The Dissertation Committee for Jeannette Driscoll Alarcón Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Life in the Middle: Exploring Culture and Identity
in an Urban Middle School

Committee:

Noah De Lissovoy, Supervisor

Cinthia Salinas

Victor Saenz

Jo Worthy

Luis Urrieta

Kathryn Obenchain

Life in the Middle: Exploring Identity and Culture
in an Urban Middle School

by

Jeannette Driscoll Alarcón, B.A; M.A.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Chloe.

She continually inspires all that I do.

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"I believe that by changing ourselves we change the world; that traveling El Mundo Zurdo path is the path of two-way movement; a going deep into the self and an expanding out into the world; a simultaneous recreation of the self and a reconstruction of society"

~Gloria Anzaldúa

I read these words every day that I worked on this study. I can truly say that my graduate school journey has facilitated my recreation of self and they ways in which I will approach changing the world. One pivotal moment was the realization that there was no way to accomplish this in isolation. Contrary to my solitary nature, I became part of many communities during my time at UT. I believe that every encounter, no matter how brief, we have with any other person carries meaning. I would like to take the time and space to acknowledge and thank everyone I have encountered on my path, but that would be impossible. Instead I will include the people who have watched this journey unfold, encouraged me along the way, held their tongues when it seemed like I would never finish and who I admire…

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Life in the Middle: Exploring Culture and Identity
in an Urban Middle School

Jeannette Driscoll Alarcón, PhD.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

Supervisor: Noah De Lissovoy

My dissertation study is two-year interdisciplinary project that combined case study and oral history methods to craft the life history of West Middle School. The goal of this project is to gain knowledge of how a school's identity, image and culture are shaped by outside forces such as education policy and demographic shifts over time. To this end, I ask teacher participants to narrate the life history of West Middle School, while paying particular attention to shifts in educational policy, to a changing student population and to citizenship education. The aim of exploring these issues is to present a holistic view of schooling. My theoretical framework draws upon the theories of figured worlds, hidden curriculum and social reproduction as entry points for understanding the complex world of West Middle School. I use case study methods such as observation along with oral history interviews and archival data to construct West's life history. The data sources include teacher interviews, an extensive yearbook archive, district school board meeting minutes, and school district boundary maps. The findings of the study are presented in two chapters. Chapter five presents key themes from the teachers' interviews describing the cultural environment and public image of West Middle School. Teachers characterize

the school's image and reputation in terms of exceptionalism and the school's identity in terms of family and guardianship. Chapter six discusses citizenship education at West. The main themes in this chapter draw attention to teachers' understanding of good citizenship in pointed terms of respect, responsibility and civic duty. Central conclusions include a nuanced understanding of contradictions within the West Middle School community, the ways in which diversity is simultaneously valued and assimilated, and the ways in which West's positive reputation acts as social and cultural capital. Implications for teacher education include creating spaces where pre-service teachers can engage in deeper learning about school communities and coming to see teaching as a political rather than passive act. Finally, implications for research call for expanding methodological frameworks to include bending and combining methods toward gaining a rich understanding of the complexities of schools.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> Within the next century, educators will not be able to ignore the hard questions that schools will have to face regarding issues of multiculturalism, race, identity, power, knowledge, ethics and work. These issues will play a major role in defining the meaning and purpose of schooling, the relationship between teachers and students, and the critical content of their exchange in terms of how to live in a world that will be vastly more globalized, high tech, and racially diverse than at any other time in history. Cultural studies offers enormous possibilities for educators to rethink the nature of educational theory and practice as well as what it means to educate future teachers for the twenty-first century.
> (Giroux, 1994, p. 235)

My path to graduate school began with my journey as a public school teacher. During my years in the K-12 setting I experienced schooling as a normalizing mechanism. Regulatory messages bombarded students, teachers and parents constantly. School knowledge was continually communicated in official and unofficial spaces both within the school and outside the school. My final assignment was in a public middle school that endured the moniker, "low performing," for many years. My position as the Language Arts Instructional Specialist and Department Chair provided the opportunity to glimpse the behind-the-scenes production of school-reform movements enacted in urban school settings. This experience reinforced my suspicion of the public schooling project in the United States. When I accepted this assignment, I believed that I would be working in an environment that promoted progressive notions of education. Unfortunately, the reality was one of scripted reading programs, constant surveillance of teachers and students, and an emphasis on standardized test preparation. During the four years that I worked in this school, I witnessed definitions of success and knowledge become narrower and narrower. I felt constantly conflicted, as I was simultaneously expected to

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help teachers implement strategies like reading and writing workshops, that would foster critical thinking skills, while being pressured by the administration and district to supervise and enforce participation in the campus-wide implementation of the SRA Corrective Reading program. Contradictions such as these, prompted me to return to graduate school in search of the ways in which to more deeply understand and articulate schools as cultural environments that are vulnerable to outside forces such as educational policy shifts.

During the fall of 2008, I returned to the middle school where I had previously worked to conduct a pilot project with the aim of practicing ethnographic methods. I noticed several interesting goings-on in the school that would ultimately guide development of my dissertation project. The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) persistent "low performing" label and the school district's "chronically underperforming" label (School district press release April 2007), coupled with the increased district pressure to shed the labels, affected the school's environment in obvious and dramatic ways, especially in the common areas of the school. Test scores were not only the topic of almost every meeting I attended (student behavior and discipline were the focus of the other meetings), but also became a prominent feature in the school's physical environment. Huge, bright yellow signs hung in the gym, cafeteria, library, and hallways. They graphically represented the school's achievement scores over the last several years with a large red circle around the goal of 90% passing for the current school year. Additionally, t-shirts and signs depicting a sinking pirate ship (the school's mascot is the pirate) and the letters S.O.S. with the motto: "Success is the Only Option" seemed to be

everywhere. These are only two examples of the ways in which images of failure/rescue and an emphasis on the importance of test scores were communicated daily by non-verbal means.

A second important noticing happened during interviews, conversations, and meetings with teachers. A recurring theme emerged, many teachers reported feeling disconnected from the administration. They often reported a lack of professional value and about the top-down nature of implementation of reform programs. I also noticed that they articulated these concerns by using language similar to the students' when they expressed frustration. Phrases like, "no one listens to us" and "they don't care" were commonly used in an attempt to explain tensions. Additionally, the teachers engaged in small acts of resistance, such as showing up late for meetings if they knew the topic was test-score related. Prompted by my visits to the school and my conversations with teachers, staff and administrators, I began to wonder whether the teachers were succumbing to the "underperforming" identity that had been imposed upon the school via labeling and constant visual reminders that they were not meeting minimum standards. Further, I wondered if it were possible for an individual teacher's professional identity to be shaped by a school's reputation.

Lastly, the school librarian gave me a box of school artifacts (yearbooks, staff directories, student organization meeting notes, memos, photos) that spurred my thinking about the ways in which I might be able to use artifacts to discover the story of a school's life. These artifacts were dated from the late 1950s to the mid 1970s. The school depicted was a much different place than the one I was sitting in. This led me to see this school as

having a changing life, and to think about the ways in which a school's history impacts the place it becomes in the contemporary moment. This thought was the seed for developing a project that would use oral history methodology to craft a life history. The project would move toward understanding the complexities of schools by using teachers' voices as the vehicle for communicating said life history. I felt certain that this school would be the perfect site for my dissertation project because it seemed to have had such a rich life. The school district did not share my enthusiasm.

The district's external research office denied my request to conduct my dissertation project at this school. I was shocked by the news, given the fact that weeks before I submitted my application the new superintendent, speaking at a community meeting regarding a restructuring plan proposal, claimed to be committed to discovering the systemic cultural issues underlying the school's "chronic underperformance." Instead, the district approved my study to take place at West Middle School; a place that enjoyed the best reputation in the district and was situated in an affluent suburban neighborhood. I had previously visited this school on several occasions because the district language arts curriculum team often held middle school language arts department chair meetings there. I remembered West as a cute, retro-style school where the teachers and students seemed happy. As I pondered how I could alter my initial ideas for a dissertation project to explore this new environment, I realized that West must have been impacted by some of the same state and district policy changes as the other school. I found it interesting that while the first school had developed a pathologized reputation, West had been able to maintain its stellar reputation.

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My limited visits to West coupled with its reputation in the district and city informed my initial perception of West. I knew that West had been built during the 1950s and that the building was preserved to reflect this time period, communicating a nostalgic feel in the environment. I had worked with West's language arts department chair on several occasions, so I also knew that the teachers faced some of the same student motivation problems that our teachers experienced but these issues were treated much differently. At our school students were often accused of not "wanting to learn" or not "appreciating" the opportunity for a free public education. West teachers, however, were constantly reflecting upon their own practices in order to discover how to better involve students. These instances of remembering were my first steps toward realizing that schools did in some way generate a unique identity, image and culture.

Prior to beginning visits to West, I passed it each day on my way to and from the building where I worked at the time. I began to notice sizeable groups of middle school kids at the city bus stop down the street from the school around 4:00 each afternoon. Where were all these kids from and where were they going? Taking further notice, I realized that they were students from the eastside of town who were attending West. I had never considered the number of students who transferred to West under the No Child Left Behind transfer option. I began to realize that West, like my former school, had a life of its own. Sharing this life could prove valuable for understanding the consequences of educational policy implementation, demographic trends, teacher perspectives and curricular decisions as important pieces in the school's story. West's life history reveals the complex tensions at work in a "good" school.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My goal is to gain knowledge of the ways in which schools develop identity image and culture over time with a focus on how education policy, demographic shifts and teachers' understandings work together to accomplish this. A second aim of my study is to understand how notions of citizenship education also contribute to the school's cultural identity. My research questions are:

1. How do teachers narrate the life history of a historic middle school and articulate understandings of the school's identity, culture and image over time?

2. How do contemporary educational policy, shifts in demographics, and present teaching practices contribute to the continuing production of the school's institutional identity?

3. In the context of this institutional life history, what are the perspectives of middle school teachers regarding notions of citizenship education and the teaching of democratic values, and how have these changed over time?

The aim of exploring these research questions is to present a holistic view of schooling and teachers' understandings of their work within schools. Taking an historical perspective gets at the myriad ways in which schools adapt to changes in educational policy trends as well as societal changes. Asking teachers to narrate this history creates a space for privileging the voices of the integral actors who carry out the mission of schooling, while at the same time demonstrating the ways in which their own identities are affected by their work. A second goal is to share the ways in which teachers' understandings of, reactions to, and enactments of educational and social changes contribute to the school's cultural identity and image. Lastly, because citizenship education persists as a major school goal, I also find it relevant to unpack the ways in

which notions of citizenship education contribute to the school's identity, image, and culture.

Operating from the anthropological premise: "making the familiar strange" in order to analyze everyday routines and procedures, listen to teachers' stories and understand the history of the school, my project shares the story of the ways that West Middle School has been and is currently impacted by an array of competing influences that are not routinely problematized but rather are accepted as normal in schooling. These influences include power: structures, accountability and evaluation systems, labeling, surveillance, behavior management systems, professional identity production, curricular choices, and teacher agency. Jackson (1968) reported the relevance of studying "life in classrooms" in order to understand the complexities of interaction that resulted from the mundane and routine tasks of schooling. Of equal importance in Jackson's work, is the recognition that students and teachers spend a lot of time in schools. The concepts of routinization, location and interaction inform this project because each is a key factor in understanding the ways in which teachers' construct their school identities, enact the school day, and contribute to production of the school's life story.

My project re-purposes oral history methodology in order to conceptualize the school as its subject making it necessary to choose a narrator of West's life. I opted to privilege the voices of the teachers who have played an integral role in bringing West to life. The teachers' collective remembering of particular experiences came together to craft a common narrative describing West's culture and image in nuanced ways. Their shared and enduring understandings of the school made possible its unique and durable

identity. The yearbook archive housed in the campus library also proved a valuable data source in crafting West's story. I looked through the books several times before I realized that I was encountering a powerful curricular tool. I began to notice the overlap between teachers' descriptions of citizenship education and messages communicated within the yearbooks. As will be described in chapter three, the yearbook archive became a key data source for exploring the messages and purposes of citizenship education over time.

West Middle School enjoys the life of a reputable school. It is a place where a durable positive image creates a space of privilege. On the surface West presents itself as a place of opportunity not only for neighborhood students, but also for those who are fortunate enough to transfer there for educational opportunity. The familial bonds among the teachers, along with the programs available to students, are positives traits. On the other hand, there also exist intricate power dynamics, deficit perspectives resulting in assimilation, and moments of tension.

SIGNIFICANCE

My study of West Middle School contributes to the field of educational research by adding a vision of school as living, evolving and responding to change. In this contemporary moment, standardization is valued and cast as a necessity in demonstrating schools' achievement and success. My study aims to illustrate the importance of understanding schools as unique places where education-reform movements do have an impact but do not automatically result in equity or betterment. By defining West Middle School as a living entity, my study adds a perspective that draws attention to ways in

which the people who inhabit schools react to education-reform movements but also possess certain forms of capital that allow them to maintain West's public image. Further, it points to the importance of public image in shaping a school's cultural identity. Approaching the subject of school in this way provides a pathway for exposing hidden power dynamics among teachers and administrators, revealing mundane forms of resistance that teachers engage in when the need arises and showing standardization can be a moot point if we consider schools as individual places.

To this end, my study presents West's unique story by sharing features of the school's life history. I aim to explore how teachers construct a collective school identity via shared nostalgic narratives. A main focus is how participating teachers recount experiences that contribute to fostering the school's image and culture. Further, my project explores the collective construction of norms at West Middle School and the spaces occupied by hidden curricula that included artifacts and extracurricular activities. Teachers often consider experiences outside of the classroom as an important component in forming school culture and teacher identity; my study also focuses on this understudied out-of-school context.

A second important component of this study is privileging teacher voice as authoritative in the matter of understanding West. In the contemporary moment, teachers are often either blamed for school failure, overlooked when schools succeed and/or ignored in policy making. Bringing teacher voices to the forefront of this study is a move toward acknowledging that the project of schooling could not happen without them. Though the teachers share mostly positive stories, they also reveal the ways in which

even the highest achieving schools are not simple places where prescriptive curriculum causes school success. Rather the stories demonstrate that, even in the "best" schools, complex issues such as power, deficit orientations and racialized assumptions play out on a daily basis. This is an important consideration as educational researchers continue the march toward figuring out how schools operate and how to make schools work for a larger number of students.

OVERVIEW OF DISSERTATION

My dissertation contains seven chapters including this introduction. Chapter two draws upon empirical research that provides a starting point for thinking about my project within contemporary educational research. Because my research site is a middle school, I situate it within the context of the national middle school movement. I go on to include literature addressing key issues of school culture and citizenship education. The second half of the chapter deals with my application of an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that provides the building blocks necessary for articulating the cultural development of West Middle School as well as explaining the dynamics involved in producing and maintaining the school's image and reputation over time. This framework draws on the theory of figured worlds for describing the space and place created in the school. Key components are interpersonal relationships between myriad actors within the school and the meaning ascribed to artifacts to carry particular messages to teachers and students. Additionally, notions of social reproduction and hidden curriculum are essential for getting at persistent overarching messages that

become part of the school's cultural identity and reputable image over time. Incorporating ideas about collective memory and a nostalgic view add an additional layer to the integral role that teachers play in maintaining the image and reputation at West.

Chapter three explains my innovative application of the concept of life history research to an institution as opposed to an individual person. A key component of this approach is to envision the school as a living entity that develops a public image and cultural identity. I enlist traditional oral history methods for data collection including archival and document searches to establish the historical context of the school. I also use open-ended interviews that focus on the participants lived experiences. To ensure that participating teachers became the authority in narrating the life history of the school, I privilege their voices. This is an important point because oral history work seeks to include the voices of ordinary actors in the archive concerning public history. Chapter three also describes my interpretation of interview and archival data.

Chapter four draws upon archival and journalistic data to orient the reader to West's varying contexts. The first section provides the structural context of West by including both information about the district process for opening West and about the national middle school concept movement. The second section identifies historical moments that have influenced West' development over time. This historical background situates West's life within national and local education policy movements including, desegregation orders, increased teacher accountability measures and No Child Left Behind legislation. The final section describes West's contemporary moment and demonstrates the continuing evolution of West's cultural identity.

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Chapter five draws upon teacher interview data to construct the story of West Middle School. The teachers selected for interviews represent a variety of time periods and content areas with the goal of crafting a story that shows the ways in which West changed and did not change over time. The participant voices provide a nuanced understanding of the place, West Middle School. While the teachers share mainly positive accounts of their time at West, they also reveal the complexities at play within the school and amid public policy shifts. Analysis of interview data draws out recurring descriptions of West's identity. The participants collectively construct West in terms of: exceptionalism when describing extraordinary parental involvement and outstanding student achievement; familial structure when describing the close-knit community of West; and guardianship responsibilities when describing relationships with students and perceptions of the teacher role at West.

Chapter six attends specifically to the issue of citizenship education addressed in my third research question. My data sources included, the definitions of citizenship education elicited from teachers during the interviews. A second data source were yearbook depictions of the ways in which a normalizing view of citizenship education circulated among the students. I analyzed both the participants' understandings and messages within the yearbook archive to articulate West's version of citizenship education. The chapter also brings attention the ways in which ordinary school artifacts can become powerful vehicles for communicating the agenda of schooling. In the case of West Middle School, yearbook images and text reinforced accepted notions of school success. The yearbooks demonstrated a durability of these messages over time by

creating the notion of a school citizen by repeatedly communicating character traits and

behaviors that demonstrate respect for the self, others and school. In addition to notions

of respect, the yearbook and teacher interview data include pointed definitions of

responsibility that reinforced individualism and self-sufficiency as positive traits of

citizens.

Finally, chapter seven provides an overview of the research findings and

undertakes a discussion of my key conclusions, explaining the ways in which my findings

contribute to scholarly conversation regarding the operation of social reproduction and

hidden curriculum in schools. Central conclusions include a nuanced understanding of

contradictions within the West community, the ways in which diversity was

simultaneously valued and assimilated and the ways in which West's positive reputation

acted as social and cultural capital. I go on to discuss implications for teacher education

that draw attention to creating spaces where pre-service teachers can, engage in learning

about historical aspects of the communities they will serve and coming to see teaching as

a political rather than passive act. Last, I discuss implications for expanding

methodological frameworks to include bending and combining methods toward gaining a

rich understanding of the complexities of schools.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

While school stories have been captured and reported many times in a variety of ways, it is rare to find the story of one school's life. My dissertation project presents an examination of the production of school culture by imagining the school as a living entity with a life of its own. Additionally, troubled by the current trend toward blaming teachers for persistent problems in school, the project centers teachers' voices as the reporters of that life in an attempt to re-insert them as the integral actors in the project of schooling.

This research is informed by and supplements three main areas of education research that will be reviewed in this chapter. I begin with an overview of research concerning the historical development of the middle school as a unique school environment with an emphasis on the rationale for the middle school concept. Then I move to briefly review current trends in the study of achievement in middle school and the niche that researchers are attempting to create by articulating the benefits of special attention to the education of adolescent students. Next I examine various reports of the ways in which school communities develop unique school cultures, react to external forces that influence interactions within schools and operate to fashion their reputations via achievement. In the last section of the literature review, I provide an overview of the ways in which citizenship education is defined by teachers and communicated to students in the contemporary moment.

The second part of this chapter presents my theoretical framework. I begin with the theory of figured worlds as an entry point for understanding the complicated ways in

which competing and complimentary forces came together to define West Middle School. Additionally, I discuss notions of social reproduction via the "hidden curriculum" and memory and nostalgia as frameworks understanding teachers' stories about West. These key theoretical concepts are threaded together along with attention to the power dynamics at play in the ongoing construction of this unique place to present the life story of a public middle school. I found a postmodern analysis of the data to be particularly useful in describing subtle power struggles, demonstrations of teacher solidarity and collective memory making among the teacher participants. For this reason the theoretical framework section also includes my understandings and uses of postmodern and poststructuralist theory with the end goal of extending the critical argument and helping me to articulate the complexity of my project.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Because of the nature of this study, the literature review could have taken a number of different directions. I have chosen to focus on three main categories that best situate my study within both contemporary and foundational selections of empirical literature. The first section traces the implementation of the middle school concept in terms of an educational reform movement. This historical moment is integral to understanding the identity, image and culture of the school because it marks a significant transition in the school's identity. Additionally, enactment of this reform movement provided an example of the ways in which education research impacted daily life within

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the school and created shifts in the culture of the school. It is also important to situate this study within contemporary contexts of research in and about middle schools.

Secondly, I present literature related to the production of the school's culture over time. This section includes understanding schools as cultural communities via ethnographic studies that have reported the ways in which school culture and norms develop within the context of their unique settings. Additionally, the accountability movement beginning in the 1980s created a backdrop for several teacher stories that contributed to the narrative of the school. Particular moments in time were remembered by teachers as significant when constructing the story of West and their roles during their time at West. Next, I include a section drawing links between cultural capital and achievement as well as the ways in which achievement is cast and recast as a significant identity marker in schools with a reputation of academic success. The final section takes up understandings and enactments of citizenship education in schools. This section includes studies that involve teachers' attempts to carry out the goals of citizenship education via service learning projects and other curricular devices as well as students' reported understandings of citizenship in secondary and elementary school classrooms.

The Middle School Context

It is important to understand the middle school as the main setting in the production of West's identity and culture. West has been a middle school for the last several decades and was a junior high for the first thirty years of its life. While this may seem like nothing more than an issue of vocabulary, an exploration of the middle school

reform movement and the current perception of middle schools as specialized

environments warrant attention to both historical and contemporary contexts of middle

schools.

Middle School Beginnings

The history of the middle school would not be complete without mention of the

American Junior High, which originated in 1910 (Beane, 2001). Overcrowding in

elementary schools, containing grades K-8, coupled with a "disengaging educational

program meant for younger children" were cited as reasons for moving students in grades

7 and 8 to a separate environment (Beane, p.xiii). Student disengagement often prompted

students to drop out of school to join the labor force. As the movement to enact child

labor laws grew so did the move toward a more specialized school for this age group

(Beane, 2001). At the same time that these structural changes were being considered

educators such as G. Stanley Hall were putting forth arguments regarding the uniqueness

of early adolescents' learning processes and behavior. Beane (2001) describes this mixing

of educational reform and social intervention by saying:

> The desire for an institution dedicated to the developmental interests of young
> adolescents was certainly part of the mix…this explains why, even after passage
> of laws abolishing child labor and extending the age of compulsory school
> attendance, the junior high school remained largely unchanged in succeeding
> decades. (p. xiv)

Thus junior high schools are a good example of the way in which schooling is used as a

vehicle for upholding implementation of systemic social change. With the body of

research regarding early adolescence growing, the middle school concept would be the next step toward providing a specialized environment for this age group.

Lounsbury (2009) points to the following developments to summarize the structural transition from the junior high school model to the middle school model:

- Indianola Junior High School, generally acknowledged as the first junior high school, was established in Columbus Ohio, 1909
- In 1946, 37 years after the junior high school was introduced, the 6-3-3 pattern of school organization became the predominant pattern in the United States, replacing the 8-4 plan.
- In 1963, William Alexander, speaking at Cornell University, first advanced the term "middle school." This event, 46 years ago and just 17 years after the junior high school had become the majority practice, is commonly used to mark the beginning of the middle school movement.
- By 1983, the new 5-3-4 plan of organization, featuring a grade six through eight middle school, had become the predominant pattern. (p. 1)

Several significant factors coincided with the aforementioned events. Elementary schools began to be overcrowded as baby boomers attended public schools in record number; new data concerning the age of the early adolescent was reported and progressive education movements were gaining momentum (Beane, 2001; Lounsbury, 2009).

While on the surface it appeared that the middle school concept was ripe for implementation, scholars point out that implementation in most cases consisted of only surface level changes such as inclusion of grades 6-8, assigning teachers to "teams" and advisory classes to provide mentoring for the students (Beane, 2001; Lounsbury, 2009; Dickinson, 1998). Lounsbury is quick to point out that mere adoption of these structures did not ensure effective implementation of the middle school concept. The middle school concept drew heavily upon the progressive education notions of experiential learning as the most effective avenue to education (Dewey, 1938). As Dickinson (2001) points out

the rapid move to a middle school structure did not equal a philosophical shift to embrace the middle school concept among teachers or administrators. In most cases school districts did not provide adequate professional development for teachers regarding the specialized curriculum and learning experiences that middle level education advocates had envisioned as the heart of the middle school movement. Additionally, there were no teacher training programs with a middle school grade focus.

Middle schools had a growing number of critics by the 1980s due to the lack of evidence that forming this grade grouping yielded success. While middle level education advocates pointed to success in schools where the concept was fully implemented, critics pointed to the vast majority of middles schools' shortcomings. By the mid-1990s, middle schools became especially vulnerable as the "manufactured school crisis" (Berliner & Biddle,1995) sparked standards and testing movements. (Beane, 2001)

In support of the original progressive middle school concept, in 1989 the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development set forth recommendations to guide schools in the creation of "needs-responsive programs for young adolescents" (Gallagher-Polite, et al., 1996). The eight key recommendations were:

1. Create small communities for learning (commonly called teaming)
2. Teach a core academic program (including critical thinking, health, ethics, and engaged citizenship)
3. Ensure success for all students by eliminating tracking
4. Empower teachers and administrators in decision making at the campus level
5. Staff middle schools with experts in teaching young adolescents
6. Improve academic forces performance through fostering health and fitness
7. Reengage families in education of young adolescents by giving them meaningful roles in the school
8. Connect schools and communities via service learning projects (Gallagher-Polite, et al., pp. viii & ix)

George (2009) points out that while the middle school structural model is still predominant in the United States, most have not implemented these recommendations to the full extent. But despite that fact, some schools that have adopted both middle school concepts and philosophy have done so with great success. His examples include use of teaming effectively to create authentic interdisciplinary units of study; flexible scheduling and looping so that teachers can form relationships with their students over time.

Interestingly, twenty years after the Carnegie Council report in 1989, the school district where the site school for my study is located mentions several of these tenets in its Middle Level Education Plan, showing the continued usefulness of this framework. The district's Middle Level Education Plan also describes goals for student achievement and attendance. Over the last several years, the district Plan has reflected increasing emphasis on meeting accountability standards as well as reaching and maintaining high rankings.

Middle School in the Contemporary Moment

A decade after the original *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* was published by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, *Turning Points 2000* sought to demonstrate the success of students who participated in schools fully enacting the middle school concept. This book was published by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to present longitudinal results depicting a promising picture for adolescent students who attend the middle schools that originally implemented the middle school concept.

The emphasis in both reports called for increased "support for educating young adolescents through new relationships among schools, families and community institutions, including those concerned with health" (Jackson & Davis, 2000).

While some research indicates that the adoption of middle grades structures has improved relationships within schools and that students are experiencing a greater sense of emotional well-being (Midgley & Edelin, 1988 p. 195), by the year 2000 little had changed in the curriculum, instruction and assessment administered to middle school students (Jackson & Davis, 2000). This has prompted a trend in the research on middle grade education to focus on relationships between other education reform measures such as the accountability movement and middle grade learning (Irvin & Arhar, 2003) and student achievement in the middle grades (Anfara & Lipka, 2003). These lines of research are relevant to my project because they provide a basis for understanding teachers' accounts of the transition from the junior high to middle school model.

An additional line of research on contemporary middle schools is useful in analyzing teachers' perceptions of the middle school environment. Wentzel (1998) writes about the importance of student motivation and social relationships in middle schools. She argues that development of healthy relationships with both adults and peers are key in determining students' success in school because these supportive relationships provide the motivation that students need in order to accomplish academic goals (Wentzel, 1998). Building from the premise of adolescent development, middle school research also includes attention to the development of character education as key in fostering the education of the "whole child" (Diette, 2002). Including character education as the focus

of advisory classes resulted in middle school students who, "were more respectful of each other, used character education vocabulary outside of class and were more engaged in campus wide activities" (Deitte, 2002, p. 26). The findings in these studies provide a starting point for my own unpacking of similar sentiments expressed by West Middle School teachers. Anfara (2009) calls for a broadened research agenda on middle level education that not only highlights the potential academic achievement possible in the middle school setting but also includes understanding the environments and communities of middle schools. My study aims to do this by sharing the complex story of middle school culture.

Schools as Cultural Communities

Operating from the premise that school cultures and environments are unique, my dissertation project centered the school as a contemporary place with an identity that shifts and changes as a result of outside influences (such as policy mandates and demographic shifts) and the day-to-day experiences and encounters happening inside the school as teachers implement policy and/or negotiate the effects of policy. In this section I consider ethnographic studies that shed light on the development of school culture via covert and overt message, an overview of the accountability reform movement in Texas, and operations of cultural capital within school communities.

Studies of School Culture

Ethnographic research proves valuable for providing rich depictions of school culture. Education ethnographies depict school life from the inside by providing thick descriptions of daily practice, detailed interview data, and stories of the ways in which interactions contribute to the school's culture. They can also provide an examination of the underside of school life where hierarchical structures, inequities and deficit thinking often reside. I make use of ethnographic research that reveals the inner workings of the power relations within schools and school communities (Foley, 1994; Valenzuela, 1999; Ferguson, 2001; Pennington, 2004).

Pennington (2004) presents the story of Elena elementary school situated within the accountability movement in Texas. Her education ethnography aims to reveal the ways in which outside forces, in this case major education reform via legislative mandate, impact a school culture that has deeply-embedded roots. She provides a rich description of the history of Elena elementary school emphasizing the community's commitment to the school as well as the generational ties that exist. Using teacher voices to construct the "figured world" (Holland, et. al, 1998) of Elena she describes the impact that sweeping No Child Left Behind legislation has on the students, teachers, administrators, and neighborhood community of Elena. I discuss my use of "figured worlds" in more detail later in this chapter but it is important to note here that the study of Elena elementary school inspired my use of teacher voice to describe the figured world of West Middle School. Additionally, Pennington's work provides a blueprint for my thinking about the

ways in which outside forces impact the life lived and identity produced within schools. The story of Elena, like the story of West includes an account of the important ways in which the school is historically and currently situated within the school district, city and state.

Ferguson (2001) also uses ethnographic research to tell the story of an elementary school. Her work reveals the workings of power differentials between adults and students with particular attention to the ways in which racialized understandings play out to pathologize Black male students in the elementary school that is the subject of her book, *Bad Boys: Public Schools and the Making of Black Masculinity*. Her work provides a model for observing and analyzing the complex web of culture that exists in an urban intermediate school. She unpacks issues of image-making that mark and alienate Black male students from the "normal students" thereby ascribing a pathologized identity. She points to the powerful yet subtle ways that communication about students and with students plays a major role in shaping their identities as students and as Black males. While West Middle School does not appear to shape student identities in such drastic ways, teachers do express assumptions about students' abilities based upon race and class lines. Like the teachers in Ferguson's study, the West teachers' interactions among themselves played a major role in establishing the culture of the school and accepted teaching and discipline practices.

Valenzuela (1999) also addresses notions of racialized identity formation within the school context by situating Seguin High School within the context of Education history and policy in Texas. As she reveals the story of the school she also demonstrates

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its unique culture by describing in detail the importance of image and perception among both teachers and students in producing the culture of the school and inscribing the identity of Mexican Immigrant to some students and Mexican-American to others. Valenzuela's work proves an important building block for me for two main reasons. First, because the school district where my study takes place has a substantial history in dealing with education reform and shifting student demographics over time, her account proves a useful model for developing a description of the impacts that these factors have on schools. Secondly, her description of the attitudes and perceptions of teachers toward students and vice versa provides a way of thinking about the importance of daily exchanges as well as the ways in which these experiences come to form the story of the school.

Foley's (1994) classic education ethnography, *Learning Capitalist Culture Deep in the Heart of Tejas* is influential in the field of education research because it presents a complex picture of schooling situated within a specific socio-historical context. Drawing upon extensive fieldwork in North Town Foley offers a perspective for examining the culture of high school by pushing beyond classrooms and the campus itself to explore the ways in which the culture of the town and state influence cultural production at the school. He weaves together interactions within the school that illustrate the reproductive nature of schooling by providing examples of interactions between teachers and students as well as among students. He pushes his descriptions further by situating the school within the context of the political and racial tensions at play in the town itself thereby showing that schools not only impact communities but vice versa. Foley's study inspires

my study of West Middle School as I seek to provide not only the story of the school in the contemporary moment but to provide a nuanced understanding of the intricate relationship between school and community. Drawing upon his work, I consider the school's community not only to include the immediate neighborhood around the school but the larger communities of city and state. Additionally, I include an exploration of the impacts that outside influences such as policy changes and local politics have on the school's development of a unique culture.

Effects of School Reform and Accountability on School Communities

The story of education reform in Texas includes an increased emphasis on accountability measures for both students and teachers. Many of these measures are standardized and are therefore perceived as able to provide objective data regarding teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Education researchers such as McNeil (2000) provide detailed accounts of the ways in which these measures often disrupt and erode educative experiences for students and teachers. Further, researchers also provide accounts of various school sites thus providing a pattern of similarity in experience while also providing a glimpse at differences within each school (McNeil, 2000; Nieto, 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). Because these accountability measures impact relationships among teachers, students, and administrators they produce important effects on school cultures/communities. These effects can include an agreed upon school story constructed by integral actors and enactments of pedagogy.

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Over the past decade accountability systems, standardized testing and ranking systems have increasingly become an accepted part of school culture in the United States. A warning over a decade old, "'accountability by standardized testing' as the panacea for school reform…undermines quality, and it increases discrimination." (McNeil, 2000 p. xxi-xxii), seems to have gone largely unheeded. This is evidenced by an ongoing emphasis on the standards and accountability movements, in both lay-conversation and educational research. McNeil's remark was initially made regarding research she conduced in Texas during an era of increased standardized measures used to determine student achievement in public schools, implemented by then governor, George W. Bush. A variation of the Texas system would gain federal status in January 2001 as George W. Bush took the office of the president and passed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Initial critiques by Nieto (1996) Valenzuela (1999), and McNeil (2000) regarding the (re)making of inequitable educational situations, the production of tensions between teachers and students, and the decline in relevant educational experiences were exemplified in the school district where the site school for my own study was located. More recently, Craig (2009) has published longitudinal data illustrating continued tensions among teachers and reform initiative implementation. She states, "understanding of teacher knowledge leads to an additional understanding of this inquiry: the teachers' professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) conceptualization." This quote shows that the role of teacher warrants attention because they are major players in reform initiative success while simultaneously voicing concerns about the lack

of instructional freedom. Additionally, teachers are often impacted by accountability via standardized measures of their own performance.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 marks an era that seems to disproportionately value efficiency as evidenced by an overemphasis on standardized measures (Horn, 2003; McNeil 2000) while claiming to also pay attention to quality. This idea was communicated repeatedly by the school district superintendent's discourse regarding closing the "achievement gap" and choice (in the context of NCLB's provision providing "school choice" for parents). The danger in current reform mandates that value efficiency at the cost of other educational values is creating/sustaining an educational system that is not able to provide equitable, relevant learning experiences for students. Further it positions teachers as scapegoats when schools do not achieve the desired state label.

Teachers and curriculum work as vehicles to carry policy to practice within schools. Adoption of a policy change will usually result in a change in teacher attitudes, teachers' pedagogical practices, and/or materials used in the classroom. McNeil's (2000) work regarding the "educational costs" of valuing a standardized accountability system prompt study of the ways in which schools are affected by these "reform" policies. At the time of McNeil's study high stakes, federally mandated systems were in the beginning stages of implementation. She was able to gather stories from teachers who were experiencing new pressure to raise test scores. McNeil (2000) states, "splitting personal and professional knowledge, and the requirement to do so, abound. A particular example reveals not only how test-prep 'teaching' diminishes the role of the teacher but also

distances course content form the cultures of students." Even early on, as McNeil reports, teachers' professional identities were changing. Now, a decade into the reforms of NCLB, the field is ripe for discovering the unintended impacts of the current "reform" movement on teachers' professional identity and the school's constructed image.

Contemporary literature examining the effects of education reform and accountability also includes aspects of school culture by looking closely at the ways in which teachers respond to and resist these movements (Webb, 2005, 2006; Stillman, 2011). Webb's (2005) qualitative study shows the ways in which school culture could have been negatively impacted by increased surveillance of teachers' practices as accountability measures were ramped up. The increased scrutiny came from not only power players such as district personnel but from parents and community members as well, thus affecting the culture of the school and the position that teachers held within it. Interestingly in a follow up article Webb found that the teachers came together to resist in "choreographed" activity that drew upon their professional teacher identities and created space for agency (Webb, 2006). In this way they were able to reclaim the discourse of "good teacher" and dispel the normalizing narrative imposed by education reform mandates.

Stillman (2011) presents qualitative data that emphasizes moments when teachers and administrators use "productive tension" to solve issues related to a minimizing of teacher knowledge with regards to their classrooms and students. In this case teachers once again resisted accountability mandates and risked being cast as bad teachers in order to place the authentic learning needs of their students over testing requirements. In all

cases the culture of the school and relationships between integral actors (teachers, administrators and students) helped to determine responses to accountability/reform mandates. Similarly at West, teachers asserted solidarity and agency when they felt that reform measures were not in the best interest of their students and/or colleagues.

Reform initiatives often emphasize providing proven, innovative instruction and using "culturally relevant" materials to engage students in learning. Unfortunately, the "innovative" methods are often scripted reading programs, packaged curricula and test preparation materials. A valuing of prescribed and prepackaged curriculum often becomes part of the school culture. Since teachers rarely have a choice regarding implementation of these programs, they often voice concern about losing the autonomous decision-making privileges they had before current reform initiatives began. Additionally, reform brings extra layers of supervision including campus content area specialists, district curriculum specialists, TEA officials, and additional assistant principals. As Tyack (1974), comments "city teachers remained subordinate members of elaborate bureaucracies, and new layers of administration often meant more bosses" (p. 268), which may contribute to teachers feeling pulled in conflicting directions as they attempt to sort out policy mandates and maintain learning opportunities within their classrooms. The literature reviewed in this section is relevant to my study because it provides the historical context of the education reform and accountability movements that impacted both West Middle School and the school district where it is located.

Privilege, Reputation, and the School Community

In this section I include studies that provide detailed descriptions of the ways in which a school's reputation impacts the school community. One facet explored is the idea that a "good" reputation results in a privileged space while "poor" reputation results in loss of privilege for the school community. The work of Sizer (1984/1992) emphasizes the former by showing the ways that privilege and cultural capital that "good high schools" possess enable them to resist "reimagining" themselves. Fass's (1989) work addresses the fact that while schools claim to be spaces of opportunity where students can acquire privilege and upward mobility, these benefits often result in cultural loss for students. I also include the ways in which a lack of privilege and cultural capital in schools cast as "urban" impacts school communities by forcing them into positions where they are subjected to education reform whims and the scrutiny of the public (McQuillan, 1998; Friend & Caruthers, 2012). I have chosen to include studies of secondary schools that portray their subjects as unique places where an intricate web of social interaction establishes the cultural identity of the school but also contributes to the perceived cultural capital possessed by the schools.

Fass (1989) applies a historical perspective to study the ways in which schooling in the United States, high schools in particular, has worked its way into the American psyche as a necessary component in training students to become assimilated citizens. She writes:

> Today, schooling does matter, and education as a massive enterprise has become an integral component of the economy, culture and state. While

Americans in high places still incant schooling as part of the liturgy of American ideology, the experience of almost all Americans has made the school part of their own intimate past and vital to their children's future. The domestication of schooling, from the realm of inspiration to the ghettos of daily life, has been part of the social transformation of the twentieth century (p. 3).

The level to which people are impacted by school experiences has always intrigued me thus informing my decision to understand the ways in which these places develop as unique. Fass's study revealed the ways in which schools function to assimilate "outsiders" including marginalized groups of citizens as well as immigrants (p. 5). Her work provides a detailed account of the ways in which schools have come to be accepted as institutions that provide students with the cultural capital they need to enjoy a more privileged status than they had when they began school. However, she also points out the ways in which schooling works to assimilate students to dominant cultural norms and often squeeze out students who do not conform by excluding them from the school culture. With these issues still in the forefront of discussion regarding equitable educational experiences, her work provides an historical trajectory of the ways in which the school has functioned to assimilate students via citizenship training.

In the mid 1980s Theodore Sizer contributed to the conversation regarding school culture by inventing Horace Smith, a composite character, that he used to tell the story of the "good American high school" (Sizer, 1984/1992). His study chronicles the ways in which high schools operate to serve students educational needs while at the same time chronicling the dilemmas that teachers face when they know that the schooling experience could be improved for students. The most intriguing part of his work informing my study is the idea that "good schools" by virtue of reputation retain the

privilege to decide whether or not to implement improvements. Sizer represents the teachers via the composite character Horace as "concerned," "good," and "conflicted" as they realize that there is room for improvement in campus policy and instructional practices (p. x). Because the schools included in the study are "good schools" these problems are not seen as urgent thereby making a space for teachers to simply maintain the status quo in their teaching and attitudes about school. These themes relate to my study in that they draw out the subtlety of privilege operating within school contexts. West Middle School enjoyed this type of privilege, as will be discussed in chapter five.

