

Chapter 1

Decentralization: The Ideologies of Inclusion and Deinstitutionalization

INCLUSION AND THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

Isaiah Robinson suggested, almost as a joke, that since white children would not be sent into Harlem schools and black children were not being invited downtown in any meaningful numbers, *maybe the blacks had better accept segregation and run their own schools.* (Fantini, Gittel, and Magat 1970, p. 4; emphasis in original)

African American education historically has been a troublesome issue for white institutions, which often insist on avoiding racial mixing while simultaneously trying to treat people equally. In periods when emphasis on racial equality is strong, some racial mixing is supported, but these brief periods are followed by a return to segregation. Sometimes, as the above quotation illustrates, that segregation is viewed by the segregated group themselves as “unchangeable.” Usually, the result is that racial conflict and the demand for inclusion become resolved into a set of arrangements that are legitimate, relatively stable, and anchored in the racial status quo.

Writing in the middle of the twentieth century, Myrdal (1944) described the essential “American Dilemma”—the problem of recon-

ciling persistent racial segregation with the American principles of equality and democracy. Myrdal, and later Fredrickson (1971), argued that the African American population has an inferior status in the minds of whites, based on historical relationships of slavery. This deeply ingrained white attitude of black inferiority is the foundation for the desire to keep the races separate. The “inferiority attitude” is not just descriptive but also prescriptive, stimulating whites to build institutions to support their superiority economically and socially. Furthermore, these institutions re-create a sense of “moral hierarchy” in each generation of whites, allowing for the continuation of these racial prejudices.

An early work on urban life and politics illustrates how the inferior status of blacks was maintained and recreated. In *Black Metropolis*, Drake and Cayton (1945) examined segregation in Chicago. They described how blacks migrated to the city, supposedly leaving the system of social control found in the South. Although Drake and Cayton wrote that “Northern institutions...did not have ‘keeping the Negro in his place’ as one of their primary objectives” (p. 757), they did find a limit on how far blacks could advance in society. Ingrained racial attitudes in the North worked to create a system that, rather than being truly inclusionary, was just as exclusionary, if a bit more subtle, than anything found in the South. Blacks were segregated in the city and kept at the bottom of both the social and the economic hierarchy by a set of institutional arrangements—housing, education, job training—that had a profound influence on their eventual life opportunities.

Ogbu (1978) has extended this line of reasoning in his study of minority education. He has argued that, historically, race relations in the United States are embedded in a caste-like system of economic and social institutions. Blacks were brought to the United States as “involuntary minorities,” against their will. Ogbu finds that such caste-like minorities are usually “relegated to menial positions and denied true assimilation into the mainstream society” (Ogbu 1992, p. 8). The caste-like position of blacks has created a lower-quality system of education for them and limits black students to subordinate positions in school and beyond. The involuntary minority status also creates a negative impression of those minorities who choose to achieve—black students who do well in school are often accused of “acting white” and identifying with their white “oppressors.” Even

then, there is no guarantee of success: “[T]hose who successfully learn to act White or who succeed in school are not fully accepted... nor do [they] receive rewards or opportunity for advancement equal to those open to Whites” (Ogbu 1992, p. 10).

While descriptions of racial subordination such as Ogbu’s confirm Myrdal’s argument, Myrdal did not think these attitudes were fixed. He felt that the white attitude of superiority would eventually clash with the American belief in democracy. Thus, systems would have to become more inclusionary in order to support the ideology of democracy.

In a democracy, marginal groups must be included in the polity if conflicts are to be settled without resorting to violence and order is to be maintained (Shils 1982). If that incorporation is to lead to stability, there must be a redistribution of power that gives the marginal group a stake in the institutional arrangements (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984). In urban areas, the policy for redistributing power has been inclusion in the form of expanded political participation.

World War II signaled the beginning of the transformation to an inclusionary style of social control. Changes in the domestic economy and the Nazi racial ideology forced the nation to confront the weaknesses of exclusion and segregation (Sitkoff 1978). The federal government and the judiciary were among the institutions targeted in the movement to include black Americans. Civil rights organizations pressured these institutions to bring the practices of the nation in line with its value system. By 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court pushed the inclusionary principle into law with *Brown v. Board of Education*, which outlawed school segregation. During the same period, labor shortages in the North and changes in agricultural practices in the South combined to stimulate the migration of more and more Southern blacks into Northern cities (Lemann 1991).

