this question was important. It was exhausting in two ways: first, because of the 'draining' effect as I tried to listen, make sense, and remember to ask for explanation or clarification; and second, because of the tiring aspect of traveling long distances to so many sites. However, I realized how privileged I was to have principals give so freely of their time and speak so frankly in responding to the interview questions; but they also made clear which information we discussed could not be used and why. It was this clarification by some participants at the beginning of the second interview, or questions about whether the tape recorder was still on, that led me to consider the nature of the study and conclude that for some participants there was a perceived danger in being involved and that they were concerned about their identities being revealed and the repercussions of this. I returned to each site twice to collect data, and the interview process allowed both the participants and me to speak spontaneously. It also enhanced the opportunity for seeking clarity regarding comments and gaining increased insight into the individual participants both as persons and as principals within their unique school environments.

Continually listening to the tape after an interview helped me hone my questioning skills for the next interview. It also allowed me time to analyze which responses from different participants were similar and which were unique. After the tapes

were transcribed, I listened to them to confirm the transcription the participant would receive was correct. Listening to the tapes reminded me of the tones, inflections, and specific words the participants used. I continued to use both the typed transcriptions and to listen to the tapes as I coded and selected quotations; this clearly was a significant step in being 'true' to the participants' accounts and a painstaking way of teasing out understandings and meanings more accurately.

The Phenomenon of Power Sharing

Research on power sharing in the principalship has been approached infrequently from the perspective of the interpretive paradigm; in fact, I was not able to locate such a study. However, other related concepts such as participative decision-making and collaboration have been investigated using the interpretive paradigm, but again infrequently. It was important to me to hear the stories of principals, to hear from them directly regarding their understanding of this complex phenomenon of power sharing. As a practicing principal, I had heard the voice of 'authorities' telling principals to "decentralize your decision making; empower your staff" for some 10 years previous to my beginning the study. These ideas made me consider in what way power was directly responsible for or interacted in these actions. It was vital that I hear from the principals themselves.

I recall, each time after a principal either directly denied having power or refused to accept the term *power*, wondering, "Why?" Second, I wondered, "How can you share something you do not possess yourself?" Yet, as one principal so succinctly put it, "Things do get done"; therefore these participants were coping with opposing views and constraints, whether financial, human, or resource. How were these tasks being carried

out if there was no power base, no source of power? That was exactly it: *No participant said, "All these things would happen if I was not here."* In spite of all the external constraints by Alberta Education, the Alberta School Act, school district policy, and organizational structure, there were decisions to be made by someone daily—the principal. I wondered if this meant that one could be an effective leader without using power. I recalled a statement in a study by Epp (1992):

> As with the other 'incidental' aspects, differences in the power afforded the group did not modify the participative process. The power question did not appear to be of importance to anyone. The expectation was for principals to have and use power, and whether they did or did not was of little consequence to the individuals within the group. (p. 138)

It seemed to me in the leadership and organizational literature I read, power was so important; how could no one have cared about power in Epp's study? How could the participants in this study deny having power? How could no one be concerned about how power assertion or power sharing could prohibit or facilitate the endeavor toward creating an effective school?

Power remains a complex phenomenon to me. My understanding leads me to consider *power sharing* may be ill-conceived terminology. I found power sharing as a proposed construct was difficult to discuss and elusive to describe, and I continue to wonder about its tacit nature. However, the participants provided insights for me into the complex and extensive changes that may be required to implement power sharing, and their shared optimism regarding the development of new skills and capabilities to address these changes was encouraging.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview One

Background Information:

Thank you for participating in this research. I would like to start by collecting data regarding your educational background and your experience as a principal. Specifically, the number of years have you been a principal here or in other locations? Next, I would like to know about your current situation, the number of students and staff, how your administration time is divided with teaching time, if at all. Last, please include any other information you believe is relevant or useful to my understanding of your current employment arrangements. I would also appreciate it if I could view any documentation describing your job in this school division.

Primary Question:

What is your perception of power sharing in the principalship?

How do you believe it is used in your practice?

Guided Interview Questions:

1. When did you begin the practice of sharing power?
2. How did power sharing come to be a practice in your school?
3. What results were you expecting? Did the results live up to your expectation?
4. In what ways have you found power sharing to be useful?
5. In what ways have you found power sharing to be a hindrance?
6. Are there any specific limitations you could identify that were due to the use of power sharing? Could you identify and further explain this/these limitation/s?
7. Are there specific constructive aspects that have arisen due to the use of power sharing? Could you identify and further explain this/these constructive aspect/s?

8. Is/Are there an instance/s where you encountered a conflict with your staff due to the use of the power-sharing strategy? Was there an instance/s in which you did not agree with the decision that had been arrived at by the staff member or members when using a power-sharing strategy? How did you handle this instance?

Interview Two

Review and response to transcript from interview one:

Do you have any questions or responses you would like to revisit from the first interview transcript? Were there any answers from the first questions of the first interview that you would like to clarify or add to your answer?