The work of McQuillan (1998) and Friend & Caruthers (2012) addresses the ways in which school culture develops in an opposite trend when the "urban" moniker is attached to the student population. Like my own study, McQuillan's work looks at the case of a single school and provides an historical perspective when describing the development of the school's culture. He posits Russell High School as an example of the ways in which educational inequities persist over time and contribute to the reputation and culture of the school. He describes his study in writing that:

> Culture can hide as well as highlight. Because we emphasize the individual, we often overlook the collective. Because education opportunity is so taken-for-granted, we seldom look at it critically. Because students are institutional non-entities, their views inform very little of what occurs in schools. As a consequence, our understandings of educational opportunity are incomplete and distorted…The American population can grow increasingly polarized, in terms of income and race/ethnicity, while schools not only promote these undemocratic outcomes but also the attitudes that allow society to accept   these divisions as equitable. (p. 16)

This passage draws attention to the ways in which the educational system works as a mechanism of control, operating by its own momentum often overlooking the very

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people it professes to serve and create opportunity for, namely students and their communities. Given the contemporary propensity to ignore teacher voice in education policy development and to blame them for poor school performance, I would add their experiences to those in need of understanding as we move toward creating greater equity in schools. Additionally, McQuillan's work draws attention to the concrete ways in which the inequalities in education carry over into the larger society.

While McQuillan expresses concern that education researchers do use a critical eye to examine schooling, recent trends in education research have answered this call. The work of Friend & Caruthers (2012) illustrates the attention being given to incorporating student voices in conversations about re-imagining the culture of urban schools. In their heuristic qualitative study the researchers sought to understand the ways in which urban high school students narrate their desires for "reculturing" their high schools. Amid an increased environment of restructuring low performing schools, the study shows that students found improvements to school culture more important than improvement of the curriculum. Using student voice Friend & Caruthers communicate the importance of a school's culture as a conduit for constructing positive or negative student identities. Overall students in the study emphasized a desire for "their voices to be heard regarding their educational experiences" and to "change people's attitudes about the school" (p. 382). This indicates not only the impact that equitable educational opportunities have on student investment in their own education but also the importance that their reputation as students has on their interactions with teachers and others.

Citizenship Education in Practice and Context

Notions of citizenship education are present in many places in my study. As will be described in detail in later chapters, one of these places was unexpected. Contained within the school yearbooks I began to notice students communicating with one another via text and images character traits that translated to good citizenship. This prompted me to ask the teacher participants to define citizenship education and the ways in which they enacted it while teaching at West Middle School. Later, in the theoretical framework section of this chapter, I consider the concepts of citizenship and democracy. Here I consider studies of citizenship education enacted in school contexts in the contemporary moment. In order to make clear connections with my study, I focus on the perspectives of social studies teachers and the trend toward service learning projects to promote civic engagement.

As notions and understanding of citizenship evolve and change to include multicultural perspectives scholars present theory and research with attention toward the ways in which identities and experiences are impacted by individual's senses of citizenship (Banks, 2004, 2008; Flores, 2003; Salinas, 2006). However, there seems to be a persistent disconnect between reformulating concepts of citizenship and the types of citizenship education still pervasive in schools. As Dalton (2004) shares the over-emphasis on duty-based notions of citizenship neglects to acknowledge a paradigm shift among young people to understanding civic engagement as increasingly activity-based.

The National Council for the Social Studies includes the teaching of Civic Ideals and Practices among its priorities in social studies education. This framework calls attention to teaching the concepts of identifying citizens' right and responsibilities, understanding the functions and limits of government, addressing public issues with an end toward finding a solution, and defining the concepts of liberty, justice and the common good to name a few (Sandmann & Ahern, 1997). These foci remain constant in social studies classrooms as teachers and students engage with a variety of projects aimed at addressing these concepts. Classroom based approaches to teaching citizenship range from in-class simulations of the ways in which civic organizations work (Hoge, 1997; Alleman & Brophy, 2002) to using a historical lens to teach about the traits of good citizens (Landorf & Lowenstein, 2004; Libresco, 2002). These studies provide a variety of accounts of the ways in which teachers can work with students to ensure they are learning the ideals of citizenship while at the same time making connections to literature and/or real life situations. Underlying this work is an emphasis on developing positive character traits in students that demonstrate and model accepted values (Larkins, 1997).

Hoge (1997) presents an elaborate plan for incorporating many of the citizenship principles included in the NCSS themes by asking students to construct a "micro-society." Within this society, students simulate a mayoral election and set up a municipal court and city government in order to learn how these facets of cities work. Additionally, however, they set up a bank and marketplace, emphasizing the role of the free market system in our society. Within the micro-society students are expected to make decisions that focus on the common good which includes generating revenue for the society (Hoge,

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1997). Alleman and Brophy (2002) say that teaching students about the relationship between citizenship and government should "emphasize its functions: how government helps us, protects us and provides services" (p. 10). Libresco (2002) echoes these points while adding lessons that envision historical figures as possessing the character traits of good citizens. These trends seem to emphasize dominant historical and cultural narratives as useful for teaching about citizenship. On the other hand, there also seems to be a broadened understanding of citizenship education to include immigrant groups' experiences. VanFossen (2003) describes a variety of ways in which literature can be incorporated to teach about the immigration experience for a variety of groups during different historical time periods and how pathways to gaining citizenship varied for different groups. There are also trends within the social studies to move instructional practices to address varying conceptions of citizenship in a more inclusive manner. One space of particular interest within schools is the late arrival immigrant classroom (Salinas, 2006; Salinas & Franquiz, 2008). In her studies of late arrival immigrant classrooms Salinas pushes for a more "democratic environment" where diverse student backgrounds can be incorporated into learning conceptions of citizenship (Salinas, 2006). While this work addresses content-specific spaces in secondary schools the message is a paradigm shift that prompts teachers to take into account students' backgrounds, communities and understandings.

Increased use of service learning projects, particularly at the elementary level, is another trend in citizenship education that potentially moves notions of citizenship beyond civic duty to civic engagement. Education researchers have reported that

engaging in service learning projects can increase students' understanding of democratic processes (Battistoni, 1997). Additionally, elementary students who engage in community service learning projects begin to identify as problem-solvers and realize the power they have to create change in the community (Abernathy & Obenchain, 2001). Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, Rahima Wade (2007) calls for a move toward service learning for social justice. She remarks that "high quality community service learning activities share many of the same characteristics of social justice education" as both "are aimed at ameliorating societal problems and both involve students working collectively with others to effect change" (Wade, 2000). While the rationale provided for engaging in service learning projects with students aligns with meeting goals of educating democratic citizens, teachers often feel the pressure of time constraints and it becomes a reason given for neglecting this mode of teaching citizenship. Additionally, limited time could be one reason for continued instruction focused on a duty-based understanding of citizenship. Exploring citizenship education at West Middle School revealed moments when both types of citizenship were endorsed.

Theoretical Framework: Identity, Image and the Production of School Culture

This project asked questions about the ways in which teachers narrated the school's identity, image and culture over time. The identity, image and cultural production that played out over time tended to be influenced by and to include significant sociocultural influences that constructed a unique figured world were schooling activities were carried out as well as defined. In an attempt to understand and describe the figured

world of West Middle School and the production of its identity I draw upon scholars whose work defines the notion of figured worlds. Definitions of place and uses of space (both physical and symbolic) applied to school environments proved to be relevant to the formation of the school's unique culture and for this reason I consider scholarly work that helps me to articulate the constructs of place and space that contributed to the formation of this particular figured world. As the figured world of West Middle School revealed itself over the course of my time in the field, mechanisms of social reproduction via the hidden curriculum as well as interesting and in some cases unexpected power relations became apparent. I draw upon scholars of the hidden curriculum and power relations in society and in schools to help me recognize and describe these phenomena. In an attempt to extend the critical analyses of these topics I also make use of postmodern scholarship to provide a broadening of my theoretical lens.

My study includes an emphasis on teacher voice and their perceptions about aspects of schooling, such as citizenship education, over time. This study possesses an historic component by virtue of taking place in a middle school that has existed for over 50 years making it important to include an evolution of ideas regarding citizenship education. However, because the teacher participants share remembered experiences, I feel it is necessary to develop an understanding of collective and cultural memory as well as the ways in which nostalgic remembering contributed to the formation of this figured world. Additionally, operating from the premise that one of the main and most durable purposes of schooling is to create a sense of citizenship and understanding of democracy, I draw upon scholarly work that explores how enactments and understandings of

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citizenship education have changed over time. The following sections discuss in further

detail these components of my theoretical framework.

Figured Worlds

A foundational theory for my study is Holland et al.'s (1998) concept of

figured worlds. They define this concept as follows:

> Figured worlds in their conceptual dimensions supply the contexts of
> meaning for actions, cultural productions, performances, disputes, for the
> understandings that people come to make of themselves, and for the
> capabilities that people develop to direct their own behavior in these worlds.
> Materially, figured worlds are manifest in people's activities and practices:
> the idioms of the world realize selves and others in the familiar narratives and
> everyday performances that constantiate relative positions of influence and
> prestige. (60)

By acting in particular ways on a regular basis the actors within figured worlds build and

maintain that world. Within figured worlds, realities based upon common understandings

form the basis for the production of unique identity and culture in that world. Activity is

not the only producer of the figured world. In addition one must consider the discourses,

artifacts and contexts (historical and contemporary) that are inscribed with meanings that

help to reinforce and legitimize the actors' narratives. Further, the authors point out that

the relationships formed among the actors do not operate free of conflict, privilege and

power. Explorations of these dynamics reveal the complexities involved in both

constructing figured worlds and identifying one's role in it. The authors go on to describe

the intricacies of the relationships formed within figured worlds and the key role that

these play in creating the culture of the figured world. Holland et al. write:

> Positional identities have to do with the day-to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, deference and entitlement, social affiliation and distance—with the social- interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world. Narrativized or figurative identities, in contrast, have to do with the stories, acts, and characters that make the world a cultural world. Positional identity, as we use the term, is a person's apprehension of her social position in a lived world: that is, depending on the others present, of her greater or lesser access to spaces, activities, genres, and, through those genres, authoritative voices, or any voice at all. (127-128)

In this passage they describe the fluidity of the identities the actors construct as well as the limitations and tensions that arise thereby influencing activity. These ideas proved useful in developing my understanding of West as a figured world and analyzing the ways in which the teachers narrated the story of West.

The concept of the "figured world" (Holland, et. al, 1998) describes a way of thinking about identity production. I applied the idea of "figured world" working within "frames of meaning" when thinking about the negotiations of human interaction within the school. When people come together in the public place of school, the interaction that occurs actually helps to define the place. There was a consistent if not constant negotiation between interactions, which impacted life within the school and ways in which the school was able to react to shifts in its image over time. For example, within the school decisions about how policy would be implemented was a negotiated interaction between administrators, teachers and students. However, because power was not evenly distributed among these roles, each individual learned his/her role in the figured world of school. Holland et al. (1998) go on to point out that individual actor's enact their roles in particular ways within specific contexts:

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> We focus on the development of identities and agency specific to practices and activities situated in historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed 'worlds': recognized fields or frames of social life, such as, romance, mental illness and its treatment, domestic relations, Alcoholics Anonymous, academia, and local politics (p. 7)

This premise leads me to consider that the figured world of West Middle School is actually situated within the larger figured world of Schools. Because the construct of School existed for the teachers who participated in this project, they were able to construct their own figured world, West Middle School. In other words, West is recognizable as a school but the unique lived experiences of the teachers and the ways that they made meaning of particular socio-historical events enabled the figured world of West Middle School to exist.

As many scholars have demonstrated (Urrieta, 2006, Boaler & Greeno, 2000, Jurow, 2005) figured worlds is a useful theoretical construct for describing socio-cultural aspects of education. Urrieta (2007) notes, "figured worlds…is a useful tool for studying…particular sociocultural constructs in education, local educational contexts, and can also be used as a practical tool for crafting figured worlds of possibility" (p. 112). My study takes up these ideas by using the theory of figured worlds for the basis of understanding the life history of West Middle School. Interactions are negotiated in particular ways within accepted hierarchical structures and identity is not only constructed from within but is assigned from without based upon the image of the school that is endorsed by outside entities such as the school district or neighborhood community.

Skinner & Holland (1998) also write about the ways in which a "rendered collectivity" emerges when actors within a figured world relinquish individual identity to that of the group in order to form a collective identity. They note that labeling often plays a role in this process thereby showing how reputation (individual or group) defines expectations for participation in the group. These expectations and actions come together to form a rendered collectivity that produces the collective identity. This notion became evident at West when teachers expressed shared understandings and acceptance of what it meant to be a teacher there. Additionally, the power of rendered collectivity is evident in the teachers' willingness to participate in becoming a part of West's figured world via adopting the identity of West teacher. As previously noted figured worlds are created under specific circumstances and impact participants in different ways. While this suggests agreement among participants in the figured world, it also calls for acknowledgement that not all participants possess equal power. Working from this idea, my inquiry also paid attention to questions about how race, social class and gender were enacted in and affected by the figured world.

Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain (1998) describe the concept of identity in this way:

> We build upon notions of inner activity and inner life, drawn from Bakhtin and the sociohistorical school, that cast the development of self-understandings (identities) on intimate terrain as an outcome of living in, through, and around the cultural forms practiced in social life. (p. 8)

Building from Bakhtin, the authors conceptualize identity as constantly orchestrating multiple voices, which are often in conflict (Holland & Lachicotte, 2005; Holland et al.,

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1998). The notion of identity will be applied to discussion of the ways in which the school's identity and image developed over time and continues to develop. This project suggests that a school has an identity that is constructed by both the multiple and complex lived experiences of teachers and other actors as well as outside influences such as educational policy. The term *experience* refers to the activities and human interactions happening within the school at various historical moments. The term *influence* refers to outside happenings that alter what happened in the school and how the school, via integral actors, reacted to them. Additionally, the project sought to understand how the "image" of the school may or may not impact the (re)construction of the culture of the school.

The role of teacher remains prominent in the figured world of school. As stated previously, the figured world relies upon actors and acts as defining elements. "By 'figured world,' then, we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland, el al. p. 52). While there are many actors in schools (teachers, students, administrators, secretaries, custodians, parents, etc.), this project focused on the stories of teachers whose professional identity production was impacted by participation in the figured world of West Middle School. In sharing their stories, the participating teachers constructed the history of the school via their perceptions, their descriptions of their professional identities and their insights regarding the ways in which these worked together to create the culture of West Middle School. The enacted role of teacher at West developed via

their learning the story of the school, embracing the expectations of the teacher role within the school, and recounting past portrayals of that role. I also explored the possibility that the identity and culture of the school is produced by collective experiences enacted there during certain time periods. Contributing influences included political and social changes, community needs/expectations, enactments of roles and scenarios that communicated a particular image of the school to outsiders.

Holland, et al. (1998) emphasize story as a major contributor to understanding individual and collective identity production. The figured world of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) represents an explicit example of the ways in which potential members must witness, learn and take ownership of the "official story" of AA. While the school story is set forth in a more subtle way, it exists nonetheless. The school's story made the teacher identity possible just as the story of AA makes the recovering alcoholic identity possible. Accepting this premise, I dug deeper by considering the idea that a single teacher identity does not exist. Rather, multiple teacher identities exist in different settings and a person's teacher identity may change over time. This framework opens a space for addressing the impact that a school's image (often engineered by outsiders) has on teacher identity construction as well as the contribution that the teachers' stories about a school have on maintaining the image of the school.

Definitions of Place and Space

Because school is a socially recognizable place, in order to identify West Middle School as unique and able to manufacture its own identity, I drew from Creswell's (2004)

idea that "…place does not have meanings that are natural and obvious but ones that are created by some people with more power than others to define what is and is not appropriate" (p. 27). The place of school does not exist in isolation but rather is a place that is given meaning by those working within it daily and by public understandings of what schooling is and what it does. This type of meaning making results in a common, accepted image of the place, school. This image contributes to the identity of the school. Holland's (1998) idea that identities can "…form and re-form over personal lifetimes and in the histories of social collectivities" (p. 270) prompted the idea that studying a school's changing yet durable identity could lead to understanding the impacts of policy trends, hegemonic structures and the enacted purposes of schooling.

An important consideration when thinking about the factors that make up the identity of a place is the intricate relationship between the place, in this case a school, and the communities it serves. The place that the school becomes is connected with the community that it chooses to align itself with. While one can acknowledge the reliance upon certain common structural components such as schedules, curriculum and various artifacts in order to define a place as a school, we should also acknowledge the interpersonal relationships schools form with community members. Additionally, consideration should be given to who receives the greatest opportunities in these constructed places and how they go about accessing them. Apple (1993) argues for recognizing the importance of the school/community relationship:

> success required the conscious building of coalitions between the school system and the communities being served. In none of these cases was the impetus generated from the top. Rather, bottom-up movements, within groups of teachers,

the community, social activists and so on, provided the driving force for change…creating new ways of linking people outside and inside of schools together so that schooling is not seen as an alien institution but something that is integrally linked to political, cultural, and economic experiences of people in their daily lives. (Apple 1993 p. 40-41)

The communities surrounding schools are important contributors to the formation of the school as a place. The input of the community both fosters the environment at the school and helps define the activities that take place in the school via participatory support. While I am not suggesting that the support of the administration at the campus level does not also greatly impact the formation of the school's identity, the outside involvement is nonetheless relevant.

The physical condition of the school is often overlooked regarding its impact on the school's environment and image as well. School buildings are more than a place for people to congregate, rather they are specialized places that embody specific agendas. As teachers live their experiences within school walls, unique places are carved out in the educational landscape making it possible for each school to construct and maintain its own unique identity. As Harvey (1993) points out:

Places are constructed and experienced as material ecological artifacts and intricate networks of social relations…They are an intense focus of discursive activity, filled with symbolic and representational meanings, and they are a distinctive product of institutionalized social and political-economic power. (Harvey, 1993, p. 316)

This statement provides a direct link to the examination of schools as places of structured production. Schools become an intricate network of happenings in which many influences are at play. Tuan (1992) points out, "If the map has this power to convey

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coherence and homogeneity, so has-even more powerfully-the concrete, multi-sensorial presence of built environments. An area that is architecturally homogeneous immediately suggests common function and shared activities." (p. 33). This statement can be applied to the school setting because often the familiar-ness of school buildings masks the interactions that take place within. The places created within this familiar space are unique in function and have significant influence over individuals just as systems do.

Flores (2002) argues, "Recent studies concerning the formation of places of public culture, especially locations connected to power, identity, and community have received critical attention in anthropology… when these reproductions concern the making and establishment of national, regional and cultural identities…it behooves us to explore and understand the social processes and conditions that transform private visions into public places." (p. 61). This study viewed the site school as a place of public cultural production while at the same time being made up of the private visions of individuals who are positioned within schools to have the power and input to contribute to creating the environment. These processes and conditions impact teachers' reporting of the story of the school via their experiences in these places. As Gulson (2005) states, we can "envision schools as multiple and contradictory sites with porous borders." (p. 142). The life that is lived within these porous boarders contributes to the reproduction and formation of the school's culture and identity over time by creating spaces where the purposes of schooling are communicated to and by teachers. Lefebvre (1991) notes, "space is not only produced by social relations it is a producer of social relations." (in Gulson, 2005, p. 142). In this way, in schools, teachers create relationships that enable

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certain types of work to take place. For example working within teams created not only a collaborative space for the teachers in this study to complete tasks, but also a space of support. This in turn contributed to the positive culture that teachers reported having experienced.

Massey (1994) makes a strong argument for seeing the interconnectedness of space and the basic principles of our societal systems. This type of relationship is apparent in the formation, regulation, and perpetuation of our public educational system. Because schools create spaces characterized by unequal power outcomes, educators must consciously avoid privileging certain groups over others. Unfortunately, privileging certain groups continues via mechanisms of standardization and behavioral control. Boundaries that regulate behavior, such as school attendance, operate to create spaces where "success" can be easily measured and communicated to students and teachers. This is one example of power structures at play within schools to ensure particular types of activity. Massey (1994) points out:

> It is that the mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people. Differential mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak. The time-space compression of some groups can undermine the power of others. (p. 150).

The concept of mobility in the context of schooling is key as it speaks to the ways in which power dynamics can and do shift within schools as student and teacher populations change over time. The nature of the change is also an important consideration. For example, an influx of transfer students from outside a school's neighborhood may cause the school to enact policies that will help it to maintain its

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reputation and assimilate the new students to its culture.

In addition to the physical space of schools and the interactions that take place within them, this project also considers the symbolic space that is created within the school. Space is carved out with in each school day for certain types of interactions to take place and for the dissemination of sanctioned knowledge. The space of educational policy and its enactment are of particular interest in figuring out the ways in which a school develops its culture and how that culture allows for responses to implementation of educational reform policy.

Social Reproduction, the "Hidden Curriculum," and the Power/Knowledge Relation

Social Reproduction in Schooling

Notions of the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968; Apple, 1975) and systemic social class reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990/1977) are foundational starting points for thinking critically about the function of schools. Apple (2004/1975) details his version of the term "hidden curriculum" as the workings within the educational structure that reproduce social class by promoting and valuing "normalized" behavior. His work exposes the inequalities in educational settings and names invisible systems of oppression that have become accepted practice in classrooms and schools. Examples of these systems at work could include: discipline systems overly concerned with behavioral control via punishment rather than creating relevant learning experiences and curricular materials geared toward remediation and test preparation rather than fostering the development of the adolescent brain by providing experiential learning opportunities.

Apple's (1975) work naming a "hidden curriculum" that operates in virtual silence for "cultural preservation and distribution" in order to maintain social control by dominant groups remains an important consideration in the study of schooling. It is important to consider how schools with teachers as vehicles of communication set out to meet these social goals using everyday practices and procedures. Apple (1982) pushes the idea of regulation and reproduction further by directly linking them to the economic system. He describes the school system's "hidden curriculum" in terms of its impact on ensuring that traits valued in the workforce are embedded in students ways of understanding and decision making:

> Broadly, correspondence theories imply that there are specific characteristics, behavioral traits, and dispositions that an economy requires of its workers. These economic needs are so powerful as to 'determine' what goes on in other sectors of a society, particularly the school. Thus, if we look at our educational institutions we should expect to find that the tacit things that are taught to students roughly mirror the personality and dispositional trails that these students will 'require' later on when they join the labor market" (Apple, 1982 p.67).

These are concrete examples of the ways in which schools support the class system in the United States while at the same time creating orderly environments within schools so that the business of schooling can be accomplished.

In creating microcosms that mirror larger public life (Jackson, 1968), schools also create cultural environments where students learn to accept the ideas of productivity and obedience as traits of socially acceptable people. In his seminal work, *Life in Classsrooms* Jackson's (1968) use of close observation and reporting of the seemingly mundane aspects of the school day draws attention to the covert training that happens along side the pedagogical activity aimed at disseminating content knowledge. Further he

asserts that those conducting education research would be wise to broaden the scope of their investigations beyond learning theory to include the intricate web of relationships that develop between teachers and students as the business of schools is carried out. Additionally, he points to the ways in which the school environment carries out this agenda via the safety of routine.

Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990/1977) ideas of education as social reproduction are similar to Apple's in that they also point to links between school structures and class structures:

> To grant the educational system the absolute independence which it claims or, on the contrary, to see in it only the reflection of a state of the economic system or the direct expression of the value system of society as a whole,' is to refuse to see that its relative autonomy enables it to serve external demands under the guise of independence and neutrality, ie to conceal the social functions it performs and so to perform them more effectively." (p. 178)

As Bourdieu and Passeron (1990/1977) point out, the school system claims to be about teaching students basic core academic concepts but it has taken on the function of teaching citizenship and responsibility as defined by societal norms. In this way it becomes a mechanism for the reproduction of the social class system though often these goals are concealed and are rarely in the forefront of conversation about schooling and educational reform.

Their work differs from Apple's in that they describe varieties of "capital" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990/1977) that students arrive at school with and that help them to navigate the educational setting. They discuss students' *linguistic* capital, as the ability to communicate using sanctioned school language, which is of utmost importance in

determining success in school as well as the ability to maintain their social class status. They also describe a *cultural* capital that plays out in support of social reproduction. Bourdieu (1977) posits that a privileged social location enables actors to draw upon their cultural experiences in order to retain power and maintain social class position. In his critique of the education system he asserts that schools actually help to foster these positions by determining success and advancement based upon the dominant cultural norms and seeking to do away with the cultural norms of groups marked as lower class. Additionally, he points out the ways in which actors within institutional settings often make careful decisions about the cultural resources they should draw upon in particular circumstances. This indicates an understanding of social life as complex and fluid where actors are capable of making choices but where privileged classes have at their disposal an array of choices.

Lareau (2003) draws upon Bourdieu's theory in her empirical study that demonstrates "the existence of a cultural logic of child rearing that tends to differ according to a families' social class position" (p. 8) while also showing the ways in which this "cultural logic" influences the child's success in school. Lareau investigates the daily, lived experiences of elementary school students and their parents from a variety of socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. Her work draws attention to the ways in which school personnel value middle class knowledge over that of working class parents by reinforcing and seeking out middle class parental involvement. Additionally, she describes the connections between middle class students' extracurricular activities and their ability to interact successfully with adults and maintain schedules that mirror their

parents' schedules. Lareau's work makes a strong case for understanding the power dynamics at play not only between teachers and students but among students as well. Her study clearly indicates that teachers, supported by the structures of schools, work toward assimilating students to the dominant school culture as opposed to making space for an understanding and fostering of students' home cultures.

Nearly a decade before Lareau's exploration, Ladson-Billings (1997) wrote, "Culturally relevant teaching is about questioning (and preparing students to question) the structural inequality, the racism, and the injustice that exist in society" (p. 128). This draws attention to the particularly important concept that all knowledge presented in schools is socially constructed within a hegemonic structure. Critical perspectives regarding the educational system and/or schooling in the United States name institutional mechanisms working to support societal reproduction and foster inequity in school experiences. The persistent nature of systemic racism, in particular, has been exposed in education by researchers who point to specific examples where oppressive practices are carried out both individually and via policy (Nieto, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1997; Delpit, 1988; Ferguson, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999). The work of these scholars is particularly important in this historical moment because since the Civil Rights movement acts of racism and classism have become disguised and hidden making it more difficult to battle inequality in schools. Ferguson's (2001) empirical work highlights "how institutional norms and procedures in the field of education are used to maintain a racial order, and how images and racial myths frame how we see ourselves and others in a racial hierarchy" (p. 19). Her study detailed examples of the ways in which black masculinity

was constructed in an elementary school via identity markers imposed upon the students by the adults in the school. Her study is of particular relevance because she was able to tease out the racist implications of taken-for-granted school practices such as punitive punishment that fostered exclusion of black students from the "normal" classroom environment (Ferguson, 2001). These practices reveal themselves as racialized upon close examination and also draw attention to the need to bring into focus the ways in which they persist and are accepted in daily school life.

As contemporary scholars point out, the persistence of both racist and elitist structures are not limited to those involving discipline and behavioral systems. They are also present in the curriculum and the environments of schools and are communicated via the sanctioned language of dominant power structures. Akom (2008) calls for researchers to move away from the propensity of erasing race from discussions of cultural capital and other forces of social reproduction. He writes:

> Narratives that forecast spectacular mobility for Black people/people of color along with the growth of a Black middle class function as proof that American "works'…However, what is concealed within this 'meritocratic' discourse is that full acceptance into this society is still restricted on the basis of racial identity, skin color, gender, culture, class, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, special needs, and other factors linked to processes of assimilation, incorporation, and the whims of white supremacist, capitalistic patriarchal hetero-normative society. (p. 15)

Here Akom describes the ways in which societal oppression works to keep marginalized groups constrained and denied equal social opportunity. The discourses and ideologies that support this structural racism not only exist in schools as they do in the larger society, but are also reinforced there. The hierarchical and patriarchal systems at play

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within schools are racialized and result in acceptance and implementation of mechanisms of control such as prescriptive curriculum and high stakes standardized tests.

Building from the notion that study of social reproduction and cultural capital cannot exclude considerations of race, class and gender, recent scholarship also examines the violent power dynamics that manifest both overtly via accountability systems (Au, 2011) and covertly via things like the politics of student labeling (De Lissovoy, 2011). Au (2011) points out the ways in which standardized high stakes testing operates as a control mechanism for regulating teachers' practices. This more restrictive environment structures school knowledge to "assimilate to a culturally and religiously conservative agenda" (Au, 2011). The danger of succumbing to such an agenda is at the least a discounting of student and teacher knowledge and at worst results in further state sanctioned symbolic violence. DeLissovoy (2011) furthers the argument by calling education researchers' attention to the ways in which the "violence of the hidden curriculum" plays a role in the formation of the student self and "is always at the same time survived and refused by students." This is a key idea in pushing researchers to consider the ways in which students' and teachers' agency becomes necessary as they navigate the terrain of the school's power structures.

Postmodern Analyses and The Power/Knowledge Relation

Power dynamics are essential to understanding the ways in which curriculum, both official and hidden, function as mechanisms for supporting power structures within schools. Foucault (1977) presents genealogical underpinnings that I use to contextualize

power dynamics at play within enactments of education reform policy via daily interactions within the school. He writes, "The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, heirarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*" (p. 183) (emphasis in original text). Standardized, assimilationist curriculum and accountability systems function as tools implemented toward the end of normalization in schools. These tools are often spoken about in terms of the tests that students must pass in order to advance in school but teachers are held accountable by standardized measures as well. Not only do these measures contribute to a flattening out and squeezing out of experiential learning experiences, they also often serve as records for keeping track of teachers' progress in implementing the mandated curriculum. The idea of surveillance as a mechanism of control also remains relevant in contemporary educational research. As Cary (2006) points out, "the child/student/individual is knowing, but is also acted upon through surveillance and the use of authority as effects of power" (p. 9). Schooling itself can be seen as a system of surveillance used to monitor not only students' behavior, but also teachers' professional performance and "success" rate. Additionally, Foucault (1977) influenced the historical component of my project. His work tracing the origins of "normalizing institutions" creates a more full view of the underlying purposes of institutions and how this work is realized. Foucauldian perspectives provide tools for investigating the historical moments that contribute to the construction of institutions as well as a way to think about societal structures, namely schools in this project.

Usher and Edwards (1994) describe the postmodern as an attempt to question the basic constructs of modern institutions (such as a school). Postmodern theory provides spaces to build from critical understandings in order to widen and sharpen questioning of many types of social structures. Applied directly to the institution of schooling, postmodern theory has the potential to create a deeper understanding of the embeddedness of school life. It provides way to think about the possibility of not only naming and disrupting inequitable practices but also of displaying their origins and the mechanisms that perpetuate them so that root change might become possible. Lather (2007) states, "post-structuralism understands structures as historically and reciprocally affected by practice within contingent conditions of time, particularly conceptual practices and how they define disciplinary knowledges." (p. 8). Thus, the study of any given societal structure is not limited to its contemporary existence but needs to include an analysis of the impact that various historical moments have had upon it constructing and maintaining its image. Using historical representation as a frame can lead to the discovery of patterns in power/knowledge production and examples of agency and resistance. They can push researchers to find places to puncture the idea that one true way of knowing exists. Because I am interested in historical perspectives in an educational research context, this line of poststructuralist theory is useful. Application of a genealogical lens regarding educational policy can be helpful in determining significant historical moments in a school's life history.

Postmodern and poststructuralist movement proposes studying societal systems in order to gain a fuller and deeper understanding of how they operate and are sustained.

This journey toward understanding the system of schooling requires critical awareness of deeply-embedded notions of race, class and gender influencing the way in which schooling operates, what is taught there, who attends public school, who works there, and who makes decisions there. Lather (1991) states, "postmodernism, however, raises questions that press our effort toward transformative praxis" (p. 12). This idea reinforces the stance that researchers using postmodern paradigms seek to understand why more radical policy change has not been the result of critical research. Naming and consciousness-raising alone do not seem to have made a dent in the "structures" of education. In order to continue a forward move toward action and change, we need to develop understandings that take into account the present historical moment as well as past historical moments leading to the construction of social institutions. When looking at a school, it is important to keep in mind that it is a modern institution preserving modernist ideals and ways of understanding. While postmodern analysis allows for a questioning and disrupting of societal norms via increased examination of the hegemonic structures that keep them in place, post-structuralist theory seeks to closely examine the structures themselves.

Giroux's (1992) *critical postmodernism* is helpful in thinking about the importance of school culture and the ways in which it is constructed by teachers as well as the importance of teacher voice and identity and how these are wrapped up with the school's culture. He states there is a need for critical educators to "take up culture as a vital source for developing a politics of identity, community and pedagogy" (p. 24). In centering culture this way researchers can also see the ways in which culture shifts rather

than remains static. This is of particular interest in school settings as the culture and identity of schools can and does change based upon forces outside the school. He goes on to state, "in this perspective, culture is not viewed as monolithic and unchanging, but as a shifting sphere of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages and experiences and voices intermingle amid diverse relations of power and privilege" (p. 24). Extending critical arguments to see schools in this light also emphasizes the importance of recognizing the delicate and intricate nature of school culture while at the same time acknowledging the durability of the messages transmitted within schools.

Memory and Nostalgia

Notions of memory and nostalgia play an informative part in both the formation of figured worlds and the power of narratives to hold social structures together. Both the private, narrative memory of individuals and public, collective memory of societal groups are necessary to construct the remembered story of the school in the form of its life history. Memory is at once an active remembering and forgetting of past events based upon one's socio-historical reality. Because my study places an emphasis on the school's cultural identity, I will draw upon Assman's (1995) notion of collective memory. Collective memory interacts with lived experiences to bring about a cultural identity. This collective identity enables the creation of new narratives that reinforce cultural identity. According to Assmann (1995) collective memory stresses characteristics that are used to provide a nexus between memory (the contemporized past), culture, and the

group (society). Creating a unified identity, this nexus constructs narratives through changing social and political situations, and through cultural connection to a system of values. John R. Gill (1994) and Assmann (1995) postulate that collective memory defines a group's cultural identity, which can either unify or divide. Assmannn (1995) notes that cultural memory becomes "defined through a kind of identificatory determination" that unifies a cultural group through positive ("we are this") or negative ("that's our opposite") associations with that group.

Halbawchs (1985), speaking from a more historical perspective suggests that there are as many memories as there are groups, and that memory by nature is multiple yet specific, collective and united yet individual. This is an important notion in considering the ways in which collective memory is constructed. Nora (1989) extends this idea by pointing out an oppositional relationship between history and memory:

> Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer...a representation of the past (p. 8).

This relationship is relevant in my study because just as I aim to report the life history of the school, I acknowledge that the memories reported construct a particular history that is subject to revision depending upon the narrators.

Another tenet of memory work builds from the roots of trauma theory. Trauma theory often emphasizes the important role that narrative plays in preserving the life of a

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memory. The use of memory work stemming from trauma theory is useful to my project in that it provides a basis for capturing subtle nuances within remembered experiences that push beyond the mainly positive stories shared by participants to examine the underside where power dynamics were often at play. Caruth (1995) says, "to listen to the crisis of trauma…is not only to listen for the event, but to hear in the testimony the survivor's departure from it…in other words, is *how to listen to departure"* (p. 10). The idea of listening to departure suggests the potential for learning about historical moments by paying attention to unspoken communication and seemingly insignificant moments. Within these moments the researcher discovers the importance of all of the social, political and cultural aspects at play, thereby providing a deeper and more complex context for the event.

Bal (1999) furthers the discussion of memory work by distinguishing between habitual, narrative and traumatic recall. Habitual recall refers to involuntary response to stimuli that has been previously learned (such as avoiding a hot stove). Narrative recall refers to memories that are recalled as events or circumstance from one's past (such as remembering one's wedding day). Traumatic recall refers to memories that are not usually summoned voluntarily but rather come up suddenly for the person remembering an event of impressive impact (such as the memory a soldier has of being on the battle field). Bal (1999) pushes past the idea that trauma is the only producer of "narratable" memory (viii). This opens the field of memory work to interdisciplinary study by moving it beyond the realm of trauma theory. Working from Bal's premise of the "narratable"

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memory, narrative accounts can be used as a tool for collecting school stories that represent lived and remembered experiences that contribute to the remembered construction of school and teacher identity. Often these representations are nostalgic in nature. Schooling of the past is often remembered as somehow superior to schooling in the present. Additionally, representations of the teacher of the past are often presented in a romanticized way.

Leo Spitzer (1999) states, "nostalgic memory also plays a significant role in the reconstruction and continuity of individual and collective identity" (p. 92). Spitzer elaborates, "nostalgic memory—employed to connect the present to a particular version of the past—certainly did serve the thousands of Central European refugees in Bolivia as a creative tool of adjustment, helping to ease their cultural uprootedness and sense of alienation" (p. 92). This points to the use of nostalgia to help maintain a cohesive idea of one's culture. Schools can be seen as occasions for this nostalgia as they provide a sense of understanding of an imagined historical moment, such as the romanticized 1950s in the United States. Jameson (1984, 2003) uses the nostalgic film genre to exemplify the construction and spread of the nostalgic view of the 1950s in the United States, just as Otto (2005) used the school film genre to find examples of nostalgic, romanticized views of schooling. Jameson describes nostalgia as an artificial memory that is repeated to the extent that it becomes a part the collective memory. This project draws upon this idea to present the ways in which this historic middle school keeps hold of its nostalgic past to produce its unique culture and identity. Further it helps to expose the role that integral

actors play in passing and adding to that culture and identity by both buying into the nostalgic past and by contributing new experiences to the story.

Kidron (2004) states, "culture ferments to produce narratives, practices and ultimately carriers of memory to both sustain and revitalize historical grand narratives and the cultural scenarios they embed." (p. 513). In the case of the compulsory schooling system in the United States, students and teachers continually enact and produce narratives that construct the story of school and render a collective memory of school. These narratives can be cast in positive and negative light, which often results in conflicting memories of school experiences. While teachers are the specialized carries of the meta-narrative in the contemporary moment, all members of society are potential carriers of remembered school stories. These stories cause school experiences to move beyond the individual to the collective memory. Britzman's (2003) notions of "education as a mass experience" and the "educational experience as an authoritative order of compliance or noncompliance" (p. 1) reaffirm the normalizing and controlling characteristics of schooling. "Education as a mass experience" evokes both questions about the compulsory nature of schooling and the collective memory produced via participation. Notions of compliance and noncompliance are focal points of school discourse with regards to both teachers and students. This binary reinforces the success/failure apparatus that props up the accountability system.

Senses of Democracy and Citizenship

An additional prevalent discourse, concerning the purpose of schooling, remains educating students to become active members of our citizenry (Parker, 2003; Dalton, 2004) who are able to understand the functions of government, carry out civic duty and/or become engaged members of their communities. On the surface these goals seem reasonable and even desirable however, citizenship education often falls short of allowing for true democratic processes and understandings to develop (Parker, 2003). Over time, notions of good citizenship continue to be used to reinforce and endorse a set of historical knowledge founded on white supremacy and to communicate ideals and virtues based upon the norms of the dominant culture. Exploring the ways in which citizenship education's messages and methods have changed and not changed over time informs an understanding of the durability of societal ideals that continue to be communicated in schools.

An appropriate starting place is with Dewey's (1938/1997) notion of the necessity for social control in carrying out the business of progressive education. He writes, "…no one would deny that the ordinary good citizen is as a matter of fact subject to a great deal of social control…" (p. 55). While Dewey does not argue that this social control should not limit personal freedom, he acknowledges the need for orderliness if the endeavor of schooling is to be carried out. This notion helps in understanding the underlying principle of citizenship education as helping students to understand the concept of operating for the good of the whole rather than the individual in certain social situations such as schools.

While social control may be a necessity of schooling there are moments when it can work to counter messages of citizenship education that would promote democratic involvement. Since the early days of education schools have been used as sites that contribute to producing the next generation of citizens and communicating democratic ideals (Tyack, 1974; Dewey, 1938/1997). Apple (2004) points out that current school practices often eliminate teaching students to engage with the conflict that naturally occurs in democratic deliberation. This idea becomes apparent when teachers begin to speak of citizenship education as interchangeable with character education. Additionally, students are often positioned to think in terms of their responsibilities as "good" students and/or representatives of the school. In this way, it becomes less important for students to understand how powerful civic engagement can be and more important that they understand and accept conforming to school norms which often mirror the norms of the dominant culture.

These purposes of schooling have been studied and described in a variety of ways including a focus on the absence of aspects of cultural citizenship that seek to open spaces for broader understandings of citizenship (Rosaldo, 1997; Miller, 2002). Juxtaposing these two notions of citizenship illustrates the complexities facing schools as they continue to impart notions of citizenship to students. Amid changing definitions of citizenship and civic involvement, Parker (2003) warns that reducing notions of citizenship and democracy lead to a number of "adverse consequences" (p. 29). These consequences include both "a tenacious bias for assimilation" and "an impoverished notion of citizenship" (p. 29). Assimilation in this context refers to the valuing of very

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specific types of behavior along with a diminishing of and even pathologizing of other types of behavior. For example this study will illustrate the ways in which certain characteristics are repeated and reinforced while others are completely erased thus communicating to students what is normal and acceptable and what is not.