The increase in the numbers of poor blacks in urban areas eventually led to federal programs aimed at more inclusion. During the mid-1960s, the federal government initiated community action programs (CAPs) as part of the War on Poverty. These programs introduced the concept of “maximum feasible participation,” that is, ensuring poor people power in the creation and implementation of the CAPs. However, in many cities inclusion was difficult. Variations in local city politics determined how much inclusion occurred. Greenstone and

Peterson (1968, 1973) found that cities (such as Chicago) that were dominated by entrenched “political machines” were less likely to disperse authority to new agencies. Such cities took black, lower-income political participation less seriously than did other cities, but were able to disperse resources more efficiently. Other, reform-oriented cities allowed more political participation in the running of the CAPs, but were more disorganized and less able to disperse resources and services efficiently. Greenstone and Peterson ironically concluded that “the complete triumph of reform seems to have reduced the political system’s capacity to achieve even reformist goals” (1968, p. 290).

In most Northern cities, the public schools were a part of the exclusionary system of social control. Black children went to segregated schools that were often inferior and underfunded when compared to white schools. After *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, most large American cities were grappling with the demands of the federal courts and representatives of black interests to desegregate the public schools and equalize the resources spent on those schools. The lack of cooperation from many school districts led community members to other attempts at creating equality of educational opportunity (Scribner and O’Shea 1974). Reformers and community leaders, utilizing the concept of maximum feasible participation, viewed community control and school decentralization as ways to insure that creating equality of educational opportunity was in the hands of blacks, not of the white majority.

Peterson (1985) and Katznelson and Weir (1985) have described how minority groups won inclusion into the public school system by expanding their political power. Peterson has written that Asians and blacks were discriminated against in the education system because they were “politically isolated,” that is, they were not part of the “participatory framework.” By expanding their power politically, blacks and other minorities believed they could secure better education for their children.

Any kind of political expansion upsets those benefiting from the status quo, and this is particularly true in the educational arena. Historically, reforms in the public education system have never radically altered resource distribution (Katz 1971). The United States has a commitment to “non-socialist approaches to social reform,” which eliminates the possibility for policies to equalize income or resources

(Katz 1971, p. 23). Education has thus been used as a prescription for inequalities in society, allowing reformers and others to take part in “a flurry of seemingly purposeful activity” without “tampering with social structures” (Katz 1971, p. 109). We add that the ideology of inclusion as a way of reforming education has also been used to give the *appearance* of change without much resource redistribution. Process replaces outcome as the measure of success.

Within the ideology of inclusion, when marginal groups demand to be part of the institutional center, they are included—but what they thought was the center becomes peripheral to the sources of power. The history of race relations in large American cities can be viewed in this way. African Americans have gained political office in large American cities just as the cities themselves have lost jobs, resources, and authority, not to mention white residents. In a nutshell, this is the story of school decentralization in urban areas. Twenty years ago, decentralization was about being included as a marginal group. Now that blacks and other minorities have gained status in the bureaucratic structures of the public schools, those schools lack resources and status, and the bureaucracy, now largely populated by blacks, is the first to be attacked for educational failure. The center of power in urban public school systems no longer lies in the hands of the bureaucracy; the ideology of inclusion reveals an institutional shell game in American schools, leaving the caretakers bereft of all but the appearance of control.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE

School decentralization, in addition to meshing with general notions of democracy, also met the requirements of the general strategy to reform cities that began in the progressive era. This strategy evolved along traditional reform lines into a way to include peripheral groups while combating institutional corruption and inefficiency. In the early 1960s, these general progressive concerns were tied to the issue of the incorporation of blacks through the struggles for integration and civil rights. That progressive critique, and the emerging coalition that articulated it, pushed for a kind of change that democratized decision making by eroding “machine” control. Inclusion and the resultant powers

for decision making were dispersed to newly formed interest groups that argued for a type of reform that focused on *procedures* for making decisions rather than the *substance* of those decisions. In cities where politics were dominated by issues of race, the business elites, legislators, and media were won over to this way of thinking. The revised ideology of reform, supported by conservative business interests, evolved into a set of organizations that purported to speak for the educational needs of the black poor. And the insiders—that is, the bureaucratic leadership of the schools—failed to adjust their thinking to the critique. The natural result was that “insiders,” or school bureaucrats, came into conflict with “outsiders,” or reformers and other progressive groups (Crain 1969).

