POLARITY AND DISPUTATIOUSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL BOARDS

by

Cheryle Beaumont

B.Ed., University of Saskatchewan, 1978

A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the Faculty

of

Education

© Cheryle Beaumont 1989

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

July 1989

All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

Name: Cheryle Beaumont

Degree: Master of Education

Title of Project: Polarity and Disputatiousness in British Columbia School Boards

Examining Committee:

Norman Robinson
Senior Supervisor

Michael Manley-Casimir
Professor

Ian E. Housego
Professor
Dept. of Administrative Adult
& Higher Education
Faculty of Education
The University of British Columbia
External Reader

Date Approved July 25, 1989

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

POLARITY AND DISPUTATIOUSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL BOARDS

Author: _____
(signature)

Cheryle Elizabeth Beaumont
(name)

_____
(date)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine polarity and disputatiousness in British Columbia school boards and the relationship between board conflict level, selected trustee characteristics and contextual factors. Trustee characteristics considered were political party affiliation and governance style. Contextual factors considered were the influence of the superintendent on the board and the community type the board serves.

Polarity of boards was characterized as either bipolar (highly polarized voting patterns) or unipolar (no specific voting pattern). Disputatiousness was characterized as fractious (highly conflictive) or quiescent (consensual).

A questionnaire gathered information from a representative sample of boards. Completed questionnaires were returned by 11 out of 26 boards and 91 out of 184 individual trustee respondents.

The information was examined for the relationship between the polarity and disputatiousness of a board and: 1) trustee's political party affiliation, 2) trustee governance style, 3) community type and 4) the influence of the superintendent. The most important finding was that boards can be measured and labelled by both the degree of

polarity and disputatiousness present. When both dimensions of board conflict are examined, four distinct types of boards emerge: 1) quiescent unipolar (consensual with no-pattern voting, 2) fractious unipolar (conflictive with no-pattern voting), 3) quiescent bipolar (consensual but with polarized voting) and 4) fractious bipolar (both conflictive and polarized voting).

The examination of the personal characteristics of trustees and contextual factors yielded the following conclusions. Firstly, polarized, highly conflictive boards tend to be composed of trustees with widely varying political attitudes and governance styles. Secondly, specific party politics are unrelated to governance style or conflict level but trustees generally commit to an organized party. Thirdly, the most conflictive governance style is to be found in greater numbers on the more polarized, conflictive boards. Finally, a powerful influence for all board types, trustee types and community types is the superintendent.

In conclusion, the significance of this project lies in the characterization of the four board types. School boards in British Columbia can be characterized as; quiescent unipolar, fractious unipolar, quiescent bipolar or fractious bipolar according to the degree of polarity and disputatiousness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my thanks to my Senior Supervisor, Dr. Norman Robinson for his encouragement and confidence in me during every stage of this project.

Thanks and appreciation is also extended to the trustees and superintendents who took part in the completion of the survey.

I would like to thank my husband and daughters for their unfailing support and encouragement from the beginning of the project to the end.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Approval Page	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	x
CHAPTER I: The Problem	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Sub-problem 1	2
Sub-problem 2	2
Sub-problem 3	2
Sub-problem 4	3
Sub-problem 5	3
Sub-problem 6	3
Sub-problem 7	3
Sub-problem 8	3
Significance of the Study	4
Definition of Terms	4
Overview of the Study	7
CHAPTER II: Background to the Study	8
School District Politics and Educational Governance	8
Board Polarity	12
Disputatiousness	12
Styles of Trusteeship	14
Partisanship in School Boards	15
Board-Administrator Relations	17
The Board-Community Relationship	19
Summary	21

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	Page
CHAPTER III. Research Methodology	22
Introduction	22
Data Required	22
Sample	23
Instrumentation	24
Data Collection	26
Data Treatment	26
Summary	29
CHAPTER IV. Findings	30
Introduction	30
Sub-problem 1. Board Polarity	30
Sub-problem 2. Disputatiousness	33
Sub-problem 3. Trustee Governance Style	34
Sub-problem 4. Partisanism	38
Sub-problem 5. Characteristics of the Community	48
Sub-problem 6. Influence of the Superintendent	55
Sub-problem 7. Superintendents and Community Relations	60
Sub-problem 8. Political Patterning of Boards	62
Summary	71
CHAPTER V. Summary, Conclusions and Implications	73
Summary	73
Conclusions	74
Implications for Research	78
Implications for Practice	79
APPENDICES	
Appendix A. Styles of Trusteeship	82
Appendix B. Styles of Trusteeship	85
Appendix C. Instructions	87
LIST OF REFERENCES	88

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1.	Total Number of Unipolar and Bipolar Boards.	31
Table 2.	Total Number of Boards by Disputatiousness	33
Table 3.	Trustee Respondents by Trustee Governance Style. . .	35
Table 4.	Relationship Between Board Polarity and Trustee Governance Style	37
Table 5.	Trustee Respondents by Political Party Support . . .	39
Table 6.	Relationship Between Trustee Governance Style and Political Party Support.	40
Table 7.	Relationship Between Trustee Governance Style and Political Party Support.	42
Table 8.	Relationship Between Board Polarity and Political Party Membership	43
Table 9.	Relationship Between Board Policy and Political Party Support.	44
Table 10.	Relationship Between Board Disputatiousness and Political Party Support.	45
Table 11.	Trustee Respondents by Perception of Community Characteristics.	49
Table 12.	Relationship Between Trustee's View of Their Community and Board Polarity	50
Table 13.	Relationship Between Degree of Disputatiousness on A Board and the Trustee's View of Community Characteristics.	51
Table 14.	Relationship Between Trustee Governance Style and Trustee's View of Their Community.	52
Table 15.	Relationship Between the Influence of the Superintendent and Board Polarity.	56

LIST OF TABLES (Continued)

		Page
Table 16.	Relationship Between the Influence of the Superintendent and the Degree of Disputatiousness on Boards.	57
Table 17.	Relationship Between the Influence of the Superintendent and the Trustee's Governance Style .	59
Table 18.	Relationship Between the Influence of the Superintendent and Trustee's View of Community Characteristics.	61
Table 19.	Number of Boards by Polarity and Disputatiousness. .	63
Table 20.	The Four Types of School Boards Typologized by Polarity and Disputatiousness: Relationships to Trustee Governance Style, Political Party Support and Membership, Community Type and the Influence of the Superintendent.	64

LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1.	Sources of Influence on School District Politics and Educational Governance	9
Figure 2.	Diagrammatic Representation of Selected Factors in Influencing School Board Polarity and Disputatiousness	11

CHAPTER I

The Problem

Introduction

School boards differ widely from district to district. They differ in their degree of polarity, their degree of disputatiousness and their pattern of decision-making. There are a number of influences on a board that affect the nature of the unit. Boards are composed of trustees, diverse in background. There may be any combination of age, sex, occupation, political affiliation and governance style within a single board. The possible personal differences on a board are many.

Then there are certain contextual factors that influence the nature of a board. Contextual factors are external influences that impact on a board's operation. Examples of contextual factors may include: the economic structure of a community, the politics of a community, or the nature of the labour-management relationship in the district. Two that are considered in this study are 1) the position and power of the district superintendent and 2) the type of community influence found in educational affairs of that district.

When the various sources of influence on a board's nature are examined a pattern of decision-making becomes evident. Given the background of the trustees on the board and the contextual factors, a definitive style emerges that types the board's decision-making pattern.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was two-fold: 1) to determine whether school boards in British Columbia differ in their degree of polarity and disputatiousness 2) to examine the relationship between board polarity and disputatiousness and selected trustee characteristics (governance style and political affiliation), community type (school district power structure) and degree of influence of the superintendent.

The sub-problems that were investigated were as follows:

Sub-problem 1

To what extent are school boards in British Columbia polarized in their decision-making?

Sub-problem 2

In terms of disputatiousness to what extent can school boards in British Columbia be termed fractious or quiescent?

Sub-problem 3

How do trustees view their own governance style and what is the relationship of this perception to board polarity?

Sub-problem 4

Is there a relationship between provincial political party support and trustee governance style and board polarity?