As the year 2000 and a new millennium drew near, Putman (1998) put forth ideas regarding the disengagement of young citizens, citing a decrease in voting participation as evidence of a decline in civic participation by young people. Further he asserted that this trend demanded attention in order to sustain an informed citizenry who take part in political life. By the mid-2000s Dalton (2004) was pointing out that a decrease in voting did not necessarily indicate a decline in civic participation. He suggested, rather, that younger generations sought different types of engagement such as community service. Young people participating in the study felt that these forms of engagement are more meaningful, evidencing that they exert agency in defining the civic activity they value and the civic identities they will construct. Interestingly, schools seem to impart knowledge and skills defining voting as a key responsibility as well as encouraging community engagement. This communicates to students that both activities are important to the construction of the good citizen.

The work of Youniss, McLellan and Yates (1997) serves as a valuable building block in understanding civic identity as a political act in which students potentially learn to use their own agency for working toward the common good. Their work explores civic and political participation among adults who had been involved in extracurricular activities in schools. They found that students who were engaged in such activities had a

tendency to be more involved in political and civic organizations as adults. The inclusion of extracurricular spaces as sites for communicating citizenship education evidences the pervasiveness of this goal of schooling. Given ideas regarding the goal of schools to create a certain type of citizen, it is important to identify a working definition of citizenship and ideals of citizenship engagement that appear to be the focal point when addressing citizenship education.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) discuss in detail three "visions" of citizenship that were identified by teachers in their study of citizenship education curriculum. While the main focus of their study was to explore the outcomes of citizenship education curriculum aimed to promote participatory and social justice oriented citizens, they also describe in detail the notion of the "personally responsible citizen" based upon participating teachers' definitions and understanding of citizens. A personally responsible citizen is one who "acts responsibly in their community, works and pays taxes, obeys the law… as well as [has] good character…[is] honest, responsible and [a] law-abiding [member] of the community" (p. 240). They describe the participatory citizen as one who "organizes community efforts…knows how government agencies work, knows strategies for accomplishing collective tasks" as well as one who "actively participates and takes leadership positions within established systems and community structures" (p. 240).

These notions of citizenship are particularly relevant here because they describe ideas about citizenship echoed by the participants in this study as well as the communication about citizenship found in the yearbooks and school newspapers from the early years of the school's existence. As will be discussed later in the dissertation, the

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yearbooks communicated messages of citizenship to readers by illustrating the ways in which the construct of the dutiful citizen was valued as a way of ascribing the identity "school citizen" onto the students. Interestingly, the notion of "participatory" citizen is also represented in the form of a predominant representation of students involved in service organizations such as the student council and human relations clubs.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the scholarly building blocks for my dissertation project. I have presented a framework that draws upon a variety of fields in the hopes of illustrating the ways in which the project of schooling reaches out from itself to touch almost all facets of society. The empirical literature included in this chapter situates my study among work concerned with understanding the significance of the middle school concept, understanding schools as cultural communities and examining trends in citizenship education. Building from theoretical perspectives investigating figured worlds, "hidden curriculum," and social reproduction as well as using critical postmodern perspectives allows me to examine the total of school culture as it develops and solidifies its identity. Looking at a school from a historical vantage point also provides researchers with the opportunity to look at the subtlety of change over time as well as to notice openings where additional and perhaps more radical change is necessary. Nostalgic memory provides a key understanding of how the story of school is shared across time and space in very particular ways creating an identity not only for the school but also for the actors within it. My goal, starting from this literature, is to

contribute to the body of research that pushes for sharing an understanding of the

complexities that are lived out in one of our most taken-for-granted public spaces.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

> I would further suggest that the common and ordinary aspects of our lives, to which classrooms certainly belong, are precisely the parts that call most urgently for renewed vision. What this means insofar as educational investigations are concerned is that the practice of 'just looking around' and trying to make sense of what one sees in classrooms is fully as legitimate as that of trying to solve one of education's many pressing problems. Or at least it is so as long as the goal of 'just looking' is to achieve a renewed understanding of the taken-for-granted. (Jackson, 1990/1968, p. xviii).

SITUATING THE STUDY

Choosing methods calls for deliberate and careful thought about how the four elements of epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods inform one another (Crotty, 1998). Coming to methodological decisions required that I consider my own biases and my understanding of theoretical frameworks that provided a foundation for articulating my project. My choices reflect methodologies and methods that were best suited to enacting my project. These factors coupled with my desire to disrupt taken-for-granted ways of understanding schools, led me toward blending case study research with oral history and life history methodological perspectives to reveal the multi-layered story of West Middle School.

Research of complex social systems (like schools) can be best articulated by use of a purposeful combination of methods. As Crotty (2003) points out, "In a very real sense, every piece of research is unique and calls for a unique methodology. We, as

researchers, have to develop it" (p. 13). My study combined methods and approaches in order to provide a fuller picture of West Middle School. St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) suggest that we "ask questions that produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently, thereby producing different ways of living in the world" (p. 1). In conceptualizing my study I interpreted this as a call for looking at familiar structures in different ways and then sharing realizations and conclusions that may represent it anew. I sought to create space for exploring socio-historical contexts of West Middle School and allowed for an examination of the power structures that have influenced schooling over time. My approach to the study was guided by my desire to engage with methods that would allow me to work collaboratively with the participants whom I felt could best narrate the story of West Middle School. Leavy (2011) writes, "In recent decades, feminist researchers have highlighted the possibilities of oral history in the social sciences" (p. 2). Use of oral history methods in feminist work allows for the inclusion and interpretation of data that includes voices that are often overlooked and/or marginalized. While my project included voices from the dominant group such as white males, they were positioned in the feminized role of classroom teacher. In this sense all of the participants became part of a group that I thought of in terms of being overlooked.

Attending to underrepresented or overlooked groups is central to my research because I view issues of race, class and gender as socially constructed mechanisms for maintaining systems and institution. My epistemological stance grows from the idea that knowledge is situated within and influenced by social and historical contexts. Operating from an emancipatory paradigm, my study seeks to construct new knowledge based upon

rethinking existing, accepted realities such as those produced in schools and use this knowledge to promote broadened definitions of success, citizenship and achievement. My belief that the lives of teachers and schools are intertwined led me to develop a project that would highlight this relationship in an attempt to show the ways in which school life permeates teachers' lives. My project drew upon my assumption that I would be able to learn details about schools from teachers that I would not be able to learn from other actors.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I crafted research questions that emphasized the participants' perspectives and understandings while at the same time elicited an account of West Middle School's life history. First, I aim to elicit the story of West's identity, image and cultural production over time via teacher narrative. Second, I extend focus beyond the school itself to understand the ways in which participants remembered the affects of outside forces on their daily lives as teachers. Finally, I explore citizenship education as a particular curricular component. My research questions are:

1. How do teachers narrate the life history of a historic middle school and articulate understandings of the school's identity, culture and image over time?

2. How do contemporary educational policy, shifts in demographics, and present teaching practices contribute to the continuing production of the school's institutional identity?

3. In the context of this institutional life history, what are the perspectives of middle school teachers regarding notions of citizenship education and the teaching of democratic values, and how have these changed over time?

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QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Case study research is a valuable and trusted method useful for studying schools and education in general because it provides an opportunity to study lived experiences via collected narratives, artifacts, and direct observation. Additionally, it allows for in-depth exploration of social phenomena such as interpersonal relationships in communities and the institutional structures at work within schools (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2005; Merriam, 2009). I drew upon Yin's (2005) notion of the potential of case study to help researchers understand the complexities of schools. Endorsing case study as a useful method for studying schools, Yin (2005) points out, "The complexity of school systems adds to our difficulties in learning more about public education" (p. xiii). This notion of complexity directly influenced my ideas for using and extending case study methods for my project as I sought to incorporate methods that would get at the nuances of school life in order to more deeply understand West's identity, image and culture. I also drew upon Yin's definitions of characteristics of case study methods in order to select and focus on the ones that seemed to lend themselves to blending with oral history and life history methods.

As Yin (2005) points out characteristics of case study include, "close-up examination of everyday life…extended period of years covered by the case…individual persons within the case study…documents cited as evidence" (p. xix). My study included these characteristics in that the purpose of the study was to use an understanding of lived experiences within the school in order to show the ways in which they

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contributed to the development of the school's culture. My study also possessed an historical aspect that highlighted the progression of the school's identity development over time. Each of the teacher participants could have been viewed as a single case within my case study had I chosen to develop that aspect of my project; instead I privileged their voices as experts on the life of West Middle School. The aforementioned characteristics were not only present in my study but they also helped me to conceptualize the ways in which I could develop a blended methodology bringing aspects of oral history to the forefront. While this may seem an obvious fit, the draw of oral history and life history methodology is the underlying goal of adding to the project of public history and imagining the school (an institution) as an evolving being.

I studied a single school making my project a bounded case study (Adelmen, et al, 1983). Additionally, I ascribed to Stake's (1995) notion that, "a case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case" (p. xi). Building from these two accepted definitions, I situated my project in order to communicate West as a unique site within the larger social contexts of the school district and city where it is located. Conceptualizing West in this way provided a pathway for close examination of the school as a social unit where I could learn about the structures of schooling. I also built upon Stake's emphasis on interpretation as a marker of case study research. He points out that case study researchers enter the field with the goals of closely observing and recording data that will help to craft a representation of the case and revealing what we can learn from it (Stake, 1995). Case study allows space for the researcher to plan and organize the study while also remaining open to changing direction when relevant.

Application of Oral History Methods

According to Leavy (2011) oral history is an interdisciplinary method, most often associated with interview methods used to include ordinary actors in the recording of historical contexts and/or events. Oral history methods are used in a variety of disciplines including history, anthropology and sociology (Leavy, 2011). My study most closely aligns with an anthropological use of oral history because a main goal was to understand the culture of West Middle School from the "perspectives of people enmeshed within" the context of West (Leavy, 2011, p. 5). My study includes oral history interviews that focus on personal experiences, memories of events and participants' attitudes and beliefs while also situating the study within a variety of socio-historical contexts as shown in the archival data I collected.

A key goal for this project was to conduct a study that would work toward use of emancipatory methods (De Lissovoy et al., 2013) meaning that I wanted to engage in a project that provided space where participants were seen as experts. As I worked to develop my methods within the confines of qualitative research, I continued questioning of the university researcher's claim to "privileged producer and arbitrator of systematic knowledge" (De Lissovoy et al., 2013, p. 29) and realized that an oral history stance would provide a space for moving toward more collaboration in crafting the story of West Middle School. Michael Frisch's (1990) work provided a foundational understanding in the development of my methodological stance because of the emphasis he places on shared authorship when interpreting oral history interview transcripts. I

found this prospect intriguing as I began to plan for using the teachers' stories to construct West's story.

Oral history methodology deepened collaboration between researcher and participant as the teachers were prompted to share the experiences they felt were most important rather than adhering to the confines of a set interview protocol. I followed Thompson's (2000/1978) notion of the semi-structured interview in order to allow space for the participant to influence the direction of the narrative. The semi-structured interview also allowed me to follow the direction of the narrative and include variations in the story of West. These variations helped to illustrate the complexities of life at the school. Portelli (1991) emphasizes the ways in which ordinary actors experience events during historical periods recognizing the importance of their social positions when recollecting events. He advocates for carving out space within dominant historical narratives by including oral history narratives that, on the surface, appear to contradict mainstream accounts. He points out, however, that these counter-narratives actually provide evidence of the variations in social life and power structures during varying historical periods. In my study I used this application of oral history as a mechanism for uncovering the collective experiences of certain groups of teachers and to understand the ways in which they positioned themselves within the context of West. This step informed the way I grouped teachers according to their reported memories. As a collection, the teachers' narratives provided the pieces of West's life. Additionally, their narratives enhanced official accounts of West's history documented in the school district archive because most of the teachers' stories were situated in the past. Portelli (1991) also points

to the importance of using memory as a data source. While he makes no claim that memory is objective data, he argues that "memory is not caused by faulty recollections [of historical events] but rather is actively and creatively generated…in order to make sense of crucial events" (p. 26). Thinking about memory as data was useful to my project because it provided a lens for considering the significance of the ways in which teachers constructed West in their memories and relayed that information in the contemporary moment. Recognizing the teachers' stories as recollections added a layer to the shared stories by revealing subtle shifts in their accounts depending upon the socio-historical influences at play and the teachers' perceived position at the time.

Application of Life History Methods

Use of a life history methodological framework provided a starting point for my imagining West. First, I positioned the school as the subject of the life history. While life history is most often conceptualized as the study of certain periods in a person's life and the development of a person within those time periods, my study applied the same idea to the school. As Choi and Goodson (2008) point out, "Life history provides insight into the collective impact of structure, without missing the uniqueness of the interactive dynamics between personal agency and the structural contexts" (p. 15). This idea helped me to imagine using teachers' remembered stories about their lives at West to reveal the ways that collective memory contribute to the crafting of West's life history. I drew upon the accounts of teachers who had experienced West during various socio-historical contexts to show how they made sense of their lives as teachers in this environment. I purposefully

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selected teachers as narrators because teacher identities were intertwined with the school's identity. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) explain, "We live in a world of stories, and though we help shape those stories, we are shaped by them. Our stories, and the shaping of stories of our professional knowledge landscapes, are narratively constructed" (p. 318). I used this premise to position teachers' professional knowledge of West as authoritative in constructing West Middle School's identity and culture.

Hatch and Wisniewski (1995) propose, "life history and narrative offer exciting alternatives for connecting the lives and stories of individuals to the understanding of larger human and social phenomena" (p. 113). This idea shaped my thinking about using the teachers' individual narratives to weave the broader life history narrative of West Middle School. Hollan (2005) explains, "There are things we can learn about people by actively engaging with them, talking to them, and listening to them that we learn in no other way" (p. 465). Hollan's sentiment contributed to my placing an emphasis on the narrator's voice in life history research as a way to develop a deeper understanding of experience. The participants in my study encountered West at various times during its life therefore they were able to share, via their narratives, West's life history. As individual narratives came together to show the ways in which teachers articulated broader cultural patterns at West Middle School (Agar, 1980), I was able to craft a story that revealed the moments in West's life that contributed to its identity and culture.

CONTEXTS OF THE STUDY

My project aimed to extend notions of case study research by sharing the life history of West Middle School. I recast West moving it from an inanimate location to a living place that changes and evolves over time. In order to facilitate the crafting of West's story, I enlisted the help of 11 participants who were willing to share their stories about West. Ten of the participants selected were teachers and one was the school librarian. The teachers were purposefully selected based upon criteria that I set (Merriam, 2009). The main criterion for selection was that the participant worked as a classroom teacher in any content area. I also selected participants who had worked at West during different time periods in an attempt to include voices from as many historical contexts as possible. West teachers' voices were given prominence in telling West's story because they had firsthand knowledge of West's life and they were integral actors in the production of schooling. Inclusion of teachers from both past and contemporary moments helped to show a more detailed picture of West Middle School's life.

The Setting

West Middle School is located in a Central Texas city and in an affluent neighborhood near the center of town. The location of the school within the city is an important component in understanding West because the centrality of the location enables the school to attract transfer students from various other neighborhoods. Not only do students from the east side of town transfer there when their neighborhood schools are

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reported as failing, many university professors' children attend West because of its proximity to the major university located in the city.

Due to the life history nature of my project, one requirement for site selection was that the school be at least fifty years old. When I applied to the school district's external research office for permission to conduct my project, I listed all four of the schools that were at least fifty years old as options for this project. Any of the four schools would be suitable for this study because each had been impacted by a variety of education policy changes, demographic shifts and/or possessed a unique image within the district and city. I was granted access to West because it has maintained a positive reputation over the span of its life. Additionally, during the time of this study, West was the only one of the four options that was not engaged in politically-charged conflicts.

As will be discussed further in chapter four, West serves a diverse student population. When my study ended in the spring of 2012 the total enrollment at West Middle School was 1007 students with a student-to-teacher ratio of 15:4 (Austin Independent School District 2012a). This population included: 47% white; 40% Latino; 10% African-American and 2% Asian students. In this way West is more diverse than many of the schools who claim diversity while at the same time serve a mostly Latino population (Austin Independent School District, 2012a). Over the last several years, West has been impacted by an increase in students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch moving from about 14% in 2000 to about 33% in 2012 (Austin Independent school district, 2012b). School personnel at West were quick to point out that this increase is directly correlated to the increase of transfer students due to NCLB legislation and that

Title I funds sent to the students' home campuses do not transfer to West. For this reason, the PTA was regularly called upon to help make up funding differences. One example of their success is the money raised to buy more teacher credits thereby keeping the student-teacher ratio lower than the district average. According to the Texas Education Agency report card on West (2010), they have also maintained an acceptable rank throughout the 2000s, a period when many of the middle schools in the district fell to unacceptable rankings.

Aspects of West Middle School's physical environment reveal not only its age but also its purposeful preservation. West's main building reflects the 1950s when it was built and the main hallway is adorned with vintage-style, red and white tile. The school's front office, library and cafeteria have been expanded to accommodate a growing student population. Common areas are kept clean, there is an abundance of natural light and the outside spaces are built to promote student learning and socializing. These physical aspects encourage a positive attitude and communicate a sense of school pride. Students demonstrate a sense of ownership and belonging at West by decorating the halls with homemade signs announcing school events and happenings. Teachers and administrators also use common areas to communicate sanctioned school messages such as behavioral expectations. Arriving at West before or after school, one notices that common areas outside the main entrance are well used as students gather and socialize. Outdoor learning spaces are also often used at West providing both opportunities for authentic leaning experiences and to work outside of classrooms on occasion. These aspects of West create the impression of community via shared space and some freedom of movement.

Once this site was approved, I made an appointment to meet the principal and ask for permission to conduct research at West. The principal was very excited by the prospect of this life history project and expressed his willingness to assist in any way he could. Ms. George, the principal's secretary, gave me a tour. This was my first glimpse at West's history. She pointed out the various spaces that make up West Middle School and shared with me the parts of the building that were original and those that had been added during various time periods. My visit ended with a referral to speak to Mr. Franklin, the sixth-grade counselor, who had worked at West since 1970 and was viewed by many as the keeper of West's oral history. Mr. Franklin became my first participant.

The Participants

The study included eleven participants who in a variety of content areas across different time periods. Because Mr. Franklin worked at West from 1970 until 2011, he became a key participant. During one of our initial meetings he provided the names and contact information for potential participants who had worked at West during different decades. While the contacts met my criteria for working at West during past decades, many were administrators. Since I had already made the decision that West's story should be told from the teachers' perspectives, I ruled many of them out. I then turned to a second source for potential participants, the yearbook archive. As I began to study the archive, I recognized former teachers whom I had known from my time working in the district. I began to contact them and ask if they would participate in my project and if they new any other teachers who would be willing to as well. As my list of potential

participants grew, I realized I had to set a limit and settled on 10 for the sake of time management in transcribing and analyzing interviews. My eleventh participant was not a teacher but the school librarian. I made the decision to include her among the interview participants because she worked very closely with the teachers at West and I had worked with her over the school year that I visited the yearbook archive

Because there are eleven participants I have created a table to organize demographic data including the timeframe when they worked at West, race, gender, and subjects taught. I also included any extracurricular activities they sponsored. As will be discussed in chapter six, extracurricular activities played a key role in citizenship education at West.

TABLE 1: Participants

Teacher	Race/Gender	Years at West	Subject(s)/Grade Level(s) Assignments
J. Bristol	White Male	1965-1978	7th grade Texas History 8th grade United States History 9th grade United States History one section 8th grade math for one year
D. Franklin	White Male	1970-2011	7th, 8th grade Science 6th, 7th, 8th grade Counselor
Y. Ruiz	Latina	1975-1986	8th grade Language Arts
J. Nathan	White Female	1978-1986	7th, 8th grade Language Arts Latin Club Sponsor Yearbook Sponsor Human Relations Club Sponsor
D. Smith	White Female	1982-1992	7th, 8th grade Industrial Arts
J. Ramses	Latino	1984-1993	8th grade United States History National Junior Honor Society Sponsor PALS Teacher Student Council Sponsor National History Day Sponsor
J. Ruler	White Female	1986-1993	7th, 8th grade Language Arts Yearbook Sponsor
G. Wilson	White Female	1987-1993	6th grade Science
S. Stanley	White Female	2003-present	School Librarian
H. Eastern	White Female	2006-present	8th grade Spanish RODEO Coordinator Spanish Club Sponsor
J. Dumont	White Male	2008-present	6th grade World Cultures 7th grade Texas History 8th grade United States History RODEO Coordinator

As I worked with them, I categorized the participants into three groups as I worked with them in order to facilitate understanding the historical moments that they shared as important to the construction of West's identity, image and culture. The first group of teachers included Mr. Bristol, Mr. Franklin, Ms. Ruiz and Ms. Nathan. These teachers represented the earliest time period discussed in my study. They all worked at West Middle School during the first iteration of busing and the district's earliest attempts to include diversity training for teachers. Additionally, all of these teachers worked at West when it was a junior high school thus offering a glimpse of West's early identity and culture.

The next group included Ms. Smith, Mr. Ramses, Ms. Ruler, and Ms. Wilson. This group of teachers worked at West as it transitioned from junior high to middle school. All but Ms. Wilson worked at the school before it became a middle school. Ms. Wilson could offer a unique perspective in this group because she came to West as a sixth-grade teacher. This group of teachers also worked at West during a second major influx of transfer students. The students who transferred to West during this time frame did so under the district's majority-to-minority transfer option and due to the closing of the sixth grade centers. This group was unique in that they all remained members of a West happy hour held every Friday even though none of them has worked at West in over 20 years. I engaged in conversations with them more frequently than other participants because they invited me to happy hour on several occasions.

The last group included Ms. Stanley, Ms. Eastern and Mr. Dumont. All of these participants began working at West during the early 2000s and currently work at the

school. Their perspectives reflect West in the contemporary moment. I chose Mr. Dumont and Ms. Eastern as participants because they were co-sponsors of the RODEO advisory program. I hoped that this position would provide a unique perspective regarding citizenship education at West. Ms. Stanley, the school librarian, was selected for participation because I worked closely with her as I studied the yearbook archive and she was knowledgeable regarding a variety of activities taking place at West in the contemporary moment.

DATA COLLECTION

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) write that data collection "ranges from the interview to direct observation, the analysis of artifacts, documents, and cultural records, and the use of visual materials or personal experience" (p. 23). My study included a variety of data sources that I pieced together to construct the life story of West Middle School. My main two data sources were semi-structured interviews emphasizing the experiences of the participants within historical contexts (Thompson, 2000/1975) and the extensive yearbook archive housed in the school's library. I treated the yearbook archive as a document-based source in order to closely examine the themes communicated within the yearbook (Merriam, 2009/1998). My secondary data sources included school district records and journalistic data such as newspaper articles.

Interviews

Prior to conducting the interviews, I asked each participant to fill out a questionnaire soliciting background information such as the length of time they had worked at West and which subjects they taught. Additionally, I asked them to list any educational policy they could remember impacting their teaching during their time at West (see Appendix A). After receiving the completed questionnaire via email, I scheduled a formal interview with each participant. In the case of group two, I attended a happy hour meeting with them before scheduling the interviews. During this meeting, they brought several photos for me to look at and shared stories about their time at West. After this meeting, I slightly modified the interview protocol I used for interviews.

The teacher interviews were semi-structured in nature meaning that while I used the same interview protocol to begin each interview, there were times during interviews when I would pursue information that was not included in the protocol but was relevant to West Middle School's history, identity, image and/or culture. I designed the interview protocol to include three categories based upon my research questions (see Appendix B). These broad categories included questions about how teachers defined the identity and culture of West Middle School, the experiences they remembered as important during their time at West and how they defined citizenship education. The interviews usually lasted between one to two hours. Most participants were interviewed individually with the exception of Mr. Dumont and Ms. Eastern who were interviewed together. Each person participated in one formal interview. The interviews took place in a variety of settings including participants' homes, my home, school district offices and West Middle

School. I audio recorded and transcribed all interviews. In addition to the formal interviews I had several follow-up conversations with Mr. Franklin, Ms. Stanley, Mr. Ramses, Ms. Ruler, Ms. Smith and Ms. Wilson. I usually jotted down notes during or after these conversations if the content was related to the topics covered in interviews. I did not record the follow-up conversations.

Site Visits and the Yearbooks

Initially my visits to West were to focus on observing the day-to-day operations within the school in order to provide a descriptive picture of West in the contemporary moment. During one of my first visits to West, I met the school librarian and described my project. She shared the school's yearbook collection with me. I could hardly believe that the school library housed a nearly complete set of yearbooks dating back to the opening of the school. Once I discovered this data source most of my visits were spent in the library recording images from the yearbooks, taking notes and looking for themes within them. While the majority of time allotted for field visits was dedicated to working with the yearbooks, I also recorded images of the posters, signs and artifacts displayed in the common areas in order to document the current environment at West. Additionally, I visited several lunch periods at West to observe the interactions between teachers and students as well as attended beginning-of-the-school-year faculty meetings in order to understand the ways in which the teachers prepared the environment for the students. My final visits took place during the last week of the 2011-12 school year with the purpose of observing the closing of the school for summer break.

The yearbook archive proved a valuable resource for answering my research question addressing citizenship education at West. The student-to-student communication about the traits of good citizens and the expectations for acceptance at West Middle School prompted my thinking about how these notions are communicated in ordinary yet unexpected spaces. The yearbooks also provided data regarding student organizations, West's reaction to trends in popular culture and the construction of West's reputation over time. The yearbook archive I used included a total of forty-eight books. They spanned the years from 1954 when the school opened to 2008. Missing editions included 1955, 1974, 1986, 1994, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2010 and 2011. My first focus when using the books was the images of students in the class pictures section. I looked through hundreds of student yearbook photos in order to gain a sense of the student population over time. I then turned my attention to focus on the teachers' photo section mainly to aid identification of potential participants. As I continued to work with the archive, my focus settled on the sections of the yearbook that depicted student life, student generated text and extracurricular clubs other than athletics. Two sets of yearbooks provided what I termed bonus material. First the yearbooks spanning the 1953-54 to 1959-60 school years included West's student newspaper. The newspaper provided more in-depth student-generated text about school events, expectations and a small amount of news about the high school and city. Second, the yearbooks spanning the 1990-91 to 1992-93 school years included judges' feedback from the state-sanctioned yearbook competition. These comments provided insight into yearbook production and decision-making.

School District Archives

District archival data served a dual purpose in this oral history research. They both chronicled events as they happened and documented the larger social contexts that impacted this particular school and the participants' teaching lives. Three main forms of archival data were used; school board meeting minutes spanning from 1949 to 2010; school district boundary maps from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s; and public announcements in a variety of formats. Using these archival data enabled me to understand outside influences that impacted West Middle School and contributed to West's cultural identity.

1. School Board Meeting Minutes. The school board meeting minutes are housed in the school district's central office. I "mined" the archive for data addressing a variety of West's historical contexts (Merriam, 2009/1998). Because I framed the study as a life history, my search of the archive began with the first mention of West to the school board. This took me to the 1949 school board meeting regarding the purchase of a plot of land that would later become the site for West Junior High School. I visited the school board archive several times over the course of two years looking for reference to historical markers that the teachers mentioned in interviews. The school board meeting minutes were useful for situating West within the school district context by describing issues such as the procedures for opening new schools and the transition from the junior high to the middle school model. Additionally, the minutes situated both the district and

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West within larger social and national movements such as federal desegregation of schools and implementation of No Child Left Behind legislation.

2. *School-District Boundary Maps*. I used school-district boundary maps to understand the diverse student population at West. Looking at the boundary maps provided a glimpse at the changing population in the city as well as the neighborhoods contained in West's opening boundary zone. Maps from the desegregation era depicted the areas of the city impacted by the district's busing policy. The maps revealed the larger than usual elementary feeder pattern indicating West's on-going reputation as a desirable school for transfer. Additionally, they showed the creation of a neighboring school district and shifts in attendance zones over time due to construction of new schools as the city's population grew.

3. *Public Announcements and Newspaper Articles*. I included district website communications and mailings in this category. The information gathered from the district website, mailings and newspaper articles were used to situate West within the larger district and city contexts. The school district website data were mainly used to gather current demographic information about West, information regarding current programs offered at West and West's current accomplishments. Newspaper articles most frequently provided a socio-historical backdrop for situating the stories teachers shared about historical moments.

DATA INTERPRETATION AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

I approached data analysis and interpretation with the goal of understanding the ways in which West's identity, image and culture were shaped by a variety of historical events and social contexts. This allowed a disruption of accepted understandings of a taken-for-granted institution by opening a path to finding alternative ways of representing it. Additionally, my analysis used a genealogical approach to situating the school within relevant historical moments to mark instances of change in school culture and/or identity. Data interpretation for this study focused mainly on close analysis of the yearbook archive and the narratives shared by the teacher participants. Other data sources such as notes from site visits and conversations as well as other archival data were mainly used to supplement the story that grew from the two main data sources. As I began the process of interpreting documents and teachers' stories, I realized that my own perceptions and understandings would play a role in the story I crafted. I knew that because I had attended public school and worked in public schools, I carried my own biases with me into the interpretive process. I decided to draw upon the idea that the researcher should use her implicit knowledge to garner a deeper understanding of the data gathered and the story represented (Delgado-Bernal, 1998). A second key feature of my data interpretation process considered not only the words and images reflected in interviews and the yearbooks, but also the memories cast by these words and images.

Behar (1993) wrote about taking the stories of her "informant" and "translating [those] conversations into a text and becoming [herself], a certain kind of storyteller" (p. 14). Beginning the transcription process, I drew upon the idea of becoming a storyteller, recounting the stories shared with me. Data collected during interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Once I had transcribed the interviews, I printed them so that I could look at them along side the memos I had collected during the interviews and during visits to the school. Reading and interpreting the accumulated information, I began "searching for underlying patterns, relationships, and meanings" (Wolcott, 2005, p. 5). Upon identification, I started to manipulate the transcripts to form stories that address the themes that were emerging. Eisner's (1992) five dimensions considering the ecology of schools "the *intentional*, the *structural*, the *curricular*, the *pedagogical* and the *evaluative*" (p. 621, emphasis added) became useful for constructing initial categories. The categories I developed reflected Eisner's in that I addressed structural differences between the junior high and middle school versions of West, curricular and pedagogical aspects of the teachers' stories, and various forms of the evaluative components that contributed to the school's reputation such as its ranking with the Texas Education Agency.

During interpretation of the interviews, I was mindful of such life history issues such as language and narrative structure, memory, representation, and shared authority. Etter-Lewis (1991) points out that when working with life history narratives researchers must be mindful of the social position that the participant occupies as well as forms of expression that may differ from the researcher.

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These points remained at the forefront as I listened repeatedly to audio recordings of the interviews in order to determine the ways in which each story fit together to craft West's life history. Frisch's (1990) notion of a "shared authority" when authoring the stories of participants prompted my careful and purposeful selection of the quotes I included in chapters five and six to convey each participants' version of historical moments and daily life at West. Tonkin (1992) calls for memory to be included in our attempts to understand how people constitute themselves as social beings. Building from this premise I framed many of the interview questions in terms of eliciting the teachers' remembered experiences. I then coded their reported experiences to identify them as individual or collective with areas of overlap identified to illustrate the reciprocal relationship between teacher and school.

Because both collective and individual memories were crucial to the project, I situated the data obtained from the yearbook archive as a collective representation of West Middle School over time. The information gleaned from the yearbooks provided a story that purposefully conveyed particular moments in West's life. I used archival data as a secondary source that provided context for the participants' narratives as well as confirming data (Thompson, 2000/1978). While visiting the West library, I recorded several images of the yearbooks and took notes and memos as I examined the books. My process for coding the yearbook data began with noting the structure of the yearbooks, for example the sections that each contained, and organizing photographs from each year book in the same digital folder. This round of coding served as an organizational tool initially. I looked at each book and set of images several times and for a variety of

purposes. For example, on one visit I focused on the types of extracurricular activities and clubs offered in order to understand how popular culture played out at West. On another visit I poured over the students' class photos in order to visually understand the diversity in the student population. These activities led to my second coding phase. Once I had identified and named the themes I would be working with, I created a poster-sized wall chart. I posted color-coded index cards containing excerpts from the yearbook texts that provided evidence of each theme. Additionally, I purposefully looked for overlaps between the categories I developed for the yearbook data and those developed for the teacher interview data.

I used multiple data sources in a variety of ways as a method of triangulation to establish trustworthiness of the findings (Mertens, 1998). While each data source was extensive enough to have been used to provide a historical account of West Middle School, I found that using them together made the case for establishing cultural patterns at West. The interviews, yearbooks, site visits and district archives each included unique aspects of West's story. For example the school board meeting minutes provided an outsider's view of West while the teachers' stories gave an insider's perspective. When used together, I could identify the similarities that combined to craft the story of West.

Gailey (1998) posits research as never politically neutral and objectivity as impossible since we are cultural beings. Nevertheless, she makes clear that bias can be avoided or at least reduced to the extent that researchers make explicit their assumptions and beliefs. She highlights, "Cross-checking for bias, for feminist anthropologists, lies in reflexivity, in critically examining the links that we make or do not make between our

assumptions, how our research is designed and conducted, and the conclusions we draw"
(p. 206). For this reason, I also incorporated the strategy of member checks with one
group of West teachers. I was able to share my understandings of their stories during the
happy hour meetings I attended with the second group of West teachers (Borland, 1991;
Mertens, 1998). Engaging in member checks increased the credibility of the story I was
crafting because I was able to ask for clarification about teachers' accounts of the school.
This strategy also provided a collaborative moment in the sharing of West's life history.
While I only engaged in structured member checks with one of the teacher subgroups, I
provided electronic versions of the transcripts to each participant and ended each
interview session by asking clarifying questions.

POSITIONALITY

My own identity as a Latina, Tejana researcher as well as my connection to
teaching and learning in public school environments informed my interpretation of the
data I collected and the story that I set forth in this dissertation. As hooks (1994) states,
"Identity politics emerges out of the struggles of oppressed or exploited groups to have a
standpoint on which to critique dominant structures, a position that gives purpose and
meaning to struggle" (p. 88). While my skin color often sheltered me from many
oppressive moments that could have been, my group membership has exposed me to
injustices faced by many students and teachers in public education settings. During high
school, I was overlooked and nearly pushed out. As a public school teacher my
professional knowledge was often discounted and/or dismissed. These experiences

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contributed to my conceptualizing this project as liberatory in an attempt to privilege

ordinary actors and gain a deeper understanding of the hidden structures of schooling.

As I embarked upon the project of capturing teacher voices, I paid attention to

Gailey's (1998) caution:

> The researcher might consider that because there is a 'match' with informants in one or two dimensions there is privileged access or understanding. But other dimensions could be more important to the subjects of research, possibly alienating them from the researcher who is unable or unwilling to recognize these other dimensions. (p. 215)

Her words reminded me that I could not identify with my participants simply because I

had been a public school teacher. Rather I had to be mindful of crafting interview

questions that not only honored their stories as teachers but also drew out information

relevant to the project. Holland et al (1998) touch upon this premise in connection to

identity production by stating, "People tell others who they are, but even more important,

they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are" (p. 3).

This idea not only remained with me as I analyzed interview data but also as I fashioned

myself as researcher. I stayed mindful that I was not entering West Middle School simply

as a fellow educator but as a researcher with an agenda in mind.

Britzman (2003) writes, "It is rather ordinary to feel unsure of what to do in a

place called school." This sentiment resonated with me as I considered the multiple roles

I have occupied and continue to occupy in public schools. As public high school student I

often felt lost in the crowd. Each of my professional assignments in K-12 settings proved

to complicate my teaching identity. As a first-year teacher my professional knowledge

was often challenged because I was ill-prepared to articulate my position. I had not yet

developed a sense of teaching as a political act though I was continually inspired to advocate for students. Over the next several years I gained experience and developed a radical teacher identity by simultaneously working within and against settings where structural racism and oppressive practices were still solidly in place. These experiences influenced my research processes in that I purposefully chose methods that would help to highlight teacher voice in presenting the complicated story of schooling.

Now, in my role as a novice researcher, I am embarking upon educational research aimed at broadening accepted practices in educational research. As I do so I carry my experiences with me. This causes me to consistently remain present during interviews with teachers in order to ensure that I honor their stories as opposed to overshadowing them with my own biases and understandings. I similarly pay particular attention to the nuances within data sources in order to gain a fuller understanding of the subject studied. I do not claim that it is possible to set aside my beliefs and sensibilities; instead I work toward a shared authoring of stories that help to reveal complex social issues embedded within schools.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL SITUATION OF WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

> *"West Junior High School is beautifully situated on a tree studded site containing 15.7 acres. It is named for one of Texas' most famous literary personalities who is best known for his masterful short story technique.*
> *The building contains 34 classrooms, a cafeteria-auditorium, a gymnasium, and administrative offices. It was constructed at a cost of $893,256. The exterior design, while attractive, was purposefully kept simple and without excessive ornamentation. The major design effort was spent on the interior to make it, first, as functional an educational plant as possible, and second to provide facilities easily adaptable to community use."*
> *~Board of Education Dedication of West J.H.*
> *(1953)*

The middle school life history presented in this project represents the unique story of West Middle School by bringing into view the unique identity markers at play in this school. In doing so, I aim to begin to understand the ways in which schools become living entities where unique experiences are created for teachers as well as by teachers. Additionally, it is clear that even though the school seemingly operates in a unique space it is also contextualized by major historical events like desegregation and/or changes to academic programming. The culture of the school district and city in which a school is situated as well as changes to educational policy (particularly those claiming to address education reform measures) are also important factors. In other words, while schools potentially develop unique identities, just as individual people do, those identities are

continually shaped by the narratives surrounding them, as are people's identities (Hatch, & Wisniewski, 1995).

This chapter provides a brief historical context for the data presented and discussed in the following chapters of the dissertation. This is not a claim to represent the comprehensive history of the school, educational policy or school district-trustee decision-making practices. Rather, deliberate choices have been made about what to include based mainly upon the stories that the teachers shared during their interviews. The teachers' conceptualization of the school will be analyzed in detail in the next chapter but because they consistently addressed similar perceptions, this chapter aims to describe the local, state and national historical contexts in which the school was situated. This chapter draws upon information available via the public record, such as newspapers, school board minutes and district websites as well as the school district archive. The main purpose in sharing this information here is to orient the reader regarding the school's grade-level structure, population, and shifts in educational policy that impacted the school.

STRUCTURAL CONTEXT

This section contains information regarding two structural elements of the school. When West opened in 1954 it reflected the junior high school configuration, popular during time period. The school housed seventh, eighth and ninth-grade students. A significant shift in West's identity happened during the early 1970s when West ninth graders moved to the senior high school. A second shift in identity took place during the

1980s when West switched to the middle school model, serving sixth, seventh and eighth- grade students. This structural change resulted in a shift in student population to include different races, social classes and ages than before as well a shift in teaching staff to include sixth-grade teachers. The following two sections represent an image of West before and after implementation of the middle school model in order to contextualize the images created by teachers in the next chapter.

School Opening

The life story of West Middle School was unique from the very beginning. It was one the few schools during the 1950s to be constructed for the purpose of housing a junior high school. According to Tye (1985) most junior high school buildings during the 1950s were old high schools. During the 1960s, the physical space of middle schools began to become a focal point for education researchers, many of whom felt that if the needs of this unique age group were to be met, the buildings housing them should not simply be old, worn-out high school buildings (Gores, 1963; Murphy, 1965; Fogg & Diamond, 1973).

According to the district's school board minutes from May 1949, planning for the new West Junior High School began in 1949 with a public notice of land for sale. Despite property ownership disputes during 1950 and 1951, the school district slowly acquired the 15 acres that would become the school grounds. With the land secure, the district began taking bids for the construction of the building as well as interior design and

implementation of the then new technology of fluorescent lighting. Once the bids were accepted and contracts negotiated, construction began.

According to the school district boundary maps drawn for the 1953-54 school year, West was assigned students from two additional demographic areas that are noteworthy here because of the significant role the district boundaries have contributed to the school's image as having notable diversity. The first attendance zone of note was located farther west than the city limits and was known during that period of time as Westland. The students who attended West and lived in this area mainly came from families with significantly less financial means than did the students who lived in the neighborhood immediately surrounding the school. According to Mr. Bartlett who worked at West during the 1960s, when West first opened and for about the first 20 years of its operation Westland was still considered a rural area and lacked the population to warrant a separate school district. As people from the city migrated toward this area to buy larger plots of land, some of it lakefront, the population grew. By the 1980s students from this area no longer attended West or any district school (School Board meeting minutes, 1980). As the school district began to succumb to federal mandates regarding integration, parents in the former Westland neighborhood moved to form their own school district (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011). This newly formed district drew students from both the areas west of West Middle School near the lake and areas farther southwest.