Government service bureaucracies, historically, have controlled the amount of inclusion and political participation in their institutions. But in the 1960s, newer forms of citizen involvement emerged to respond to problems of inclusion. Banfield and Wilson (1963) found that many urban reformers during the early sixties called for arrangements that shifted power away from political machines and electoral parties and toward new nonpartisan forms of organization. Urban reformers sought a transition to more middle-class forms of governance away from the corrupt political machines of the first half of the century. In response to racism, corruption, and inefficiency, urban reform passed from a reliance on electoral innovations (e.g., nonpartisan elections or referenda) to an investment in democratic participatory mechanisms. The demand for racial equality was transformed into the demand to reorganize bureaucratic decision making. The American Dilemma became bureaucratized.

Banfield and Wilson (1963) believed that government served two purposes: to deliver services and manage conflicts. They acknowledged that services were sometimes the mechanism for managing conflicts, but they did not foresee that conflicts could be submerged in the delivery of services. By reorganizing how services, such as schooling, are delivered, the government effectively alleviates conflicts by suppressing them.

Conflict among groups keeps a democracy working, provided that conflict can be kept within acceptable bounds. The level of acceptability is controlled by elites who determine the extent to which, and the means by which, an aggrieved group is absorbed into the institu-

tional structure of the society. The question is not just when the new groups gain access to political power (Lipset 1963), but how. By the end of the 1960s that new access and inclusion was being defined through the prism of a white urban reform agenda that focused on what we call "democratic proceduralism" (Lewis, Grant, and Rosenbaum 1988). These white reformers were attempting to break the hold of political machines on large cities by creating new processes through which African Americans could exert some control over urban political and service institutions. Blacks had to be included, but included by changing the procedures used to make decisions in the service bureaucracies.

The relationship between democracy and bureaucracy is fundamental to much of the discourse about advanced capitalist societies, but most of that debate has been about how bureaucracies and the elites they breed undermine democratic institutions (Burnham 1943). We are interested in the inverse relationship, that is, how democratic tendencies are used to support bureaucratic institutions and the socioeconomic relations they protect. The literature (Piven and Cloward 1971; Selznick 1949) has focused on cooptation and participation, and the undermining of representative government in its more traditional forms.

What we find are two parallel critiques imperfectly blended into school decentralization. On the one hand, there is the ever-present racial conflict and the resultant demand for democracy and inclusion. On the other hand, there is the bureaucratic institutional critique, which attempts to transform some bureaucracies even as they become more inclusionary. School decentralization was a *reorganization* of relations between an urban bureaucracy and its clients, where the legitimacy of the schools was affirmed by democratizing the administration of the bureaucracy. Such reorganization supported minority demands for power without redistributing educational benefits between whites and blacks. The institutional critique, coupled with inclusion, legitimized the unequal distribution of resources and the continued separation of the races in the name of transforming the bureaucracy.

American reliance on an institutional analysis is rooted in a political philosophy that emphasizes rationalism, a benign human nature, and the notion that evil behavior flows from poorly designed institu-

tions (Burnham 1985). Rational solutions to difficult problems could be found in the rearrangement of the organizations that claim expertise over the problem. This view promoted the idea that men and women could be changed by these organizations, and social problems solved. In the late 1950s and 1960s, foundations and federal programs turned these beliefs into policy as they aimed to improve how human services operated by forcing them to turn outward to meet the challenges of poverty and race relations. Up until that time, bureaucracies, especially school systems, were not responsive to the needs of the poor (Marris and Rein 1967). In creating new policies to help the poor, reformers assumed that rational reform could achieve its ends, that human nature was at worst malleable and would respond to institutional shifts in activity, and that better-designed institutions would work better. In terms of public education, changing how the schools operated would change the educational chances of the poor.