Sub-problem 5

Is there a relationship between trustee perception of community type and trustee governance style, board polarity and disputatiousness?

Sub-problem 6

Is there a relationship between the perceived influence of the superintendent and board polarity, disputatiousness and trustee governance style?

Sub-problem 7

Is there a relationship between the superintendent and the type of community he or she serves?

Sub-problem 8

To what extent can school boards be politically patterned by degree of polarity and disputatiousness?

Significance of the Study

Extensive work studying the patterns of decision-making within public school boards has been done in the past, most notably by Blanchard (1985) and later by Newman (1988) and Brown, Newman and Rivers (1985). Work on board polarity and disputatiousness furthers understanding, not only of ever-present board politics but also the individual style of trustees that make up those boards.

Understanding the conflicts within a board not only provides valuable insight into how district staff might best work with their elected board but also provides the board members with information and knowledge on the power exchange between superintendents and themselves. How information and advice is received and utilized is coloured by the political power framework and climate that its members work in. That framework is a combination of factors: the type of community a board serves, the perception a trustee has of his own governance style, the political background of the individual trustee and the relationship the board has with its superintendent.

Definition of Terms

Polarity: The polarity of a board is a reflection of repeated voting blocs its members fall into during decision-making. Bipolar boards see themselves as frequently experiencing conflict within the board but possessing standard, consistent voting blocs. So,

even though conflict is frequent, its sources are predictable, resulting in a similar and consistent voting patterns from issue to issue. Unipolar boards do not perceive themselves in frequent conflict and do not see consistent or repeating voting blocs amongst themselves.

Disputatiousness: Disputatiousness is the degree to which a board is fractionalized by dispute in their problem-solving process. Polarity indicates the possible presence of divisiveness and disputatiousness indicates the nature of that divisiveness. In order to judge the degree of dispute present within a board trustee respondents indicated how frequently they perceived their board to be unanimous in decision on other than routine business. They responded on a five-point scale, from one indicating "Almost Never" to five indicating "Almost Always". The mean of the board's total responses was calculated and the score indicated the degree of disputatiousness. The disputatiousness of a board was considered either fractious or quiescent according to its score.

Fractious: Fractious is the term applied to a board characterized by dissension, disagreement, argumentativeness and a general lack of cohesiveness between members. Boards with a score of 3.0 or less on question #1 of the questionnaire were labelled as fractious boards. Fractious boards were considered to be fractionalized by

dispute to the point it affected their overall functioning.

Quiescent: Quiescent is the term applied to a board characterized by co-operation, low conflict, agreement between members and general cohesiveness. Boards with a score of greater than 3.0 on question #1 of the questionnaire were considered quiescent.

Quiescent unipolar: A board characterized by very limited conflict and unanimity in decision-making.

Fractious unipolar: A board characterized by conflict but able to come to agreement at decision-making time.

Quiescent bipolar: A board characterized by very limited conflict but distinct voting blocs do exist.

Fractious bipolar: A board characterized by a high degree of dispute and conflict with entrenched, distinct voting blocs.

Trustee Governance Style: The school board trustee's own perception of his role as a publicly elected official. His perception of the parameters of his mandate and power provide a framework from which he views his responsibilities.

Overview of the Study

The first chapter discusses the setting and scope of the problem. The eight sub-problems are outlined and the terms to be used in the ensuing discussion are defined. Chapter II includes a review of the literature in the areas pertinent to the sub-problems. Chapter III outlines the research methodology: the instrument to collect the data, the sample, data collection and data treatment. Chapter IV discusses the results obtained by the survey. Chapter V draws conclusions based on the results of the survey and indicate possible implications for further research and practice.

CHAPTER II

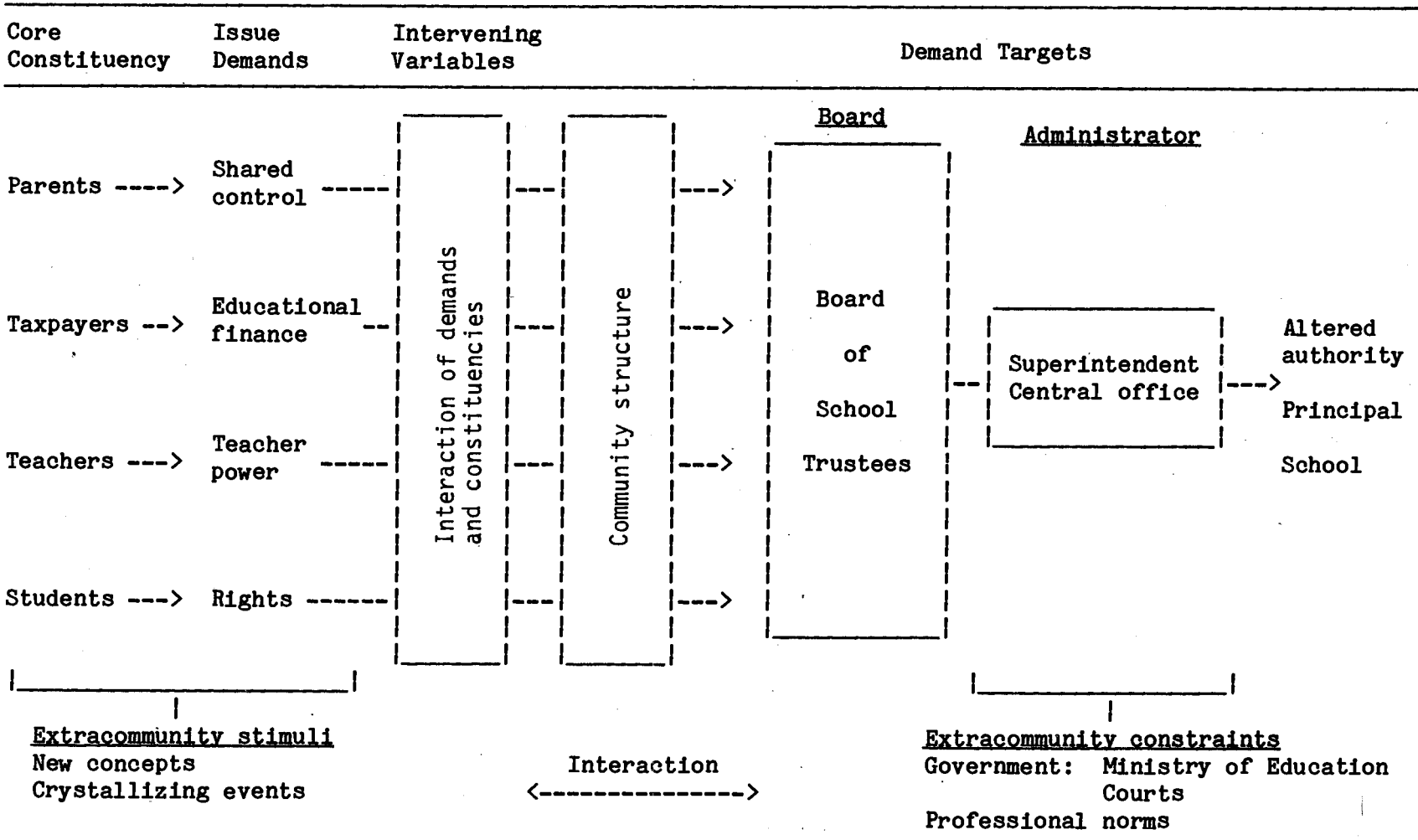
Background to the Study

School District Politics and Educational Governance

The conflict generated within school systems by school district politics and educational governance is the result of interaction of a number of factors. The influencing factors come from both within and without the system. In their book, Schools in Conflict, Wirt and Kirst (1982) represent the educational system as intensely political. They use a diagram of Wirt's, Paradigm of Turbulent School Politics. That diagram is adapted here as Figure 1. The three immediate sources conflict or turbulence impacting on a lack of school board are constituencies, issues and intervening variables. Core constituencies are the groups with a vested interest and active part in the operation of a school district: parents, taxpayers, teachers, and students. Each of those constituent groups has their issue demand to make. The parent's issue is shared control, the taxpayers' issue is financial reform and so on according to Figure 1. The constituencies and their demands are filtered through two intervening variables. One is the community structure, comprised of such things as its economic status, religious, social and political groups. The second intervening variable is the interaction of the various demands. This whole structure impacts directly upon the demand targets, which are the elected school board and the superintendent. The actual policies and