According to district boundary maps from the 1950s, the Village neighborhood children attended West. The Village was one of five sections of property given to freed

slaves at the turn of the 19th century. Originally the five Black settlements were dispersed throughout the city. When the city developed the 1928 Plan, these original settlements were rescinded and most Black families were coerced into moving to a concentrated neighborhood located to the east of East Boulevard (*Handbook of Texas History Online*, retrieved May 2011). This would later become the Interstate 35, a barrier that would promote/foster segregation in this city for the next 80 years. Despite the city's best efforts to contain the Black population, a few families retained their homesteads in the Village. Because their children were slated to attend West in 1959, the school has historically boasted being integrated long before the federal desegregation and busing mandates trickled down to the Austin school district in the early 1970s (school district boundary map 1957-1958 school year).

Shift to Middle School

Amid the national focus on desegregation of public schools and toward creating more equitable educational experiences, educators also began to pay attention to the quality of schooling for students in various age groups. Beginning as early as the 1940s educational reformers began to formulate plans for the ideal type of learning environment for early adolescents (Tye, 1985). Historically the grade structure had been an eight-four model, meaning that grades one through eight were housed together and grades nine through twelve were housed together (Tye, 1985). As student enrollment numbers grew and more research about the adolescent came to light, many districts and education specialists formulated plans for a major change in grade configuration for early

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adolescent students. While there were varying models the most popular and the one that would become the norm for junior high implementation was the six-three-three model. In a six-three-three configuration, school buildings housed grades one through six in elementary schools, grades seven through nine in junior high schools and grades nine through twelve in high schools.

During the 1960s identification of the adolescent age group drew researchers to think of these students' potentially unique needs. One aspect of the proposed middle school model remained the grade configuration. Advocates for the middle school concept proposed that the middle grades be comprised of the sixth, seventh and eighth grades as opposed to seventh, eighth and ninth grades because they felt that the sixth grade should serve as a transition grade out of the elementary school. Many school administrators supported moving the ninth grade students from the junior to senior high because it would prove to be more cost effective and the move addressed the concern that high school enrollment numbers were down in many places (Tye, 1985). Texas was one of the first states in the nation to begin this transition in the 1970s when it moved many ninth grade classes in public schools up to the senior high school (Tye, 1985; School Board meeting minutes, January, 1972).

West was not an exception. In 1972 the school district trustees elected to address decreased student enrollment at Austin High School by moving the ninth grades from West and Marin Junior High Schools to Austin High School. During the same year, the school board assigned a special committee, the Committee on Secondary Education, to study the "feasibility of the middle school model" (School Board meeting minutes, June

1972). In 1973 the district opened eight sixth-grade centers as a part of their desegregation plan. This is significant to West's development because the students at these centers would later comprise the school's sixth grade when the sixth-grade centers were closed a few years later in 1980. The new sixth, seventh, eighth grade model became known as the middle school.

Teacher interviews indicated the importance of this milestone in the school's history. Interviews will be discussed in detail in the following chapter but it is important to note here that the addition of sixth grade once again changed the demographics of the student population. More than that, the teachers remembered the transition as the first of many changes mandated by the district that called for a retraining of the teaching staff and resulted in additions to the physical space of the school building. The district approved portable building structures to be purchased from the military and moved to the West campus to house the sixth-grade students on the newly formed middle school campus (School Board meeting minutes June, 1979). The participants interviewed who worked at the school during this period of transition shared stories about training sessions that focused on re-conceptualizing the student population by thinking of the needs of early adolescent students. During the interviews the teachers who formerly considered themselves junior high school teachers spoke of their concerns about the school shifting to the identity of middle school rather than junior high while the incoming sixth-grade teachers spoke about the anxiety they felt knowing that the teachers working in the school considered them to be elementary teachers. Both sets of teachers, though, reported that support from the administration was key to making the transition successful.

This section situates the school within the historical moments associated with the education policy issues reported by teachers as most relevant. As the teachers wove the narrative of West Middle School, they talked about a variety of ways in which education policy impacted their professional lives as well as the culture of the school. They spoke about three main points as particularly relevant to them: 1. Desegregation and busing, 2. Accountability systems, and 3. *No Child Left Behind*.

Desegregation

It seems appropriate to situate the life story of West Middle School as parallel to the desegregation issue and its impact on the school district. As the 1954 Brown vs. the Board of Education Supreme Court decision proclaimed an end to "separate but equal" practices in public schools, Wes was opening its doors in a central Texas city. Despite the fact that the local NAACP filed a court petition that asked the school district to take immediate action to desegregate the district's schools that same year, two decades passed before the board of trustees and district lawyers made minimal moves toward compliance with desegregation orders from the federal government. In his district report compiled in March of 2008, Larry Cuban chronicled this long and drawn-out fight between the school district and federal courts. According to Cuban (2008), as well as school board accounts of lawyers' presentations to the board (School Board meeting minutes, 1957, 1960, 1977, 1985), the school district remained unsettled on the desegregation issue from 1954 to

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1986. The district did not necessarily hold fast to segregated schools. Rather, they did the minimum required in each court ruling and continually appealed the decisions of the courts. During this time period the school district followed a neighborhood boundary line configuration. Given the segregation of city neighborhoods that followed implementation of the 1928 Plan (*Handbook of Texas History Online*, retrieved May 2011), it followed that most schools would be "naturally" segregated meaning that school population reflected the neighborhood's demographic population based upon racial and social class markers. At this time, the district had one junior high school and one senior high school designated to serve Black students. Both schools were located on the east side of town. Black students attended these schools no matter which area of town they lived in. Beginning with the 1955 school year, the district board of trustees elected to allow Black senior high school students to transfer to the senior high school nearest their homes but did not approve this choice to junior high nor elementary school students. Due to *de jure* segregation practices in Texas, Latino/a students could be considered white but this did not mean that they were free to choose which schools they attended (Rangel & Alcala, 1972). According to district boundary maps, Latino/a students seemed to be mainly segregated into neighborhoods in the southeast parts of town and attended schools in those neighborhoods. Interestingly, images and surnames present in West's yearbooks from the 1950s and 1960s show a Latino/a population at West.

An examination of the district boundary maps from the period of 1954 when the school opened until the early 1990s when the district was released from its obligations to report on desegregation measures, shows that West had a larger feeder pattern than any

other junior high/middle school in the district. The maps indicate the "neighborhood" schools configuration in that the students assigned to West were from neighborhoods in close proximity to the school. Over time, shifts in demographics caused by changing attendance boundaries began to show the path toward desegregation in the district.

The first attempt by the district to show a move toward desegregation was to offer a transfer option to Black students. The schools open to transfer students are indicated on boundary maps with the label "for Negro transfer only." Between the years of 1958 and 1963 the district extended the option for Black junior high school and elementary school students to attend schools nearer to their homes. However, few students' parents opted for transferring their children to white schools due to fear of unrest and the lack of Black teachers in many of these schools (*Austin American Statesman*, May 1994). Because both the senior high school and the junior high school serving the eastside had become identifiable educational institutions, many Black citizens did not think they would find a supportive, educative, welcoming environment in other schools. One of the exceptions to this was in the Village neighborhood. The few remaining families in this neighborhood did opt to send their children to West in 1960. This was recognized by the current school librarian as a formative event in establishing school's image of diversity because it became the first junior high school in the district to claim that it was integrated. It is important to bear in mind that in 1959 the Texas Education Agency defined an integrated school as one that has "integrated one child into one grade" (cited in Cuban, 2008) According to this definition, West met the criterion for integration.

A consistent fight against integration measures that would last nearly 40 years marked the years following federal desegregation orders in the school district. District officials justified the fight by claiming that integration would not only cost the district money, but it would also upset community members who were opposed to busing (*Austin American Statesman*, May 1994). Citing examples like the West case as grounds for halting further integration movements had a two-fold effect. On the one hand it afforded the district the time it needed to continue engaging in lengthy court proceedings to stall integration efforts (School Board meeting minutes, 1957, 1960, 1977, 1985). At the same time, according to the school librarian, West could claim integration and diverse student population based upon the one Black student and few Latino/a students enrolled at West in the fall of 1960.

Throughout the 1960s the school district continued to submit integration plans that were rejected by the federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare (referred to as HEW in district school board minutes). In 1968 the HEW found that the district was out of compliance with the 1964 Civil Rights Act by determining that not only had they failed to comply with federal desegregation law as it pertained to Black students but also discriminated against Mexican-American students (School Board meeting minutes January, 1969). In the years prior to this ruling the courts rejected all of the districts plans for desegregation stating that they did not result in an integration of the districts schools (*Austin American Statesman*, May 1994). The predominant position of the district at this time was "freedom of choice" for the Black students who lived on the east side of town. The measures however did not offer any assistance for transporting students to "new"

schools, had they chosen them, and funding was not transferred to the school receiving

bused students (*Austin American Statesman*, May 1994). Simultaneously, the school-

district trustees claimed the district did not segregate schools for Mexican-American

students because they were classified as white on district paperwork (School Board

meeting minutes, January 1969). Lastly, the court also found that the district did not

provide for a two-way exchange in desegregating schools because white students did not

enroll in large numbers at the junior and senior high school on the eastside of town

(*Austin American Statesman*, May 1994).

With the 1970 school year, school district attendance maps began to show the

implementation of this latest federally-mandated integration policy by noting that

"Negro" students in the district had a "free choice" of any junior high school in the

district. West was named the first junior high school to be specifically designated as a

school choice for students from the eastside (School district boundary maps for 1970-71).

But the more significant court order came the following year when a U.S district judge

ordered that both the senior high school and junior high school on the eastside be closed

and the students dispersed to the other schools in the district (School Board meeting

minutes, January 1972). This ruling marked the district's first round of mandatory busing

of students, a significant change not only in racial diversity but also diversity in

socioeconomic status because of the increase in the number of students from the eastside

attending West (Interview with J. Bristol July, 2011).

School district lawyers also suggested to the school board that they not build any

new schools because, since many of the city's neighborhoods remained segregated,

boundary lines based upon neighborhood attendance would result in additional segregated schools. (School Board meeting minutes January, 1972). As a further attempt toward compliance with desegregation orders, the district built eight buildings to house sixth-grade centers. Despite the opening of the centers in 1974, the US 5th Circuit Court ordered that the school district develop a more thorough desegregation plan (School Board meeting minutes, May 1977). While the sixth-grade centers remained open for several years they ultimately closed when the district trustees decided to implement the middle school model. This had a direct impact on West as described earlier in this chapter.

The 1980s marked the release of the school district from the federal-court-ordered desegregation plans (School Board meeting minutes, May 1985). In 1980 the district's second round of busing was implemented with the revision that city-wide busing would replace the prior busing practice of an East-to-West feeder pattern. Now equal numbers of white and minority students would be bused between schools on the east and west sides of the city. This new system lasted for seven years. In 1987 the school district trustees officially returned to the neighborhood schools model by instating the Neighborhoods Schools Plan that ended busing. Although the district no longer provides transportation for students seeking transfers, the district minority-to-majority school-transfer option remains on the books today, so that a student wishing to transfer from a school with a larger percentage of minority students to a majority-white school could still do so (District transfer policy retrieved from the school district website, May, 2011). In an attempt to prepare teachers for these demographic changes, the district formed

diversity committees to provide professional development (School Board meeting

minutes, May 1972).

The formation of the committees coincided with the arrival of students from the

eastside schools that had been closed by court order. The committees were charged with

providing "tolerance training" for staff members assigned to the receiving campuses

(Interview with J. Bristol July, 2011). Teachers who worked at West at this time received

such training in preparation for the change in student population and participant

interviews indicated that the topics largely assumed that teachers at the school had

limited exposure to working with students of different racial backgrounds from

themselves. Typically the workshops took place in the few days prior to the school year

beginning and included filmstrips and discussion groups (Interview with J. Bristol, July

2011). Training related to implementation of the desegregation plan is only one example

of policy affecting teachers' daily lives. The early 1970s also marked the beginning of

increased emphasis on performance goals for teachers, professional development and

accountability, all the result of recommendations by outside consultants. (School Board

meeting minutes, 1972).

Accountability Systems

The transition from the junior high to middle school model is one indication of the

ways in which education research impacted district decision-making. A second major

impact came in the form of an increased emphasis on teacher accountability to the public.

According to school board meeting minutes from 1971 and 1972, beginning in the 1970s

the school district entered into a series of "professional consultation agreements" with the goal of examining teacher efficiency and teaching practices. Prior to this time district school board minutes indicated that special committees were made up of teachers and administrators from local campuses. The early 1970s marked a shift in district policy to rely on outside consultants' findings to shape district policy. One of the first recorded district-wide policy implementations was the formation of a "Human Relations Committee" on every secondary campus. The goal of the Human Relation Committees was stated as "seeking to understand the quality of interactions which occur in the school setting." (School Board meeting minutes, June 1974).

The 1980s brought even more stringent performance measures for teachers as a national controversy arose regarding the testing requirements for teachers. The Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers (TECAT) became one of the first measures of teacher competency via standardized test to be imposed upon teachers who had already been licensed and in many cases had been teaching for several years. The testing requirements were met with resistance from teachers who argued that the tests were biased and did not present a true measure of teachers' abilities to work with students. The TECAT proved to be a significant marker in the formation of family identity in the school and will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

In Texas, the 1990s marked a decade with an increasing emphasis on standardized test scores as tell-all data regarding student achievement. Every few years throughout the 1990s a new test would replace the old one. The stated rationale for these changes was the desire to keep assessment aligned with curricular revisions that took place during the

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same time. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed a more rigorous curriculum,

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), but early assessments were not

aligned with the new state standards (Cuban, 2008). Increased emphasis on testing and

test scores had a variety of effects on schools around the state. Throughout this time

period, West maintained its status as a TEA recognized school thus avoiding many of the

district-mandated improvement plans that other middle schools claiming diverse

populations were forced to implement. Some of these plans included pulling students out

of elective classes to attend extra academic tutoring classes in low performance areas.

West's status as a recognized school also helped to maintain its popularity as destination

for transfer students. In turn the school maintained its positive reputation and image in

the community.

Another important facet of the school's image today remains the school's ability

to maintain the Texas Education Agency (TEA) ranking of Recognized. While the TEA

ranking system was not in place during the early years of the school's existence, the

school did consistently enjoy the reputation of having high student achievement and a

strong academic program. A strong reputation in the community benefitted this school in

that parental involvement and investment in the school became the norm and continues in

the contemporary moment. Teachers emphasized parental involvement as key to ensuring

that the school had the human and financial resources it needed. This support became

even more important as school choice transfer student numbers increased as a result of

the No Child Left Behind legislation.

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No Child Left Behind

The beginning of a new decade brought the most sweeping change in U.S. educational policy at the federal level seen in decades. The accountability movement that had swept across Texas became federal law with the enactment of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education act commonly referred to as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. In addition to the symbolic emphasis placed on test scores at the state level, NCLB imposed the "high stakes" component of testing, a more narrow definition for the term "highly qualified teacher" and freedom for principals to use Title I funds freely for purchasing test preparation materials and paying for testing tutorials both during and outside the school day (No Child Left Behind Executive Summary, 2000).

All three points had implications for West Middle School. Students whose home schools did not meet testing achievement criteria according the state ranking and/or did not employ "highly qualified teachers" (those with at least three years teaching experience) were allowed a transfer option. According to Mr. Franklin, one of the school's counselors, many students transferred to West under this new option. However, even though they may have been a school eligible for Title I funding, West was not and therefore would not receive the additional funds. Several teachers spoke about the implications that these factors had for maintaining the school's image in the community.

CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Visiting West Middle School today one can see the established culture and reputation enacted. The student population represents many areas of the city, races, and social classes. Teachers, administrators and parents work toward the common goal of ensuring that the students are provided with an education that will result in increased opportunity. This is evidenced by the solidly acceptable TEA ranking that the school maintains, the sign in the hall informing visitors that West is a "middle school to watch" and an overall positive environment. West's mission statement reads:

> *West's mission is to provide students with a safe, nurturing learning environment that celebrates cultural diversity, while promoting mutual respect, life-long learning and civic responsibility.*
> (Retrieved from West Middle School website May 2012)

The mission statement reveals that the characteristics that West has developed over time amid policy and demographic shifts remain steadfast. West retains a favorable reputation within the district and city. Additionally, West has come to embrace the diversity that is the result of drawing students in from outside its own neighborhood.

Local and state educational policy decisions continue to impact West and to use its established culture and reputation to solve issues as they arise. At the time of this study West's student population was 1080 students, its largest population to date. As mentioned in chapter three the population still demonstrates diversity in racial/ethnic and socioeconomic representation. It still has the largest elementary school feeder pattern of any middle school in the district drawing students from a variety of areas of the city (District Boundary maps, 2010). Additionally, West sends students to every high school

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in the city (School District website, data retrieved May 2012). This final point is noteworthy because it demonstrates West's continuing positive reputation in not only the immediate neighborhood surrounding West but in the city as well. Over time West has built and maintained the reputation of the best middle school in town.

Due to the high demand for transfers to West, based upon its legacy of success, the district has placed a freeze on transfers to the school (School Board meeting minutes, December 2010). The national trend toward lottery system drawings for giving away slots in higher performing schools has reached West as well. Students wishing to transfer to West from other, lower performing schools must now enter a lottery draw (School Board meeting minutes, December 2011). As the district continues to miss the mark in restructuring low performing middle schools on the east side of town, West becomes even more desirable. In recent years, the school district has proposed a variety of plans for improving middle schools on the east side of the city including converting schools to single-sex campuses, increasing emphasis on test preparation and implementing charter school management in existing low performing schools (School Board meeting minutes, December 2011). Because West maintains an acceptable rating, it is not impacted by these discussions. It has, however, been impacted by the funding cuts imposed during the 2010 Legislative Session.

Chapter five contains an in-depth discussion of West Middle School as exceptional based upon teacher interview data but it is important to note here the ways in which parental response to legislative budget cuts sets the stage for the teachers' discussion of exceptional parental involvement. While West's student population has

swelled to over 1000 students, the student-to-teacher ratio remains much lower than most of the middle schools in the city (West Middle School PTA website, retrieved May 2012). This relatively low ratio is due to the PTA's "Save Our Teachers" initiative. The project materials read, "In summary, excellence is typically more expensive than mediocrity. If we want exemplary teachers, top notch programs, and smaller class sizes, we will have to pay for them." The PTA hopes to raise $100,000 in order to keep class sizes small and maintain programs like technology. According to the PTA website they were able to meet this goal the previous school year. This scenario demonstrates the way in which the West community bands together to solve a problem imposed by the state by showing the resources available to West. Amid budget cuts, the West PTA was also able to raise funds for improving the teachers' break/work room, thus further demonstrating the value they place on teachers (*Austin American Statesman*, May 2010). A final example of West's resiliency during the budget cuts is the implementation of a Turkish program at West. Many West students go on to attend City High School where the Academy for Global Studies is located. This affiliation made it possible for parents to secure funding to implement this after-school enrichment program (*Austin American Statesman*, July 2011). This relationship with City High school highlights West's resiliency because it shows that while most district middle school's after-school programming consists of test preparation and academic remediation, West is able to support the type of programming the school community values.

As House Bill 3 calls for an intensified accountability system in Texas, concerns regarding an increased emphasis on testing, charter school take-overs and additional

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scrutiny of teaches mounts. However, West seems able to escape the consequences of this increased surveillance by maintaining its positive image and reputation. Participation in the *National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grade Reform's Schools to Watch Initiative* is one way that West is able to solidify its reputation as a good school. While Texas continues to focus on end-of-course exam reform for high school and on paving the way for charter school management takeovers in middle schools (Texas Initiative for Education Reform website, retrieved April 2012), the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grade Reform maintains an emphasis on the goals originally laid out for the middle school concept. Their vision statement calls for preparing students for "college, career and citizenship" by "responding the developmental needs of early adolescent students" (The National Forum website, retrieved April 2012). By participating in this organization, West is able to continue to produce an image of mainstream success, care and exceptionalism.

CONCLUSION

Amid myriad forces, West Middle School's identity, image and culture developed and continue to develop as a high-performing and diverse middle school. Historically significant moments provide the context for understanding and situated the teachers' lived experiences reported in the following chapter. Additionally, life at West in the contemporary moment is also a key factor for understanding West's evolving image. Archival and journalistic sources along with the accounts from school personnel provide information about educational trends at the local, state and national level. The

information contained in this chapter situates the teacher stories and yearbook archival

data discussed in later chapters within a purposeful historical framework. There are many

more facets and instances of education policy at play at any given moment than are

included here. My choices are based upon the teacher narratives and yearbook content

gathered for data analysis, giving me a way of situating these stories.

Chapter Five: Teachers Narrate West Middle School's Cultural Identity and Public Image

INTRODUCTION

West Middle School is situated in an affluent neighborhood in a medium-sized Central Texas city. The school grounds are well kept with a large, inviting shady lawn in the front and ample sports fields in the back. The building itself is modest compared to some newer schools' architecture, and its design reflects the 1950s, when it was built. There are no visible signs of deterioration or age on the building's exterior. Upon arrival, visitors enter the front office, clearly remodeled within the past decade. The cafeteria, classrooms, and hallways also show signs of upgrade, yet the décor somehow seems nostalgic. The trophy case in the main hallway displays current awards won by the school as well as older awards that demonstrate the past successes. At the end of the main hallway that leads to the classrooms, a large banner proclaims the school to be a "High Performing Model Middle School" and a "2012 School to Watch" (this designation was given by the Texas Middle School Association and the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform). The banner is one of many non-verbal communicative devices that remind teachers and students that they live their daily lives in a unique place; a place where particular notions of achievement and success are valued, a place were tradition is upheld and a place were people come together to form a culture that ensures that common ideals are embodied and enacted.

The physical environment is an important factor when considering the identity and culture of a place because it provides the backdrop for the activity that generates identity and culture. Over time, this school's main features have remained largely the same: a large main entrance making for easy movement, inviting lawn space where students can gather to socialize, red and white tile representing the school colors, various sculptures and graphics depicting the school mascot, ample windows allowing natural light to flow inside, a cafetorium used for gathering for meals and meetings, and large classrooms providing comfortable learning spaces. All of this communicates, upon arrival, that this school maintains a reputation and image that has endured over time.

People inhabit these spaces as well. For up to 12 hours each day, teachers, students, support staff, administrators, parents, and community members occupy the space. These actors carry out integral roles within this space that enable it to function as it does. They help to shape the culture and identity of the school while simultaneously being impacted by forces outside of the school, including educational policy implementation, demographic and attendance boundary shifts, and administrative changes, to mention a few.

The narrators of the story are teachers who have worked at the school during various points in the school's history. I have chosen to privilege the voice of the teacher in this project because during this contemporary historical moment their voices are often silenced and left out of conversations about schools. The teachers who participated in this study represent a variety of decades in the school's life including the contemporary moment. While the interview protocol did include questions about their teaching

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practices, the bulk of the interview questions prompted them to recall the ways in which they remembered the school when they were working there and to share memories they felt were important. As often happens in a life history project, many of the stories were cast in a positive light. However, upon close examination and via follow-up conversations, one can see the complexities that play out as a school's culture, identity and image were crafted and maintained over time.

The interviews took place in a variety of settings, including the participants' homes, workspaces and in my own home. In each space the teachers seemed at ease and willing to share their experiences. One interesting point to note is that four of the participating teachers still meet regularly at happy hour each Friday, even though none of them have worked at the school in over twenty years. This point is notable because it is indicative of the ways in which a sense of teacher identity permeates other aspects of one's life. When these teachers were interviewed separately, they often spoke of each other.

As one might guess, the teachers interviewed spoke about the school's administration as key in shaping the culture of the school. However there were much more subtle themes that surfaced as well. The senses of culture, identity and image described by the teachers most often in the interviews included the following themes: understanding the school as a family, the importance of parental and community involvement with the school, developing a sense of belonging among teachers and students during times when new populations arrived at the schools (including the new

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sixth-grade teachers), impacts of major educational policy implementations at the local, state and national levels and changing student demographics and district boundary lines.

This chapter draws upon teacher interview data. As discussed earlier, the teachers represent a variety of content areas and periods of time in the school's history. I have grouped the narratives together so that they best tell the story of each identified theme. The goal of this chapter is to share the ways in which teachers narrate their understandings of school culture via their descriptions of various cultural aspects of the West Middle School. These teacher understandings included: a sense of the school's image and reputation expressed in terms of the school's exceptionality, a familial structure at play within the school and teachers' professional identities expressed in terms of a sense of guardianship for the students.

WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL AS EXCEPTIONAL

For several decades, West Middle School has enjoyed a positive image and reputation, both amongst teachers and in the wider community. Several teachers described West as the top junior high or middle school in the city at the time when they worked there. Additionally, they were sure to point out the ways in which West maintained this reputation of exceptionality despite demographic shifts resulting from district implementation of federal desegregation mandates and federal educational reform mandates and despite changes in school administration. While the teachers shared stories of the challenges that the school faced during these times, they consistently described the accomplishments by students and extraordinary parental involvement

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These markers of exceptionalism contained assumptions about race and class that are noteworthy. Unpacking the nuances of West's reputation sheds light on the ways in which teachers' ideas about race and class, though deeply embedded, surfaced when they constructed the story of West's image. There was an underlying victory narrative at work when they talked about ways in which West was able to maintain its image, despite the addition of transfer and bused students from the east side of town, students who were mainly Black, Latino and/or of lower socioeconomic status than the students from West's immediate neighborhood. They pointed out important dynamics of social class when they cast the more affluent parents in the role of benefactor for bused and transfer students. This premise reinforces the notion that there are tighter linkages between upper-middle class families and schools (Lareau, 2000). Additionally, the teachers expressed attitudes of amazement when they realized the capabilities and strengths of these students. This level of surprise indicated embedded deficit perspectives at play when the teachers first began working with students from outside the neighborhood and contributed to their sense of urgency in making sure that the students were assimilated to the school culture as quickly as possible (Delpit, 1988; Ferguson, 2001).

Mr. Bristol, who worked at the school from 1965 to 1977, spoke about the school's image in the community during those years in very positive terms. During the course of the interview, he described his time at the school as mostly favorable and expressed his gratitude for the experience. He shared his impression of the school's reputation by saying:

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> I don't think there is any real question that West was the preferred junior high in town…And, why was that? Well I can tell you that if a teacher really knew the city well and had the opportunity to be a teacher at West, they would go there because we had good teachers, we had excellent administrative support and we had a PTA that could raise money. I wasn't really involved with the PTA but I can tell you this, if there was a need for something at West that could not be obtained with district funds the parents would see to it that we had it. (Interview with J. Bristol, August, 2011)

While Mr. Bristol stated that stellar teaching and administrative staffs contributed to the school's strong reputation, he emphasized parental involvement as essential for the school's success. Further, he noted that the financial support of the PTA, mainly comprised of parents from the surrounding neighborhood was essential for keeping the school attractive to teachers. His implication here was that the school's good reputation among teachers and community members was linked to the support of affluent parents. This support made maintaining the school's reputable image in the community possible, according to teachers.

There were, however moments in the school's history when there were shifts in the school's reputation. Despite these shifts, the schools reputation remained intact. In the next example, Ms. Williams shared a time in the school's history when she felt its reputation was in decline. She directly implicated the shift in population resulting from the school district's second implementation of busing:

> I think it [West's reputation] changed when they took the neighborhood kids out. It had been respected. Up until that time we had governors' kids, a lot of UT professors' children and all because of its proximity [to downtown and UT]. I think our situation in the community went down when the neighborhood kids left, because those kids tended to come from wealthy families. And when those kids didn't go there anymore, we kinda lost a lot of the support we had had because the parents would donate very generously to different things. And we

were left with parents who didn't have those resources to commit as heavily.
(Interview with G. Wilson, July 2011)

Like Mr. Bristol, Ms. Wilson connected parental financial support to maintaining the

school's reputation because the extra funding they provided made possible enriched

programming that enabled students to excel. She continued on to share her recollections

of decreased parental involvement when the district boundary lines changed:

> The Thousand Oaks kids were bused to West and that was out of their
> neighborhood. That was probably the most affluent elementary school that came
> in and that's not really an affluent neighborhood, they were solidly middle class I
> would say. They were moms for the most part that stayed home they could afford
> to stay home but not really what I would call wealthy. But because it was out of
> their neighborhood too, they weren't as likely to come up and volunteer and
> do those kinds of things like they did when they were from the neighborhood
> elementary school. I think that's kinda true for a lot of parents, you know if the
> parents are not close by they're not going to be as involved.
> (Interview with G. Wilson, July 2011)

Ms. Wilson's description of waning parental involvement is interesting because it is an

example of the ways in which particular types of parental involvement were, and are,

valued at West Middle School. This story demonstrates the expectation for parents to

volunteer at the school in needed roles and financial support programs at the school that

helped to maintain the image of the school in the community.

The extraordinary commitment demonstrated by the parents contributed to the

exceptionality of programming made available to West students and the resources made

available to West teachers. Perhaps more remarkable is the sentiment of loyalty that Ms.

Wilson communicated regarding the West community long after working with them.

While she recounted an instance in the school's life when it's reputation waned, she also

revealed the exceptional nature of the relationships forged amongst teachers and parents.

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The teachers consistently communicated stories about parents making a difference, despite having worked there during different time periods. They maintained the view that the PTA via financial and volunteer support was partially responsible for preserving the school's exceptionality. Mr. Franklin, who worked at the school from 1970 until 2012, shared several stories about the shifts in parental involvement. Not only did he confirm both Mr. Bristol's and Ms. Wilson's recollections, he added to them by sharing stories of current parental involvement. He spoke about the current PTA's efforts to arrange transportation for parents outside of the immediate neighborhood and the return of parents from the surrounding neighborhood. Because he worked at West during both implementations of mandatory busing and the current NCLB transfer option, he has had the unique experience of seeing students who were bused to West return in the role of parent or guardian of a transfer student. He shared:

> Well you know it's always been, and this is not just one ethnicity because I mentioned that we've had these parents were bused here and then they send their kids [here]. Parents who have really wanted the school to work and have talked to them about the school's opportunities and then became involved in it too. I think that's really a help. There's always been a significant core of those people who have helped it stay that way because we still have a significant number of high achieving students to keep that going.
> (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

He went on to talk about the resurgence in involvement by neighborhood parents:

> It's probably better than I've ever seen it--the parental support for people who have chosen to come here--because there are a lot of people who come to West who have options to go somewhere else, they can go to private school or something else, and they want to make it work. And so we have this phenomenal group, PTA group, here, just amazing. They have a huge fundraiser in the fall and they really get behind it they have a lot of different committees.
> (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

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This quote reinforces, once again, not only an appreciation of parental involvement but the view that it is essential for maintaining the school's ability to live up to its exemplary reputation. By mentioning that parents are choosing West, he cast both the affluent parents and the transfer parents as essential players with an investment in creating an image of exceptionalism at the school. The affluent parents were described as wanting their neighborhood school to work in order to solidify their children's social status via a good education. And the transfer parents were described as remembering the opportunity West had afforded them thereby hoping to improve their children's social standing via a good education.

Mr. Franklin went on to share another story that emphasized the parents pulling together for the good of the school without directly providing monetary support:

> The person you've seen volunteering in the office, it's a different person each time. We had a secretary retire and the principal decided that instead of replacing [the position] we'd add part of a teaching unit for that money and we'd get parents. They've got a committee and they keep somebody in there everyday. They do shifts so just a few hours a piece but it's just phenomenal. (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

He offered this story as evidence of the ways in which parental involvement enabled financial resources to be freed up for instructional use, thereby supporting continued academic success within the school. This in turn translated to a positive image in the community because the school has been able to maintain its status as academically high performing. This is an important point because West is not eligible for Title I funding even though many of the students using the NCLB choice transfer come from Title I schools. Several of the teachers currently working at the school pointed out the lack of

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resources available to help these students maintain academic success when they come to West. The above example once again illustrates the ways in which the affluent parents are seen as essential to maintaining the reputation of the success at the school because requests for parental involvement are often made of parents with "elite economic status" (Lareau, 2000, p. 8)

Stories of outstanding parental support were only rivaled by teachers' prevalent accounts of exceptional students. When I first began visiting the school library to work with the yearbook archive (described in detail in the next chapter) the librarian shared several other artifacts with me, including two scrapbooks. One of the scrapbooks was clearly made by a student during her time at West. It included announcements of dances and other events, corsages worn to the dances, school newspaper articles and the like. The other scrapbook was put together in commemoration of West's 50th anniversary. This book revealed the many alumni of West who went on to accomplish success in a variety of fields, as well as many teachers who had devoted decades of service to West. Former students included in the book were successful politicians, published writers, local entrepreneurs, and professional athletes. This scrapbook provided a glimpse at the ways in which a reputation of exceptionality was produced at West. First, the deliberate selection of alumni who accomplished extraordinary goals pointed to the very purposeful choice of exemplars presented to current students as role models and presented to the community as West's products. Secondly, the selection of devoted faculty also portrayed exceptional teachers who were deeply invested in ensuring that West students were at the very least successful in middle school, and at best exceptional citizens like the other

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alumni had become. Lastly, each of the people included in the scrapbook wrote a letter about his/her time at West. The letters all communicated a sense of gratitude for the time they spent at West, as well as messages to current students to recognize the privilege they enjoyed by attending the school. Memorializing these sentiments in letters helps to solidify the theme of exceptionality and creates artifacts that can be used to foster the reputation of the school.

This data prompted me to add a question to the interview protocol, asking teachers to tell a story about their most memorable students. The responses I received included stories about several of the people included in the scrapbook, these responses also included stories of exceptional academic achievement and intelligence, while at the same time revealing the bond that teachers had with particular students. This bond was usually related to the areas that the students excelled in and was strengthened by the fact that the teachers remained in touch with several of these students. This is interesting to note because it demonstrated senses of loyalty, shared achievement and the ways in which schools provide spaces for the intertwining of lives.

Ms. Nathan described the interconnectedness of the school's culture and students' achievement by saying, "I thought the culture at West was that of a very safe school, a very safe feeling, a very nurturing environment, high expectations for all students especially in terms of educational accomplishment and standards" (J. Nathan, April 2011). Others echoed her sentiment when they described stories of student accomplishment in terms of successful teams, the academic effectiveness of students while attending West and the achievements of alumni. The following stories of

exceptional students shared by their teachers illustrated these topics. Like Mr. Franklin,

Ms. Nathan worked at West during the first cycle of busing. As described in chapter four,

she shared the ways in which West dealt with a changing student population during a

socially contentious time period. While she acknowledged that things did not always go

smoothly, she stated that,

> For the most part my kids were very bright no matter where they came from, all three communities. I had very bright kids; I had kids that really were struggling to try to break out of the cycle of poverty and to be the first people to go to college in their families. As I recall we did ok in athletics, basketball was better than football. The kids seemed to have a pretty good sense of priority about what was important and it was amazing they all did their homework and they all completed all their assignments. That was shocking to me. And I think that because the five years I taught in Georgia and the first year I was in Texas--I taught in Gonzalez Texas--were really different. I [had] usually worked with kids of lower, socioeconomic status, so it was interesting to see the other side of the picture and to see it put together at West that way was really kinda cool. (Interview with J. Nathan, April 2011)

Ms. Nathan alluded to the idea that when previously working with students from lower

socioeconomic backgrounds in other areas of the state and country, they did not seem to

demonstrate the same level of achievement as the students, who attended West but were

also from impoverished areas of the city. This is a key point in unpacking the notion of

exceptionality for two reasons. First, the comment revealed an embedded belief that

students of color and/or from lower socioeconomic circumstances are not usually as high

achieving as more affluent, white students, resulting in her expressing the fact that the

bused kids at West were exceptions to this rule. Secondly, the story contributes to the on-

going reproduction of the school's story of exceptionality in that she implies that students

became high achieving in the West Middle School environment, not that they were

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naturally high achievers. Further, this implies her belief that placing these students into

an integrated setting helped them to achieve their academic goals but more importantly

created a space for prioritizing school work and school achievement. Praise of her

students stems solely from a subtractive orientation (Valenzuela, 1999), which values

their demonstrated ability to configure themselves to fit into the West Middle School

culture: she never mentions the strengths and resources they may have brought with them

to school (González & Moll, 2002).

Mr. Franklin expressed a similar sentiment when he spoke about the first year he

spent as a teacher at West:

> At that time West was really considered [very high achieving]. We still have
> high academic achievement but then it was just amazing. At that time the
> counselors did, I was a teacher then, did a group (I can't remember the name of it)
> but some kind of group IQ test with seventh graders. At the time we had grades
> seven, eight and nine: we did not have a sixth grade. I remember that the
> counselor told me that the median IQ on that group test, and it was nothing as
> intensive as the individual assessment that students would receive now, but on
> that group test it showed like 128 median IQ. Then, I did realize it when I got into
> the classroom, that the students were really, really bright. We were also integrated
> you know; we weren't just all-Anglo school.
> (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

In this recollection, Mr. Franklin not only shared his impression of the students'

intellectual abilities, but he also emphasized the fact that West was an integrated school.

This is an important interpretation of events in that it supported the overall feeling at

West that extraordinary students attended the school and that the school personnel valued

students for the academic potential they possessed. Mentioning that the school was

integrated already during this time period shows both Mr. Franklin's and Ms. Nathan's

attitudes that intelligence may have been a natural state for students who came to West,

but nurturing it into academic achievement called for team effort between teachers and

students. Mr. Franklin's comments again emphasized the embedded beliefs he had

regarding exceptionality of the students who were bused to West and amazement at the

idea that they seemed to be different from the way he had imagined they would be.

Prioritizing their development as successful students at West, helped to keep the positive

reputation of the school solidly in place. When I asked if he could talk about a particular

student he taught, Mr. Franklin shared this story:

> One was a student who was only here a year or two. He was down here living with his dad because his dad had gotten custody from the mom from somewhere in the Midwest. And it was a very dysfunctional situation and he had some emotional problems but was just brilliant, brilliant kid. In fact when I picture him, he looks like Bill Gates. It wasn't Bill Gates but the shock of red hair and glasses. But he, I'll never forget, his dad was very brilliant too, I think, but never went to college. But he [the dad] could have been like probably a nuclear engineer or something. He had a van and he was like a carpenter. In the back of his van he had all this equipment and everything, he had like a mobile shop that he went around, you know doing his own jobs. And they lived in a trailer over on eastside; this was an Anglo kid. There was a program we had just started getting involved in called the Duke Talent Identification Search. I think they actually do fifth grade too, but as a seventh grader he was eligible. They have to have done extremely well, (and now they have some equation with the TAKS) but then it was the Iowa Test of Basic Skills they used. If you made it [in] as a seventh grader, if you showed that kind of performance, then you could be eligible to take the SAT or the ACT as a seventh grader and it's the real thing, it's not a watered-down version of it. Well this kid, I can't remember his score, but it was just up there, it wasn't a perfect score but it was close on the real SAT. Well he was invited to Duke University that summer between his seventh and eighth grade year and it was a two or three-week stay, and he took algebra and then passed the test needed to demonstrate that he knew the algebra. In the eighth grade he went over to Austin High for Geometry. Back then we didn't [offer geometry at the junior high level]. But it was just phenomenal, that this guy's score was just so much above anybody else and here he came from this situation that wasn't [that good]. He got in trouble one time and was suspended for like three days and it turned out his dad had taken him with him to his job and made him carry around a wheelbarrow and all this heavy stuff to show him that he wanted him to stay in school. But I always wondered what happened to him, because they moved to

some other town after he left West, and I always wonder whatever happened to that kid. He got suspended, like I said he had some emotional problems. He was in the Industrial Arts class and he had gotten upset over something and hit a girl with a hammer. Luckily it wasn't as nearly as serious as it could have been; it just wound up a bump and a little scratch you know. Maybe it was a glancing blow, but he was immediately suspended. Anyway that was one [student] that just kinda popped into my mind. (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

I have chosen to include this longer story intact because Mr. Franklin makes several interesting points regarding student achievement amid varying socio-cultural dynamics. As the story unfolds, the reader comes to recognize that this teacher is impressed by both the student's "natural" intelligence evidenced by the IQ test, as well as by his ability with school subjects when he masters Algebra before the eighth grade. It is not unusual for teachers to be drawn to students who do well academically, or at the very least exhibit an aptitude for schoolwork. Upon a deeper reading of this account however, it is apparent that the story is made more extraordinary by including certain details of the student's life. Because this student lived with his single father, still not a common phenomenon in the early 1970s, and had emotional problems, his aptitude for math was a pleasant surprise. Due to the fact that he completed a summer program at a prestigious university, the school and district made special allowances for him so that he could continue his math education, a highly valued school subject, during eighth grade instead of taking an additional elective. While the story goes a long way to support the victory narrative of educational opportunity, it also documents a truth. Even after the accomplishments, the teacher and school lost track of this student. He was only mildly punished for the assault of another student because the injury was minor, and perhaps also because he was a math whiz but at the same time fell into the same void that many students lacking social,

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economic and cultural capital fall into. Mr. Franklin was clearly fond of this student. While he did not seem to find it surprising that he had lost track of the boy, he did seem to wish he had not. Given the details of the student's life that Mr. Franklin chose to include, he saw the student's familial situation, lack of monetary resources and emotional state as the factors that made the difference between this boy being one of the alumni recognized in the school's 50th anniversary scrapbook and one that exists in the memory of one teacher.