However, as public bureaucracies resisted reform efforts, institutional analysis led to calls for deinstitutionalization. Theories of deinstitutionalization have their foundation in the Chicago school of sociology. Goffman (1961) and Becker (1963) adapted earlier theories on occupational careers to the worlds of deviance and institutions. Their theories were built on issues of identity formation and interpersonal interaction as formulated by the founders of American sociology. Personal identity was based on how others related to you. You were who others said you were. If institutions were total, then who you were followed from the roles you played institutionally. Systematic changes in occupational identity were the result of role expectations and institutional needs. The institution created a career. Goffman and Becker applied this approach to the bottom rather than the top of the organization. Where others had looked at how medical careers were formed in the 1940s, these scholars looked at the patient career in the 1950s. Deviance was not in the personality of the criminal or mental patient; rather, it was in the institutional definitions applied to those it recruited to the patient role.

If institutions by definition created the very people they were supposed to change, then reform meant destroying the factories of deviant identity and failure. This theory was supported by empirical work in the institutions of social control that were overflowing in the 1950s. Large, crowded, and understaffed, these places came to be

seen as the cause of problems. They had to be radically transformed.

Schools are not quite “total institutions” (Tyack 1974); they do not have complete control over the lives of students. Students go home at the end of the day, they skip school, they transfer out, and they have alternative sources of identity provided by peers, parents, and others. But the public schools do have many features in common with other institutions, and the deinstitutionalization paradigm was a powerful ideological tool for understanding social problems. In the late 1970s, Meyer (1977) adapted institutional analysis to the formal study of schooling, arguing that myths and institutionalized rules drive schooling and its organization far more than do science and performance.

Thus, as the movement to reform urban schools in the late 1960s gained moral advantage from the ideals of democracy and inclusion, the movement also gained political support from an ideology of deinstitutionalization. Fantini, Gittell, and others used this perspective to shape a reform strategy for public schooling which insisted that the bureaucracy was the problem, and that external control by the “community” was the solution, thus combining the two perspectives of inclusion and deinstitutionalization. For Fantini, Gittell, and Magat (1970) “the institution” meant the set of arrangements—bureaucratic, professional, and centralized—by which public education was delivered. Public schooling had been taken out of politics by these institutional forces, and the city reformers of the late 1960s wanted to put politics back in (Rogers 1968). If the institution was controlled politically by outside forces, schooling would improve.

The reform dilemma was articulated as a choice between two institutional systems: one operated by the community and open, and one operated by professionals and closed. Open up the institution and you fix the problem. An institution could generate either learning or failure, depending on how it was designed; in broad terms, change who runs the bureaucracy, and the life chances of the clients would improve.

FROM DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION TO EMPOWERMENT

Like reformers of other human services, big-city school reformers believed in the deinstitutionalization ideology. The school bureaucracy, like other bureaucracies, was failing to respond adequately to the

demands for change that were made by local and national elites (Peterson 1976; Rogers 1968). As more modest projects to improve the schools failed to achieve the objectives that were set for them, and desegregation efforts met massive resistance in large American cities, commitment to the notion that the bureaucracies could improve themselves without outside control lost legitimacy. Professionals and the bureaucracies that housed them were seen as incapable of improving the situation. Like mental hospitals and prisons, schools were transformed in the name of community.

The idea of maximum feasible participation carried with it a commitment to empowerment. Schools, the welfare department, and other agencies were supposed to improve the relative position of their clients, and there was ample evidence that they were failing to do this. Indeed, some argued that these services contributed to keeping the poor at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder by making them more dependent on the very services that were supposed to help them and thus less capable to compete (Ogbu 1978). The core of the dilemma came to be seen as the lack of power that the poor had over these agencies of improvement. Increasing the participation of the poor in the governance of these services would lead to empowerment.

The War on Poverty in the 1960s created a national policy built on these assumptions. During this period, social services were aimed particularly at helping children in poverty, and programs such as Head Start helped children by helping the children's families (Zigler and Valentine 1979). Although this was similar to the mainstreaming of immigrant groups during the 1920s, in this case the groups to be mainstreamed were the poor and rural minorities who had migrated to urban centers (Gordon 1977; Slaughter and Kuehne 1988). The empowerment focus meant that in programs like Head Start, where parents played an integral role, parent education and training were supplemented with parent involvement in the running of the program (Valentine and Stark 1979). The participatory democracy ideal was utilized in Head Start to empower parents so they would learn to have control over factors that affected them, and in that way they could improve themselves and the lives of their children.