Figure 1

Sources of Influence on School District Politics and Educational Governance



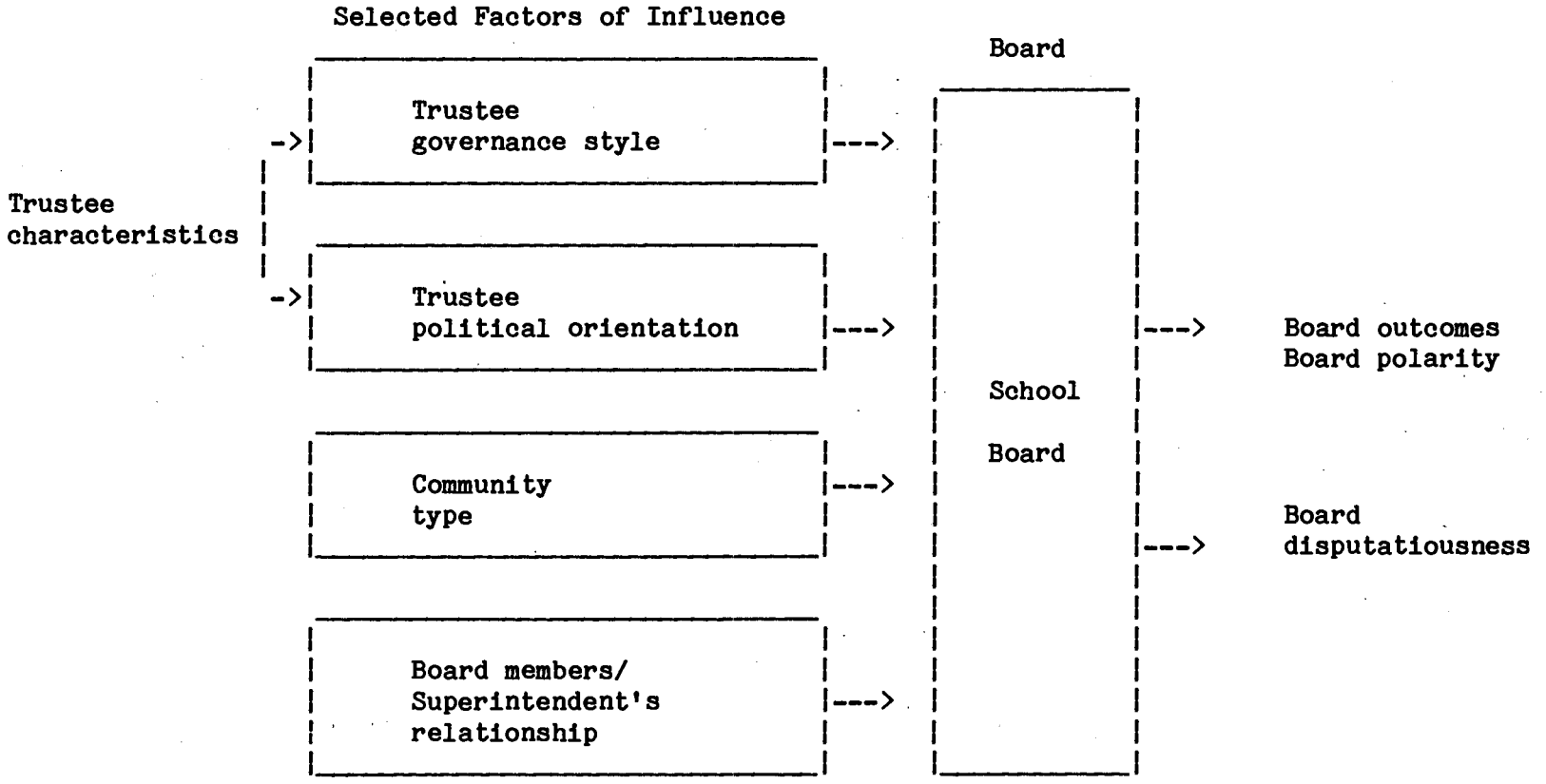
Adapted from: Frederick M. Wirt, "Political Turbulence and Administrative Authority in the Schools", in Louis H. Masotti and Robert L. Lineberry (Eds.), The new urban politics, p. 63.

procedures decided upon at the board level go out to the altered authority to be enacted. The altered authority is made up of lesser district level administration, principals and school-level staff. While the entire process is operating there are external forces that are constantly acting as well and modifying the outcome. Extracommunity stimuli in the form of the new concepts and attitudes in the community and crystallizing events impact continuously upon the board and superintendent, adjusting and colouring their view of constituents and demands. These stimuli interact with the on-going legal systems of courts, the Ministry of Education and professional norms. The diagram is a comprehensive one, outlining a complex system and including a great number of internal external sources of conflict on a school board.

This study has selected four specific influences on school boards and examines them in terms of their impact on a board's polarity and disputatiousness. The fur areas of influence are: party politics, trustee governance style, community type and the superintendent. The four areas and their impact on a board are diagrammed in Figure 2 and each is discussed in detail in this chapter.

Figure 2

Diagrammatic Representation of Selected Factors in Influencing School Board Polarity and Disputatiousness



Board Polarity

Polarity of a school board is defined as the pattern of decision-making a board may consistently fall into due to the degree of conflict within its unit. In a study of Kentucky school boards Blanchard (1975) found three distinct types of polarization evident in public school boards. He established the polarity of boards by questioning the degree of frequency with which a board was unanimous in its decision-making. Bipolar boards are characterized as experiencing frequent conflict amongst themselves but also possessing clear and consistent voting patterns when decision-making time actually arrives. Unipolar boards are always or nearly always unanimous in their decisions and on the rare occasions when they are in conflict, there is no discernible pattern in their voting blocs. The third type is the negotiator board. On negotiator boards, conflict regularly exists but with no pattern and no consistent power blocs. Newman (1988) concurs with Blanchard's evidence of bipolar and unipolar boards but did not find negotiator boards in the manner described by Blanchard. Newman describes the third type of polarized board as frequently unanimous but with voting blocs when disagreement exists.

Disputatiousness

Disputatiousness is concerned with the role of conflict in educational politics. The role conflict plays may be examined by

looking at the mix of individuals and what they bring to their elected role, how their attitudes and background mix to provide the personality of a board and how they impact upon their educational system. Richard Townsend (1988) in his book, They Politick for Schools, provides a thorough study of educational governance in Canada. He interviewed individuals responsible for educational policy and examined their perception of their role and their perception of their impact upon the system. He considers three aspects: 1) a politician's stance (what they talk about), a politician's style (how they talk), 3) and a politician's standards (what politicians talk to or believe in). In all three operative aspects of a politician's behaviour, Townsend finds trustees and legislation divided between those who are conflictive in their behaviour and those who tend to be consensual. There are degrees of both along a continuum depending upon the issue. The more conflictive an individual issue is, the greater the tendency for an individual to behave in an increasingly conflictive manner. The discordant traits of a board are characterized by conflict, moralism, cynicism and cabal-finding. The traits of concord are characterized by consensus, acceptance, trust, democracy-finding. Townsend's results led him to four conclusions about public education and the on-going disputatious nature of public school boards:

1) Trustees are more active in influencing the educational system they govern than was previously thought.

2) Trustees know more about and learn more about specific educational issues than was previously thought.

3) The more conflict involved in an issue, the greater the conflict that will be detected in the politicians.

4) Conflictiveness and consensuality are not determined by partisanism but are a reflection of the culture their system represents. One region of Canada will be more likely to have a style of board or degree of conflict evident than another. Each region has a distinct stamp or style on its educational governance.