The stories teachers shared about their exceptional students often included their going above and beyond mere classroom expectations. This commitment to school work outside of the parameters of the school day helped to construct the image of the exceptionalism of West students. Mr. Ramses also shared a story about student academic success. Similar to Mr. Franklin, this story he told about his student exemplified the individual's giftedness in an academic area:

> Lindsey was in my 8th grade social studies class. It was the fall of '92 when the presidential election was taking place and when we were focusing on citizenship aspects and voter rights and responsibility. The bulletin board at that time had all presidential posters and everything for the campaign. It was at that point three parties because Ross Perot was also running. But one day Lindsay didn't come to class and I knew she wasn't gonna be there because it was a day when Bill Clinton and Al Gore were campaigning in town. She had actually gotten her mom to take her so that she could hear what they had to say and so that she could include pictures and materials that she got and passages from what she heard in their speeches in her presidential notebook that we were keeping together [in class]. So that really impressed me. You know, how much of an interest she took in the presidential election and going the extra mile for that. So that was one student who really stood out and I still keep in touch with her. She was a great student and still is. (Interview with J. Ramses, July 2011)

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Mr. Ramses did not provide as much detail about Lindsey's socio-cultural background. But the fact that her mother was not working and able to navigate a presidential candidate's visit was not surprising to Mr. Ramses, thereby indicating that the family must have had the social and cultural capital necessary for such an activity. Like Mr. Franklin, he valued the extra effort she put into her academic work and pointed to this as a trait of school success, identifying her as a "great" student and implying that the additional effort made her a life-long learner by stating she "still is." Further, this student possessed a particular social status that has facilitated her staying in touch with her eighth-grade history teacher. Mr. Ramses reported to have kept in touch with several of his students, as did Mr. Bristol (whose student story will be shared in a later section) because theses alumni live and work in the city in occupations that cross paths with their former teachers. In fact, Mr. Bristol shared that one of his former students is his CPA clearly demonstrating the ways in which social capital remains the possession of upper-class families and can be reproduced within schools (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). These examples how maintaining West's reputation became an important component in solidifying the social capital it is able to provide its students. On the other hand, Mr. Franklin's student's "othered" background made losing track of him seem normal, showing academic achievement at West is not quite enough to acquire gains in social capital. Students who do not assimilate to the culture of West were likely to slip from the larger narrative of the school.

A second area of student achievement that several teachers spoke about was athletics. Mr. Franklin, Mr. Ramses and Ms. Ruler all mentioned current major league

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athletes who attended West and demonstrated promise at the time. One of the more

poignant stories shared by both Mr. Franklin and Ms. Ruler took place during the 1984

school year, when the school underwent yet another demographic shift. This particular

year marked a change in student population as the district closed the sixth-grade centers

and added sixth grade to form middle school campuses. Simultaneously, the district

redrew the district boundary lines, thus leading to a second round of busing of students

from the eastside neighborhoods:

> One real positive thing that happened to the school that year was they won
> the city championship in football. Because typically in southwest Austin they
> had the real strong sports program because the parents are all into it. And then
> you had the population from East Austin; they had their fair share of athletes so it
> just worked out to where the team kinda came together and that fall I can
> remember the West group was real supportive of them. It was good for the school
> it got everybody to rally around something. It kinda happened through that
> particular football season so it was fun. I just want to see (she looks at a
> yearbook) I think there's a picture, there it is. When they won that city
> championship they were so excited! And I can remember how excited the
> principal was for the kids too. (Interview with J. Ruler, July 2011)

> Well one thing that made that year 1984--the first year they had middle school--
> work, with some other kids came in from other places was that we won the city
> championship in football. It took all those different neighborhoods on that team
> and I thought that was the one thing that, it seemed like after that everything
> worked out pretty good, you know, that they had all worked together. It was
> interesting. So anyway I think that's always been a good thing is that if you look
> at the makeup of the groups it really helps.
> (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

Both of these accounts of West winning the city football championship showed a moment

in which the students came together in an act of school identity formation. The

achievement is remembered as a collective event that made possible a shared identity as

City Football Champions. The stories also point to achievement as a valuable trait of the

exceptionalism the school portrays to the community. This accomplishment is a key

event, leading to the solidifying of the school's positive image in community and its

culture of exceptionalism. The 1984 City Football Championship trophy is still displayed

in the main hallway, making this event a tangible part of the school's history.

Similarly, individuals who have accomplished great things also remain persistent

pieces in the story of the school. Ms. Ruler and Mr. Franklin both shared stories about a

former student who became professional athletes. Mr. Franklin reflected pride in sharing

the success of the three former students:

> And then you know we've had some celebrities come through here, uh the
> current, he was the five-time all star for the Astros, Lance Berkman, he played
> with the Astros and then he moved to the New York Yankees and now he's with
> the St. Louis Cardinals. And he's you know a really great person. He went to
> Thousand Oaks elementary, he came here to West and went one year to City High
> and then the family moved to a small town. He went to Rice University and up
> until last year, you know, he was making 15 million a year salary. And then we
> had two brothers come here, they were twins, Michael and Marcus Griffin who
> came from Thousand Oaks, again, and actually they came from Powers because
> we got some students from there back then and they went to the University of
> Texas and were starters on the football team, and Michael now has been a starter
> for several years with the Tennessee Titans, a national football team; he's a
> safety. (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

In Mr. Franklin's account of successful alumni, he shared not only their current successes

but also offered small glimpses of who they were as West students. Once again the story

of students who were bused to West became a factor for defining the students as in the

case of the Griffin brothers. Despite the narrative of inclusion of diverse populations at

West, the teachers consistently distinguished between the kids from the surrounding

neighborhood and those coming from other places, exemplifying the ways in which

social capital helped to solidify a privileged position for the neighborhood students

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(Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Ms. Ruler's recollection of teaching Lance Berkman included his successes in her English class, thereby showing that athletics was not his only talent. All of the teachers interviewed pointed to working with brilliant and talented kids as one of the main draws to working at West Middle School. West's persistent reputation of achievement has evolved to exceptional over time. This is demonstrated by the uniformity with which stories of student achievement, parental contribution and teacher dedication come together to weave a narrative that shares the ways in which West is different from other schools. Further, this difference is evidenced by the ways they are privileged in making their own campus policy. For example, they are the only area middle school in which students are still allowed to dress up for Halloween. This small, ordinary action demonstrates the privilege that comes with a reputation of exceptionalism.

SCHOOL AS FAMILY

West teachers often spoke about the sense of family they felt when they were members of the West faculty. Membership in a family is somewhat accidental. We are brought into familial structures that already exist as very young beings and learn how to become a member of that family. We learn about family traditions, acceptable behavior, and our family's values. We adapt and adjust our behaviors and thoughts in order to gain membership into our families and experience a sense of belonging. Families often simultaneously create a safe refuge from the outside world and a space where tensions among members arise. The structure of family mirrors many hierarchical structures in

society in that there is usually a leader who is deemed qualified by markers such as age and/or life experiences. And there are subordinates who are positioned as in need of guidance and instruction for forming their identities as familial members. Often, life within families hums along with each member enacting his or her role. At other times, tensions and conflicts arise, causing members to either band closer together, create alliances within the family or part ways.

In similar fashion, teachers often come to schools accidentally. While they may choose a school based upon location or reputation, they do not have control over the existing members of the school community and little say about structures that may have existed in the school for long periods of time. When a teacher joins the faculty of the school, he/she is expected to learn the power dynamics at play, contribute to the common good and foster a supportive environment where members feel a sense of belonging. The teachers at West reported that developing and maintaining a sense of family at the school was important to them because it made their work life more enjoyable and they felt valued as members of the West family. Teachers often spoke of the notion of family as involving positive connotations of support but also revealed other more complex issues of power and control at play. They described their notions of the West family in three main ways. First, many of them talked about working together toward common school goals as a starting point for creating the familial bond. This was often done via mechanisms such as carrying on school traditions and sharing the workload through professional teams. They went on to talk about the ways in which deeper personal relationships developed among many teachers, adding to the sense of loyalty often associated with families.

Lastly, they cast administrators in a parental role, frequently describing the ways in which their attitudes and actions set the tone on campus. This sense of family is important to note as a main component of the image and identity produced by the school. Participating in the world of school via familial roles allowed the teachers to collectively produce the identity of the West family. (Holland, et al., 1998)

Creating a Sense of Familial Solidarity

Each of the participating teachers remembered his or her time at West Middle School in a mostly positive light. They consistently spoke about the tight-knit nature of the faculty acknowledging that, historically, various administrative teams had taken the lead in creating an overall feeling of familial bond via leadership style and modeling of behaviors that promoted West's positive reputation. Teachers also reported the presence of authentic spaces for developing a sense of community among the faculty members as a key factor in fostering this sense of family. While these two factors are largely positive, the teachers' stories also revealed moments of tension that arose at times due to embedded power dynamics that often play out in familial structures. In these moments teachers drew upon a type of solidarity by banding together in support of each other and at times through subtle resistance. The excerpts in this section illustrate instances that the teachers identified as important for creating senses of belonging and negotiation that produced the feeling of family for them. Later in the chapter, the power dynamics between teachers and administrators will be explored further.

Mr. Ramses, who worked at West Middle School from 1983 until 1993, recounted an early memory of the school. He arrived on campus for a job interview to find the principal in work clothes, painting in the library. He shared the following:

> I remember coming into the school and it was definitely showing its age. The walls were yellowed and everything was small and I waited for Mary Ann to come in. And it was actually funny because Mary Ann as principal was actually doing some work on the school. She was spattered in paint, she had been painting library shelves. So we sat in an interview.
> (Interview with J. Ramses, August 2011)

This story clearly had an impact on Mr. Ramses. As he told it, he smiled and conveyed it as a pleasant memory. In emphasizing that it was the principal physically working to improve the school for the teachers and the students, he communicated his impression that this showed the principal's commitment to leading by example. This is a subtle from of coercion in that it shows the ways in which power dynamics worked toward teacher buy-in at West. When the person in power demonstrated a willingness to pitch in, she communicated the expectation that the faculty would do the same. Here disciplinary power works through a normalizing process of inclusion (Foucault, 1977)

A second interesting account offered by one of the sixth-grade teachers illustrated a parental-type relationship between teacher and principal. Mrs. Wilson shared many stories about the school's transition from the junior high to middle school model. She came to the school in 1988 and described an environment where the upper level teachers cast the sixth-grade teachers as younger siblings, a group who may or may not be equipped to move from the elementary campus to the newly-created middle school campus. She said,

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> I think when we first started as a sixth grade group, the older grades were sort of wary of us, they didn't really know what to make of us. We were considered elementary teachers. And I think they were afraid we were gonna be a lot of trouble…But once they got to know us and we proved our worth [they accepted us]. (Interview with G. Wilson, August, 2011)

While she in no way described a hostile environment, Ms. Wilson definitely communicated the idea that the sixth-grade teachers were in a unique position in the school, a position that they could also use to their advantage when working with the administration, as she described here:

> I think the principal liked us because we were easy going. We were used to being on an elementary campus, so we didn't question or argue with a lot of stuff. They said this is what we're gonna do and most of the time we would be like ok, how do we do that? So, he called us his sweet little sixth grade teachers, kind of mockingly at first, but then I think later he appreciated that we were really flexible, and whatever they told us to do we would try to make it work on some level. (Interview with G. Wilson, August 2011)

Here notion of family is reinforced in remembering a story in which a group of teachers adopted the role of younger sibling. As with the role of a sibling in a family, in this case the role was multifaceted. For the sixth-grade teachers, the sibling relationship meant feeling as if they had to meet the expectations of the upper-grade teachers though they seemed to understand this requirement as simply becoming part of the family. Additionally, Ms. Wilson's description gives the impression that, though the sixth-grade teachers wanted to become accepted by the upper-grade teachers as capable educators, they simultaneously could use the skills they already possessed to fit into the existing familial structure in the school.

Another story that Ms. Wilson shared about her relationship with the principal very much demonstrated a relationship dynamic similar to parent and child. In this story she talked about the way she would communicate with the principal in order to achieve a desired outcome:

> He was a nice guy, he liked his sweet little sixth-grade teachers… the way I would handle him is I would ask him something and he'd say well I don't know, and he'd put me off and then I'd come back and I'd say, you know that idea you had about letting the sixth graders leave five minutes early, that's a really good idea we'd really like to try that and he'd be like ok. But I'd keep putting it out there until he couldn't remember if it was his idea or my idea and then he'd agree to do it. (Interview with G. Wilson, August 2011)

Again, this story was communicated as a natural part of adopting the role of "sweet little sixth-grade teacher" or younger sibling in a family configuration. In both situations the sixth-grade teachers acknowledged the power dynamic when, instead of asserting themselves via resistant behavior, they banded together as a group and developed strategies for getting what they needed, all while remaining in favorable standing with those in power. Playing the role of younger sibling was purposeful activity for this group of teachers. These notions of family help to weave together the story situated within the school that revealed how teachers came to co-construct the roles they carried out in their daily work lives. Further, the teachers' story offered complex explanations of a subtle, yet effective, exhibition of power among teachers and between teachers and administrators. These interactions reveal hegemonic structures within schools that not only include obvious power struggles between teachers and students, but among adults as well. This interplay of power is illustrative of Foucault's (1980) assertion that "the relations of

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power are interwoven with other kinds of relations (…family…) for which they play at once a conditioning and a conditioned role" (p. 142).

The teachers interviewed spoke of the strong bonds that they formed during their time working in the school. Because the teachers felt like a "family," they were often willing to help each other during working hours and spent a good deal of time together outside of school as well.

Similar to the ways in which family dynamics operate to shelter, promote and develop the individual family member, so did the West Middle School family work together to carry out the common goals of the school. At the same, time each member was situated within particular contexts and roles. Many of the teachers described the school's environment as supportive and friendly. They expressed that they felt backed by their administrators as well as their teaching peers. They described memories of the principal possessing what could be framed as a paternal role in that he or she was often cited as a driving force in creating the environment in the school. The teachers maintained that the attitude and actions of the principal were important. At the same time their comments revealed that there existed tensions and differences that complicated the often simplistic understanding of family. Ms. Smith, an industrial arts teacher during the mid 1980s points out:

> So that was where it started, a very supportive staff and we became very close. And until that regime changed then of course things began to change a bit. But like I said at the beginning, there was very little turnover and at the very beginning the first few years, it would only be if a husband was transferred; nobody left because they weren't happy or something.
> (Interview with D. Smith August, 2011)

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Ms. Smith's points demonstrated a belief that West Middle School's low teacher turnover rate was connected to the fact that people were happy with the administrative team. She also acknowledged that the teachers' support of each other made working conditions more comfortable. Similarly, Mr. Ramses pointed out the way in which the principal and school secretary made him feel part of the school family right away. He shared the following story:

> When we finished the interview I was asked if I was interested in the job. I was. The next issue was, because this was about a week before school started, trying to find a place to live. I did let Mary [the principal] know, I don't live here in town so I need to find a place quickly. And she said no problem. If you can't you, know you can come stay with me; and at that point the secretary, Beth Hayworth, who was there for many years after, said and if he doesn't want to stay with you, he can come stay with me. So immediately the culture of a very close faculty was evident. (Interview with J. Ramses August, 2011)

This story not only demonstrates the willingness of fellow school personnel to help a colleague, but it also provides an example of the principal showing a type of parental care when she offered to shelter a new member of the staff. This was Mr. Ramses' first teaching assignment and move to a new town. He felt welcomed and cared for immediately in this environment. Both the teacher and secretary, who had been working in the school since the 1950s, went to great lengths to foster a familial environment. This type of care and bonding was also emulated among the teachers themselves. Following the administrative example of working together to solve problems and create a positive environment, the teachers worked together in grade- level teams and via physical proximity to create communities within, the school were they could gain support and guidance, similar to a sibling relationship.

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In recalling her daily routine, Ms. Wilson shared the ways in which the newly

arrived sixth-grade teachers worked to create an authentic community in order to foster

making a place for themselves in the middle school. She talked about her experience in

terms of her daily routines and physical location:

> I tended to get there fairly early and I'd run off materials and visit with the
> teachers in the lounge; they were a very friendly group of people. I think the
> sixth-grade teachers in particular bonded just because we were the new kids
> on the block. We networked a lot. We were supportive of each other. We had
> several different teams and those kind of changed a little bit from year to year but
> overall it was good. We were sort of clustered in a group of portables out in the
> back. There were a few teachers that were inside the back the wing but for the
> most part we were our own little community out in the back along with the special
> ed. teachers. We all kind of joked about being in the shacks, like we were kind of
> out in the slums. (Interview with G. Wilson August, 2011)

This recollection is important because it demonstrated two ideas. First, it reinforced the

notion of teaming as significant in creating supportive networks for teachers. The fact

that Ms. Wilson reported feeling supported by her sixth grade teammates shows how their

bond grew from the perception that they needed to prove their worth in the new role of

secondary teacher. Secondly, Ms. Wilson's memory demonstrated the ways in which

physical grouping communicated a particular notion of identity to people. While her tone

when telling the story was not complaining, the mention of the word "slums" indicates

that these teachers' physical environment made them feel as if they had not earned a

space within the main building. In this way, they took on the role of youngest sibling

because they did not feel altogether excluded from the family. Her recollection of the

events, and the ways in which she spoke about her time at West Middle School,

suggested that she felt that the sixth-grade teachers' role became more integrated as their

reputation as competent grew. At the same time, while their reputation developed they

quietly lived with the strains and difference in treatment and facilities in order to dutifully

maintain the image of the school as a happy family.

Ms. Ruler also pointed to the notion of grade-level teaming as a key space where

teachers were given decision-making responsibilities and provided support for each other.

She came to West in 1986 and recalls her first experiences:

> I remember taking my stuff there early because you know teachers never can
> do everything at the last minute, so I had gone before school started to start
> getting my room ready, and the school-- It's probably one of the oldest middle
> schools in the city and so the building at that time kinda showed it. I mean, there
> were things, like the desks, that were kinda old, and I felt like oh my goodness,
> what am I getting into here, but then when I met the people there, at West,
> everyone was very welcoming and friendly. I felt it was going to be a real home
> for me there. (Interview with J. Ruler, August 2011)

Similar to Ms. Wilson's story, Ms. Ruler's impression of the physical environment could

have negatively impacted her overall picture of the school culture had her teammates not

been "welcoming and friendly." The feeling of "home" made her experiences memorable

in a positive light and made her time at West productive and positive. She also talked

about the ways in which the grade-level teams were responsible for providing

opportunities for students' success, planning together for extracurricular activities like

field trips and generally helping each other to provide positive learning environments for

their students:

> So the teachers were in grade-level teams and they were pretty much
> responsible for developing everything for their own team of kids. Instead of
> having, well you always had school-wide rules but you also had your own team
> rules and you developed that whole camaraderie with your team, kids and their
> parents. That was up to you, your team, to figure all that out. So within that
> day, one conference period was our team-planning period, and we could plan

whatever we needed to, trips, we could meet with parents, with the kids. Which to me, the point of having teams so you can bring parents in with the kids who are having difficulties, you can do interventions there.
(Interview with J. Ruler August, 2011)

Ms. Ruler's description of teaming at West Middle School depicts a space where teachers operated in mutually supportive ways. Not only did they rely upon each other to contribute to the good of the team, they also helped each other to carry the burden of multi-step tasks like planning field trips and planning for conferences with parents. Often they would meet as a team with parents, showing a united front and demonstrating that they wanted to "intervene" on the child's behalf. These stories detailed some of the ways in which they worked together in the official roles of teacher and guide for the students while they also developed more personal relationships with each other resulting in the tight-knit nature of the faculty.

Happy Hour: Bonding Time

I first met several of the West Middle School teacher participants at a local Tex-Mex restaurant at 3:30 pm on a Friday. I had been making phone calls to recruit participants when one of them shared with me that they would be meeting for happy hour that very afternoon, and I was welcome to join them and meet several people at one time. I was floored because I knew that this woman had not worked at West since 1992. When I arrived at the restaurant, I found a small group of former West teachers, the former principal's secretary, one spouse and a man who had volunteered at West for many years. They began to ask me about the project and agreed to be interviewed individually. I had

not included questions about happy hour in the interview protocol, but during the interviews with each of these participants it proved to be an important topic. Mr. Ramses initially described the importance of happy hour in this way, "You're in the trenches together. It's a way for you to unwind and share your common stories and kids you have in common. Its just a way to sort of take a load off at the end of the week" (J. Ramses, July, 2011). In my own role as a public school teacher, I have experienced this rationale for happy hour gatherings, but as I continued to listen to the teachers, I began to see a deeper meaning in the West happy hour.

When the interview with Ms. Ruler was about to conclude, I asked if there were anything missing from our conversation and she responded:

> Happy hour in schools is kinda traditional I guess, but at West that whole thing was something that I've never seen at any school. We would have like 30 people. Mr. Ramses organized it, and we would go to a different place every Friday. That's back when places used to put on a free buffet and stuff. We would stay at happy hour til late at night, you know, dancing. All kinds of teachers would be there and people that had gone from West would come back. People that had retired or gone other places, they would find where the West happy hour was, I mean it was a network. (Interview with J. Ruler, August 2011)

Ms. Ruler's impression of happy hour extends beyond seeing it as an event where teachers can let off steam and bond over school-week occurrences. She points out the uniqueness of retired and former West teachers who sought out the group, demonstrating the long-lasting effect that being part of the West faculty had on people who were no longer participating in that community on a daily basis. While she acknowledges that the atmosphere of happy hour included socializing and fun, it is also important to point out that she saw this group as a network, which in turn implies that they are supportive of

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each other, even in situations that have nothing to do with the operations of West Middle

School. On the occasions when I visited happy hour, the "core group," as Ms. Smith

called them, was always present, and each time one or two others would drop in. I never

saw anyone that was currently working at West but Mr. Franklin had shared that the new

teachers at West did get together; the two groups may not have known about each other.

Instead, the joiners were teachers who had worked at the school at various times. They no

longer discussed the day-to-day life of the school but instead reminisced about the

experiences they shared there and discussed current educational policy shifts and issues.

Both Mr. Ramses and Ms. Ruler commented on the happy hour group, describing

it in terms of family bonding and a mutual interest in each other as people, rather than

thinking only in terms of work/professional relationships.

Mr. Ramses shared this perspective:

> Well it still goes on, I mean the same group after almost 30 years. But at that time
> every Friday rotating from place to place and we would take pictures. [I would]
> convert them into slides and show that at the end of the year party. I would put
> together this slide show and have music to go with everyone's section. So people
> were featured and liked coming to see those. It just built that sense of unity, you
> know. Everyone was invited and some chose not to participate but you always had
> people showing up. (Interview with J. Ramses August, 2011)

By documenting and producing a visual reminder of the teachers shared bonding, Mr.

Ramses was able to capture moments among the faculty when trust and relationships

were being formed. The teachers clearly enjoyed spending time together, but they also

looked forward to seeing the final product at the end of the year, when they would feel

part of the school community that they had constructed together. Each of the teachers still

participating in the happy hour gathering recalled the slide show at the end of the year

and remembered the impact it had on them as a familial unit. Even the act of putting together a slide show, as opposed to passing around photographs, evokes a feeling of familial bonding.

Ms. Ruler was the most illustrative in her description of happy hour as a space where the relationships teachers formed spilled into their outside-of-school lives. She shared the following thoughts about happy hour and the West family:

> You know our group that still is there I mean, we have been together in all phases of our lives. Mr. Ramses was one of the ushers in my wedding. And another example, when my grandmother died, they came up to Waco for the visitation, you know that's unusual for [work friends]. When Mr. Ramses' mother died last summer, we went [to the Valley]. These people really are like family to each other, that's how I see them. I had good friends at the new school but it wasn't like this family; I've never seen anywhere like at West. Just something about how they took care of each other there. I thought we would be able to do that when we went to [the new school]. I think Mary, the principal, attempted to carry on that family feeling but I think the school was just too big, maybe, I'm not sure. I've wondered about that, why we couldn't recreate that. Sometimes people will come [to happy hour] that we haven't seen in a long time but mainly these days it's the group that you saw there on Friday. It's a special place. Before I came to West I think they had an even stronger sense of family because of [the administration], they treated teachers like a family. (Interview with J. Ruler August, 2011)

Ms. Ruler's narrative illustrates the importance of the parental figure, the principal, as a key player in accomplishing the familial structure that the faculty at West experienced. Given this, it is also important to point out the power dynamics involved in creating school culture. As Ms. Ruler notes, for a variety of reasons, that the principal and faculty were not able to recreate the school culture of West when they left together to open a new middle school in 1994. While Ms. Ruler names both the administration and teachers as playing roles in establishing school culture, she names the positions of power as those who are poised to enable this to happen, providing evidence that she recognizes a

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relationship between culture and power (Giroux, 1994). She mentioned past administrators at West as playing an integral role in creating a sense of family at the school while acknowledging the ways in which the teachers themselves have remained together by choice, thus expressing negotiations of positionality (Urrieta, 2007). She expressed power dynamics within the culture of West in terms of the familial bond while also using ordinary aspects of school life to explain development of the school's culture

Interestingly, the data also showed the ways in which memory and nostalgia worked to help the teachers create the identity of the school via reminiscence (Spitzer, 1999; Cary, 2006). Because the teachers were no longer involved in the daily struggles of school life, they had the freedom to create a remembered image of the school. This particular group of teachers provided an example of the ways in which groups of people who have come together, in both good and challenging times, can form a collective cultural memory (Bal, 1999). The teachers in this case became a mechanism of support for maintaining the positive image that West has enjoyed for over 50 years. Bal (1999) makes the point that as memories become habitual, they inform behaviors that become part of "normal" life. The work of habitual memory is demonstrated here as the teacher's used it to construct their teacher identity within the cultural context of West.

The Ambivalent Power of Administrators in Parental Roles

These feelings of collectivity meant that the teachers were poised to exercise the agency to support or resist the power imposed by the administration. The following sets of data share the teachers' descriptions of both positive impressions of campus

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administrations and rougher times at West. In both instances, the teachers expressed an understanding of power dynamics in terms of the parental role that administrators played in the West family. The next section explores the ways in which the TCAT exam for teachers negatively impacted their professional identities. At West Middle School, this repressive policy resulted in the teachers binding tightly together in order to offer support to each other.

In March of 1986 West teachers were among the 202,000 teachers and school administrators who took the TECAT , the Texas Examination of Current Administrators and Teachers (Shepard & Kreitzer, 1987). This exam was designed to test teachers' competency with basic literacy skills, including basic reading comprehension, professional vocabulary, determining the difference between fact and opinion, grammar and written composition. Teachers who failed the test the first time would be given one additional re-test opportunity before being dismissed.

The political context surrounding education during the 1980s, amid the *A Nation at Risk* report and data displaying Texas high school students' under achievement on the SAT, fueled accusations that teachers were to blame for students' poor performance. In 1983, after failing to obtain approval for a budget increase for teacher salaries, then governor Mark White appointed H. Ross Perot to chair a Select Committee on Public Education. This committee's solution to the students' low performance was to create the TECAT and implement mandatory testing for teachers and administrators. "Teacher testing to weed out the incompetent teachers emerged from the Select Committee recommendations as a necessary element in educational reform" (Shepard & Kreitzer, p.

24). The Select Committee immediately tied approval of a tax increase allocated for a teacher pay raise to the passage of the bill implementing the mandatory test. The same Texas reform legislation that included the TECAT mandate also included several other pieces of education reform legislation including: redistribution of resources to poorer school districts, an increase in starting teacher pay, implementation of the career ladder, textbook adoption, the high school exit exam, "no pass, no play," and a $4.8 million tax increase. Despite this long list of education reforms passed in 1984, when I asked about specific policy changes that affected their lives as teachers, the participants working at West during the 1980s and 1990s almost all mentioned the TECAT first. The collective memory presented by the teachers mirrored the sharing of family stories in that the event became a part of the West family narrative that contributed the development of sibling identity among the teachers. The moment became a defining one, as they felt the need to band together in resistance to what they perceived as unfair treatment among siblings.

When she recalled teacher reaction to the test, Ms. Wilson offered, "Back to the TECAT, we felt like it was insulting" (G. Wilson August, 2011). Ms. Smith remembered the experience as "demeaning" because she felt that the administrators treated the teachers in a less-than-respectful way during this year. She recalled a general "lack of respect; the administrators' professional attitudes towards things, their demeanor. Some of them were really quite rude at times and just it affects one person and because you're all close, it starts to affect more [people] too" (D. Smith August, 2011). She felt that more and more often the administrative attitude shifted to a type of "gotcha mentality" rather than the supportive one she had known before at West. She described the change in

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environment saying, "You might have a real good day and they don't like you, so they will really nitpick things and stuff like that. I know the TECAT really upset a lot of people. A lot of people found it very demeaning to go and have to do this. And then [we] got a big laugh out of certain administrative people were there all day trying to pass it." This last part of the quote refers to a story that several of the teachers told about the principal staying the maximum allotted time in order to finish the test while the majority of teachers were able to complete it in much less time. Once again, this demonstrates the "sibling" bond that the teachers felt in supporting each other and casting the principal in the parental role. It seemed that this story was particularly amusing to the teachers because of the way in which he had treated them just prior to the test. In this way, it also shows a limit to the familial bond concerning teachers and administrators, with teachers demonstrating a stronger alliance to one another.

It is true that the teachers interviewed felt that the test content and implementation were insulting, but the stories they shared exemplified a moment in West's history when education-reform resulted in drawing the teachers together in encouragement and solidarity. The test amounted to a basic skills exam and many of the teachers interviewed saw it as a mechanism for weeding out older teachers, minority teachers, and/or vocational teachers. Both Mr. Ramses and Ms. Ruler described scenarios that illustrated the effects of the testing. In Mr. Ramses' account he recalled a fond memory of the teachers spending the testing day together in a supportive action. Ms. Ruler's account described the aftermath of the testing, detailing both administrative changes and a shift in the overall school culture.

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When I asked Mr. Ramses which education policy changes he remembered happening during his time at West, he talked about the addition of the sixth grade and the "no pass no play legislation." Further discussion of these topics is included later in this chapter. The final education reform measure he discussed was the TECAT. This is the story he shared:

> The other biggie that happened my second year was TECAT, the exam for teachers, and there was a lot of resentment toward that. It was seen as being insulting; whether you could read, write, punctuate, it didn't have anything to do with content. It was nowhere near the level the exit exams (here he is referring to the Texas teacher certification exam) are now, but it still caused a lot of people distress. I remember it was done in February of '86 and that people had to take it all around the district; in fact you could not take it at your campus. You divided into groups. It was a small number of your folks with other people from other parts of the district. We went to a high school to take it. Most people finished within like 30 minutes to an hour even though you had several hours to take it. I just remember at that point, showing how united the faculty was, it was just sort of an all day happy hour before and after the test. It was called Lone Star Café and the early group got there for breakfast and they were there all morning and they came back for lunch and then those of us who had to take it in the afternoon left and then everyone came back so it was like the entire day you know people showing just the unity and the cohesion as we were supporting each other during this test. (Interview with J. Ramses, August 2011)

The detail Mr. Ramses used to describe his TECAT experience is noteable because it provided evidence that education reform policy created markers for teachers when they tell the story of a school. Mr. Ramses not only remembered the details of the test itself but also remembered the affective experience. He began the story by talking about the test in negative terms, describing the feelings that teachers had about it and the content of the test itself. As he moved through the story, he shifted to positive language as he recollected the experience of the teachers binding together. The teachers carved out their own space for agency through an ordinary act of resistance to the test. This display of

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solidarity exemplified the importance of understanding the ways in which education-reform policy is enacted far from classrooms and how it permeates into the lives of teachers. This story also shows that understandings of the familial sibling bond are not static; they shift as needed. In this case the teachers could put aside sibling rivalries in order to band together to resist the powers that be. And, despite the usually positive image of the administrators, they could be cast as adversaries in certain circumstances.

Despite the short length of the TECAT era, remnants of the tension between district and campus administration and the teachers lingered, as did low public opinion of teachers' professional competencies. The Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS) was the next, and lasting, accountability system implemented. The teachers formed a strong alliance as the result of going through the TECAT experience together and adjustment to the PDAS system. The administrative attitudes regarding implementation of these accountability measures would produce trying times for West teachers.

Ms. Ruler served as the teachers' union campus representative during the mid-1980s. She also shared stories of the teachers supporting each other during the implementation of TECAT testing. She went on to remember trying times during the following years when a new principal was assigned to West and the familial bonds that had formed among the faculty were tested. She shared this story about the teachers' perception of the new principal:

> I had taught with her at [my pervious school] and I thought it was going to be a great thing because she was a teacher, she knew what it was like to be a teacher. I don't blame it totally on her but I think the district administration had

sent her in there to kind of, well this is what we thought, to kind of break up that family which seems kind of ridiculous, why would you do that?
(Interview with J. Ruler, August 2011)

Ms. Ruler's assertion that she and the other teacher's felt that the district administration wanted to break up the West Middle School family is noteworthy because it is indicative of the ways in which punitive accountability systems contribute to an environment of distrust and imbalance of power within a school and district system. She continued on to describe what the teachers felt was a systematic clearing out of older teachers and the pain that it caused the faculty:

> What happened was some of the long-time career teachers started getting hassled by the administration and some of them kind of were forced out. It was very upsetting to the teacher group there because they had been together so long. I was serving as the AAT rep there, the teacher union group, so people would come to me with these concerns, it was very painful. Anyway that last year, I guess it was, I don't know if it was the majority of teachers wanted something done; there was a group grievance filed against the principal for creating this hostile work environment but they still ended up getting rid of some of the career teachers there. These were our friends and we didn't want them to be mistreated. There was another assistant principal who kinda gave unfair evaluations, we felt like. I remember we had this meeting with the whole faculty where people could ask the administrators these questions, but there was part of the faculty that sided with the administration and felt that we had no business questioning decisions she made.
> (Interview with J. Ruler, August 2011)

As Mr. Ramses had pointed out earlier, prior to this time period the teachers felt that the administration had played a key role in fostering the familial structure and feeling at the school. In this story, Ms. Ruler clearly expressed the belief that, without the support of the administration, it became a challenge for the faculty to remain a cohesive familial unit. And, in fact, the end result was the faculty became a divided family. As often happens among siblings, some of them remain complacent in behavior, seeking to secure

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position and please the parents. And some of them strike out on their own in resistance to

what they might view as poor leadership or unfair judgment. Here it became clear that

this notion of the school-as-family was operated as a mechanism for establishing the

professional identity of West teachers as they authored a collective meaning of

themselves long after they taught at West (Holland et al., 1998). As a result of

administrative displacement of several of the older faculty members, a long-time assistant

principal and several teachers left West Middle School to open a new school within the

district.

> Ms. Ruler shared the following story about her leaving West Middle School:
>
> So at the end of that year, Mary Leonard, who was an assistant principal, got
> chosen to open the new middle school. And she took a whole group of West
> teachers with her to open up that new school. I guess there was a feeling, I mean
> we were all excited to get to open up a new school because you get to do all kinds
> of things, set traditions and it's a great opportunity. But it was heartache too
> because you felt like you were leaving your school where people were family. I
> remember there were some, not lay offs, but surplussing… And people were
> going different places because, and once again when as new school opens the
> staffing [at all the schools] changes because the population shifts. So D. Smith
> was going to go to another school and was real upset because you know choices
> had to be made and the whole, the family was being broken up and it was not a
> good feeling as we left West. So it was kind of sad.
> (Interview with J. Ruler, August 2011)

Ms. Smith left teaching shortly after the move to the other school but continues to

participate in West Middle School happy hours more than 20 years after these incidents

occurred. An example of the close-knit bond that these teachers formed can be seen when

Ms. Ruler described her departure from West as bittersweet. Her repeated reference to the

family breaking up can be likened to a grown child leaving home. She was full of

expectation and excitement but saddened because she felt her time at West had come to a

natural end. It was clear that understanding her departure from West in these terms was important because it created a context in which she could remember West in the most positive terms, thereby solidifying her identity as a member of the West family.

The West Middle School Family was not without its challenges over the years but as the story of West unfolded, it became undeniable that the relationship dynamics played a key role in shaping the story of the school. Ms. Wilson remarked, "I was the happiest there and that's not to say that it wasn't stressful because we did have our challenges….I would say it was a happy place to be" (G. Wilson August, 2011) This statement reinforces the collective reporting of the positive aspects that helped to define West as the place the teachers remembered. Teachers' view of the school affected their professional attitudes and professional identity development. This is illustrated in the ways in which teachers remembered themselves as integral members of the family when their opinions were valued, and when they had to cast themselves in the roles of resister when the parental units questioned their abilities. Ms. Ruler offered this definition of school culture:

> School culture…. A school is a living breathing entity. It's not like a business; you can't run a school like a business. It lives and breathes and I think how a principal and the staff set up a school so that people feel like a family. You are a family, including the parents and community members, that was our West family. I think if you get people to buy into that then they are more willing to take care of everybody within that school setting, just like you would take care of the members of your family. I don't know that everybody these days sees school that way. It really pains me to see what the legislature has done in education. I don't think they see schools as living, breathing creatures; it's really sad to me. (Interview with J. Ruler, August 2011)

Her sentiments here evoke the feeling of nostalgia often associated with remembering school experiences. What I found relevant about this particular quote is that when she shared it with me, it was apparent that she truly believed that her time at West was a special moment frozen in time. Even though she had previously talked with me about problematic educational policy implementation, she clearly felt that the teachers had been better able to cope with those challenges because of the supportive environment in which they worked. Because the school had a long reputation of strong, supportive administration, the brief period of time when the administrative staff weakened was not enough to destroy the image and culture that had already been established at West. Teachers who worked at the school during a variety of historical moments confirmed the durability of the school's tight-knit community, image and culture.

Teacher participants also shared stories about the positive traits that West administrators exhibited via teacher support and fostering a positive campus environment. The following excerpts include a span of time beginning with the current principal and reaching back to the early 1970s. I asked Ms. Eastern to talk about her decision to begin teaching at West Middle School and she shared the following:

> Honestly the community at West and the administration at West made me feel like it was the perfect school, I wanted to stay. Since then, I've thought that the community and administration at West have just been encouraging. Mostly administration-wise, I just feel like we have really great administration. That keeps me here, honestly. (Interview with H. Eastern, September 2011)

Ms. Eastern had been teaching Spanish at West for five years at the time of the interview and was also one of the co-coordinators for the RODEO advisory at West. The RODEO program will be discussed at length in chapter six but it should be noted that working

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with the program put her into direct contact with the principal on an almost daily basis as she and Mr. Dumont carried out the advisory program. The principal was particularly invested in the RODEO program as a tool for creating smaller learning communities for teachers and students. He often implemented programs that would foster nurturing relationships between teachers and students. Mr. Dumont seconded Ms. Eastern's opinion of the principal by saying,

> And I always stuck around here for the same reasons [as Ms. Eastern]: the administration was great. When you would come here, there was always a positive attitude around it. I always liked the positivity of the campus, whereas some of the places, it doesn't seem like your are having fun there as much. And when you come in here, everyone's smiling, the kids are happy and it just had a different vibe around it. So I was very happy to just keep working here. (Interview with J. Dumont, September 2011)

Mr. Dumont's quote gave the sense that the attitude of the administration permeated the environment at the school. He suggested that because the current principal is a positive and supportive force on campus, everyone else is positive as well. Mr. Dumont began his career in education as a substitute teacher and therefore had had the opportunity to visit several other campuses in the district. He acknowledged the difference in environment he felt at West from the beginning. Earlier in the interview, he shared that he sought his teaching certification after working as a teaching assistant at West and consequently decided to remain there. Mr. Franklin, who had seen several administrative teams over the decades he had been at West, concurred, "and our principal has a lot to do with this. He's a real positive person, um open door policy" (D. Franklin, April 2011). As Mr. Franklin points out here, not only is the current principal a positive person to work for, he demonstrates professional respect for the teachers.

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Ms. Nathan, who was working at the district level at the time of the interview and

collaborated with West's principal to implement the district's Positive Behavior Support

(PBS) system confirmed this idea:

> I think it's still a wonderful school. I think the principal is doing an incredible
> job there. The diversity is still there, they care so much for their kids there.
> They're one of our PBS schools and when we went in, he said well we might
> implement parts of this. Well he came to training, and I don't know if you know
> about true colors but he's a green person, he sees the global picture so it just
> clicked for him and then he went this is the best thing I've ever seen, my teachers
> are gonna love this. His staff just cares so much about kids. He's really created a
> very safe, secure and nurturing environment for those kids.
> (Interview with J. Nathan, April 2011)

Ms. Nathan's impression of the current principal echoed Mr. Dumont's in that she

believed that his positivity enabled the consistent nurturing environment at West. She

agreed with Mr. Franklin's emphasis on the principal's willingness to bear in mind the

teachers' input when considering changes to campus-wide systems. Because the principal

valued the teachers as professionals, they were able to function as a cohesive familial

unit. In turn, the teachers nurtured and valued the students. Each of these teachers'

accounts of the current administration demonstrated their belief that the school's

environment was greatly impacted by the attitude and practices of the principal. What

made this a unique case was the consistency with which teachers gave administrators

credit as leaders who created a familial bond that benefitted both teachers and students.