As with Head Start, parent empowerment in the schools was anchored by the idea that empowerment would change both the lives of the participants and the running of the institution:

Both the schools and the parent and community participants themselves benefit from their active involvement in the education process. Their very act of meaningful participation—a sense of greater control over a decisive institution that influences the fate of their children—contributes to parents' sense of potency and self-worth. (Fantini, Gittell, and Magat 1970, p. 95)

The reformers of the 1960s believed that improved self-worth of the parents would also improve the lives of the children. And the end product of these improvements would ultimately be educational achievement (Gittell and Hevesi 1969; Levin 1970).

A study by HARYOU (Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.) in 1964 offered some of the first ideas for empowerment and community control. Titled "Youth in the Ghetto: A Study of the Consequences of Powerlessness and a Blueprint for Change," the research detailed both quantitatively and qualitatively the status of Harlem youth. Clark (1965) used the findings to raise questions about social power and how the schools might be changed to allow the "youth in the ghetto" both educational and social power. As Gittell and Hevesi (1969) wrote in applying this notion to the schools:

The accumulated evidence indicates a basic sickness in the school structure: The total environment of the system prevents progress and changes that would meet new situations and serve new populations. Studies...have identified as the fundamental malady an insensitive system unwilling to respond to the demands of the community. (p. 8)

If the poor had control of the schooling enterprise, these scholars argued, then they could make it work by directing the educational effort toward the goals of those being served. Carmichael and Hamilton (1967), in their book *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, strongly stated the case: "Black parents should seek as their goal the actual control of the public schools in their community: hiring and firing of teachers, selection of teaching materials..." (p. 166). Professionals would respond to the authority of the new governance structure or they would be removed. If the community (meaning people who live near the school) and parents of school-age children had more voice in the schooling enterprise, there would be more parent

satisfaction with the schools and more commitment to the educational process. The result would be improved educational attainment. The democratization of the governance process and the representation of parent and community interests would be both a cause and a consequence of "empowerment."

Not only would individuals become empowered, but it was assumed the school bureaucracies that controlled access to opportunities would be more responsive when parents and community members governed their own schools (Mayor's Advisory Panel on Decentralization 1969; Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Glass and Sanders 1978; LaNoue and Smith 1971; Levin 1970). The approach hinged on several unspoken assumptions about social and political change that were sorely tested in the ensuing decade as these efforts met stiff opposition and failed to meet many of their goals.

The first assumption was that if the school bureaucracy performed better, then individual mobility would follow. The assumption proved untenable as issues of race and class in labor markets and residential segregation proved far more intransigent than originally thought (Marris and Rein 1967). The second assumption was that school governance was related to student achievement. Not only was this difficult to measure, but, with respect to parent empowerment, Fine (1993) asserts there is no link between increased parent power and increased student achievement. The third assumption was that power and authority could easily be transferred by legislative action; such an assumption vastly underestimates entrenched modes of bureaucracy and the distribution of resources (Gruber and Trickett 1987). The final assumption was how the individual parents would respond to such a policy—that they wanted decision-making responsibility and that it would lead to more parental commitment to the institution (e.g., volunteering, helping with homework, even building up parents' own skills and educational interests). Research (Wasley 1993) does not indicate that parents necessarily want decision-making responsibility; however, increased involvement in the school has been related to increased commitment (Fine and Cook 1992).

In deinstitutionalization, parents are treated as agents of change with common interests in how the schools should be operating. In essence, the empowerment model, which rests so heavily on the importance of outside interest groups, treats parents themselves as an

interest group. These parents can articulate shared interests in opposition to the interests of other groups or classes that also seek to control the educational process, especially if they are aided by reformers and activists who can help articulate those interests. If the governance structure changes to accommodate those parental interests and treats the parents with respect, then parents will soon be able to articulate their own interests and develop their own leadership. Community organizations that represent those parent interests are important in the reform process, for they teach parents not to accept the powerlessness that professionals impute to them, and they draw parents together to act politically. The empowerment model suggests that parent dissatisfaction with urban education and parent involvement in the school are related, and that under the right circumstances parents with strong community ties and the right values will get involved with schools (Bastian, et al. 1986; LaNoue and Smith 1973).