Styles of Trusteeship

Elected school trustees carry out their responsibilities to their constituents in a distinct recurring style or pattern. Mann (1976) has defined three clear styles to be found in school officials. The first, and considered by Mann the most common to be found in educational administration, is that of the trustee. A trustee member believes he is responsible to his electorate but that in electing him, they trust him to use his own best judgement in decision-making. He sees himself as deciding for his electorate even if it is at odds with what may have been communicated to him. He believes he is expected to decide what is best for his constituents. The second type of board member, a slightly smaller group proportionately, is the delegate. The delegate sees his public representation to be the enactment of his

constituents' wishes. He does not believe in acting contrary to what his public wants done or in deciding for them without consultation, even if his personal, private, experienced judgement may be different. Delegates are to reflect the electorate's wishes, not interpret them. The third, and proportionately the smallest group in Mann's work, is the politico. This member believes he best serves the represented by handling each issue separately, sometimes similarly to a trustee. Their behaviour is determined by the situation at hand and the weighing up of the issues and consequences. They usually want to know the source of a problem and to defer judgement until they can assess the probable overall outcome. The stamp of this style is compromise and conflict and he tends to be very political. All three political styles are to be found in elected school board members and how a board member perceives himself in his role will have a direct impact not only on how he handles his responsibilities but also on the conflict within the entire group.

Partisanship in School Boards

Partisan-elected public school boards are found in only a very few communities in British Columbia and indeed, is definitely in the minority as an established system in all of North America. Within this century school politics have consistently moved away from trustees affiliated with a political party in favour of independent, "apolitical" elections. Nielsen and Robinson (1980) make a case for

the positive aspects of partisanism in local school boards. Their contention is that without clearly defined party platforms on issues citizens vote for the "man" and frequently vote in ignorance, unsure of where their candidate stands philosophically. Without party platform, boards of conservative nature are invariably elected. In addition, self-professed non-partisan candidates and boards are not actually non-partisan at all. Once elected, they are called upon to make allocative partisan decisions, frequently favouring one group over another. In non-partisan elections candidates are chosen at large but usually from conservative thinking ranks with regard to their background, education and occupation and frequently their decisions fall into the lines of more conservative, centralized decision-making and control of policy by district staff (Nielsen & Robinson, 1980).

The conflict in this issue centres on the relative merits of partisan school boards. Opponents insist that politics do not belong in public education and there is no right political party that should be guiding the system strictly by its philosophy alone. Proponents insist the system is by nature political and that political beliefs cannot be avoided. Even non-partisan groups and candidates hold firm beliefs on educational philosophy and policy and that a party system would provide the voter with a rational method of what each candidate stands for.

Although ostensibly there is no partisanship in British Columbia

school elections (except for Vancouver), when the conflict within a board is considered, political factors may be a contributing factor to the type of polarity or degree of disputatiousness.

Board-Administrator Relations

It seems apparent that superintendents have a great deal of power and influence with their boards. As he or she represents the most important hiring decision they make, he is the closest immediate authority on their school system specifically and on educating children generally. Although in most situations the relationship between superintendent and board is amicable and characterized by cooperation in their common goal, there are possibilities for conflict. Awender (1985) indicates there are definite and separate sources of power belonging to each the superintendent and to the board that affect their overall relationship. In addition, who controls the more ambiguous power tools will indicate who has the distinct edge in setting the tone for the relationship and the parameters of power.

Awender notes the board has firstly the legal authority to govern, and secondly the support of the electorate that put them there. This authority and support is rooted not only in fact but in tradition in Canada where the public believes an apolitical, freely-elected board to be essential to school board governance. Thirdly, board members develop knowledge of the system, at least politically, if not mechanically, and fourthly, there is the personal prestige and status

that comes not only from public election but as an enhancement to the type of candidate usually chosen, that is one with occupational and community status.

The superintendent, on the other hand, possesses far greater: 1) professional expertise of the system, 2) positive public opinion and profile (particularly in smaller communities), 3) ties with influential local individuals and bodies, 4) access to power tools, that while they may be considered ambiguous as to whose arena they solely belong in, are in reality the possession of the one who can control them best and that is usually the superintendent. Boards not only do not completely understand their sources of money, they need professional advice on how to spend it wisely. Although personnel selection is again the perogative of the board, in practice much, if not all of it, is delegated to district professional staff. Control of information and communication systems is central to informed decision-making and the superintendent is the single greatest purveyor of information to the board. The relationship between superintendents and boards, while characterized by the control and use of such tools, is also tempered greatly with a measure of trust, cooperation and responsiveness. The measure of openness and cooperation are what provides most districts with an amicable and cooperative working arrangement.

The Board-Community Relationship

School boards methods of operation may be viewed in connection with the type of community they represent. McCarty and Ramsey (1971), in their work, The School Managers, examine community types and propose that there is a "fit" between the prevailing characteristic or quality of a community and the elected school board that represents their interests in public education. McCarty and Ramsey maintain specific types of communities consistently maintain specific types of boards and those boards in turn select (and attract) a specific style of superintendent. These authors propose four main types of communities and resultant boards exist: the dominated community, the factional community, the pluralistic community and the inert community.

In the dominated community the members clearly perceive their community and consequently their board to be dominated by one specific power group. That group may or may not even be present on the board but the influence is constant and pervasive and provides the levers that control board action. This type of board tends to have a superintendent that is a functionary who implements policy and wards off potential trouble when and if it arises.

The factional board represents a factional community, with at least two opposing groups continually confronting each other. Any issue may be cause for disagreement and the resulting suspicion and argumentativeness may obscure the original reason for the

disagreement. Such groups get their representative on the board so that factionalization is manifested in board action and the superintendent is the position of master political strategist, cooperating with the majority power holders but not allying himself wholeheartedly in case they are replaced in the next board election and he would then be faced with those whom he previously opposed.

The pluralistic community is one where there are many well-informed power groups anxious to participate in public education but unable to control a board politically on their own. The groups continually align and re-align to exact greater power but the alignments are only temporary, frequently dissolving and producing yet another new alignment. They are more commonly found in suburbs of middle to upper class economic neighbourhoods and the only superintendent who can stay on top of such groups is a confident, well educated, informed, professional consultant who provides guidance and advice.

The inert community appears to be disinterested and apathetic when it comes to community involvement. There is little, if any, public interest and no controversy or organized conflict. In such a community the board follows the advice and lead of the superintendent who is unencumbered by dissenting action groups or a conflictive board.

Summary

The literature indicates that school boards are polarized in their decision-making. The recurring pattern of voting is further complicated by the degree of disputatiousness present within a board. The greater the dispute the more the board is likely to be fractionalized.

A number of factors combine to produce the personality of each board. How each trustee perceives his governance style will provide a framework from which to view his responsibilities. The trustee's political beliefs may have an impact on the style and attitude he brings to the board table as may his view of the community he serves. The final factor in board conflict to consider is the role of the superintendent. The relationship of the superintendent to the board he serves is shaped by the type of community they both serve and the nature and personality of the board itself.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

Introduction

The study looked at selected British Columbia school boards to see if there was a difference from board to board in the degree of polarity and disputatiousness within the unit. The study further looked for a possible relationship between board polarity and disputatiousness and 1) specific trustee characteristics (governance style and political affiliation), 2) community type (school district power structure), 3) the influence of the superintendent.

Data Required

In order to examine the polarity and dispute within a board, as well as attempting to discover some underlying reasons for the conflict, trustees were asked questions on a number of points pertaining to board politics. Unanimity of school board voting and voting block patterns of conflicting boards were examined to provide a two-dimensional label of polarity and disputatiousness. In order to develop information on supporting political factors for conflict, trustees were questioned about: 1) their governance style using questions based on Mann's (1976) definitions; 2) their political affiliation and party support at the provincial level; 3) the board's relationship with the superintendent regarding asking and accepting

advice and sources of regular opposition to him/her; 4) the trustees' view of the type of community they serve using McCarty and Ramsey's (1971) designations of community style.

Sample

Questionnaire forms were mailed to a total of 26 districts. In British Columbia boards are composed of five, seven or nine elected members with seven being by far the most common. A questionnaire form was provided for each individual trustee. A total of 184 forms were distributed and 47% of individual trustees responded in total.