Ms. Nathan went on to share an early memory of the administrators who were there when

she first came to West in the 1970s:

> I was a little bit worried about moving to junior high [from high school], but the
> leadership at West was just incredible. At that time, the principal and the assistant

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principal were both very strong leaders, very positive, created a great, supportive environment for their staff. (Interview with J. Nathan, April 2011)

In this passage, Ms. Nathan described the administrators as having the same traits that the current principal had. Not only did this demonstrate that Ms. Nathan valued these traits, but it also provided an example of the long history of strong, parental-type leadership in the school, since the administrators in this example were at the school over 30 years ago. This consistency in leadership is reported to have contributed to the maintenance of the school's culture and image over time. Likewise the teachers shared similar comments about the principal who was there prior to the one that worked with Ms. Nathan. Further, teachers who worked at the school decades later also spoke of him, saying, "they loved him [the principal], they really loved him. If you could talk to MaryAnn, she was principal after him and she treated her teachers like a family" (J. Ruler, July 2011). Mr. Franklin gave a concrete example of this principal's support of staff development and ideas:

> I went to a summer institute at the University of Texas. I was a science teacher, and it was about an individualized approach to teaching science and it was just so fascinating. I came back and told our principal about it and he said, well, let's try it out and he got behind it and allowed me to get it all set up. There was a lot of expense involved, a lot of equipment, but it was students kinda worked at their own pace. I mean, they couldn't just sit there and go to sleep or something, but it was a fascinating process. There was a lot of lab activity involved with it, and so it was really fascinating. (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

Mr. Franklin's story demonstrated the principal's fostering a teacher's professional development by accommodating the teacher's request to participate in the workshop. The principal then went a step further by endorsing and financing the implementation of the teacher's knowledge, just as a parent would foster a child's development via monetary

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support as well as encouragement. When Mr. Franklin shared this story, he expressed an appreciation for being given the opportunity to work with his students in a "fascinating" way, but more importantly, he communicated the sense that his professional judgment was trusted and valued.

The idea of family became a defining factor at West. Building from this premise, the next section explores notions of guardianship via teachers' recollections of their everyday experiences and exchanges with their students. When the teachers spoke about their relationships with each other and the overall sentiment in the school, they spoke in terms of family that included particular power dynamics. When they spoke about their relationships with students they shared stories of everyday exchanges in both classrooms and extra curricular spaces. Their stories included an expression of guardianship with the goal of providing students, not only an education in a curricular sense, but also passing on cultural and social knowledge. The teachers demonstrated care for their students by engaging in these exchanges. Because this complicated the notion of care to include both politicized activity (Valenzuela, 1999) and a space for nurturance (Noddings, 1984), the metaphor of guardian will be used in the next section to discuss the relationships the teachers shared with students.

THE SCHOOL AS GUARDIAN

Teachers repeatedly and proudly described West's student population as diverse. They explained their sense of pride in terms of the harmonious campus environment and the fact that, despite a lack of federal or district funding to support transfer students, they

maintained a positive image and reputation. Teachers spoke of the West student population as diverse in terms of obvious markers, such as race and socioeconomic class, and in terms of the students' needs. During the interviews, many of them discussed students' academic abilities and various iterations of tracking. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the teachers expressed fond memories of their students and were impressed by their work in the classroom. However, the teachers also described their role as much more than mere conveyors of content knowledge. They also noted settings for creating educative experiences beyond the physical limits of their classrooms. When they spoke about their interactions with students they demonstrated a genuine responsibility for not only teaching students how to behave in ways that would guarantee their success in the school but also showing them glimpses of life outside of school that they viewed as normal and/or important. In this way, the teachers demonstrated a sense of guardianship for the students during the time that they spent with them. The participants did not assert a parental role, but rather a role in which they could foster the students' development of habits and behaviors that fit the mainstream. This is a particularly interesting perspective as it relates to the students who were bused to West and whom the teachers perceived as needing more guidance for navigating both West's cultural environment and learning how to operate within the boundaries of society.

The students at West consistently appeared to be happy when I visited. Additionally, the campus environment seemed to be a supportive one for teachers and students. Both the teachers and administrators gave the sense of being deeply invested in the students' success in many realms. This attitude is another example of the ways in

which the culture of West has developed over time, because it shows the persistent value placed upon students conforming to the school culture via guidance by the adults in the building. Ms. Wilson shared her thoughts about the way that administrators treated the students when she was at West:

> I think they [the administrators] were supportive, most of the time they were on the kids' side. I've been at some schools where administrators would target kids and there wasn't anything that kid was gonna do right, they just didn't like them; their goal was to get that kid out, get them off to the alternative center. I didn't see that so much at West. I think we had very good counselors that had been there for a long time, they knew generations of families, they may have taught their fathers, like Mr. Franklin. So I think there was a support system, I felt they were on the kids side, it was about the kids, even if you got cross ways with an administrator, I always felt like you are both working toward the same thing. Then you've got that in common and then that was something you could work together on. I didn't ever feel it was us vs. them. So I would say they were very supportive of both the teachers and the kids.
> (Interview with G. Wilson, August 2011)

There are several interesting nuances at play in this quote. The students that Ms. Wilson is referring to are the students who came to West via busing after the sixth- grade centers were closed and the sixth grade added to West, making it a middle school. This is important to note because it supports the sentiment that the adults at West were committed to ensuring that the students became successful members of the West community. Secondly, her mention of Mr. Franklin's having taught "their fathers" is a key point because Mr. Franklin was a classroom teacher during the iteration of busing prior to Ms. Wilson's. The students bused in both cases were from the same neighborhoods outside of the West neighborhood. Not only does this allusion toward the tradition of working with these students demonstrate the ways in which West built a reputation for embracing its diverse student population it also demonstrated the fixed

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nature of the class system within the larger city community. It speaks volumes that

twenty years after the initial integration orders for the district, the same student

populations were cast as receiving the same opportunity for a better education. Further

education in this sense is not limited to the curriculum and pedagogy enacted by teachers

but rather is more broadly described in terms of fair treatment and administrative support.

Because the administration communicated to the teachers this sense of positive support of

the students, they began to understand their role in terms of guardianship. The teachers

viewed their function as guardian in terms of guiding students to success by creating a

nurturing environment for them. However, they were integral to the goal of guiding the

students to assimilate to the norms of the school and society. This tension between

activities that fostered assimilation and delivery methods that demonstrated nurturance is

important because it illustrates the ways in which normative values are communicated to

students in an almost dysconcious fashion. The following sections provide concrete

examples of this tension at work.

Custodians of Behavior

Schools are generally accepted to be spaces where students are encouraged to

behave in particular ways and meet particular goals. Most teachers and teacher educators

acknowledge the necessity for effective classroom management strategies aimed at

creating safe and productive environments. So pervasive is the belief that structure, order

and respect are essential for carrying forth the mission of schooling, that many places,

including West, implement campus-wide discipline plans in order to meet these goals. At

the time of this project, West's behavior plan consisted of the teachers enacting the strategies outlined in the book, *Teach Like a Champion* by using common language for conveying and enforcing behavioral expectations in the classrooms and common areas. The two teachers who were using these strategies at the time of their interviews reported liking them because the expectations were presented as mutual between the teacher and student, while at the same time communicating to students, simply, that success begins with appropriate behavior.

The second component of the school's discipline plan drew upon elements of the school district's Positive Behavior Support (PBS) system. This system emphasizes the appropriate behavior in the common areas of the school, like the cafeteria and hallways. The behavioral expectations are posted throughout the campus. Additionally, as with *Teach Like a Champion*, the teachers used common language when enforcing rules and expectations. These programs emphasize value- based instruction that models for students how to act respectfully and productively in order to achieve success. Ms. Nathan, who taught at West during the late 1970s, was the district's PBS director at the time of her interview. She remembered that during her time as a classroom teacher, the district's stance on value-based instruction was quite different:

> Well I remember at that time there was a big push not to teach values to
> children that was a parents job, they didn't want the school involved in that.
> There was actually a lawsuit filed against the district while I was there
> because a teacher had been doing a lesson on integrity or honesty, I don't
> remember which. And it really offended a parent. Which is really interesting
> because now it's like they hand them to us at 6 and go take them, teach them
> everything…When I first went to West, they still were paddling kids in the
> district. That ended while I was there (Interview with J. Nathan, April 2011)

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Ms. Nathan offered a glimpse at the ways in which the school's guardianship parameters

shifted over time as parents' expectations of schooling shifted. She expressed dismay that

during a time period when parents still readily accepted the school's authority to paddle,

they questioned a teacher's choice of subject matter for character development. Whereas

in the present moment, she implied that parents are more than willing to allow a

discussion of moral values, but most parents would not accept paddling. Mr. Bristol, who

taught at West during from 1965 to 1977, remembered the era of paddling as an

innocuous part of schooling in that time period:

> I paddled several kids, yes absolutely. You could send them to the principal
> and he'd paddle them or you could paddle them yourself. Well, our principal
> was such an enforcer of the law, I mean he kept the lid on over there and it
> didn't take much. If you were sent to the principal office for misbehaving, that
> just almost meant automatic paddling for the boys, and they didn't want to go
> back for a second round of that because he could swing a mean paddle. So I mean,
> if they had a choice between me busting them or him busting them, they'd let me
> do it because I wouldn't hit as hard. But listen, that happened so infrequently I
> taught for twelve years. I suppose it doesn't happen at all now. I'll tell you this, I
> don't think very many children and it was mainly boys; very, very few boys who
> were paddled at West came out for the worse. It would end up, we'd all laugh
> about it usually, even them the next day or two days later. I don't recall them
> paddling girls. Now you know, since you mention that in a worse case scenario
> the lady PE teachers had the right to do that. So if there was an occasion for a girl
> to get paddled the principal wouldn't do it but he would send them out to the girl
> PE teacher, Lady PE teachers. And they would do it but you know it was so
> seldom. (Interview with J. Bristol, July, 2011)

Mr. Bristol's story reflects the times in which he taught, in that it demonstrates the taken-

for-granted nature of the school's authority and teachers' and administrators' roles in

exercising that authority. Most of Mr. Bristol's time at West was prior to forced

integration, making his memory of paddling an interesting account. As he described in

the story, paddling was not seen as oppressive or abusive but rather as a sometimes-

necessary part of school life. Because the cultural differences between teachers and students were minimal during this time frame, the school took the liberty to act as guardian, in a very literal sense, during the school day.

Despite instances of corporal punishment, the school maintained an image of care, as evidenced when Mr. Bristol asserted that the students could laugh about it within a couple of days and actually benefitted from it in the long run. His intentions were clearly not to demean the student but rather to protect him from going down a wrong path. Further, the excerpt demonstrates an interesting gender dynamic in that paddling was rarely seen as an appropriate punishment for girls. It seems as if paddling was viewed in part as masculinity training when he talks about it as not harming the boys who were paddled. And it similarly appears to reinforce the notion that if girls acted like girls, they were not paddled. On the rare occasion when a girl required discipline as severe as a boy, a female would handle the task. This in itself also reinforces the societal norm that men should not physically strike women. Although Mr. Bristol did not communicate regret for having paddled students, he also acknowledged that there are better ways to handle student behaviors in school. His tone as he spoke about paddling is important to note here because it clearly demonstrated the underpinnings of care at the same time he used physical force as behavior modification. Mr. Bristol, in his role as guardian, remembered these moments as mildly unpleasant but part of his duty. As time passed, the practice of paddling diminished and is no longer used as a means of behavior modification at West or in the school district. Even though methods have changed, the overall desire for students to act appropriately and productively in school has not.

Ms. Wilson's description of the ways in which teachers handled discipline at West during the 1980s reflects a change in the boundaries at play as the school's demographics shifted and the teachers and students became more culturally separated. Ms. Wilson, a sixth-grade science and social studies teacher, came to teach at West when the district closed the sixth-grade centers. This was the district's move toward re-integration as well implementation of the middle school model. The move meant that once again, West would undergo a transition period from serving mainly the neighborhood population to serving students from all over the city. From this point, teachers would be working with students who were racially different from themselves, as well as from a variety of social classes. Ms. Wilson discussed handling discipline in this way:

> I know the sixth-grade teachers [worked together]. We had at least two or three black teachers and they were very much on board helping us if we needed. It was not uncommon for them to be like, well let me talk to them because I can talk to him like his momma talks to him. Or I know his aunt at church, so I can tell her what he's been up to. They were very supportive in trying to make everybody act as good as they could. I think amongst ourselves, we were very cooperative with each other. We would discuss kids and were not opposed to switching kids in classrooms if we felt they got along better with another teacher and they were having a hard time. Everybody was usually on board with doing that, when we were trying to handle discipline. (Interview with G. Wilson, August 2011)

This excerpt demonstrated a shift from the authoritarian attitude that Mr. Bristol expressed when he discussed addressing discipline to one that recognized a difference in cultural communication and the need to convince students to conform to appropriate behavior. Ms. Wilson's example of "talking to kids like their momma" showed an acknowledgement of a difference in the discourses that were appropriate for teachers to

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use when working with students from different racial backgrounds. However, it also highlighted the privilege that Ms. Wilson, and other white teachers exercised by relying upon Black teachers to communicate with Black students and their families. This exemplifies the complexities at play when considering demonstrations of care and guardianship by teachers. While physical force was absent, there remained an essence of coercion in the means used to get Black students to conform and perform appropriately. As Ferguson (2001) points out, these interactions represent spaces where even "well intentioned individuals actually actively reproduce systems of oppression through institutional practices and symbolic forms of violence" (p. 73).

As in previous examples, Ms. Wilson voiced the importance of drawing upon social networks, such as parents and community members, to maintain West's desired environment. Although the parents of bused students were not often present at the school, nor as involved with activities as the neighborhood parents, Black teachers acted as a conduit for helping to simulate the desired parental involvement, thereby demonstrating how, at times, school personnel served as guardian for both transfer parents and students. The teachers positioned themselves as allies to the parents in order to manipulate the behavior of the students. This is an interesting example of how teachers handled students who entered the school as culturally othered, but in time assimilated to the school's norms. Additionally, it shows one way in which notions of culturally relevant pedagogy are often co-opted in order to benefit the institution over the students. Instead of reaching out to the parents outside the school culture to establish a mutually beneficial

relationship, they positioned Black teachers in a role that required them to deliver and enforce mainstream messages vital to maintaining the image of West.

Protecting and Teaching

The role of guardian was more nuanced than only acting as custodian of the school's structure and reputation. The teachers also described their perceived teaching responsibilities in contexts outside the bounds of official curriculum, where they might possibly impart cultural and social knowledge to low-income students that their more affluent classmates already possessed. The teachers seemed mainly concerned with providing and facilitating experiences for their students that would enable them to function successfully while attending West Middle School and to become engaged members of society. The teachers shared stories of teaching beyond of the parameters of the curriculum, providing experiences and opportunities outside of the school day and connecting with students to build trusting bonds. Participants spoke about a variety of instances when everyday activity translated to an ethic of care involving relaying helpful information or facilitating experiences that would later become valuable. The teachers' memories of their time with students indicated the intricate relationships that develop in schools. Ms. Nathan recalled her relationships with students:

> I had a great rapport with all of my students. They would come to me and talk to me about their problems, which was interesting to me because when my own kids got to be that age it was like, never mind mom you wouldn't understand. I was like everybody else's kids come and talk to me about their problems but not mine…They would come to me, that was kinda cool and it was kinda not cool too because sometimes you heard things that you had to…and they knew, you know, I would tell them too you know whatever you say to me is confidential

> unless someone is hurting you, you're gonna hurt someone or you know the
> law's involved, you know its illegal. I would tell them, you need to understand
> that I may need to refer this to the counselor or administration.
> (Interview with J. Nathan, April 2011)

The relationship that Ms. Nathan developed with her students was a clear priority for her. She emphasized the importance she placed on having a rapport of trust with her students. This excerpt is significant because upon remembering her time in the classroom at West, she is most drawn to the relationships she established with her students over the curricular lessons she taught or the behaviors she may have had to address. To her, the most important aspect of classroom life was creating a safe space where students felt comfortable with sharing their thoughts and experiences. Her attitude toward her students illustrated a protective and protected space where they could seek advice or share stories about their lives. Adding to the protective environment was the safeguard of knowing that she possessed the social capital to offer aid when needed. She reinforced the nuanced differences between parent and guardian when she shared that her own children did not view her as a non-judgmental confidant but rather as the parent with the power to judge actions and behaviors.

Ms. Wilson shared stories of specific instances that illustrated the way in which the common, everyday occurrences operated as messages of guardianship. She shared two stories of helping sixth-grade boys with their grooming habits. This is not an uncommon scenario in schools. However within this particular context it further evidences the types of relationships that the teachers developed with their students at West:

One little boy was coming to school dirty, stinky everyday. And we started talking to him, he had seven older sisters, he never got his turn in the bathroom, so we had to work out a plan. Ok, you need to take your bath the night before, before you go to bed you take your bath, and then you won't be in there when everyone is trying to do their hair in the morning. You need to have a time because if you come to school stinky, nobody wants to sit next to you. So yeah, its, in sixth grade they are still little kids, and especially the little boys their necks are dirty because momma's not watching their hygiene anymore, and their ears are dirty and crusty. I remember this little boy walking in, and he had this little spot of white stuff in his hair, and I said what's this white stuff in your hair. And he said hairspray, well he was just holding it in one spot and spraying it so it was just this little glob of white stuff. I was like, no, it needs to be back here: you need to spread it out.
(Interview with G. Wilson, August 2011)

Ms. Wilson remembered these moments with fondness making it apparent that she took helping her students to heart. The first story not only illustrated the way that she helped the student to fit in better with his classmates, but she also took the time to fill in a small gap she perceived in his personal life by mentioning the ways in which boys at this age need this extra bit of guidance, as parents begin to relinquish responsibility for personal care to their children. This suggested that her role as guardian overlapped with his mother's role, as he became an adolescent. She took responsibility for his grooming habits only because they were affecting his school life, and she could use this moment to teach him a broader life lesson. By helping him to develop a plan for taking charge of his hygiene, she helped him toward voicing his needs in important situations. The second story further illustrated this idea. When Ms. Wilson instructed the boy about grooming products, not only was she protecting him from embarrassment, she was also filling in the same maternal gap that she had with the first student. These examples also demonstrate

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the ways in which school personnel often assume parental responsibility throughout the day, as they become primary caregivers for students.

Thus far, the examples provided show the ways in which teachers have enacted guardianship at West. They also demonstrate gender-specific qualities of the guardianship role. In the case of Mr. Bristol, one can see the ways in which a masculine form of guardianship emerges when he is called upon to paddle a male student, while the same time communicating that the student is able to handle it and even laugh it off later. Ms. Wilson also enacted guardianship in a gender-specific manner when she commented on grooming as the mother's domain. Likewise, Ms. Nathan enacted a feminized version of guardianship by describing her role in terms of motherhood. In none of the examples did the teachers profess to carry out the rights and responsibilities of parents, but rather saw themselves acting as disciplinarian, guardian and confidant during the school day.

The following excerpts present another teacher's recollections of time spent with her students. They also convey a sense of guardianship for her students. However, they are unique in that they also bend the gender-specific enactments of guardianship described above. Ms. Smith taught at West Middle School during the 1970s and early 1980s. At the time, she was the first and only female industrial arts teacher in the school district. When I interviewed Ms. Smith she told several stories about the interactions she had with students. The following are stories about a variety of students that she worked with while at West. All of the stories are about students who were bused to West during the early 1980s. While she also told positive stories about the students who came from the neighborhood, the stories she told about these students communicated the idea that

she thought it important to teach them about a more mainstream lifestyle than she perceived them having. However, she spoke highly of her students' work and she seemed to prioritize helping them with it:

> And like I said, I did spend a lot of time with my students, extra time with them because I would be there early and they would come in and work, and they would stay and work, some of them until 9:00 at night, catch a city bus home, or I'd drop them off too or something like that.

Ms. Smith not only devoted her time to helping students with their class projects, she also facilitated experiences that she perceived they were deprived of:

> I mean I had one time at Christmas one student staying after and made some comment about the Zilker Christmas tree and he had never seen it in his life and he had never been out in the town. So I took him over and showed him the tree but it was just a whole different lifestyle that the two entities had.

In working with her female students, she was able to provide both types of experiences simultaneously:

> I also had two girls from the eastside over there, they lived in homes and they loved to do some of the work. And they would come over on Saturdays and a couple of times they stayed over at my house and then would go back to work on Saturday and Sunday type of thing, you know, with the parents' permission and what have you. But they were really involved and they were very close… But we were very close, and like I said I took an interest in many students. The girls really enjoyed getting out, I also had a fish pond in the backyard so it was a whole different atmosphere. They enjoyed doing that sort of thing…I would have certain ones that really put in the extra time wanting to do stuff. So as long as they were willing so was I. (Interview with D. Smith, August 2011)

These stories share a common thread in that they all demonstrate the care that Ms. Smith had for her students. She demonstrated this in a variety of unique and complex ways, given her position as an industrial arts teacher. First, because she taught a trade-based elective, it was usual for students to be allowed a space for expression and an

opportunity for learning a marketable skill. Likewise, the students she worked with were often thought of as in need of guidance or opportunity. Given this fact, Ms. Smith acted out guardianship in unique ways by providing experiences outside the classroom and school day that she perceived as helpful to the students.

Secondly, because she was a female shop teacher, she had the unique ability to work closely with both male and female students in an almost motherly way. She was open to helping students to accomplish their goals by sharing her personal time and space with them. She also fostered a sense of pride by displaying their work in a prominent place in the school communicating that she was proud of their achievements. She gained the respect of the male students by being able to show them that she was nurturing in a feminine way but also understood how to teach them a traditionally male trade. Simultaneously, she showed the girls her life outside of school by inviting them into her home. In both cases, she used her own social and cultural position in the mainstream to guide and provide her students with memorable experiences that might inspire them to set goals for middle-class success.

CONCLUSION

The story of West Middle School, as told by the teachers provides a look at the complexities of schools. The culture, identity and image of the school all rely upon purposeful interactions between a varied cast of characters. The factors that make this place unique also provide glimpses into the particular ways in which schools' stories are constructed and shared. Drawing upon Holland et al.'s (1998) notions of identity

production and figured worlds, this chapter highlights the teachers' understandings of the ways in which the school's identity and culture is defined via their lived experiences and ideas about their roles as teacher and schooling itself. When the teachers shared their stories, they spoke of the school's image and reputation in terms of exceptionalism and the school's identity in terms of family and guardianship. When they described the school's culture, they drew upon understandings of the aforementioned concepts to emphasize the diverse population of the school while also expressing the urgency with which these same diverse populations were assimilated to school's established culture. They also drew upon these understandings by describing the school's culture and environment in mostly positive terms, showing their continued role in maintaining the school's image and expressing agency via the telling (Urrieta, 2007).

The teachers described the exceptionality of the school's reputation by pointing out the ways in which traditions, parental involvement and student achievement set it apart from other schools in the district. The stories they shared about parental involvement were unique in that they went well beyond typical stories of parents volunteering or donating money. While these activities were at the heart of the stories they shared, the bigger message was the school's financial dependence upon white, affluent parents to ensure that non-white, less affluent students had the resources necessary to achieve at the school. This painted an exceptional picture of parental involvement at West that was not present at other schools, according to the teachers, while also emphasizing the specific type of parental involvement they valued (Lareau, 2000). Additionally, the described students' exceptionalism mainly focused on normative

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notions of success while at the same time making clear a disruption to teachers' assumptions about the non-neighborhood students. Lastly, the school's reputation itself proved exceptional in its ability to rebound from moments when its reputation waned during certain periods of time.

The teachers expressed their West identities in terms of both familial membership and guardianship. Because teachers perceived the school environment as a space where they were valued and respected much of the time, they developed a strong interpersonal bond. The bond several participants described reflected that they thought of the West faculty and administrators as a family. Their descriptions of the West family were revealing because they allowed for a complex rather than simplistic view of family. The complexities the teachers shared included negotiation of power dynamics, "sibling" rivalries and instances of rebellious behavior. Despite the challenges that they faced, the West teachers seemed to remain focused on goals promoting the common good for the West community as well as on working to maintain a caring and nurturing environment for the students. The power dynamics described are illustrative of the ways in which hierarchical structures are continually reinforced in schools (Apple, 2004/1975; Giroux, 1988; Foucault, 1980)

The teachers simultaneously engaged in the roles of sibling with their peers and subordinated child in a parent-child-type relationship with administrators. Complicating the construct of teacher identity further, they saw themselves in the role of guardian in their relationships with students. Several of the teachers also pointed out the complex and complicated nature of the expectations placed upon them. Additionally, they

unpacked the numerous experiences they facilitated outside of their standard teacher duties aimed at student betterment. They also articulated the extraordinary expectations that society has of teachers, as well as the tremendous impact that teachers have on society, thereby broadening the scope of teachers' guardianship to include the general public, even after they leave school. The idea of teaching was presented as more complex than simply disseminating content knowledge and taking grades. The participants agreed that no matter the teacher's level of expertise, if the students do not feel cared for, the teacher's credibility would come into question. This idea suggested the level of commitment that the teachers at West maintained for facilitating student achievement in both academic and life skills.

This chapter has privileged teachers' voices in an attempt to tell the life story of a middle school as constructed by the teachers who were, and are, integral actors in the production of schooling. The teachers shared a story that weaves together various times and spaces to create a unique place with a unique life. Their accounts and descriptions of West call attention to the idea that even the most positive and productive environments operate by a complex and delicate set of circumstances that simultaneously create a sense of security and accomplishment while also reproducing and reinforcing common-sense notions of normalcy and success.

CHAPTER SIX: DESCRIPTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION VIA TEACHER VOICE AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIONS

"We are students at West Middle School. We're residents of _____. We're Texans. We are citizens of the United States. This is our world."
(2005 yearbook caption)

INTRODUCTION: TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDINGS OF CITIZENSHIP

As the teachers narrated the life history of West Middle School my visits to the West library continued. The yearbook archive continued to draw my attention. I flipped through the pages repeatedly feeling certain that the school's culture was communicated in the photos and stories presented by the students under the guidance of teachers. I found the space in the yearbook devoted to written text notable. Further, this text not only documented school days but also communicated messages that included self-sufficiency, involvement and co-operation. Additionally, over the years, the yearbook consistently cast the students at West as citizens of the school and the school as their community. The connection between West's construction of culture, identity and image appeared intertwined with educating West students to become citizens.

Public schools persist as a main site for teaching students to become productive citizens. Since the turn of the last century, the project of schooling, particularly urban schooling, has been one of normalizing and communicating to students not only academic content but also accepted practices for functioning within society (Apple, 2004/1975; Tyack, 1974). While the notion of a hidden curriculum (Apple, 1975; Jackson, 1968) is not new to discussion of accepted school behavior and the underlying

task of school to produce citizens who fit into the norm, this chapter seeks to shed light on the ways in which a taken for granted school artifact, the yearbook, and teachers' understandings of citizenship work to actualize citizenship education.

Relevant literature addressing the historical context of urban education in the United States provides the basis for framing discussion of an historic middle school by providing an understanding of the goals and purposes of public, urban education as well as the ways these have changed and not changed over time (Apple, 1993; Arnet-Ferguson, 2001; Tyack, 1974). A key component in sharing the story of this historic middle school is the exploration of the role the school and its teachers have played in citizenship education over time. As previously discussed one of the main purposes of schooling in the United States is to help to form the civic identity of students. During interviews, the teacher participants were asked to define their notions of citizenship and to describe the ways in which they felt they helped to share this definition with students. In addition to interview data, I used the yearbook archive housed in the school's library as a key data source. This extensive archive included yearbooks from the years 1954 to 2008. The yearbooks during the first decade also included the school newspaper for those years. In examining the yearbooks and newspapers, I read student-generated text about a variety of school activities and examined photographs depicting the school, students and teachers. As I did so, I unpacked the ways in which notions of citizenship were communicated to students via this accepted, if not beloved, school artifact.

Reading the student generated text revealed a powerful message of behavioral expectations presented as civic responsibility; a reinforcement of mainstream values such

as self-sufficiency, "leadership" and school pride; and the importance of being a "good" student. These messages echoed the sentiments described by the teachers participating in the interviews when they were asked to define citizenship education and then asked to explain their ideas about their own responsibilities in teaching notions of citizenship education.

This chapter presents interview data from a variety of content area teachers who provided definitions of citizenship from their vantage point as classroom teacher along with reinforcing data from the yearbooks. The goals are to demonstrate the durability of citizenship as defined in schools and explore the ways in which this definition is communicated to students through a variety of seemingly ordinary means. Because the chapter does not merely draw upon specific instructional practices or typical instructional materials, it provides an opportunity to think about citizenship education as a pervasive component of the school's hidden curriculum. Further, the discussion opens a space for thinking concretely about the tools used to enact this hidden curriculum as the yearbooks become more than school artifacts, they become curricular materials.

The teachers were asked the ways in which citizenship education was taught within the school and/or the ways in which the school did or did not promote democratic values. Participating teachers had taught or were currently teaching in a variety of subject areas: Social Studies, Language Arts, Science, Industrial Arts, and Spanish. Several of them also acted as sponsors for afterschool organizations and clubs including: The Human Relations Committee, Peer Assisted Leadership, Student Council, Yearbook, RODEO class (Reading, Outreach, Discussion, Enlightenment, Outdoors), Student

Council, and Junior Historians. These clubs will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter in the sections that deal directly with analysis of the yearbook data and teachers' descriptions of citizenship and character education. Despite the variety in teaching assignments and levels of involvement with extracurricular organizations, the teachers spoke about common ideas when asked about citizenship education. The most prominent themes to surface during the data analysis were notions of respect (for the community, others and the school), responsibility (both personal and to the larger community), and civic duties (basic understanding of government and community engagement).

Three of the ten teachers interviewed for this project were social studies teachers. Mr. Bristol taught eighth grade American History during the 1970s. After teaching he went on to become a successful real estate agent. Mr. Ramses taught seventh grade Texas History and eighth grade American History during the late 1980s and early 1990s. During his assignment at the school he was also the sponsor for the Peer Assisted Leadership (PAL) organization, Student Council and the Junior Historians, a state-sanctioned academic competition group. After leaving West, he worked as a high school history teacher. He subsequently went to work at the district's central office first as a social studies curriculum specialist and later as the district coordinator for the social studies. Mr. Dumont currently teaches eighth grade history at the school. Additionally, he is a co-sponsor of the RODEO class at the school. His involvement with RODEO is significant because one of the purposes of the class is provide a space for students to receive instruction in the character education goals for the school. RODEO will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

The remaining seven interview participants represented teachers from a variety of content areas and time periods as well as the school librarian working at West during the time of the study. Each of the teachers and the librarian were asked to define the term citizenship education and to describe the ways in which they felt they were responsible for teaching about citizenship education. While many of the teachers spoke about the main tenets of citizenship education falling under social studies, they also felt that it was a goal of schooling writ large to provide direction to students about ways to act as productive citizens. The topics identified by the teachers as being the responsibility of the social studies teachers were mainly duty- based (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), including voting and keeping up with current events. The topics that they named as appropriate for all school personnel to engage with included much more value based behaviors (Parker, 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) such as teaching students to contribute to the betterment of the community, to communicate effectively and positively with peers and adults, to take personal responsibility for successes and failures and to engage in acceptable school behaviors.

RESPECT

The teachers frequently used the term *respect* when they described notions of citizenship. They spoke about the notion of respect in terms of respect for community, respect for self and others and respect for school property and reputation. This section explores the ways in which teachers described these notions as well as the ways in which the yearbook text and visual representations reinforced these ideas. Conceptions of

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respect remained intact over time suggesting that these ideas were rooted in deeply-embedded understandings of the ways in which respect is demonstrated in a school setting. Likewise the students themselves reinforced these ideas via the yearbook showing the ways in which this type of cultural knowledge is reproduced within schools but outside of classrooms and official curriculum.

Respect for Community (state and classroom)

Mr. Dumont, the current eighth grade history teacher and RODEO coordinator, determined that good citizens are also "good people" thereby promoting many of the aspects emphasized both in the character education component of the RODEO class and in the yearbook data. When I asked Mr. Dumont to describe the RODEO class he said:

> The idea behind the program, it is called Social and Emotional learning, so the idea is not only, I mean it's the whole child, so not only are you teaching children the curriculum you're also teaching them a separate curriculum of how to handle themselves, how to be positive, how to be good people, citizenship, it goes along with social studies also. [In social studies] it's a lot of new standards like virtue and how to be a good citizen of America, like how to be good person. So basically the teachers all read something called *Teach Like a Champion* which is a great book that kind of teaches you the similar strategies to have emotional constancy, you know it teaches us how to do that. So if we do that and model it for the kids then they should do that. So you're not yelling at a kid, you're constantly saying, this is what I expect clearly; we are the models for that. So the idea of social/emotional learning is not something that is really NEW, its just one way. [We model] control yourself, teach the kids to control themselves and have a good positive environment on the campus. Which, I think we already have which is why to us it's not a big deal.
> (Interview with J. Dumont, September 2011)

This segment of the interview data reinforced two ideas. First, Mr. Dumont saw a clear connection between his work as a social studies teacher and his work with a non-

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academic class. This is significant because it demonstrates that both types of classes function to reinforce particular notions of respect and their connection to citizenship education. Secondly and on the other hand, he did not clearly delineate a line between citizenship and character education. Instead he speaks about the ways in which enacting accepted social practices such as effective communication contribute to forming a good citizen and more specifically, to the formation of a "good American."

Mr. Dumont mentions the RODEO program as a key space for students to learn interpersonal skills and practice particular types of socialization. The campus adopted the RODEO (Reading, Outreach, Discussion, Enlightenment and Outdoors) class in the 2003-04 school year. Students creating the yearbook recorded the shift from generic advisory class to a more purposeful class. The significance of the event is indicated by the one-quarter-page devoted to photographs and the descriptive editorial generated by the students. Subsequent yearbooks in the archive always included at least one-half page devoted to photographs and text depicting RODEO activities and events. As the student writers described,

> Many changes were made in the transition from advisory to RODEO, but some things remained the same. Recess for example, took place one day out of each week.
> "The outside day [is the best part about RODEO]," said E.C., eighth grader. Students had a chance to go outside, clear their heads and hang out with friends. Students were required to read two days each week.
> "I really like the reading days because I like to be able to read and relax," said Ms. C.F., seventh grade teacher.
> Group discussions were held once a week to teach students how to interact with peers and how to communicate with the people around them.
> "The group discussions help me want to make more friends and be more social," said D.P., seventh grader.

> The two most noticed changes were that the students were required, due to new state legislation, to recite the Texas Pledge and observe a moment of silence each day.
> During the moment of silence some students prayed while others sat silently in respect for their classmates.
> "I pray and think about the people who are risking their lives in Iraq," said M.A., eighth grader.
> RODEO stood for Reading, Outreach, Discussion, Enlightenment and Outdoors and describes the weekly activities done throughout the week.
> (Student-generated yearbook text, 2004)

This excerpt from the yearbook highlights the content of the RODEO class with particular emphasis on reading skills, specific types of communication and legislated patriotic activities. Connection with citizenship education is present in an obvious way when the student writes about RODEO providing an official space for reciting the national and state pledges and observing a moment of silence. This notion is further expanded when she subtly communicates that "prayer" is the preferred activity for observing the moment of silence and that the accepted alternative is to sit "silently" and "respectfully." While students were given the choice not to pray, they were simultaneously expected to follow the mandated activity thus communicating the value the school placed on these patriotic activities.

While the RODEO class was a recent development at West Middle School, teaching students to act appropriately and respectfully was not a new goal. Ms. Nathan taught language arts and journalism during the 1970s and early 1980s at the school. At the time of this study, she was still employed with the school district, serving as the district director of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), the district's initiative for student behavior management and discipline systems. PBS systems are in place in most of the

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district's elementary and middle schools. Ms. Nathan defined her understanding of

citizenship education by first talking about the skills taught within social studies classes

and moving to the current emphasis placed on teaching "the whole" child how to be

successful in school and in life. She described it in this way:

> I think citizenship education used to be called conduct grades and then the
> definition expanded a little with citizenship education because there was also
> some educating of children about their civic responsibilities both as a campus
> member and as a community member. I think most of that, at that time, took place
> through the social studies class, of course students were expected to carry out
> what they were learning about their responsibilities throughout the day but I think
> the instruction mostly happened in social studies class. Of course, now today we
> talk more about educating the whole child, so we are talking about
> social/emotional development of children and helping every kid have the best
> chance to succeed by leveling the playing field by being very clear about what
> our behavioral expectations are whether that's academic behavior or social
> behavior. Actually teaching those behaviors, what does it look like, what does it
> sound like, and as adults really modeling those expectations and reinforcing
> students when we see them carrying them out.
> (Interview with J. Nathan, April 2011)

Ms. Nathan's response was consistent with other teachers' responses in that she felt as if

the definition of citizenship education had expanded to include more than simply civics

skills as had been the case in the past. She felt that it was increasingly important to

educate students explicitly on how to become successful citizens of the school as well as

community. Like Mr. Dumont, she mentioned the importance of the teachers acting as

role models of good citizenship. In this sense the teachers enacted the roles of providing

instruction, clearly defining expectations for acceptable behavior and modeling the

behavior as well.

I went on to ask Ms. Nathan about her role in citizenship education while she was

a classroom teacher. She answered:

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I felt it was very important to create a sense of community in my classroom and to do that by being fair to everyone. I had a very democratic process, it was not just my classroom, it belonged to everyone, it belonged to the students also, we made many decisions together. We made many commitments to each other about how we were going to treat each other and how we were going to behave within the confines of the classroom. So I think just instinctively as a teacher I knew that that had to happen before learning could really take place. (Interview with J. Nathan, April 2011)

Here Ms. Nathan addressed the link between citizenship and democratic values by pointing out the "democratic process" she enlisted in her classroom. This example provided a glimpse at the subtle ways in which this teacher addressed the notions of mutual accountability by giving the students some say in the way the classroom would be run. She also emphasized the theme of mutual respect when she talked about setting up "commitments" among the students in order to ensure they treated each other well.

The students were expected to function as respectful citizens of several communities as evidenced by the mention of not only the classroom community but also the school and national communities. The teachers spoke of the classroom and national communities as an almost fluid space where the skills for "good" citizenship were the same thereby illustrating the idea that schools are the "laboratory" for training students to become assimilated citizens (Fass, 1989). This idea created the continual emphasis on particular behaviors and work habits at West over the course of several decades and well into the contemporary moment.

Respect for others (peers and adults in authority)

When the teachers spoke about respect for others, they mentioned two main "others." First, they described the importance of the students' ability to work

harmoniously with their peers. Many of the teachers shared that group work within the

content areas helped to emphasize the importance of communication while also providing

practice for the students. A 2004 yearbook feature entitled "Cooperation is Key, Students

Learn Through Group Work" demonstrates that this concept was important enough to

draw the attention of the yearbook staff and readers. The section reports,

> Huddled in groups, students eagerly discuss their reactions to the project. 'I like working with a group because you get to meet a lot of new friends,' said C.B., sixth-gradeer. Students said that when they participated in group activities they got more work done faster, but under some circumstances, that doesn't happen. 'The group of people that you work with can get you a bad grade because they can goof off,' said K.J., sixth grader. Some projects stood out as favorites. 'Decisions, Decisions was my favorite project in History because you got t be the President of the United States during the whole project,' said B.L., eighth grader. 'Decisions, Decisions' was a group project involving the whole class. The students had to decide if they wanted to go into space to find more energy resources for earth because the energy on Earth was low. Students worked in groups often in History and English. In English, students edited their writing with an activity called 'Clocking.' In 'Clocking' everyone sat in a circle around the classroom, passing around stories to be edited. Students learned how to take criticism and practiced editing skills. 'Clocking was fun because we got to look at other people's stories,' D.M., seventh grader. Teachers agreed that students should work both in groups and independently. 'I like individual minds coming together, sharing ideas, and leaving with a successful learning experience,' said Miss K.E., sixth-grade teacher.
> (Student-generated yearbook text, 2004)

This feature is one example of the ways in which specific goals within the school were

emphasized using peer-to-peer communication. Not only were collaboration and

deliberation (two notions of democratic citizenship as defined by Parker, 2003)

expectations within the classroom setting, they were so important that they were

reinforced by occupying space in the yearbook. While citizenship is not explicitly

mentioned in the excerpt, the classroom activities described illustrate the enactment of

teachers' definitions of respectful communication as a trait of good citizens. The

students' endorsement of the activities by including them in the yearbook also reinforces

the importance of acquiring and practicing these traits.