EMPOWERMENT VERSUS ENABLEMENT

The empowerment model is not the only approach to urban school reform. In contrast to the empowerment model, which sets out the school as the problem, the enablement approach shifts the onus of change onto the family. In its current guise the enablement model is based on an analysis of how societal forces are changing the family and how the schools must do a better job of relating to those families. While there is much talk of sensitivity and partnership, the impetus for change comes from teachers and bureaucrats, the very interests the empowerment paradigm sees as the cause of the problem.

In the enablement approach, school professionals are urged to change themselves so they can better accomplish the ends of schooling, and these same professionals are given resources to reach out to the community and draw it into the schooling enterprise. Power is not the problem—some might need more of it and others have abused it—but rather social change (i.e., increased poverty, advanced technology) has made the schools' job harder. This approach is often critical of the school bureaucracy but suggests that the bureaucracy can fix itself and be more responsive to parents. In the enablement model, governance is less an issue than is the creation of incentives to get the

bureaucracy to mend its ways by reaching out to and including parents in the educational endeavor. Enablement advocates seek to get parents involved in, and committed to, what the school is trying to do—educate the child for a productive role in the society. Coleman (1990) describes how schools should operate in an enablement approach:

[P]arents are unskilled in helping their children to succeed in school. Even well educated parents often lack the knowledge of what practices in the home will be most helpful to their children in succeeding in school.... It thus becomes in the school's own interest to strengthen these social resources. (p. 25)

Whereas the empowerment camp emphasizes *power* over the educational enterprise, the enablement approach pushes for more parental *commitment* to the educational enterprise. In the latter model, the school reaches out to parents to overcome the alienation of the educational process. The enablement approach, to its credit, recognizes that commitment will come only if schools make parents welcome at the school. In that model, parents should be taught how to help their children learn better and support what the school is doing educationally (Comer 1986; Epstein 1985). Educational professionals can make this happen through enlightened programming and innovative leadership.

Coleman (1990), Comer (1980), and Lightfoot (1978), although coming from different directions, exemplify the enablement approach. Each implicitly assumes that the people who run the bureaucracies have an interest in improving their operation and will be moved to action by the desire to achieve the formal goals of public education. They also assume that even though national societal and economic trends might be responsible for the problem of poor school achievement, activities at the local school can reverse these societal trends. Studies of reforms at schools and other socialization and resocialization agencies make it clear that other priorities (e.g., load shedding) influence how managers and street-level bureaucrats go about their jobs but that a recommitment to educational values is possible. Case studies in educational reform suggest that leadership can make a difference (Purkey and Smith 1983).

This approach to parent participation focuses on school personnel's developing ways to involve parents in the education of their children that supplement the activities of the teacher and the school (e.g., Becker and Epstein 1982; Coleman 1990; Comer 1980). Rather than being for political ends, participation is for educational ends. As with the empowerment model, structural problems in the system are treated as relationship problems. Teachers and principals work with parents to draw them into the educational activities of the school, sometimes by giving parents a voice in those activities. Here the teacher is looking for ways to put the parent to work as a resource for the education of the child, getting him or her committed to the values of education and working out a more collaborative arrangement between the school, the parents, and the community.

School-based management (SBM) is the decentralization policy that exemplifies an enablement model. In a district that has adopted SBM, local administrators and teachers have more power over their individual schools (allowing the bureaucracy to fix itself) (Cistone, Fernandez, and Tornillo 1989). Usually parents have an advisory role in such policies, and they are often viewed as a "program"—as in creating parent education classes or in having parent networks (Brown 1990; Caldwell and Spinks 1988; Lighthall 1989).

We exaggerate the differences between enablement and empowerment policies in order to differentiate their underlying assumptions. Enablement policies such as school-based management often use the term *empowerment* with respect to teachers and staff rather than parents and community (Rungeling and Glover 1991). And empowerment advocates state that community control would empower not only parents but also school staff (Bastian et al. 1986).