There were two separate mailings. Initially a group of ten boards were chosen to participate in the survey and the writer planned to gather the data personally from each board. Consequently, the ten boards were chosen with reasonable commuting distance in mind. However, the superintendents and trustees indicated a preference for completing their forms at a convenient time and mailing them in. In order to provide a broader provincial sample a random selection of an additional sixteen boards were surveyed for a second mailing. The sample is not then completely random but an accidental one. It is, however, very representational of British Columbia boards. The group surveyed represents urban, suburban and rural boards and boards of five, seven and nine members.

Using the whole pool of individual trustee forms was useful for certain findings and implications is discussed in Chapter Four. For

the overall issues of patterns of board conflict and sources of conflict, it was the complete board responses that were of first importance. For example, some boards returned three or four forms out of a possible seven. While of use and interest in such things as a comparison of trustee style and political affiliation, they were of no use in forming a complete picture of a functioning board. Polarity and dispute were only completely ascertained by boards where everyone was able to respond. Understandably, this was difficult to achieve in every case. Consequently, conclusions have been drawn from whole board responses, a somewhat more modest sample than the whole study undertook but valuable because of its completeness. In total, 11 of 26 boards were able to present a complete picture.

Instrumentation

The data instrument was in the form of a written questionnaire consisting of ten questions (see Appendices A and B).

On the questionnaire (see Appendices A and B) question one was designed to measure disputatiousness and question two to measure polarity. Question three was for the respondents who answered positively to question two and was designed to trace recurring voting patterns within a board. Question four asked trustees to select a governance style matching their own and questions five and six asked about a trustee's political party affiliations. Question seven was

designed to elicit trustees' sources of information and questions eight and nine dealt with the influence of the superintendent on the board. Question ten asked trustees to select a community type most closely matching their own constituency.

Trustees were asked to complete the form anonymously. They first developed a method of referring to each other on the form by number so as to provide confidentiality. It was suggested they number themselves alphabetically--the trustee that was first alphabetically became number one and the second alphabetically became number two and so on. A form was provided for this purpose and was to be discarded after completing the questionnaire (see Appendix C). The package of questionnaires and numbering forms was mailed to district superintendents with a letter of introduction asking for their support and cooperation in encouraging their board to participate.

Two separate batches of questionnaires were mailed out. Appendix A indicates the questionnaire used for the first ten boards where in-person collection had been planned and Appendix B the second. The only differences are the absence of political party affiliation questions in the second form and the absence of the question regarding sources of information. It was felt by the writer that some sensitivity existed over the issue of questioning one's politics for some trustees and so it was dropped. It should be noted, however, that in the first batch most trustees did answer those questions. Implications drawn from party affiliation are restricted to the first

set of data collected.

Data Collection

Two separate mailings of questionnaire forms were sent out. Appendix A was used for the first mailing and Appendix B for the second mailing. The first set were sent to the trustee's private address with an envelope provided for the trustee to return the completed form once it was ascertained the data would be collected by mail. The second mailing was sent to district superintendents to be distributed at a board meeting where trustees would complete it together. A stamped envelope was provided for the return of the completed forms. Although the greatest response in forms back was from the first private mailings (70% of total forms), the greatest chance of receiving whole board responses came from the second mailing.

Data Treatment

The returned questionnaires were considered individually and as whole board responses (where there was a complete set). Polarity is a measure possible only with a set of whole board responses.

In order to examine board polarity, members were asked to indicate whether or not there was usually the same division on the board when they disagreed on issues and if the same members stuck together from one issue to the next (see question 2 on Appendices A and B). They

were to circle either yes or no and, if the respondent answered yes, he was to indicate with whom he usually agreed. Board members were numbered and used the numbers to refer to each other rather than their names, to provide anonymity. Whole board responses were examined as a group to find a common perception. In order for a board to be clearly bipolar a majority on that board needed to have responded yes to the question and to have established a pattern of voting partners. In order to be considered unipolar, the majority on that board needed to have answered no. In answering no there was no answer to the second part of the question, "With whom do you usually agree?". In examining the responses the perceived polarity by trustees was actually very clear and remarkably consistent between members.

In order to judge the disputatiousness present within a board the questionnaire asked trustee respondents to indicate how frequently they perceived their board to be unanimous in decisions on other than routine business. They responded on a five-point scale, from one indicating "Almost Never" to five indicating "Almost Always". The mean of the board's total responses was calculated and the score indicated the degree of disputatiousness. The disputatiousness of a board was considered either fractious or quiescent according to its score. Boards with a score of less than 3.0 on this question were labelled as fractious boards. Fractious boards were considered to be fractionalized by dispute to the point it affected their overall functioning.

Boards where their overall mean score was 3.0 or greater on this question were considered to be quiescent in nature. They were frequently, if not virtually always, in agreement with each other. No board hovered around the 3.0 mark. They were clearly quiescent or fractious. The terms fractious and quiescent were used to label a board with regard to the degree of disputatiousness. The measure of fractiousness or quiescence was combined with the measure of board polarity to provide a two-dimensional view of the patterns of decision-making evident on boards. Thus there were potentially four board types created: 1) quiescent unipolar, 2) fractious unipolar; 3) quiescent bipolar, 4) fractious bipolar. One question on the questionnaire elicited board member's own view of their style of trusteeship utilizing Mann's (1976) definitions of delegate, trustee and politico. The data obtained from members' (1) view of their community, (2) professed provincial political party support and (3) conflict within the board were considered in relation to their own perception of their political style.

The impact and influence of a superintendent on a board was measured using the same Likert-style 5-point scale (see Appendix A) and data were examined in relation to the polarity and disputatiousness of a board as well as the perceived community type using McCarty and Ramsey's (1971) designations of community character.

Summary

This chapter outlined the data required and collected for the study. The composition of the survey instrument and how the sample was determined have been explained. Examples of the instrument used have been included as well as the method of data collection and treatment.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

Introduction

This chapter considers the sub-problems outlined in Chapter One, the results the questionnaire obtained and the implications of that data.

Did the data obtained support previous research that school boards are indeed polarized in their decision-making process and if so, do the polarity findings parallel the work of previous researchers? Secondly, in addition to polarity, can the degree of conflict within a board be measured and labelled and if so, does the degree of conflict affect the way a board operates as a unit? Thirdly, when selected characteristics of a board are examined, can those characteristics be identified as potential sources of conflict and do these have an impact on the polarity and disputatiousness of a school board?

Sub-problem 1

Board Polarity

To what extent are school boards in British Columbia polarized in their decision-making?

Findings. The polarity of a school board is a measure of a repeated voting bloc or pattern in the decision-making process. A

unipolar board, that is, one with little conflict and no recurrent pattern, was indeed found to exist in the school boards of British Columbia. Of the 11 whole board responses tabulated, 8 were considered unipolar and only 3 bipolar. These boards had either all members or all but one responding that there was little or no division amongst them and members did not group together from one issue to the next (see Table 1).

Table 1

Total Number of Unipolar and Bipolar Boards

No. of boards = 11

Polarity	Number of Boards
Bipolar boards	3
Unipolar boards	8
TOTAL	11

There were fewer bipolar boards. Bipolar boards perceive frequent conflict and very regular and established voting patterns. Responses from those members indicated not only division but, in some cases, they named (by number) the members they agreed with and those they disagreed with. When all of the forms from a single board were compared it was possible to see a conflict pattern form and consistent voting alliances.

Discussion. Unipolar and bipolar boards were surprisingly easy to label. Whole board responses were very congruent and consistent with each other and it appeared that the group of board members seemed to know themselves as a unit well. There was little indecision.

Blanchard (1975) identified a third style of polarized board, that of the negotiator board. Negotiator boards perceive conflict but see no discernible pattern. They appear more closely related to unipolar boards than to bipolar with the difference that they clearly perceive some degree of conflict. This style of board showed up in the data obtained in this study as a unipolar board but with an extending and qualifying label of disputatiousness attached. It was labelled fractious unipolar and its explanation provides the introduction to the discussion of disputatiousness and its role in defining board polarity.

There are clearly more unipolar boards than bipolar indicating trustees see themselves more frequently as a cooperative and cohesive group. Although polarization exists, the minority of boards perceive themselves as possessing entrenched, polarized voting patterns.