The feature also reinforces one of the main tenets of the RODEO class,

communication. Ms. Eastern, Spanish teacher and RODEO coordinator, emphasized the

importance of RODEO time for fostering positive character traits and teaching students

how to handle "real world" communication situations. She stated the following:

> I agree [with Mr. Dumont's remarks about teaching students to be involved]
> and I would say from there you know taking it from this tiny piece of time which
> is RODEO to helping them find their strengths. They can figure out how to
> work in a team, it teaches them how to be in real life, real world situations.
> Hopefully they are leaving us having character education or citizenship education
> that makes them want to contribute; wanting to work with others. And like Mr.
> Dumont said being generally good people instead of producing a generation, or
> having a generation come out of here not caring. You can help other people and
> sometimes they don't feel like they can and if we can give them an opportunity to
> feel like, hey you can do something, if we can do that in RODEO and I think we
> are trying to come up with ways to show them that and we will throughout the
> year. (Interview with H. Eastern, September 2011)

This excerpt clearly communicated the idea that not only are teachers concerned with the

students understanding social studies concepts when they speak about citizenship

education, but they are also concerned with teaching students normative behavior for

achieving success in the community outside of school. Ms. Eastern was not the only

teacher to emphasize the importance of teamwork, effective communication and

community service when speaking about citizenship education. Secondly, the teachers

spoke about the importance of the students having respect for authority and

demonstrating this via acceptable behavior when in school. Most teachers expressed the

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idea that successful students complied with school rules and demonstrated respect for adults. Mr. Franklin, who had been working at the school since the 1970s at the time of the study, spoke mainly about citizenship education in the context of the school as a whole. His assignment at the time of the study was sixth-grade counselor, an assignment he had held since the early 1980s. Prior to that he had been a science teacher. He stated, "The thing is school is such a different setting than a lot of these students are experiencing outside of school. Everything is regulated here, some of these kids come from very unregulated situations and so what they learn here, we are not sure how it is followed up." (Interview April 2011). He pointed out that he felt it was the school personnel's charge to teach the students explicit expectations for school behavior. He went on to explain that the main component for addressing citizenship education was "getting students to respect each other." (Interview April 2011). He went on to describe a campus wide rewards system designed to reinforce positive behavior:

> We have a program right now where if they're caught, it's not caught doing something good but its sort of like that, something that teachers recognize as a good citizenship type thing, like, opening a door for a student on crutches or something, they give them these little [slips of paper containing a praise statement and a space for the student's name]. They get that and the teacher that gives it puts their name on it and it goes in this box. Then at lunch on Friday they draw the names out, and they draw a lot of names out and it could be a cookie or a gift card, all different kinds of things [as a reward for good citizenship behavior]. (Interview with D. Franklin, April 2011)

Here we can see how the reinforcement of appropriate behavior by material reward is the first step in training students to be respectful of school authority. This campus-wide program established a culture of conformity by conditioning students to follow the rules by providing rewards. According to Mr. Franklin, the success of the program was

evidenced by the fact that students were better behaved in the hallways during passing periods than in previous years showing that they were at least acting as if they respected the rules established by the authority figures in the school and the spaces they shared with their peers.

The students also communicated their willingness to follow school rules for the sake of maintaining a positive school environment. This draws attention to the degree of respect they are willing to afford authoritative mechanisms for the sake of harmony at school. A 1986 yearbook feature entitled, "Tickets Please! Students Comment on Weird Rules" details the ways in which the school staff sought to handle misbehavior. The rules enacted were largely reactionary and punitive in nature. However as the excerpt demonstrates the student yearbook staff was enlisted to communicate and reinforce them:

> An evening of listening to the radio last night was driving people up the wall. They couldn't get the popular tune out of their heads. They are forced to hum the melody out loud to see if it will help. Mrs. D. hears the off-key noise and assigns them a detention of one and a half hours after school. But according to seventh grader, A.D., this is no normal detention; that one and a half hours will be spent humming the same tune, nonstop. Our school was full of strange and absurd policies that governed students. Students didn't always agree with them, but teachers insisted on enforcing them. "Mr. E's only rule was: don't cut your finger off, " said G.J., seventh grader. If you've ever seen the shop teacher's left hand, you may have noticed that he only has a stub of a pinky, which may be the reasoning behind the rule.
> J.P., seventh grade, said, "I didn't like the lunch tickets because it made the lines longer and not everyone could eat." Lunch tickets were created toward the end of last year when students ran from their classes to the cafeteria. Tickets were given out only when all students had been seated; they served as your pass to the lunch lines.
> B.L., a seventh grader, said, "I think the rule of sagging pants is unnecessary." Sagging pants was a big issue because people with big pants could have concealed items which were either illegal or inappropriate. Mr. G.P., assistant principal, used a twisty-tie to act as a surrogate belt.

"In Mrs. M's class, you can pass notes but you can't talk," said seventh grader M. G.. Many teachers do not allow students to talk out loud during a lecture but hardly any teachers allow you to pass notes. Teachers don't allow this because it distracts from learning.

Although students may not have agreed with them, these rules did help to maintain a peaceful school environment for learning. As seventh grader A.E. put it, "The school would be worse without rules," weird or not.

(Student-generated yearbook text, 1986)

The student author subtly questions some of the rules that the school enforces to maintain order but concludes that these rules are necessary for safety and order. This endorsement supports the notion that good citizens are law abiding and that laws are often created for the common good. The students who generated this text seem to be making sense out of the ways in which rules in the school were formulated by the adults while communicating the message that regardless of understanding them, students should abide by them. The space given to the excerpt in the yearbook demonstrates a way of emphasizing the importance of the concept and making it appear a normal function of schooling. Citizenship, in this case, comes to mean acceptance of power and authority without question. In relation to the hidden curriculum it represents a tangible moment when "schools create and recreate forms of consciousness that enable social control to be maintained without the necessity of dominant groups having to resort to overt mechanisms of domination" (Apple, 2004, p. 2). When students communicate compliance to each other, they establish the credibility of the behavior thereby allowing the authority figures to supervise from a distance and create a culture of obedience.

In addition to campus-wide school rules and administrative authority, classroom rules and teacher authority provided a mechanism for teaching respect for authority and

peers. Ms. Nathan, Ms. Wilson, and Ms. Ruler all spoke about citizenship education with an emphasis on the ways in which they personally set up their classroom procedures and rules. Several teachers spoke about the importance of setting up behavioral expectations in the beginning of the school year in order to ensure that academic learning could take place. They also spoke about the importance of teaching the students to respect each other and treat each other appropriately and saw communication skills as essential to success outside of school. The teachers described these ideas when asked to define citizenship education. Ms. Wilson and Ms. Ruler both worked at the school during the late 1980s and early 1990s and have since retired from teaching. Ms. Wilson was a sixth-gradee science teacher during her time at the school and Ms. Ruler was an eighth grade language arts teacher.

When Ms. Ruler spoke about citizenship education she described one way in which she addressed the topic in her classroom:

> Citizenship Education? Well I guess it would just be you know in the beginning of the year, the very first day when I met my students I would talk about respect and first you have to have respect for yourself. I would talk about what that looks like; try to get them to buy into the idea of respecting. If they respect themselves first then they can respect other people around them and just taking care of yourself and the people around you. I know a lot of teachers think that you have a to have a whole lot of rules to make kids behave but if you just have some few basic things, I think they learn how to take care of each other and the classroom themselves. I had a "no hunting" sign up in the room and we'd talk about, what does that mean, when you see that in the country? You know as in, you don't shoot Bambi. So, if that nohunting sign is up in our classroom, you don't shoot each other with killer statements. So that I guess was how I approached character education, just being nice to everybody, not just the people in your classroom but the people you see in the hall, you know the custodian. I mean how do you want to treat that person and how do you want that person to treat you?
> (Interview with J. Ruler, July 2011)

This example not only provided additional evidence that the teachers considered mutual respect to be a key element of citizenship education, it also illustrated a time when a teacher explicitly used the terms citizenship education and character education interchangeably. Ms. Ruler served as yearbook sponsor from 1989 to 1993. During these years the content of the yearbooks often reflected her ideas about students developing good character traits, cooperating with each other and becoming involved in school and neighborhood communities. In each of these volumes equal space is given to athletics and other clubs, maintaining an emphasis on leadership and involvement. In one short excerpt from 1989 two student writers promote involvement in the ACE (Affective Character Education) class. They write,

> Do you know what Affective Character Education is? You should, you do this every Thursday. Yes, it's ACE. What's ACE for? It gives teachers and students time away from academics, time for students to engage in activities with caring adults. It is also a time for students to build self-confidence, self-esteem, and responsibility. For the first six weeks, ACE gives time for students to get to know the schools and other classmates. Get involved and participate in ACE. (Student-generated yearbook text, 1989)

The ACE class can be read as a precursor to the RODEO class currently in place. Both courses pursue similar goals, evidencing that character traits such as involvement and respect for authority continue to be key in defining acceptable character traits for school. The student author's plea for involvement in ACE is of particular interest in discussing notions of respect for authority and peers for two reasons. First, the author casts the adults as caring thereby positioning them in a role warranting respect and gratitude. Secondly, peer-to-peer respect is communicated by active involvement in the school

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community. Involvement demonstrated an investment in the community and fostered the development of a mutual respect with community members. As many of the participating teachers described, these are also the traits of a good citizen showing the intertwined nature of citizenship and character education in the school.

Ms. Wilson extended the idea of mutual accountability when she expanded the conversation to include her own classroom procedures. She spoke about the importance of cooperative learning in her science classroom and added that experiences like these would help students in the "real world." She described her classroom environment in this way:

> I did a lot of cooperative learning, they'd have cooperative lab groups and I'd do mixed abilities. At first, they'd be like 'I don't wanna be in his group' And I'd say, 'go home and ask your parents if they like everyone they work with? People may get fired not because they can't do their job but because they can't get along with their coworkers.' And they'd come back the next day and say like 'yeah, my dad said there's this guy at work…' And I'd say 'Yeah. But what I'll do for you is I'll change your group every six weeks so you don't   have to be with somebody you don't like for more than six weeks at a time, you know everybody gets a turn.'
> And we had to talk about it, don't just tattle that he's not doing his job, maybe he forgot what his job is, tell him, remind him you know you are supposed to be writing all this stuff down or your job is to get the equipment; just remind them what they are supposed to be doing. And don't call him stupid, or they're not going to want to do anything. There is a way to manage people and first let's be real clear about what everyone's job is and then second of all if your job is to make sure you're responsible for your group. You are getting a group grade on this, so it stopped being like, he was looking on my paper, it became you know did you get that finished, we have got to turn this in together. So that was probably the hardest lesson that I taught, you know to help your neighbor out and be a responsible person and to work as a team but then once they got that   they really liked it. (Interview with G. Wilson, July 2011)

Consideration of this story within the context of citizenship education brought to light this teacher's conceptual understanding when she communicated that she felt it was

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important for students to learn how to work together toward mutual good. Teaching

students the value and importance of working together demonstrated Ms. Wilson's desire

that students become accountable. She encouraged students to pull their own weight to

benefit the group while also communicating the importance of working respectfully with

others. This provides an interesting connection to the ways in which democratic ideals are

enacted in schools via teaching students to deliberate and reach a consensus that benefits

the group (Parker, 2003). This excerpt also showed Ms. Wilson's expectation that

students would respect her authority in the classroom and work in cooperative groups

even when they had reservations about doing so. The idea of working toward the

common good is further evidenced in the next section when teachers talked about notions

of the respect for the school in both concrete and abstract ways.

Respect for school (property and reputation)

The final sense of respect to come out in the yearbook data was respect for the

school itself and was portrayed in two ways. The first was a notion of respect for physical

school property and the second was the more abstract idea of maintaining the school's

reputation. From the very beginning students were encouraged to act "courteously" for

the sake of manners and to ensure minimum damage to school property. This excerpt

from the 1954 yearbook, "Courtesy is Never Outdated" illustrates this point:

> The word "courtesy" is derived from medieval days when kings and queens
> held courts. Lords and ladies who showed courtesy were using their court
> manners.
> But courtesy is not old fashioned; nor is it reserved for the nobility. All people
> are expected to practice the rules of everyday politeness.

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Leaving tables clean in the lunchroom, paying attention in class, waiting your turn in line, caring for school property, and walking in the halls are just a few ways to show your friends that you know what courtesy at school means. No matter where you are or what you are doing, you will make more friends if you are polite and considerate. Why don't you try to build a good reputation for yourself and your school by practicing common courtesy every day? (Student-generated text, 1954)

Here the author mentions that students' behavior impacts the reputation of the school but also that they should be mindful of their behavior in order to ensure that property is not damaged or misused. The passage communicates to students that they are directly responsible for the appearance and reputation of the school thereby intertwining the identity of the student with the identity of the school.

Students have also been consistently charged with communicating messages conveying respect for the school to younger students. In the following student commentary from the 1956 yearbook we see this play out again. Two students wrote,

*R.H. says…*This year the spirit of our school and football team is high. It is really wonderful to hear everyone yelling.
In addition to yelling at the games, we should show respect for other schools and their teams. The way we act in public determines our school's reputation. So far, it is good. It is up to us to keep it that way.
*M.B. says…*Three years ago West was a new school with no record behind it. Today it has made a name for itself in sports and other activities. How did it build a good reputation so fast? Though school spirit. Now that we have such wonderful spirit, we must try to keep it that way for this year and years to come. (Student commentary in yearbook, 1956)

In both cases the students are charged with communicating a sense of shared community to their peers in order to foster a positive school image. Maintaining a positive school image is connected to the idea of citizenship by reinforcing a nostalgic be-true-to-your-school sentiment. In this case, the school is a micro version of larger society with the

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practice of preserving the reputation of the school cast as a training ground for becoming a patriotic citizen. In other words, students acting as appropriate school representatives demonstrate loyalty to the school and the embodiment of the good citizen.

One goal in promoting a positive school image is that the students be convinced to help maintain a harmonious school culture and environment. In the 1954 yearbook feature, "Privileges, Responsibility Go Hand In Hand" the writer describes to students their privilege in attending the then new junior high school and the importance of their contributions to maintaining the individual privilege that is the result of association with the school. The student writes:

> It may not have occurred to you before, but you are a privileged person. You have opportunities far greater than the average American student. You have pleasant, comfortable homes and understanding parents. The school you attend is modern, well-designed, and its teachers are experienced and highly skilled to help you in every way possible. _____, your city, is an education center and provides opportunities in every field of interest.
> All this points to the fact that we West-ites have more than our share of privileges. But with these privileges also goes our share of responsibilities. We must deserve our advantages by trying with all our ability to become outstanding citizens.
> The students of West who have the respect of, and have been chosen for honors by, their classmates are those who have shown that they are willing to accept responsibilities. These student leaders prove to us that they have consideration for the rights of others, ability to co-operate with students and   faculty, and regard for rules and school routine.
> It isn't enough just to have leaders with these qualities. Each one of us is responsible for making the most of his privileges and setting an example for others. To do this, begin now by wholeheartedly working together and trying to make everything we do represent our best efforts.
> (Student-generated text, 1954)

Interestingly in this section of text the student writer makes explicit connections between privileges and responsibilities, a prevalent notion in citizenship education. Privilege is

connected directly to establishing and maintaining a favorable reputation for the school as is the sense that students have an obligation to use the privilege they enjoy toward their own personal development and by acting as suitable representatives of the school. The excerpt also reinforces the idea that a social responsibility for modeling good citizenship is that of the privileged classes. Further, the message suggests that the more material advantage one possesses the greater the obligation and ability to act responsibly and as a model citizen. One can conclude then, that good citizenship itself becomes the domain of the privileged group.

The theme of becoming a model citizen is consistently apparent in various ways in the yearbooks. Often the topic is featured in the Clubs section of the yearbook, as is the case in this 1995 yearbook excerpt:

> We didn't have a club fair this year because of low student participation last year. We still had many organizations such as PALS, Peer Mediation, SIS, Band, Choir, Orchestra, Theatre Arts, and the Student Council. Students joined these organizations because it would be fun, they were chosen by their teachers, or recruited by friends. The organizations gave the school a good reputation and kept students busy after school. Such student activities were playing music, acting or helping fellow students. Peer Mediation became a larger and more active group this year. Students' hard work made this group a great success. In contrast last year's Peer Mediators were a little talked about group that lurked in the shadows of the student body. Being in an organization was a big responsibility because of time and effort. So doing homework in a rush or cramming for Friday tests were very common for club members. But they traveled down that path anyway; they knew it could help them in the future. (Student-generated yearbook text, 1995)

This example provided an interesting evolution of the ways in which privilege was used as a mechanism for promoting and modeling of citizenship. In the first place, the student points out that when students participate in clubs the school's reputation is bolstered

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thereby solidifying a positive image in the community and the perception of a privileged space. Secondly, while she mentions several student activities, her main focus is on the Peer Mediation group emphasizing the idea that students should learn to get along in a respectful manner and that communication skills are key to this. Further she emphasizes the idea that modeling these traits should be done in peer-to-peer relationships. While the student writer included the benefits to self and school when students participate in organizations, she also frames this activity in terms of a responsibility to the community, which will be explored further in the next section.

The word respect occupied a dominant space at West Middle School. Not only did the teachers and yearbooks communicate respect as a desirable attribute, they also communicated it as integral for success as a democratic citizen. Situating notions of respect within the context of democratic values provides a space for understanding the expansive nature of citizenship education. The inclusion of character traits as markers of good citizens pushes the boundaries of the school's individualistic goal of "producing the democratic citizen" (Biesta, 2007) as well as broadens the notion of citizenship education beyond the confines of the school and into the community. The next section deals with the concept of responsibility and the ways in which it was also constructed to produce a particular type of citizen.

RESPONSIBILITY

Slippages between notions of respect and responsibility manifested as both the teachers and yearbook staff writers often mentioned the relationship between the two. In

most instances teachers and student writers described demonstrating respectful attitudes and behaviors as the responsibility of the good citizen. Respect often meant that students were compliant to authority. This automatically cast the student in a lower status role within the school. On the other hand, responsibility was cast as a tool by which to earn the respect of those in power. This section will explore responsibility in the two contexts that came up most often in both interview and yearbook data. First, a shared sense of responsibility to school, neighborhood and city communities proved a key component to understanding engaged citizenship. Instances of engagement were expressed in both formal school settings (via class projects) and in extracurricular spaces (via organizations and volunteerism). Secondly, behavioral expectations were often nested within conceptions of personal responsibility. Exhibiting personal responsibility became an integral component of ensuring a productive school citizenry because it called upon the students to be productive, to be self-sufficient, and to take initiative in a variety of contexts.

Mr. Ramses spoke about citizenship education from the social studies teacher perspective: "Well I think citizenship education is making students active and productive citizens in your society. In Social Studies of course we did a lot through the study of the US government and the constitution and then looking at different elections. Whether they were gubernatorial or presidential it was about the election system." (Interview July 2011). These remarks corroborated the idea that curricular components often address notions of citizenship education. Mr. Ramses also spoke about the ways in which these lessons were often used as campus-wide activities thus bringing lessons of citizenship to

the whole student body. He stated, "Some of that carried out to the whole campus through mock presidential elections. These would be done in the classroom and the results for the whole school tallied." (Interview July 2011). However, because he sponsored several extracurricular activities, he went on to speak about citizenship education in ways that broadened the scope from curricular to a more nuanced definition that involved specific ideas of community involvement and participation. He stated:

> As the student council sponsor, we did a lot with service projects and helping the community and helping different individuals and working with different community agencies, like the Salvation Army. The other class that I did towards the end of the time I was there was the Peer Assisted Leadership (PALS) program. It was the PALS class where the kids who I worked with were 8th graders; there were about 15 of them. I co-taught the class with the counselor. These kids then would work with 6th grade students who were struggling students, they were their mentees, they would meet with them once a week and then the rest of the week we would either work on skills like mediation skills to become more effective in communicating with people or we'd do some kind of service project. Those were the beginnings I think of this idea of service learning that has really taken a hold now and has become much more prominent in many schools. But I think that back then it was just sort of laying the groundwork for it and not really at the same level that we have today. (J. Ramses interview, July 2011)

This transcript entry is relevant for two reasons. First, Mr. Ramses referred back to his original definition of citizenship education by referring to the ways in which community participation was advocated by both the student council and the PALS organization. In sharing the value he placed on organizations' activities, he constructed the idea of a school community. Additionally, he points out the importance of the service that the PALS and student council provided for perceived needy members of both the school and city communities. Their activities demonstrated the perception that those in more

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privileged positions are obligated to help those in less privileged positions as well as to model responsible behavior in doing so.

Secondly, the data shows the valuing of certain character traits that model good citizenship. The participant talked about good citizens being "active" and "productive" initially. The examples provided in the above excerpt show a valuing of students who are learning to meet the needs of their community while at the same time fostering very specific skill sets for doing so. Beginning in 1986 PALS was a regular feature in the yearbook, as the RODEO program would be nearly twenty years later. The descriptions often exemplified Mr. Ramses experience with PALS: "I like PALS because we get to help the sixth-grade students out and help the Spanish-speaking kids learn English," J.P., eighth grader said. "Before, after and during school, students worked to accomplish things for their activities. They dedicated time and effort to get involved and try to have fun at the same time" (Student-generated text, 1986). Here the students include text in the yearbook that describes one of the main goals of PALS as one of assisting students to assimilate into the school culture. This sentiment is echoed in Mr. Dumont's assertion that they should model good citizenship traits and praise students who practice them. This provides strong evidence supporting Parker's (1996) observation of the school's proclaimed mission of preparing democratic citizens.

Mr. Dumont made a point of discussing the ways in which all of the teachers, not only the social studies teachers, are responsible for promoting this form of citizenship education on the campus. All of the teachers are assigned a RODEO class in which they teach character education once a week. The focus of these classes were aligned with the

virtues of citizenship that Mr. Dumont spoke about such as effective communication, mutual respect, and service to the community. He went on to describe a project that the teachers and students had worked on the previous year that he felt demonstrated to the students a pathway to becoming an active citizen of their community:

> Each kid got a cloud and they talked about, if you could have your neighborhood look like something what would you have it look like? And they drew their perfect neighborhood or their perfect dream of life. Then we compared things to it and we talked about well what's going on in your neighborhood and we made t-charts about it: what don't you like and what could be fixed? How can we fix it? Can you do that? [Then we asked them if they could fix things] And they responded, well yeah I can. So it's just like that, making it small [doable] to their minds [empowering them] and to their actual lives. Instead of just saying, you know oh Thomas Jefferson was a great American, most kids don't care you know. But if I say you know look at this person from your neighborhood or do you have anybody that you know that does anything great? Then [they are like] yeah you know I have my neighbor that always comes around to make sure we're ok or always checks on us maybe when our mom isn't there. It's very cool to have them start seeing that stuff and recognizing that there are little things you can do to be a good citizen. (Interview with J. Dumont, September 2011)

In this way notions of participatory citizenship are communicated in spaces beyond the social studies classroom in that all of the teachers on campus were expected to carry out this activity with students during the RODEO class. This excerpt is particularly notable because Mr. Dumont clearly articulated the ways teachers are expected to make connections between ideological understandings of citizens and the students lives. In mentioning Thomas Jefferson as an ideal citizen and key player in the official curriculum, he reveals the motivation for the cloud activity as more nuanced than simply gathering student input regarding their neighborhoods and/or their ideas for improving them. The activity becomes a conduit for discussing the already established norms for an engaged,

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productive and active citizenry, in this case these definitions seem to be based upon those traits supposedly exhibited by the Founding Fathers.

Here I have offered both the PALS and RODEO classes as concrete examples of the ways in which the notion of citizenship education is communicated to students in the form of civic engagement. However, these examples also show how the notions of community participation and effective communication skills were stressed in a superficial manner. It exemplifies the notion that these activities often emphasize charity and character building "where the well-off feel obligated to help the less advantaged, though they do not conceive of those served as being part of their own communities" (Battistoni, 1997). In this a savior mentality is fostered while opportunities for engaging in activities such as service learning for social justice are missed.

Beginning with the very first addition of the yearbook in 1954, messaging promoted personal responsibility. In the excerpt, "You are West" the student writer connects developing a sense of personal responsibility with contributing to the school's positive reputation, showing the traits of a good leader, and recognizing and appreciating privileges. She writes,

> The day you entered school at West you automatically acquired the privileges and responsibilities of being a full-time representative of your school. You, an individual representing West in church, social, sports, and other outside activities, form others' opinions, and thus the reputation of this school. Your and every other individual in the student body greatly affect and are affected by this reputation, whether it is good or bad.
> Only a few thoughtless and uncalled for acts tend to overshadow, in the eyes of the public, much of the good in a school's reputation.
> West, as every school, has its problems. Advancement toward solving these problems is possible only through each student's realization and fulfillment of his individual responsibilities. (student generated yearbook text, 1954)

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Again this excerpt reminds students of their duty to the school via protecting its

reputation. Additionally, there is the explicit mention of the responsibility that

accompanies privilege. It is suggested that not only should the student modify behavior to

enact model citizenship they should recognize that this responsibility is an obligation of

their privileged position. This notion is key to the development of the idea that students

contribute to the culture of the school cast as citizens of the school. This leads to a second

component in the construction of responsibility at West, that individuals are ultimately

responsible for their own actions. This message has been consistent not only in this

school but remains a prevalent theme in citizenship education (Youniss, McClellan,&

Yates, 1997; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). In addition the notion of individual

responsibility serves as a building block toward the goal of learning good leadership

skills that are necessary to maintaining the privileged position.

In the next excerpt from the 1956 yearbook, "Borrowing Westites Are

Bothersome Parasites," the student writer uses a humorous yet strong analogy to drive

home the point that taking personal responsibility results in self-sufficiency, a valued

trait. She writes,

> It may seem stranger than fiction that parasites, such as mistletoe, fleas, flies
> and mosquitos feed and live on other plants or animals. This is not fiction,
> however; it is fact. It is also fact that we have among us today at West a certain
> form of parasite that lives at the expense of others. This bothersome parasite is the
> habitual borrower who expects others to provide him with pencils, paper or
> homework assignments left undone.
> As teen-agers, we are preparing ourselves for the future. The good or bad habits
> which we develop now will be determining factors in our success as
> citizens of tomorrow. Let's develop the good ones and eliminate the bad ones
> before it is too late. (Student-generated yearbook text, 1956)

In this example, the student's message begins as a tongue-and-cheek comparison but by the end of the excerpt the reader clearly sees that preparedness for schoolwork translates directly to preparedness for being a successful "citizen of tomorrow." The durability of this message is seen across time in the yearbooks. Each of the yearbooks examined for this project (ranging from 1954 to 2007) included text and images that promoted taking individual responsibility for one's actions and connecting this trait to the desired goal for students to become leaders.

A yearbook feature entitled "Producers and Directors, Tomorrow's Leaders Start Work Early" highlights both the reputation that West students, past and present, have for becoming leaders while emphasizing their commitment to becoming model citizens:

> Many West alumni have been recognized for making our city, state and world a better place, but West student leaders decided not to wait for the future. They decided to take action and make a difference now!
> Students in organizations such as National Junior Honor Society, Student Council, and the PALS program set a positive example for the student body by working to improve the school and community.
> "I like being a leader because I like being a role model for other West students," said R.S., eighth grade NJHS member.
> National Junior Honor Society members developed leadership skills and built strong character. NJHS also helped the school environment by holding fundraisers and volunteer events that included the entire student body.
> "NJHS helps the community because we do service activities that help the community in many ways and making it a better environment for people to live in," said NJHS vice president, A.H., eighth grader.
> (Student-generated yearbook text, 1995)

Once again the PALS, Student Council and National Junior Honor Society members are offered as exemplars in leadership and personal responsibility. The 2003 50th anniversary edition of the yearbook contained a two-page, full color spread depicting the citizenship

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posters and character traits posted in hallways as part of a student council project (characteristics of a good leader). The spread also included photos that documented meetings and students sharing their service hours time logs with the faculty sponsor. This edition of the yearbook also included several nostalgic glances at the school's past, which emphasized the same representations of school involvement, leadership and notions of maintaining the school's reputation as included consistently in all of the yearbooks.

Teachers' uses of extracurricular spaces add an interesting dimension to enactments of citizenship education. According to Fass (1989) extracurricular activities existed in delicate spaces in which students could learn and practice the traits of good citizenship. Embedded within the curriculum of extracurricular activities are senses of responsibility (eg. meeting deadlines and obligations) as well as assimilation via a fostering of group belonging (Fass, 1989). The teachers in this study spoke with a nuanced understanding of responsibility as a vehicle for developing a sense of membership in varying communities thereby carrying out citizenship education. In many cases the teachers' definitions of responsible behavior came to stand for good citizenship. Not only were particular understandings of responsibility advanced in many cases they also took over the ways in which students came to understand their role as citizen of the school. Presumably these ideas would extend to their lives outside of school thereby solidifying the important connections between the concept of the good citizen and responsible behavior.

Civic Duty

As Dalton (2009) points out, conceptions of the good American citizen have shifted greatly over the last several decades. He categorizes this shift as a move from the duty-based citizenry of past generations to a more engaged citizenry. Several socio-historical influences are at play in this shift including a change in how citizens think about the role of government, an increase in educational levels, a shift towards more political tolerance (among youth) and changes in the ways in which people participate in civic activities (e.g. fewer young people vote but more are actively involved in community service work) (Dalton, 2009). As this section illustrates, these shifts were evident as the teachers and student writers at West conceptualized citizenship education over time. During the early years there was much more emphasis placed on teaching students about the history and functions of the United States government, preparing them for voting, and developing law-abiding citizens. In later years, there was much more emphasis placed on community engagement via service learning, becoming an active and accountable member of the community and leaving a positive lasting contribution to the community.

Basic Understandings of Government and Civics

When asked about citizenship education initially, Mr. Bristol began by talking about his curricular understanding of the term. He described it in this way, "I quit in '77 so that's been many years ago. But there was very little emphasis put on it in those times. I mean I guess if you taught civics in high school, which was primarily a senior course

they dwelt on it more in that course. But in eighth grade American History as far a

citizenship chapter or section, I don't recall that at all." (Interview June 2011). At this

point in the interview he seems to have a very literal definition of citizenship, aligning it

with the civics course (which would later be split into the current government and

economics semester required for high school graduation). The high school civics course

was designed to teach students about the branches of government, the importance of

voting, the economic structure in the United States and the ways in which governmental

systems operate at the local, state and national levels. To follow up, I asked him about the

teaching of democratic values, at this point he talked about the Constitution as one of his

favorite topics to teach and acknowledged that in this way he addressed teaching the

importance of democratic values. He felt that the students needed to have a deep

understanding of the defining principles in the US Constitution. He described his practice

in this way:

> Well I'll tell you, I had, out of all my teaching, my two favorite areas were
> government and the civil war. And I spend too much time each year on both
> to the neglect of some other parts of American history. I bet I spent close to
> six weeks on the constitution. We went through the constitution. I mean, darn
> near word for word. You know? Uh, I remember that I, I basically made an
> outline of the constitution and tried to pick out what I thought were the most
> pertinent parts that an eighth grade kid could relate to. And printed that and we,
> we went over every single part of that and discussed it; and they had a better
> understanding of what the constitution is than their parents did, I'll assure you that
> when we got through.
> Of course during the teaching or the going over the constitution you related
> different things about the government, you tried to bring it to the present as
> much as you could, as in today such and such and you would name individuals in
> government who would fit that particular role, like supreme court or senator or
> representative. And that's what made history more interesting to those kids. The
> more you could relate it to the present, and say you know for those of you who
> think history doesn't repeat itself, we been talking about da, da, da now look at

today, look what's going on right now, today in Germany or wherever, you got the same situation, you know history repeating itself. That's why it's nice to learn something about history. (J. Bristol interview, June 2011)

This teacher conceptualized the importance of teaching about the foundational democratic ideals of figures prominent in United States history while at the same time showing students that these principles and ideals remained contemporary issues that deserve attention. His description of the importance of making the language of the US Constitution relatable to eighth graders demonstrates his understanding of his role as interpreter of the Founding Fathers intentions for citizens of the United States and his belief that these principles were still relevant during his contemporary teaching moment.

When Mr. Dumont spoke about teaching citizenship education within the social studies context, like Mr. Bristol, he addressed curricular requirements but he also included ideas about the types of citizens he hoped students would learn to be. He described his understanding this way:

> Well I think citizenship education is that while they are young, [we need to] get them to where when they are 18 or older, they are going to be people that want to vote, that follow politics, people that care about what is going on in their country instead of just being watchers and complainers, basically. Do stuff to where you can get involved enough, and you know some of its hypocritical on my part because, you know I'm not always going to get involved the way I should either. But you know [at least] it gives me a good outlet to teach them this is what being a good American is, this is what's expected. That and just being a good person because you know if we have a bunch of people we send out that are just generally good people, that will get just as far in life as anything else. So that's kind of what I think about citizenship. In history we teach it, obviously, through the constitution and the principles of it (the Constitution). [The] virtue of the Founding Fathers is a big thing now, kind of a buzzword. We are supposed to teach them this virtue, and show them America wasn't perfect but we've made strides over time. You know, like the Founding Fathers, they weren't perfect, some of them were slave holders, etc. but they believed in what they were doing and were willing to risk

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their lives to start a country for you. So, I think that's how we kind of do it in history just focus on the beginning of our American government.
(Interview with J. Dumont September 2011).

Mr. Dumont drew a clear connection between teaching students about notions of citizenship by ensuring that students understood the principles laid out by the Founding Fathers in the US Constitution. He also sustained a non-critical viewpoint by stating the "virtue of the Founding Fathers" should be framed in terms of the progress we have made as opposed to a questioning of the Founding Fathers' ideology. Presenting the US narrative of history in this way endorses a narrow sense of democracy and does not create an environment where true civic engagement could take place because the message to students, particularly those from outside the dominant group, is that the Founding Fathers' ideology is the one embraced by school officials, closing the space for deliberation. Interestingly, his words also provided evidence of the durability of the citizenship narrative communicated in public schools because he speaks about it in very similar terms to Mr. Bristol who taught in the school approximately forty years earlier.

While Mr. Bristol and Mr. Dumont spoke about teaching a sense of civic responsibility within the contexts of their social studies classes, Ms. Stanly, the current school librarian, spoke about citizenship education as one of the main goals for schooling. She noted not only the direct ways in which she contributed to students' civic training but also mentioned more subtle ways in which these lessons took place. When asked to define the school's role in imparting citizenship education she elaborated an emphasis on teaching a sense of civic duty and promoting responsible behavior:

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And also, people vote in our school. Even though we separate the kids from the voters, they see the signs, and I think that's really important. And I know our social studies teachers do a lot of talk about current events, and elections and the responsibility that you have as a civic duty and then of course we do a lot of work with I guess what you would call values education. Even little things like these library fines. I tell the kids, if you come to me I will give you a fifty percent discount. If I have to call you in, you'll have to pay full price. You know, just trying to get kids to take ownership and responsibility is something that [is important], especially at the middle school level, we are always working with the kids on [taking responsibility]. At the same time, it's not like we shame them, like they have an overdue book. I mean who hasn't been late in returning a video or whatever but just trying to get them some real life consequences and to help them be more responsible.

I think we are the only school that draws from 11 feeders, so we really do represent [name of city]. I just think it's so important for these kids to grow up with everybody. Because it's like I said citizenship, you know we are all citizens and we're different but we need to get along and have something pull us together, whether it's our US citizenship or we're all citizens of [name of school]. I think that's really the thing. (Interview with S. Stanley, May 2012)

Ms. Stanley mentioned both civic duty and learning to live in a diverse population as important traits of citizenship. Interestingly, however, she also believed that providing students with a common sense of "values" was an important component in teaching citizenship education. While she acknowledged that the student population was made up of students with diverse backgrounds, she felt common bonds needed to exist in order for them to fully grasp the notion of citizenship. This demonstrates her assumption that all students at West understand citizenship in terms of a US context showing an example of the ways in which assimilation works in subtle and dysconscious ways. In other words, while she valued the diversity of the student population, she also valued creating a sense of commonality among the students. Like the other teachers she referred to citizenship education not only as value-based but also as a preparatory component for adult life. Creating a communal environment at West remained a key component to its culture over

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time so it made sense that when describing educating the citizens of West, the teachers would emphasize notions of community engagement. But it also draws attention to the overall goal of assimilating students to West's culture.

Community engagement as civic training

I asked Mr. Ramses to speak further about the differences and similarities between citizenship education and character education. Interestingly, he was the only teacher participant who articulated a difference while also acknowledging an overlap between the two. He stated, "Well I think connections come through projects that involve service learning." (Interview July 2011). While service learning projects foster involvement and betterment in the community, they also have the potential for teaching students how to engage with local governmental agencies as well as learning about how to create change in society. He goes on to clarify that character education programs are designed to develop students' interpersonal skills and foster involvement. He stated, "I know there are a lot of good programs in the area of character education like legacy of giving and social/emotional learning. So I think there are some things that are interconnected when it comes to helping other people because as you do that you become an active and productive member of society which is the definition of being a good citizen." (Interview July 2011). This was the second moment in the interview when he mentions the terms active and productive. He went on to provide a definition of "active and productive" within social studies in terms of citizenship education by saying:

> Then with citizenship education there are some of the things that are more unique
> that deal with rights and responsibilities like voting and knowing   about your

systems of government and knowing that the rights that you have aren't given to you but you as a citizen have a responsibility to follow the laws and give back to your community and things along that line. (J. Ramses interview, July 2011)

While Mr. Ramses acknowledged the overlap between notions of citizenship education and character education, he saw citizenship education in more concrete terms of knowledge acquisition. His descriptions of the character traits of a good citizen served as a useful point of reference for thinking about the ways in which other participating teachers conflated and sometimes reduced the notion of citizenship with character education.

The topic of "rights and responsibilities" is prevalent in social studies classrooms and citizenship education and remains a key component in civic training (Dalton, 2009; Parker, 2003; Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). The notion that students should become active and participatory in a variety of communities was a dominant theme throughout both the interviews and yearbook data. Often a key component to teaching students about their civic duties was teaching them a connectedness with the outside community. This was demonstrated consistently within the yearbooks as well. The 1969 dedication of the yearbook states, "Schools are an important part of any city; they are testing grounds for the citizenship which will later contribute to the improvement and progress of the city. The Yearbook staff has decided, since _____ is so much a part of our daily lives, to make it also part of our yearbook…" This yearbook dedication emphasizes the idea that schools serve to promote the development of citizens who will work toward the continued improvement of the city as a whole and reinforces Mr. Ramses notion of an "active and productive" citizen.

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Ms. Wilson's definition of citizenship education included project-based learning as a tool for teaching students to engage with the community. During her time at the school, the sixth-gradee social studies curriculum did not emphasize world cultures but rather the local community. She offered this recollection of the ways in which students were taught to be good citizens:

> We talked about communities and, this is really before we got into sixth grade world cultures but there used to be a unit called "This is Your City, _____" and you talked about what a city was and you went to the capitol and the state cemetery and different state things and talked about the difference between a city and a state and what you're supposed to do. And I think that by going to the hike and bike trail picking up the trash, made them think oh, this is my community, you know I live in a nice place, I want to keep it nice for other people.
> (Interview with G. Wilson, July 2011)

In this brief example, Ms. Wilson acknowledged social studies skills that were addressed in this unit such as learning about the difference between a city and a state and learning about how the city works. She also reinforced the idea of becoming a productive and active citizen by contributing to the betterment of the community. This provided a concrete example of the ways in which students were taught to enact engagement in apolitical ways. However, betterment did not refer to issues of social justice. On the contrary the projects that West students participated with were neutralized sending the message that one could become an engaged citizen without actually concerning oneself with working toward equity in society. Messages about becoming an engaged citizen at West Middle School were also equated with efficient behaviors.

One facet embedded within teaching students to become civically engaged was time management. Engaging with organizations and service learning projects required

that students use a fair amount of free time in doing so. Time management proved to be a tool for reinforcing senses of accountability. The fact that the theme of the 1970 yearbook was "Time" calls attention to the emphasis that school environments place on using time in meaningful and productive ways. The leading page reads, "Time…how did we use it in 1969-1970? Life at West has many facets…teaching, learning, contributing, receiving, establishing an image…For its theme, the 1970 Yearbook presents a record of the ways time is spent at West." The following captions were used to introduce several sections of the yearbook:

> Staff page: "Time spent guiding, evaluating, understanding and most of all, caring."
> Student page: "Time spent laughing, studying, learning and being a meaningful part of West."
> Organizations page: "Time spent in coroperation, achievement, leadership and involvement."
> Final page: Time for creating an impression—to make hoofprints on the sands of time."

This short excerpt is packed with many of the same descriptors used by the teachers when they defined engaged citizenship including: caring, co-operation, leadership, involvement and leaving a lasting impression on the school community. The teachers used these ideas to exemplify the type of community engagement and membership they saw as ideal and to show that it was a cause worthy of time investment.