Guided Questions:

1. Are there areas of administrative practice where power would not be shared? Do you have specific criteria for when you will or will not share power?
2. Do you believe there is a difference between how you view power sharing and how your superintendent views power sharing?
3. Currently, there is a call for schools to be more effective. Have you collected data allowing you to establish whether the use of power sharing in your school has made it more effective? Could you expand by providing an example of how you believe it has become more effective?
4. The importance of personal power or position power is often discussed when discussing school leadership. How would you rate the importance of personal power to positional power in relation to your present position as principal? (Personal power here uses Kanter's characteristics of charisma, political skill, verbal facility, capacity of articulate vision.)
5. From your experience, what one piece of advice would you like to pass on to principals embarking on power sharing in their schools?

6. Is there any issue regarding power sharing that we have not explored that you would like to comment on now or any area we covered that you would like to expand on or review?

Thank you for your participation. I appreciate the access to your valuable time that you afforded me. The second set of transcripts will be sent to you and I will verify by phone any changes, errors, or omissions.

APPENDIX B

SUPERINTENDENT CONTACT LETTER

Attention: Superintendent
From: Gloria Zbryski
University of Alberta
7th floor, Room 167 F
Phone: 403 492 3094 University
403 431 1048 Home

Dear _____,

This is the proposed research outline. I would like to be on site from _____ to _____, 1993. I may need to return briefly in June but it would only be for one or two days if that did occur. Interviews are scheduled at the principal's convenience and are during the day or evening. I am hoping at least six of the principals in your district will consider participating. The first interview takes one to one-and-a-half hours; on-site observation is established in consultation with the principal. The first set of transcripts is provided for the principal to read (and acknowledge inaccuracies, errors, or omissions; or suggest ideas to be included or corrected), prior to the second interview. A discussion of changes will take place at the beginning of the second interview.

The second interview should take 45 to 60 minutes.

Please provide your principals with the attached proposed research outline, ethics standards, and information on how to contact me directly should they be interested in participating.

Thank you for you assistance and support.

Respectfully yours,

Gloria Zbryski
Doctoral Candidate
Education Administration
University of Alberta

APPENDIX C

AN OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

Purpose of the Study

The study is timely in that it investigates power sharing at a time when districts and schools are obliged to consider collaborative approaches to management. Principals as key members of the management team in a given school district affect overall governance of their individual schools and the school system alike. However, principals are or maybe experiencing a role constriction as teacher autonomy and central office constraints increase respectively. Changes to the role of the principal will occur as a result of a contextual social process as school systems attempt to accommodate the emerging participatory management style.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the question:

How do principals understand the phenomena of power sharing and how is this reflected in their practice ?

Qualitative research could increase understanding of the work of principals and the phenomena of power sharing. While descriptions from qualitative research data collection will not by itself advance theory underlying the study and practice of principals and power sharing, the availability of such data can provide researchers with a basis for generating theory and developing researchable problems bearing on power sharing in the principalship.

Research Design and Data Collection

A case study design for this research was decided upon because it will allow the researcher to explore in depth the understandings and practices of those principals involved in power sharing. Further, in order to develop and understanding of the principals' interpretations and responses to the shift in power, information concerning the individual principals, their school and their context, will be collected from multiple school sites.

Data will be collected in three ways: through informal and semi-structured interviews; relevant meetings, and general observations of school practices; and through the analysis of documents such as school district and school policy documents, vision or mission statements, staff meeting notes etcetera.

Level of Commitment Required of Participants

Data collection in each school is expected to take two to three weeks in total. Interviews will be conducted with the principal. Each principal will be interviewed twice, interviews being approximately one hour in length.

Timeline for the Study

Data collection in each school will take place over a three month time period, March, April and May. Some time would be required in June and or August to enable me to share my interpretations of the data collected with the participants, and to give them the opportunity to clarify any of the information that I may have misinterpreted, or to delete from the data any information that they believe should not be used in the report of this research.

The dates for interviews would be arranged with individual participants to insure the time was suitable for them.

The Report of the Study

The format of the final report of the study is expected to be as follows:

Chapter 1 – Purpose of the Study
Chapter 2 – Review of the Literature
Chapter 3 – Research Design
Chapter 4 – The Case of School District A
Chapter 5 – The Case of School District B
Chapter 6 – Cross Case Analysis
Chapter 7 – Implications, Recommendations & Reflections

The discussion of each of the cases is expected to follow the following outline:

- A description of the context – the school size, vision, the nature of the school, demographics of student population, staff, the organizational arrangement of the school, its governance, the vision statement, the mission statement, etcetera

- The Principal's story about power sharing

- A description of how the organizational arrangements of the school have been changed or facilitated by power sharing.

- An analysis of the interpretations and responses of the principal.

Ethical Issues

In order to protect the participants in the study the following procedures will be adopted:

- All information collected during the research, whether collected during interviews, during observation, or from documents will be treated as confidential.
- All names, whether of persons, schools, or districts, will be assigned pseudonyms at the beginning of the study to ensure that anonymity is preserved.
- Participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Transcribed interview data will be made available to participants so that inaccuracies, errors, omissions, and inclusions can be identified and corrected.
- Data in all forms, audio taped interviews, field notes, transcripts, or documents will be kept in a secure location to which only the researcher has access.