Sub-problem 2

Disputatiousness

Findings. The data indicated that boards can indeed either be quiescent or fractious in nature, dependent upon their perception of the degree of conflict they experience in decision-making. Boards with a mean score of less than 3.0 were considered fractious in nature. Of the 11 whole board responses, 3 were fractious (see Table 2). Boards with a mean score of above 3.0 on question #1 on the survey were quiescent and 8 boards in total were quiescent.

Table 2

Total Number of Boards by Disputatiousness

No. of boards = 11

Disputatiousness	Number of Boards
Fractious	3
Quiescent	8
TOTAL	11

Discussion. The data indicate that boards are much more likely to see themselves as quiescent than fractious. Quiescent boards are characterized by cooperation and consensuality and fractious boards by dissension and conflict. These two labels are indicators of a board's disputatiousness. The disputatiousness of a board is the characteristic that stamps a board's style and provides part of the label of board conflict. It is a predictor of how they will tackle an issue and come to a decision based on their conflict style. Although disputatiousness clearly exists, the majority of boards believe themselves consensual and quiescent.

Sub-problem 3

Trustee Governance Style

How do trustees view their own governance style and what is the relationship of this perception to board polarity?

Findings. There are some issues for which all respondents' answers can be considered and some issues for which only whole board responses are appropriate. A trustee's perception of his governance style, professed political support and view of the community he represents are all responses that have merit on their own and are not bound by the need to be considered in the light of a whole board as a single unit. Consequently, all responses, even those from boards where not all responses were returned, were used. When considering

the relationship between board polarity and the impact of party politics or community style it was, if course, necessary to consider only whole boards. Table 3 is a measure of all respondents.

Table 3

Trustee Respondents by Trustee Governance Style

No. of respondents = 91

Trustee Governance Style	Number of Respondents
Delegate	8
Trustee	29
Politico	53
No Response	1
TOTAL	91

The delegate style of school board member is by far the least common (see Table 3). Less than 10% of all respondents consider themselves delegates. Politicos are the most prevalent of all three styles with 58% of respondents perceiving their role to be that of a politico and trustees were squarely in the middle with 32%.

In looking at Table 4 where board polarity is examined in relation to trustee governance style, the data indicate 96% of trustee style members are to be found on unipolar boards. Of politicos, 62% are to be found on unipolar boards, and 37% to be found on bipolar boards. Of bipolar board members, 70% are politicos and 41% of unipolar members are trustees.

Discussion. It seems possible that the beliefs a member brings to the board table about his responsibilities and his role would influence his decision-making which, in turn, should influence whole board decision-making. The combination of all members' styles may impact upon the polarization and conflict patterns.

When the data on governance style and board polarity are examined, a relationship becomes evident, particularly for trustee and politico style members. Trustee respondents are six times more likely to be sitting on unipolar boards as bipolar boards. Politicos are proportionately more evident on bipolar boards which seems consistent with the notion that politicos govern in a style just as likely to cause confrontation as deal with it. The delegate members are small

Table 4

Relationship Between Board Polarity and Trustee Governance Style

No. of boards = 11

No. of trustees = 66

No. of bipolar boards = 8

No. of bipolar boards = 3

Trustee Governance Style	Unipolar Boards	Bipolar Boards	Total
Delegate	3	2	5
Trustee	19	3	22
Politico	24	14	38
No Response		1	1
TOTAL	46	20	66

and very closely split. Their tendency to represent constituent groups faithfully may contribute to the polarization of a board when other members are making choices based on their own judgement. Trustee respondents not only believe they are capable of exercising good judgement on behalf of their community, they govern in a consistent and orderly style, consistent with the low conflict and high cooperation to be found on unipolar boards. The data appear to indicate that board polarity and board conflict are influenced by the presence of members that are prone to behave very politically as opposed to those that believe their actions are always a representation of what their constituents would trust them to take.

Sub-problem 4

Partisanism

Is there a relationship between provincial political party support and trustee governance style and board polarity?

Findings. Tables 5 through 10 should be considered in this sub-problem. Table 5 reports the data from the first mailing of the survey and asks respondents to indicate the provincial party they usually support. There is no clearly discernible pattern with data split fairly equally between all three organized provincial parties and a substantial number of no response answers. Table 6 examines trustee governance style and political party support for whole boards

Table 5

Trustee Respondents by Political Party Support

No. of respondents: 71

Political Party Support	Number
Social Credit Party	21
New Democratic Party	22
Liberal Party	9
Other/No Response	19
TOTAL	71

Table 6

Relationship Between Trustee Governance Style and Political Party Support

(Whole Board Responses)

No. of boards: 8

No. of respondents: 47

Appendix A used

Trustee Governance Style	Political Party Support				
	New Democratic	Social Credit	Liberal	Other	No Response
Delegate	2	2			4
Trustee	5	4	4	4	17
Politico	7	8	3	7	25
No Response				1	1
TOTAL	14	14	7	12	47

and Table 7 for all respondents. Again, the responses are split fairly equally across the parties and proportionately between the three governance styles. Table 8 reports board polarity and actual card-carrying membership for whole boards. Of unipolar members, 44% are members of an organized political party (91% of those members are divided between the two largest political parties in British Columbia--the ones in official opposition to each other). Of bipolar board members, 65% hold membership in a political party. The survey allowed members to indicate that no membership was held so a no response answer is not necessarily no membership.

Table 9 reports data on political party support and board polarity. It indicates that Social Credit and New Democratic parties seem to have fairly equal representation on both unipolar and bipolar boards with the Liberal party substantially less representation. Both Socred and the NDP parties had 14 respondents on boards and the respondents not replying at all had almost as many at 12. Table 10 records the relationship between board disputatiousness and political party support. Again, there is proportionately an equal split between the two largest parties.

Table 7

Relationship Between Trustee Governance Style and Political Party Support

No. of respondents: 71

Appendix A used

Trustee Governance Style	Political Party Support				
	New Democratic	Social Credit	Liberal	Other	No Response
Delegate	2	3	1	1	7
Trustee	7	5	5	8	25
Politico	13	13	3	9	38
No Response				1	1
TOTAL	22	21	9	19	71

Table 8

The Relationship Between Board Polarity and Political Party Membership

Whole Board Responses

No. of unipolar boards = 5

No. of bipolar boards = 3

No. of trustee respondents on unipolar boards = 20

No. of trustee respondents on bipolar boards = 27

Appendix A used

Board Polarity	Political Party					
	New Democratic	Social Credit	Liberal	No Response	No Membership Held	Total
Unipolar	4	7	1	2	13	27
Bipolar	8	4	1	2	5	20
TOTAL						47

Table 9

Relationship Between Board Polarity and Political Party Support

No. of unipolar boards = 5

No. of bipolar boards = 3

No. of trustee respondents on unipolar boards = 20

No. of trustee respondents on bipolar boards = 27

Appendix A used

Board Polarity	Political Party				
	New Democratic	Social Credit	Liberal	No Response	Total
Unipolar	6	8	5	8	27
Bipolar	8	6	2	4	20
TOTAL					47

Table 10

Relationship Between Board Disputatiousness and Political Party Support

No. of quiescent boards = 6

No. of fractious boards = 2

No. of trustee respondents on quiescent boards: 5

No. of trustee respondents on fractious boards: 12

Appendix A used

Board Disputatiousness	Political Party				
	New Democratic	Social Credit	Liberal	No Response/ Other	Total
Quiescent Boards	12	11	4	8	35
Fractious Board	2	3	3	4	12

Discussion. A pivotal issue in the study was the examination of the trustee's own perception of his role and how he views his commitment to political office. Trustees run for local school board for a variety of reasons. They may represent a slate or special constituency or simply run on their own platform. Whatever their motivating purpose, their behaviour as a trustee is guided or shaped by what they believe their responsibilities are as a political and public figure.

A school board member executes his responsibilities within the framework of what he believes his role to be. If he believes he is a delegate he will try to enact only his constituents' wishes. If he perceives himself to be a trustee he will act on behalf of his constituents. If he perceives himself a politico he will behave politically, changing tactics from one issue to the next.