Ms. Stanley gave a very clear explanation of the ways in which the school promotes citizenship education in the form of teaching students the virtues of good citizens. She described the importance of students feeling like citizens of not only the city but also the school itself. This idea of membership in the school community was

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consistently communicated as an important piece in maintaining the types of participation

that were valued at the school like community engagement. Again notions of accepting

one another, working together and fostering inclusiveness in the school community were

important. The following interview excerpt provided a nuanced description of the

importance of instilling these traits:

> Well I think that's very, very important. In fact one of the things that I love
> about public school is that it makes us all come together; we have everyone
> here. I love that public education is free, that it's open to all, that we take every
> child who comes in. We have life skills kids with mental ages of one and a
> half with severe disabilities and it doesn't matter you know we take every child, I
> love our diversity here. I think that that helps create citizenship because they're
> not isolated with just people who are like themselves. But they come from all over
> town, they come with all different type of ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds
> and yet West brings us together so they play in band together, they do sports
> together, they are in their RODEO class together, they are in book club together.
> And I think that's really a great way to create a sense of citizenship.
> (Interview with S. Stanley, May 2012)

Ms. Stanley painted an inclusive picture of public schooling where people of all

walks of life come together to learn to become citizens and to create a space for

citizenship education within the school. In describing citizenship education in this way

she emphasized the idea that involvement with people from diverse backgrounds is key to

student buy-in regarding engagement with their school community. Further, she

suggested that students at West were in a unique position to engage with members of the

larger citywide community because the student population came from so many different

neighborhoods. At the same time that Ms. Stanley's vision of public education embraces

the idea of diversity, she simultaneously erases any acknowledgement of the power

dynamics that exist when diverse groups converge. While she places the idea of diversity

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at the forefront of her description she also erases issues of race, class and gender that exist in very real ways as tensions within West's culture. She seems to flatten any recognition of differences and replaces it with a nearly colorblind perspective.

CONCLUSION

Citizenship Education remains an integral part of the project of schooling in that schools persist as sites for training citizens to act in certain ways and to work purposefully toward maintaining the societal structure (Biesta, 2011; Fischman & Haas, 2012). This chapter has examined enactments and understandings of citizenship education over time within the context of West Middle School. Additionally it described the ways in which particular character traits were reinforced to produce citizens that valued particular notions of respect, responsibility and civic duty. Examination of the yearbook archive revealed a purposeful story about citizenship education, narrated via the text and images. This document mirrored the ways in which the teachers talked about citizenship education, character education and the traits and values they hoped to instill in their students.

Drawing upon Fass's (1989) work using yearbooks as a data source, this study used the yearbook archive as a starting place toward understanding the ways in which the books are used to communicate specific information to students and others (including faculty, staff, and parents). Extending beyond an examination of participation in extracurricular activities, this chapter sought to provide an examination of the ways in which students communicate about and are encouraged to communicate about citizenship

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(used here in terms of belonging in the school community) and civic education (used here in terms of democratic values). This archival data coupled with the teachers' voices provides a dynamic picture of the durability of the purposes of schooling as well as the role that schools play in communicating the values of the dominant culture to students.

A significant building block for this chapter was the premise that both official and hidden curriculum operate within schools, simultaneously teaching students a set body of content knowledge and the norms and behaviors expected in society (Jackson, 1968; Apple, 2004). The yearbooks proved to be a concrete example of a tool for enacting the hidden curriculum. The written text contained in this taken-for-granted school artifact remains one of the strongest curricular components of schooling. Not only are the messages of the hidden curriculum communicated to students, teachers and parents via the yearbook, they are presented in a genre that makes its way into the hearts and minds of anyone who has ever attended school.

This ordinary school artifact coupled with the voices of teachers proved valuable for understanding the subtle ways in which schools identify characteristics of the "good student" while simultaneously promoting pointed definitions of what it means to be a citizen of the school and community. As stated earlier, teachers' voices were significant in narrating the story of West Middle School because their voices have historically been blended into the background of schooling even though they remain in the forefront of enacting schooling. Their reported school memories and narratives were important to the narrative because they represent multifaceted views of citizenship education over time. Centering the actors that carry out the bulk of educational activity added an

authenticating voice to the narrative of West Middle School especially when examining particular practices and experiences (Portelli, 1991).

This chapter serves as an important piece in understanding what is happening in schools and what has happened in schools with regards to citizenship education. The findings presented unpack the ways in which teachers' definitions of citizenship education have evolved to include more idealistic notions such as mutual respect, active engagement and democratic behaviors while simultaneously expressing the durability of ideas such as teaching about how the government works and citizens function. The idealistic notions shared by teachers seem to express a desire for moving toward a more inclusive notion of citizenship. However, mechanisms for maintaining the set societal structure remain at work. They include: an emphasis on conformity, a de-emphasis on creating space for dissent and questioning and continued presentation of the dominant US narrative in both history classes and citizenship education activities.

The teachers' stories and the text included in the yearbook provide a valuable tool for tracing the evolution of understanding citizenship education at West Middle School. They provide evidence that schools have become more open places providing opportunities for a diverse population of students while at the same time narrowly defining success for those students. The story of citizenship education at West also serves as a reminder of how far we have to go toward broadening definitions of citizenship beyond notions of conformity to include notions of understanding. Lastly, the findings presented provide concrete examples of the ways in which the hidden curriculum is actually circulated in very tangible ways.

Understanding the senses of citizenship circulated and endorsed at West Middle School became a key component in exploring the construction of the culture at West because it led to understanding the notion of the West citizen. In constructing a school citizen identity, West was able to fashion its own image as well. With students and teachers who communicated about a commitment to the West community, the school was able to produce a positive and productive image of itself. Using both overt curricular materials, like signs in the hallways, and covert methods, like devoting innocuous yearbook space to stories about the PALS, students learned how to act as good citizens of West. Further, these practices have become embedded in the school culture allowing it to retain and maintain its image and identity as a good school.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

My last visit to West Middle School was May 31, 2012. It was the last day of school; Mustang Day was in full swing. As I entered the building, the buzz of summer vacation was already in the air. Walls were being cleared and furniture moved in preparation for summer maintenance. Teachers and students bustled about, finishing up the eighth-grade promotion ceremony and luncheon and preparing to go out to the carnival set up in the back soccer field. I visited the library for the last time, thinking about the fifty-three Mustang Days that had occurred before this one. I could visualize them being very similar to this day in 2012. The images from the yearbooks and the stories shared by teachers made it seem as if time at West were continuous. While West Middle School has grown and evolved during its life, its image and reputation remain in tact and durable.

The life story of West Middle School provides a glimpse at the ways in which particular stories of public school sites are maintained by teachers' enactments across time. The study I share in this dissertation presents insights about schools that are situated outside the parameters of the classroom by including community spaces and outside the contemporary moment by offering an historical perspective. My goal has been to provide a holistic view of schooling and to show the ways in which the school's history continuously informs the school's contemporary self. Over the course of this study, I sought to answer questions that would help push understanding the ways in which

culturally unique schools function during a contemporary moment stressing standardization.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

The research questions guiding my study were crafted with the intent of understanding West Middle School as a place with an evolving identity that is impacted by myriad forces. As I began my project I feared that because West had maintained a positive image over time and because it was the only middle school that the district granted access to, its life history might prove to be straightforward. On the contrary, situated within a variety of socio-historical contexts among a variety of social actors, the story of West turned out to reveal the complexities at work within schools as well as the tensions that create a dynamic figured world that continues to evolve while remaining steadfast.

The West teachers' stories made the figured world of West Middle School visible. They described this world as an exceptional place where they were able to create and maintain a sense of family among themselves. This familial structure played out in a variety of ways including bringing the teachers closer together during times of stress and providing a space for teachers to bond on a regular basis. While they expressed this familial bond in mostly positive terms, they also revealed the power dynamics at play as they carried out these roles particularly between teachers and administrators. As is the case in most families, identity and agency could shift within the structure of the West family. For example, the sixth-grade teachers considered the "younger siblings" and cast

in a subordinate light, were also able to use this position to have their needs met by the administration. Likewise, at the end of their first year as members of the West family, many had proven that they were more than "just elementary teachers" thereby giving them increased agency within the family. The fluidity of the dynamics at West illustrate the complexity of the relationships that developed at West and the diverse ways that these relationships contributed to the school's collective identity.

Their descriptions of exceptionality included the students with whom they worked. Because maintaining an image of diversity was important to them, stories about students included both affluent students and the bused/transfer students. In the case of the affluent students teachers were taken by the students' abilities in the classroom and athletics and also by the high level of involvement by their parents. When speaking about the bused/transfer students, the teachers usually remembered exceptional students as those who were successful in the classroom despite their social circumstances. The teachers described their relationships with these students in terms of guardianship revealing a nuanced system of conformity communicated by the teachers to the students. They saw the West familial dynamic, including the guardianship role, as integral to creating a culture of care. West was not without tensions but nonetheless remained a place where teachers wanted to be and where they established strong roots.

Building from the idea that the teachers cast their time at West in positive terms, including trying times, it is important to note the nostalgic environment that permeates West even now. The teachers who worked there long ago constructed their memory stories carefully, including an emphasis on West's strengths. The teachers who worked at

the school during the time of the study drew upon West's positive reputation and their current experiences to construct their stories of West's culture and environment. As noted previously nostalgia remains persistent at West. The physical environment, while renovated, preserves aspects of the original 1950s architecture and includes artifacts such as trophies and sculptures that depict West's reputation of achievement. The nostalgic view at West is not only represented in these physical forms but also in the shared vision of West that current teachers embrace. Over the course of the two years that I visited West, the teachers and staff members I spoke with readily shared a common story of West's past and present that demonstrated the way that nostalgic representation can work in present moments to preserve a cultural identity and image produced in the past.

The teachers' stories communicating a nostalgic view of West were reinforced in the yearbook archive. Because the yearbook archive spanned a 54-year period of time, I was able to see the ways in which messages were communicated among students. A key theme to reveal itself was how notions of citizenship and democratic values were communicated among students under the supervision of teachers. The yearbooks contained messaging that changed very little over time showing that a main component of West's reputation was the ability to assimilate students to its culture. The key themes to surface from the yearbook data were notions of responsibility that included self-sufficiency; notions of respect that included self, others and property; and notions of civic duty that included community engagement in the form of volunteerism.

Citizenship education proved to be a pervasive curricular concern at West and was not confined to social studies classrooms. Notions of citizenship education and

character education worked in concert to inform teachers' senses of how they should educate students to be "good" citizens of the school and nation. This conflation and reduction of ideas produced a definition of the good school citizen that became embedded within the culture of the school. As detailed in chapter six, the good school citizen can be described as one who possesses self control, communicates appropriately, is prepared for class, and who views attendance at West as a privilege. In this way enactments of citizenship education became tools for carrying out a hidden curriculum of conformity and normalized processes of socialization. Both social studies and non-social studies teachers recognized and reinforced durable traits of good citizens while at the same time creating space for students to learn to engage in their communities. However this involvement often did not include a social justice stance but rather operated from the more deficit-premise of volunteerism. The senses of citizenship circulated and endorsed at West Middle School proved a key component in understanding the culture, identity and image of the institution as a whole.

DISCUSSION: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF COMMUNITY

West Middle School revealed itself to be a unique place capable of producing an image, reputation and identity via the lived experiences of the actors within it. Drawing upon a figured worlds framework helped me to make sense of the stories shared by West teachers and to understand the socio-historical influences contributing to West's identity development. These activities included teacher interactions and agreement among them about what it means to be a teacher at West as well as ascribing meaning to a variety of

artifacts that came to represent West (eg. the yearbook, athletic trophies, academic achievement banners). The figured world of West Middle School is a place where teachers perceived a tight-knit community. This in turn contributed to teachers' understanding of West as a special place where they were in a unique position to educate students. The teachers identified several factors that contributed to the maintenance of West's positive reputation and image in the community. These factors included teachers reporting a collective memory of familial bond and structure, their commitment to students and casting West in a positive light even when they shared stories about challenging times at West.

The positive lens that teachers used to view West reinforced the school's nostalgic image. As Otto (2005) asserts, there exists a fascination with the era of schooling in the 1950s that is often represented in popular culture. In addition to the environment, West embraced tradition by preserving activities unique to the school, such as student-invented games and annual events. These moments of preservation became important factors for assimilating students to the culture of the school. Physical space, traditions, and messages communicating the privilege associated with West were all used to construct an exceptional place. While these nostalgic tools worked in powerful ways, teacher solidarity in recounting stories and working for the common good of West proved to be a key component for solidifying West as a figured world that has been able to endure change.

The teachers presented a surface-level picture of West Middle School where they felt valued and where the students were happy and provided with numerous

opportunities. While I do not suggest that they were sharing false memories, close examination reveals that figured worlds are complicated places were tensions and power struggles lurk beneath the surface. It is important to consider the ways in which these complexities play out in order to more fully understand schools as sites of normalization. The next three subsections, unpack some of the ways in which they played out via West's image, notions of citizenship education, and collective maintenance of West's reputation. I will discuss key conclusions that address the contradictory nature of West Middle School's life by considering the concepts of social reproduction, hidden curriculum and social and cultural capital as they pertain to West. In order to illustrate contradictions, I discuss the tensions between these critical notions on the one hand and central themes in the teachers' reports and yearbook portrayals on the other, as I have explicated them in prior chapters.

Social Reproduction and the Image of Diversity

During teacher interviews and conversations the term diversity was repeatedly used. As I listened to these stories I came to understand that the teachers saw the diverse student population at West as an asset for the campus. During my first visit the current school librarian pointed to an early yearbook depicting one African American male student as proof of the school's early integration. As described in chapter four, West claimed to be "naturally" integrated due to the inclusion of the Village neighborhood within its boundary zone. One interesting facet of West's integration story is that the diversity in students' race and socioeconomic status are an important component to

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West's public image. The discussion of West's student demographics was connected to my research question regarding the ways in which demographic shifts impacted life at West. There are also important connections to my question regarding the way teachers narrated their understandings of West's identity and culture. West teachers recounted a common narrative that cast serving the school's diverse population in a positive light and as a key characteristic of West making it an important component of West's enduring identity and image.

Teachers claimed pride in serving a diverse population while at the same time supporting opportunities that assimilated students into the established school culture. Race and culture often informed teachers' perceptions of students. While they desired to protect and help their students they also operated from racialized assumptions about these young people. This is not to suggest that the teachers operated from a solely deficit perspective. On the contrary, they often spoke of the bused/transfer students as bright, gifted, talented and great kids; the downside is that they also communicated surprise at these facts. As is often the case, even the best-intentioned adults cannot escape embedded radicalized notions regarding the academic abilities of students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2009/1994; Ferguson, 2001). These contradictions point to the necessity for continued work toward understanding the ways in which race plays out in schools. A setting like West, where there is a truly diverse student population could potentially serve as a space for engaging in difficult dialogues aimed at dispelling racialized myths, such as that bused students' families value education less than the affluent students' families. Unfortunately in the current moment West persists as a site where students are welcomed

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with open arms but quickly assimilated to a school culture that mirrors the affluent culture of the neighborhood where it is situated.

Social reproduction was also at play as students were led to conformity in order to gain the most from their opportunity to attend West. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990/1977) notion of the relationship between schooling and social reproduction plays out at West. The students who came from "other" neighborhoods were cast as in need of lessons in becoming successful West students. They were provided with a number of organized opportunities for acquiring these skills including the RODEO advisory class and the PALS program. Simultaneously teachers and students alike communicated that attending West should be seen as an opportunity for advancement. The fact that teachers felt it their duty to act in guardianship roles provides evidence of the inscription of cultural capital on parents as well (Lareau, 2003). While the teachers did not directly criticize the parents of bused/transfer students they did feel it their duty to teach students about school success. Additionally, they emphasized the exceptionality of the neighborhood parents thereby communicating that the teachers valued the involvement and the social, cultural and economic capital that these local parents brought to West. These instances evidence the ways in which schooling reproduces societal norms but also reveals a need for broadening definitions of parental involvement and valuing diversity of knowledge.

From the teachers' perspective deficit orientations were interrupted by the opportunities provided for students to feel as though they belonged at West and could become accepted members of West's community. One example of this is a story shared

by Mr. Dumont and Ms. Eastern in chapter five. They describe that all students are welcome on the pep squad and athletic teams regardless of ability to buy a uniform and/or provide their own transportation. This example shows that the teachers believed that opportunities at West should be available to all students and worked to make them available. However, it is complicated by the fact that the opportunities valued for students remained mainstream thereby assimilating students to West's culture as opposed to West expanding its view of student need and desire. In this way West exemplifies a space of social reproduction by reinforcing notions of normalcy and accepted venues of participation.

Lareau's (2003) work points out that schools act to reproduce social status when they create spaces where upper-middle-class traits are valued and cast as normal. My study extends this notion by showing how West embraced its image of diversity while at the same time generating the same narrow messages of success for students and teachers. Additionally, West is a solid example of the ways in which school culture works as a mechanism of social reproduction. My conclusions add to Lareau's argument that certain types of child-rearing are more valued in schools by showing the ways in which the school compensates when teachers perceive that certain groups of parents are not able to provide the social capital that their children need to be successful in school. West exemplifies a space where deficit orientations can and are interrupted by teachers' beliefs that all students should be included and provided opportunity. At the same time it exemplifies powerfully embedded ideas about what it means to be included and which opportunities should be provided.

Citizenship Education as Pervasive Hidden Curriculum

Notions of citizenship education functioned to communicate acceptable constructs of the West citizen. Understandings of citizenship education were a key area that I set out to investigate in my research questions. In chapter six I discussed the ways in which understandings of citizenship were communicated between teachers and students and among students. The yearbook served as a unique data source for uncovering this communication among students themselves. Much has been written about the purposes of hidden curriculum and the ways in which it is present in schools via systems like classroom routines and procedures (Jackson, 1968; Apple 1982). My study addresses the complexity of hidden curriculum by exploring the variety and pervasiveness of the spaces it occupies. The yearbook archive is a distinctive component that illustrates an overlooked space where students actually re-narrate a hidden curriculum for each other. The yearbooks carried messages of citizenship in the West community and communicated to students the character traits valued at the school. Messages related to becoming a citizen of West included conveying to students acceptable school behaviors such as following school rules, communicating appropriately and contributing to the West community. In this way citizenship education could be identified in terms of hidden curriculum because the messaging was presented in an innocuous format. Further, yearbooks produced in the contemporary moment remain a tool of mainstream discourse about citizenship traits endorsed by schools as they make their way out of school buildings and into the lives of the people who possess yearbooks. The images and texts in

the yearbooks not only worked to teach students about belonging at West but they also communicated messages to teachers about their responsibilities as well. The yearbooks often cast teachers in the role of guardian thereby reinforcing this self-perception reported by the teachers who were interviewed. Images of teachers in the yearbooks depicted them in the role of leader, sponsor and caregiver. These images of teachers' roles serve as one example of the ways in which the yearbooks not only carried messages of citizenship but also worked to help construct the identity of West Middle School teacher.

The yearbook messages were not the only contributor to West's construction of the meaning of citizenship; the teachers' stories were also relevant to this process. Collective identity construction was the result of teachers' thinking of themselves as fellow West citizens and custodians of West's reputation along with the students. Participating teachers seemed compelled to share a particular narrative of West's life in order to maintain the figured world of West Middle School. Additionally, the teachers' collective identity led to a solidarity that they often spoke about during interviews. This is an important consideration when casting teachers as integral actors in the production of schooling because it demonstrates the influence that their perceptions, attitudes and relationships have on the school's environment and the ways in which they carry out their daily lives. Unpacking notions of solidarity and collectivity among the teachers provides a way for understanding relationships that develop between teachers and the schools where they work. Not only are teachers charged with instructional delivery, they also play a key role in determining the public image of the school.

My study contributes to the scholarly discussion surrounding citizenship education in two ways. First, it provides reinforcing evidence that the trends toward flattening out definitions of citizenship to character education that have been pervasive in middle schools since the 1980s (as shared by the teacher participants) persist today (Carr, 2008). Not only did the teachers use the terms citizenship education and character education as synonyms, the yearbook excerpts shared in chapter six also mainly focused on the connection between desirable character traits and West citizenship. In turn the adults reinforced these traits as keys to success in school, providing an example of how notions of duty-based and participatory citizenship are circulated in schools (Westhiemer & Kahne, 2004). While their study mainly dealt with communication of these ideas via specific classroom projects and explicit instruction, my study reveals that these lessons also take place outside of the classroom and in covert ways.

By exploring spaces and instances of citizenship education outside of the social studies classroom, my study also extends notions of hidden curriculum beyond a theoretical construct by providing an example of a vehicle for communicating unspoken messages about citizenship. The yearbook is "hidden" in plain sight as it operates as a space for student expression while at the same time working to communicate school-sanctioned information. The discourse of yearbook production makes it appear to be a student generated product. However, close examination of the content reveals a powerful tool for normalizing behavior and providing instructions for school success. My findings regarding yearbook messaging build from Apple's (1975, 1982) work by showing a concrete mechanism where upper-middle class ideology is not only reinforced but also

uses a type of peer-to-peer policing that makes these ideas seem authentic to youth. Additionally, this particular artifact is a tangible example of how schools practice notions of cultural preservation and distribution of cultural norms via everyday, accepted practices (Apple, 1975). One final way that my use of the yearbook data adds a dimension to Apple's notion of schools-as-order-producers is by showing that the yearbooks continuously featured text and images that promoted normalized behaviors that it claimed would lead to success as a student (and citizen) of West Middle School.

I was also concerned in my research questions with how teachers' perceptions regarding citizenship education might have changed over time. At first glance it seems that little has changed in the ways that teachers define citizenship education over time. Close examination does, however, reveal nuanced shifts in the ways in which they communicate understandings of citizenship. As reported by Mr. Bristol, during the early years when West was a junior high school, citizenship education was considered a senior high school course covering the topic of civics and government. Because of this perception, Mr. Bristol reported that he did not normally address citizenship education in his eighth-grade history class. Later in West's life, as Ms. Nathan reports, when busing happened, it became necessary for all teachers to take responsibility for teaching about citizenship. Her description of this form of citizenship education mainly focused on teaching students about acceptable conduct, communication and community building that would foster an environment of belonging. This trend remains intact as teachers from later decades share similar views. In the contemporary moment at West, citizenship education is considered a key component for teaching students how to be successful

citizens of West. Teachers' understandings, definitions and enactments of citizenship education contribute to West's image of success and exceptional identity because they function as a blueprint for students to follow in order to access membership in the West community.

Constructing Reputation as Capital

West Middle School consistently enjoyed a reputation of success based upon its academic ranking with the Texas Education Agency and its geographical location in an affluent neighborhood. This subsection describes two ways in which this positive reputation worked as cultural capital. First the teachers fostered this solid reputation by collectively narrating West as exceptional. Teachers identified a variety of factors that motivated their loyalty to West including the family-like bond among themselves and administrators and the positive professional environment they enjoyed. Because the notion of a strong teaching staff became an embedded identity marker at West, the teachers were able to make space for resistance when necessary and enjoyed a certain amount of professional freedom that teachers in lower performing schools often do not enjoy. Secondly, West's durable reputation as academically recognized continues to attract and keep strong teachers making it a desirable transfer option for students whose neighborhood schools are ranked as failing. This contributes to the narrative that West provides social and cultural capital to students who would not attain it otherwise. One obvious example is that success at West, in many cases, sets a student on a path toward a more desirable high school and/or a college track. A less obvious example would be the

ways in which capital is transferred to students via special programs (such as the PALS program) that provide focused attention toward assimilating students into the cultural norms at West.

Amid the trying times created by the current accountability movement teachers find ways to carve out space for ensuring student success (Van Hover, et. al, 2012; Webb, 2005, 2006; Stillman, 2011). While many studies focus specifically on the ways in which teachers enact classroom practices and plan for instruction, my study centered on the spaces teachers created outside of instructional practice and content knowledge. This broadening of focus revealed that teachers use the capital gained from positive reputation in order to create an environment where they can accomplish their work. The stories that West teachers shared underscore the importance of the teacher's role in constructing school identity. More importantly, they show that teachers possess collective agency. When given professional opportunity and afforded a reputation of professionalism, teachers are willing to build a school community that endures and survives competing outside forces. This phenomenon shows the powerful bond that can be created when teachers carve out spaces for forming a collective identity.

Because nostalgia works to connect the present with particular versions of past events in order to maintain cultural cohesion (Spitzer, 1999), West teachers' narratives are a valuable mechanism for understanding how they created and used collective identity as a positive form of capital. Additionally, the repetition of nostalgic narratives becomes part of the collective memory, making them a key component in creating collective identity (Jameson, 2003). The participating teachers demonstrated a nostalgic view when

they recounted stories of tradition, reputation and West's image. Repetition of these nostalgic narratives was an important component in understanding the West teacher identity as created by a group of actors at one point in time and continued by other actors at later points in West's life. Furthermore, nostalgic views of West seeped out into the community helping to reinforce and maintain its reputation.

While the teachers were able to use West's reputation in combination with their own "good" teacher reputations to garner capital, West simultaneously used its reputation for normalizing students to its culture by promising them acquisition of the capital it had to offer. The pervasive narrative of school is that education equals success and West's is no different. West's version is interesting because my observations revealed many spaces outside the classroom where students were bombarded with messages promoting particular character traits, academic goals, and behaviors that would lead to mainstream success. Further, West enlists extracurricular space for carrying out many of these goals by partnering with community services, affluent parents and universities to ensure that they are able to provide a system of support for helping students conform to West's expectations. Mr. Franklin shared an example of this type of activity when he talked about partnering with one local university's school counseling program in order to provide small-group instruction for students transitioning to West from other campuses. The groups emphasize appropriate communication skills in order to help students feel as though they are members in the West community. In fact, appropriate communication was emphasized in many school spaces, including the RODEO classes, further demonstrating that it is one of the traits valued at West. Because West enjoys a good

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reputation this type of training is accepted as a normal function of the school and is also seen as capital needed for larger success.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

My project aimed to understand the school as a living entity, possessing a dynamic life story and continuing to evolve. Exploring West in the context of life history enables better articulation of the complexities at work within the school. These go beyond curriculum and instruction to include the daily lived experiences of teachers and the ways in which these experiences converge to create a life history narrative. My study makes a move toward understanding the role that teachers play in the production of the identity, image and culture of a school. On the basis of my findings and conclusions, in the following section I present ideas for broadening pre-service teachers' understandings of the places where they will teach and learn with students, colleagues and the community. I then suggest spaces in education research where we might continue to include broadened perspectives about methods and data analysis.

Practical Implications for Teacher Education

During my pursuit of the doctorate I have worked with pre-service teachers as both an instructor and facilitator giving me a particular insight into the teacher preparation program at my institution. Our emphasis remains primarily within classroom spaces. Coursework focuses mainly on methods of instruction as well as subject and grade-level curricular content. Field placement goals generally center on classroom

management, lesson planning, instructional practice and developing professional behaviors such as promptness. While I would not argue neglecting these worthy and legitimate goals for student teachers, I would argue that these practices squeeze out the important acquisition of knowledge and skills needed outside of the classroom spaces where teachers often operate. Current foci do not address the ways in which the school environment shapes teacher identity or the ways in which these identities seep into their daily lives. As I have discussed in this dissertation the participating teachers developed senses of West that moved beyond classroom walls. In fact, they rarely spoke of their classroom practices and curriculum. More often they described West as a community, a family and as part of their remembered lives long after leaving West. They also shared stories about the communities they served, the demographic shifts that took place at West over the years and the effects of education reform policy indicating that in their role as teacher, they were forced to consider much more than individual teaching practices and subject area content.

To this end I suggest three ways that my study informs potential shifts in current teacher education practices. First I suggest ways that teacher educators could facilitate the development of a broader sense of teacher identity. Secondly, I suggest working with teachers to develop skills for understanding the socio-historical contexts of the schools and communities where they will work and the educational policy that will inevitably affect them over time. My third recommendation is specific to the field of social studies education in that I suggest engaging with students in projects that embed specific content

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knowledge and address issues of social justice. I discuss each of these suggestions in more detail below.

       1. *Deepening professional teacher identity*. Based upon the stories of West teachers, I suggest approaching community-building for teachers themselves as important for understanding the dynamics at play within schools. The West teachers who participated in my study consistently and repeatedly pointed to the importance of the sense of family created among them at West. This sense of family was not only important on an interpersonal level but also helped them to come together to resist in times of adversity and to offer each other support in carrying out their daily responsibilities. While the cohort model used in the teacher education program I am familiar with helps to foster a community of learners among the student teachers, we could also take steps to broaden notions of professional identity development. In many cases the student teachers support each other as they work through coursework and field placements but I think a shift could be made toward helping them achieve a deeper sense of the professional identities they are forming.

       One way enact this shift is by moving the focus of our conversations about professionalism from behavior based (such as attendance and dress code) to meta-cognitive discussion on the shifts in thinking as they move from student identity to teacher identity. This space could also be used to engage in discussion about outside forces that impact classroom and school life. Discussion surrounding education policy measures that are up for adoption, at both the district and state level, should become much more commonplace. Access to this type of information makes possible a wider

perception of school life and enables student teachers to see the processes involved in creating school environments. This, in turn, could lead to habits of mind that create teachers who are more actively engaged in education reform.

2. *Understanding the importance of socio-historical contexts*. Equally as important as keeping abreast of shifts in education policy in the contemporary moment is acquiring a sense of the school's past. I suggest it is worthwhile for student teachers to learn the importance of the socio-historical contexts of schools and communities. Pre-service teachers' time in field placements is limited. Despite limited exposure to their school's culture during field placements, student teachers often engage in extracurricular activities with students, after-school meetings with teachers and brief encounters with parents. They begin to see that there is more involved in teaching school than classroom tasks. West teachers' stories revealed the socio-historical context of West Middle School during a variety of phases in its life. Teachers internalized, and ultimately discussed these influences in two distinct ways. First, the teachers demonstrated collective memory by pointing out many of the same specific historical moments that they considered relevant at West. In doing this, they evidenced the ways in which a school's history has lasting effects on its contemporary culture. New teachers would benefit from hearing how teachers in their own school environments narrate the school's history in order to gain an understanding of the school's culture. Secondly, West teachers expressed an understanding of the social issues that impacted the school in particular ways. For example, when they spoke about busing in a social context they shared the ways in which they prepared for receiving the new students. One product of this preparation was the

development of an intramural sports program that is still used as a mechanism for making transfer students feel a part of the West community. These examples are only two among others discussed in chapter five but they demonstrate the ways in which socio-historical understandings contribute to maintaining the school's culture by becoming a part of the school's narrative.

When new teachers enter a school's life, they take up the school's narrative. This makes it important for student teachers to consider the social and historical contexts of the school. Encouraging students to engage in conversations with teachers about changes in the school demographics, education policy and teaching practices over time as a starting point could help accomplish this. Additionally, student teachers could be provided with the tools and time for gathering information about the schools and districts where they would like to work. Adding an emphasis to this type of information, student teachers not only realize the dynamic nature of schools but also the agency they have in making choices about where they want to teach.

When student teachers are granted access to the historical facts associated with a school, as well as the lore that develops among teachers over time, they gain insight into a school's environment. This information could be accessed in simple ways, such as conversations, or in more sophisticated ways like learning where the school district archive is kept and then visiting it. The socio-cultural dynamics of the school are also important. Student teachers should be encouraged to understand the district boundary system and transfer options available to students in order to gain an understanding of the population they will serve. Again, this information could be accessed via simple or

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sophisticated means. Knowledge of historical and socio-cultural underpinnings allows new teachers to carve out space for challenging the subtle forms of assimilation and reproduction that my study reveals. When teachers understand schools as complicated environments they are better positioned to broaden their own perspectives regarding the generative nature of school culture and to challenge their own assumptions about students. Additionally, they would be able to recognize that schools do not operate independently of the society and historical moments in which they are situated but rather are impacted by myriad forces that play out on a daily basis.

3. *Rethinking citizenship education.* As citizenship education persists as a key curricular component in middle schools, my final suggestion deals explicitly with providing pre-service teachers with tools for expanding notions of citizenship beyond duty-based, character-based and superficial notions of citizenship education. As demonstrated at West, on-going discourses involving ideas of respect and responsibility worked to produce specific purposes of these traits. Notions other than those sanctioned by West were not ever visible. For example, as discussed in chapter six, the notion of respect dealt very specifically with the ways in which students made sense of authority. This resulted in continued hierarchical normalization of marginalized groups brought about by a lack of authentic spaces for dissenting discourse. If teacher-preparation spaces allowed pre-service teachers to engage in authentic deliberation of difficult topics they could learn the skills for teaching their own students about civic disagreement as another sense of respect. Addressing senses of democracy via this type of project seems a natural fit for the social studies education classroom. A second way to achieve this goal is

through service-learning-for-social-justice projects. Embedded within service learning projects are both civic and communication skills. More importantly, they provide the space for those engaged with them to more fully work with the community and to understand situations confronting schools and neighborhoods (Battistoni, 1997; Wade, 2007). Pre-service teachers could craft service-learning projects that not only focus on community issues but also focus on discovering the causes of those issues, thereby creating a deeper understanding of their school communities.

The West teachers who participated in this project would all be considered good teachers, with a commitment to teaching and guiding their students. At the same time, the power they had to create and maintain West's cultural identity was apparent. This meant that the care they demonstrated for students was continually problematized and disrupted by expectations of normalcy and assimilation. My suggestions are intended to work toward a more holistic view in teacher education. While time with pre-service teachers is short, I believe that making realistic shifts in some focus areas will help better prepare teachers for the complicated world of school. In this way, I think we can encourage new teachers to look critically at their own assumptions about teaching and students.

Implications for Research: Expanding Methodology and Mind-set

I continue to grapple with the idea that schooling is an entrenched institution in the United States that remains a powerful ideological tool of social reproduction. While the field of education research has, in recent decades, become more critical in its examination of educational policy, instructional practice, and teacher preparation there

remains a need for work that examines the ways in which everyday lived experiences within schools create school culture. Moreover, research remains largely focused on distinct outcomes as opposed to the subtle nuances that may reveal how schools develop an institutional identity over time and the ways in which this identity impacts teachers and students. I imagine space for educational research that expands notions of case study by drawing upon life history and oral history methods for understanding the complexity of schools to view them as living beings.

My study was not without limitations. It only provides one case for examination making it difficult to generalize my findings. The participants were not randomly selected but rather were chosen for specific reasons such as the time period during which they worked at West. This means that had I chosen different teachers, the story may have turned out differently. The strength of my study is that the methodology could be applied to any school setting. In the following paragraphs, I discuss three pathways opened up by this study that may be fruitful for consideration in educational research. First, I discuss the rationale for creating broader space for privileging classroom-teacher voices in education research. Secondly, I propose expanding definitions of curriculum materials to include school artifacts and covert messaging since they are pervasive in schools. My final point addresses the relevance of including socio-historical contexts in our stories about schools.

This life history project involved a subject that could not speak for itself which left the dilemma of making a decision about who would provide the narrative for this life story. This choice was my first authoritative act as researcher. My decision to ask

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teachers to narrate the history of West Middle School positioned them as integral actors in the production of schooling who would speak as the experts on West's culture, identity and image. This was a move toward sharing my authority as researcher and author. More importantly, it resists the contemporary moment where teachers are often blamed for poor school performance and their voices neglected in education policy making. Privileging teacher voice in this study creates a space for co-constructing the story of West and provides an avenue for understanding the ways in which teachers operate within schools on a daily basis. Their stories provide perceptions of their working conditions, understandings of schooling and experiences in schools. These stories reveal a broadened view of teachers from deliverers of content knowledge to creators of school culture in turn leading to a deeper understanding of schools themselves. Valuing and listening to teacher voices also creates a space where teachers can engage in reflective practice not only about teaching methods but about their teacher identity as well.

My project also drew upon oral history methods, casting archival data as important for understanding the historical context of the events and ideas the teachers shared. Engaging with archival data led me to view the yearbook in an innovative way. Not only was it an archive depicting the life and times at West Middle School, it was actually used to convey strategic and purposeful messages to students. Education research has the tendency to study curriculum materials that are solely related to content-area knowledge acquisition, particularly at the middle school and high school levels. I suggest that, as we continue research regarding curriculum materials, we include ordinary artifacts that are endorsed by schools. In the case of this study, the yearbooks became the

curriculum base for understanding notions of citizenship education. In this unlikely space, I was able to make connections between enduring ideas about the West community such as the traditions they continue and the image of the school in the contemporary moment. Understanding "hidden" curriculum materials reveals a broader picture of what students learn in schools.

While we do often mention the socio-historical situation of schools in education research, we typically do not emphasize the ways in which remnants of each socio-historical moment remains with a school, impacting its contemporary moment. While not every education project is going to provide a historical perspective, conducting this inquiry drew attention to the ways in which West is still impacted by decisions made and enacted since the very beginning of its life. Each policy revision, demographic shift or change in teaching practice left its print on West's image. Much could be gained from enacting projects that take a holistic view of schools as opposed to the slivers that come from examining schools in distinct pieces like classrooms, curriculum, instructional practice or student behavior. While this type of concentrated study does reveal much about various aspects of schooling, it does so in isolated parts. Studies including broader socio-historical contexts could help to expand our understanding of current problems facing public schooling.

CONCLUSION

I have conceptualized West as a living entity that experienced changes, not only in student demographics and teaching staff, but also in reputation and image within the

school, in the neighborhood community and in the city. I applied life history methods to enact my project as a move toward achieving an exploration of socio-historical contexts and policy trends impacting the school's image and cultural identity over time. As our society becomes increasingly diverse and complex, so too must our study of schools in order to push beyond accepting life in schools as static and neutral. This study also informs my goals for continuing work with pre-service teachers as I move toward revealing the contradictions present in school life in the hopes of creating spaces for dialogue that addresses both the potential and pitfalls of public education.

Appendices

Greetings,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation project. I will be gathering interview data, archival data and observational data in order to understand and share the life history of an historic middle school site. In conducting this study I hope to share the unique story of a middle school and represent teachers' voices over time in order to understand how school culture is constructed and impacts the environment of the school.

My research questions are:

1. How do teachers narrate the life history of a historic middle school and articulate understandings of the school's identity, culture and image over time?

2. How do contemporary educational policy, shifts in demographics, and present teaching practices contribute to the continuing production of the school's institutional identity?

3. In the context of this institutional life history, how have the perspectives of middle school teachers regarding notions of citizenship education and the teaching of democratic values changed over time?

Below you will find a pre-interview survey. Please answer the questions and return it via email or print and bring to our first interview.
Again, I appreciate your assistance and willingness to share your experiences.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Alarcon
PhD Candidate
University of Texas at Austin
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
jeannette.bellemeur@austin.utexas.edu
512-791-3978

Pre-Interview Questionnaire (email or hardcopy)

1. How many years were you a public middle school teacher? How many years have you been with this district?

2. How many years did you teach at this school?

3. How long have you lived in this city? Did you attend public school in this city?

4. What grade and subject did you teach?

5. What made you decide to become a teacher?

6. How did district, state and federal educational policy shape your teaching practice during the time you taught at this school? How did these things impact this school's environment?

1. How do teachers narrate the life history of an historic middle school and articulate understandings of the school's identity, culture and image over time?
Interview questions:

- Tell me about your first memory of West Middle School (or Junior High).
- Tell me about the years that you worked at West
- How would you describe the school's culture during the time you worked at West?
- Describe what you remember about community and/or parental involvement at West.
- Tell me about any significant changes you remember taking place during your time at West.

2. How do contemporary educational policy, shifts in demographics and present teaching practices contribute to the continuing production of the school's institutional identity?
Interview questions:

- Tell me about your students during the time when you worked at West.
- Tell me about the timely educational policy issues your remember being important during your time at West.
- Describe your teaching practices during your time at West. Did you feel free to make decisions for your classroom? Did you collaborate with colleagues on a regular basis?
- Tell me about any significant educational policy changes during the time you taught at West.

3. In the context of this institutional life history, how have perspectives of middle school teachers regarding notions of citizenship education and the teaching of democratic values changed over time?
Interview questions:

- In what ways were notions of citizenship education addressed during your time at West?
- In your role as teacher, did you feel it was part of your duty to address notions of democratic values in your teaching? If so, how did you do so (either directly or indirectly)?
- How would you define citizenship education? Describe the role of public school personnel in teaching citizenship education?

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Vita

Jeannette Driscoll Alarcón attended the University of Texas at El Paso and earned her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts in 1997. She served in K-12 public education as a high school theatre arts teacher, a fifth grade ESL and inclusion teacher, and a Master Reading Teacher and Language Arts Instructional Specialist for middle grades. In May 2005, she completed her Master of Arts degree in Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin. In the fall of 2005, she entered the doctoral program in the Cultural Studies in Education program at the University of Texas at Austin.

Email address: jeannette.alarcon@utexas.edu

This dissertation was typed by Jeannette Alarcón.