Fundamentally, enablement and empowerment views differ in their beliefs as to whether the system can reform itself or needs outsiders to do it. When Bastian and colleagues (1986) discuss "democratic schooling" as their aim, they do not believe in the system. They cite as the main deficiencies of the public educational system a "crisis of inequality" and a "crisis of citizenship," and they state that "progressive reform therefore requires empowering the constituents of schooling as both essential elements of school culture and indispensable agents for change" (p. 165). Bastian includes teachers as part of the community, but she and her colleagues are pushing for parents

and community to become necessary parts of the process—in fact, they cite the work done by Designs for Change (the community organization that spearheaded the Chicago school reform) as an example of their philosophy.

In contrast, Comer's plan, detailed in his book *School Power* (1980), emphasizes parent inclusion in the schooling process, but still leaves professionals in charge. Comer's philosophy is that "parents are more likely to support a school program in which they are partners in decision-making and welcome at times other than when their children are in trouble" (p. 70). Comer addresses educational practices of the staff more than prerogatives of the parents. And in fact, although Comer believes a school is better when parents are involved, he has also admitted that parent involvement is not always necessary for school improvement:

I acknowledge that schools can be improved without significant parent participation. Indeed, because of cutbacks in Chapter 1 funds, we have sharply reduced parent participation in our two earlier project schools, and the high level of achievement has continued. (1986, p. 446)

Both the enablement and the empowerment models have driven reform in several large cities over the last twenty years. The power of each depends in large measure on the relative strength of interest groups in differing locations. The competition between insiders and outsiders for control over the reform agenda determines the hegemonic ideology. In the next chapters, we will describe how decentralization emerged in the empowerment cities and suggest how the politics of each city interacted with the ideological dimensions we have discussed to produce a decentralized system of school governance. We will then describe the decentralization that took place in the enablement cities and show the factors that account for that approach to reform.

Ironically, with its concentration on allowing professionals to change themselves, the enablement approach might result in a better distribution of resources. Dade County, where we find the strongest example of an enablement policy, seems more capable of raising educational outcomes than are any of the empowerment cities. Like the machine politics cities of the 1960s, the professionals in Dade County are better able to understand the system and distribute resources to

school sites than are the parents and community in empowerment cities.

DECENTRALIZATION IN THE 1990s

During the 1980s, the dispersal of power legitimized the separation of whites and blacks. But more recently decentralization has divided the black middle class from the black poor. In the current educational arena the conflict between middle-class and lower-class minorities is exacerbated. The inclusionary ideal of the 1960s opened the system up to many black professionals, drawing them inside the bureaucracy. The outsiders pushing for more reform today are business groups and reform organizations. They call for grassroots decision making, bypassing the black middle-class school professionals. They accept budgetary limits. In cities with large minority populations, the result is a handicapped system of governance, where black school professionals have little capacity to harness and articulate the interests of the poor, let alone improve the capacity of the schools to do their job. The dispersal of power makes a clear statement of goals and the exercise of leadership difficult. This leads to an empowered urban school system that is hamstrung vis-à-vis state officials.

In a sense, these splits along class lines further highlight the tension between enablement and empowerment. Enablement reformers have faith in black professionals as educators, whereas empowerment advocates still seek to discredit the bureaucracy regardless of who the professionals are. The inclusion of the past is undermined as the power of minority parents is pitted against minority professionals, eroding a strong coalition along racial lines. In the 1960s, Charles Hamilton posed the fight over decentralization as a question of legitimacy or efficacy. He argued that black parents were calling for community control because the school system was not a legitimate public institution. At that time, public education was controlled by whites: few blacks were professionals in the system, and the institution did not represent black interests. Whites, on the other hand, believed in the viability of the system, but questioned its efficacy and so sought reforms (such as changes in the curriculum or new school programs) that made the existing system more effective.

Today, urban education is a minority enterprise. Whites have withdrawn and taxpayers in general are loath to spend. Decentralization is the ideology that legitimizes the current situation. In the pages to come we will describe how this situation developed and what factors account for the variations we find between enablement and empowerment cities. Divisions between blacks and whites have been eclipsed by divisions between centralizers and decentralizers. The result is an educational system that supports the racial hierarchy.