The responses indicated that far and away the fewest trustees considered themselves to be delegates, the greatest in number were politicos and trustees in the middle. There was not a significant indication that one style of trustee was more likely to support one provincial party over another or that a certain style was more likely to be found in the ranks of one party than another. There is, however, a clear indication from the number of professed politicos that school board members do see their job politically and believe themselves able and responsible to behave in a political fashion in the capacity of their political role. The public education system is

not considered officially partisan and a traditionally professed belief in British Columbia is that politics has no place on school boards but quite the opposite is actually true. School board governance is very political. In the B.C. system local school board experience is frequently used as a training ground for those aspiring to higher office (Robinson & Stacey, 1984). Very few other avenues exist for a politically ambitious individual to gain experience and public exposure. Election to school board is considerably easier to achieve than municipal, provincial or federal representation and provides a logical place to start.

In B.C. the NDP and Socred parties are polarized in philosophy and are in official opposition to each other. Although the Liberal party holds third place, the official following is small and disorganized. The NDP and Socreds hold many diametrically opposed beliefs. Yet all three governance styles, also clearly distinguishable from each other, are not to be found in the ranks of one party more likely than another.

Despite the speculation that party politics could and perhaps should have shaped a relationship between a specific governance style and a specific political philosophy, it appears no clear relationship exists. Yet there is a relationship between committed party membership and school board holders in general and between party membership and board polarity. The choice of which party did not indicate a relationship. The data, however, indicate that the more

polarized a board is, the greater the number of board members who are card-carrying members of a party.

Sub-problem 5

Characteristics of the Community

Is there a relationship between trustee perception of community type and trustee governance style, board polarity and disputatiousness?

Findings. Table 11 records the total number of respondents by their perception of their role. Table 12 examines the data on board polarity and the trustees' view of their community, using McCarty and Ramsey's (1971) four community types: inert, pluralistic, factional and dominated.

Unipolar boards believe they serve mainly inert communities with pluralistic communities following second, and factional third. Bipolar boards also rate inert communities first, followed by pluralistic, but ranked dominated communities third. Fully one-third of all trustee respondents believe they serve inert communities regardless of their polarity. Table 13 examines disputatiousness and community characteristics. Quiescent boards believe they serve mainly inert communities and on fractious boards pluralistic communities are the chosen mode. Fractious board members are more likely to perceive a wider variety in community type with inert and factional types each

Table 11

Trustee Respondents by Perception of Community Characteristics

No. of respondents = 91

Inert	28
Pluralistic	23
Factional	11
Dominated	13
No Response	16
TOTAL	91

Table 12

Relationship Between Trustee's View of Their Community and Board Polarity

No. of bipolar boards = 3

No. of unipolar boards = 8

No. of trustee respondents on bipolar boards = 20

No. of trustee respondents on unipolar boards = 46

Trustees Sitting on Boards	Community Characteristics					
	1 Inert	2 Pluralistic	3 Factional	4 Dominated	No Response	TOTALS
Bipolar	6	7	2	4	1	20
Unipolar	16	9	7	4	10	46
TOTALS	22	16	9	8	11	66

Table 13

Relationship Between Degree of Disputatiousness on a Board And the Trustees' view of Community Characteristics

No. of fractious boards = 2

No. of quiescent boards = 8

No. of trustee respondents on fractious boards = 12

No. of trustee respondents on quiescent boards = 45

Trustees Sitting on Boards	Community Characteristics					
	1 Inert	2 Pluralistic	3 Factional	4 Dominated	No Response	TOTALS
Fractious	4	7	4	2	4	21
Quiescent	16	9	4	10	6	45
TOTALS	20	16	8	12	10	66

ranked second after pluralistic. Quiescent boards ranked dominated communities second and pluralistic communities third.

Table 14 reports the relationship between trustee governance style and their view of their community. All respondents' data could be used, whole and partial boards. Fully 50% of trustee style members believe they serve inert communities with dominated communities

Table 14

Relationship Between Trustee Governance Style and Trustees' View of Their Community

No. of respondents = 91

Trustees Governance Style	Characteristic Communities					
	1 Inert	2 Pluralistic	3 Factional	4 Dominated	No Response	TOTALS
Delegate	2	2			3	7
Trustee	15	4	2	5	4	30
Politico	13	11	9	9	10	52
No Response/ Other	1	1				2
TOTALS	31	18	11	14	17	91

ranking second with 17%. There were so few respondents labelling themselves delegate style trustees that little is created but what there is shows they are equally split between believing their communities to be inert or pluralistic. Politicos had their responses spread over the widest range; 28% of politicos view their community as inert, 23% as pluralistic, 19% as factional and 19% as dominated.

Discussion. Both questions of governance style and community type were questions of judgement for the respondent based on his beliefs and perceptions. It is possible then that the perception of how a board member should fulfill his role to his constituents and his perception of the nature of that constituency he is serving are related. A trustee may have his beliefs about his role somewhat shaped by the electing community or may have his attitude about the community shaped by the eyes he sees them through.

Delegates tend to believe their communities are inert or pluralistic. Neither type of community is one powerful enough to exert control over a board, yet the delegate style member is the one who believes he must answer to this constituency strictly. Trustee style respondents overwhelmingly see their communities as inert and politicos believe their communities to be firstly either inert or pluralistic with an equal second split between domination and factionalization. Fully 34% of all respondents believe they serve inert communities and 20% believe they serve pluralistic communities. Neither type are fraught with constant conflict or negative influence

in school board affairs.

It appears that disinterest is the characteristic that shows up for publicly elected school officials, particularly when board elections are held without political platforms and philosophies for groups to rally behind. Both trustee and politico styles (by far the greatest number of respondents) believe they are acting on behalf of others and they basically choose to view their communities as unable or unwilling to marshall influence on school board affairs. Politicos may believe they "know best" in the absence of clear direction. Dominated and factionalized communities comprise a total of 38% of all politico responses. While there is a difference between the two community types, both represent clear power bases that make their presence felt on a board. The group of dominated and factionalized communities that the politicos designated may indicate the power sources and conflict some politicos have come up against in their method of administration.

The tables do not show the disparity of answers within a single whole board. Some whole boards were able to be very consistent in their view of the community they serve. However on many there was a wide range of answers. In general, unipolar boards answered more consistently and bipolar somewhat less so, which is in line with the notion that unipolar boards are more cohesive as a group and bipolar more disparate and conflict ridden. The overall results within whole boards were inconsistent enough to raise doubt in the surveyor's mind to how clearly school trustees as a whole perceive their communities.

Sub-problem 6

Influence of the Superintendent

Is there a relationship between the perceived influence of the superintendent and board polarity, disputatiousness and trustee governance style?

Findings. The results obtained on the superintendent's influence indicate him to be overwhelmingly a source of great influence and impact on the board he serves, regardless of board polarity or trustee governance style. Table 15 records the relationship between the influence of the superintendent and board polarity. All responses are on the positive side of the scale, with bipolar trustee members indicating slightly greater influence on the part of the superintendent. Of bipolar trustees, 70% rate the superintendent as frequently or almost always likely to influence a critical decision as opposed to 64% of unipolar board trustees using the same rating.

Table 16 considers the superintendent's influence with regard to the degree of disputatiousness on a board. Again the superintendent overwhelmingly had the confidence of both style boards. However, quiescent boards provided stronger support. Of fractious style trustee members, 48% indicated they believe the superintendent frequently or almost always influenced critical decisions. Of quiescent style trustees, 75% believe the superintendent influential in critical decisions.

Table 15

Relationship Between the Influence of the Superintendent and Board Polarity

No. of unipolar boards = 8

No. of bipolar boards = 3

Total no. of boards 11

No. of trustees on unipolar boards = 46

No. of trustees on bipolar boards = 20

Total number of trustees 66

Board Polarity	Degree to Which Superintendent Influences Critical Decisions						
	1 Almost Never	2 Not Often	3 Regularly	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	No Response	Total
Unipolar Boards			15	23	6	2	46
Bipolar			6	10	4		20
TOTAL							66

Table 16

Relationship Between the Influence of the Superintendent and the Degree of Disputatiousness on Boards

No. of fractious boards = 3

No. of quiescent boards = 8

No. of trustee respondents on fractious boards = 21

No. of trustee respondents on quiescent boards = 45

Board Disputatiousness	Degree to Which Superintendent Influences Critical Decisions						
	1 Almost Never	2 Not Often	3 Regularly	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	No Response	Total
Fractious Boards		1	10	9	1		21
Quiescent Boards			10	24	10	1	45
TOTAL							66

Table 17 reports the relationship between the influence of the superintendent and trustee governance style. The data of all respondents could be used here. Again, agreement on his influence was unreserved. Of politicos, 62% rated the superintendent's influence at 4 or 5 and 62% of trustees rated the superintendent's influence at 4 or 5. However, 87% of delegates rated the superintendents at 4 or 5.

Discussion. There is little doubt that school board members place a great deal of dependence on their superintendent for guidance in decision-making. The superintendent is their closest authority and usually the one specifically appointed or at least approved by them to run the district. This study did not focus on the superintendent specifically and the survey information gathering to asking trustees to rate his influence. They were further asked (in the first mailing) to indicate their preferred source of information when educating themselves on an issue. Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated that their preferred source of information was the superintendent. Regardless of trustee governance style or board polarity or disputatiousness the influence of the superintendent is powerful. One politico respondent indicated a negative response and one fractious board member indicated a negative response out of all data collected. It is highly likely that even in situations where the relationship between the board and superintendent is not characterized by trust and amicability there is at least cooperation due quite

Table 17

Relationship Between the Influence of the Superintendent and Trustee's Governance Style

No. of respondents = 91

Governance Style	Degree to Which Superintendent Influences Critical Decisions					
	1 Almost Never	2 Not Often	3 Regularly	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	No Response	Total
Delegate			1	4	3		8
Trustee			6	17	4	2	29
Politico		1	19	24	9		53
No Response							1
TOTALS		1	26	45	16	3	91

possibly to the superintendent's control of the power tools: professional expertise, public opinion, ties with influential tools and information systems.

Sub-problem 7

Superintendents and Community Relations

Is there a relationship between the superintendent and the community he serves?

Findings. All of the respondents' answers can be used in comparing the influence of the superintendent and the trustee's view of community characteristics. The data is recorded in Table 18. Overwhelmingly, the data is strongly supportive of the influence a superintendent has in any community type. Seventy-eight percent of trustees perceiving they served an inert community also believed the superintendent to be frequently or almost always influential in critical decisions, 60% of pluralistic communities perceived him so, 63% of factional communities but fully 85% of trustees believing they served dominated communities perceived the superintendent as very influential.

Discussion. The data indicates clearly that the trustees' responses were virtually all on the positive side, giving the superintendent credit for substantial influence in every community

Table 18

Relationship Between the Influence of the Superintendent and Trustee's View of Community Characteristics

No. of respondents = 91

Community Characteristics	Degree to Which Superintendent Influences Critical Decisions					
	1 Almost Never	2 Not Often	3 Regularly	4 Frequently	5 Almost Always	No Response	Total
1 (Inert)			5	16	6	1	28
2 (Pluralistic)			9	11	3		23
3 (Factional)			4	5	2		11
4 (Dominated)			2	6	4	1	13
No Response		1	2	7	4	2	16
TOTALS		1	22	45	19	4	91

type. The greatest percentage was that of the dominated community where the superintendent is considered by McCarty and Ramsey (1971) to be in the role of a caretaker. However, they also state that in a dominated community with growing fledgling groups (such as teachers' unions), the superintendent exercises more control than he normally would. As discussed in sub-problem 7, there are limited conclusions that can be drawn from the data as the focus of the study was not the superintendent. Therefore, the results are merely supportive and an additive to the overall question of school board patterns of conflict. Secondly, as also mentioned in the discussion in sub-problem 7, the concern does arise as to the trustees' reliability in their answers about their community. These are their perceptions and beliefs and the range of perception on the same board was, in several cases, wide.

Sub-problem 8

Political Patterning of Boards

To what extent can school boards be politically patterned by degree of polarity and disputatiousness?

Findings. The survey results indicated that boards could be labelled two-dimensionally according to polarity and disputatiousness. Four distinct board types emerged: 1) quiescent unipolar, 2) quiescent bipolar, 3) fractious unipolar, 4) fractious bipolar (see Table 19). The most prevalent board type found was quiescent unipolar

Table 19

Number of Boards by Polarity and Disputatiousness

Board Type	Number of Boards
Quiescent Unipolar	6
Fractious Unipolar	2
Quiescent Bipolar	2
Fractious Bipolar	1
TOTAL	11

boards considering themselves to serve on a board of this nature. The least common type was fractious bipolar with only one board of this type found. Quiescent bipolar boards and fractious unipolar boards were equally common, two of each being labelled as such.

Table 20 records the data collected on the four surveyed sources of influence on board types: trustee governance style, partisanism, community type and the impact of the superintendent. Quiescent unipolar boards had the greatest number of respondents, with 32 out of

Table 20

The Four Types of School Board Typologized by Polarity and Disputatiousness: Relationships to Trustee Governance Style, Political Party Support and Memberships, Community Type and the Influence of the Superintendent

	Trustee Governance					Partisanism									
	Style					Party Support					Party Membership				
Board Type	Delegate	Trustee	Politico	No Response	Total	NDP	Socred	Liberal	Other No Response	Total	NDP	Socred	Liberal	Other No Response	Total
Quiescent Unipolar	3	15	14	0	32	6	6	4	6	22	2	6	1	14	23
Fractious Unipolar	0	4	10	0	14	0	2	1	2	5	0	1	0	4	5
Quiescent Bipolar	2	2	9	0	13	6	5	0	2	13	6	3	0	4	13
Fractious Bipolar	0	1	5	1	7	2	1	2	2	7	1	1	0	4	6
Totals	5	22	38	1	66	14	14	7	12	47	9	11	1	26	47

Board Type	Community Type						Influence of the Superintendent						
	Inert	Pluralistic	Fractional	Dominated	No Response	Total	1 Almost Always	2 Not Often	3 Regularly	4 Frequently	5 Not Always	No Response	Total
Quiescent Unipolar	13	6	3	5	5	32	0	0	9	16	5	2	32
Fractious Unipolar	2	4	4	1	3	14	0	0	6	7	1	0	14
Quiescent Bipolar	4	4	2	3	0	13	0	0	2	7	4	0	13
Fractious Bipolar	1	4	0	1	1	7	0	1	3	3	0	0	7
Totals	20	18	9	10	9	66	0	1	20	33	10	2	66

Number of Boards

[a] Quiescent Unipolar = number of boards = 6 number of trustees = 32
Fractious Unipolar = number of boards = 2 number of trustees = 14
Quiescent Bipolar = number of boards = 2 number of trustees = 13
Fractious Bipolar = number of boards = 1 number of trustees = 7
11 66

[b] number of boards in partisanism data = 8
number of trustees in partisanism data = 47

66 total respondents. They were equally split between trustee and politico governance styles, with delegates a very distant third. From discussion earlier in the chapter, it is evident no individual political party was more clearly in evidence in their ranks than any other party, although over 25% of respondents chose not to answer that question. Despite the fact that one party does not exercise control, respondents were more likely to be affiliated with a party of some type than none at all. A relationship between partisanism and school board trustee office appears to exist, although not with specific party politics. Seventy-four percent of trustees affiliate themselves with an organized party. When actual card-carrying membership is considered, 62% of trustee respondents are members of a party. Only 25% of bipolar board members indicated they did not hold membership, compared with 48% of unipolar members.

Quiescent unipolar boards tend to see their communities as inert (46% of respondents) with the remainder of community type responses fairly equally split between pluralistic, factional, dominated and no response. The quiescent unipolar board perceives the superintendent to be influential with no negative responses whatsoever.

Fractious unipolar boards had politicos in greatest number (71%) of the three governance styles and were equally split in believing their communities pluralistic (30%) and factional (30%). The role of the superintendent was rated highly powerful with 93% of respondents believing him to be regularly or frequently influential in critical

decision-making.

Quiescent bipolar boards also had politicos in greatest number (68%) and were equally split across the four perceived community types. This board perceived the strongest influence of the superintendent with 84% believing he frequently or almost always influenced critical decisions.

Fractious bipolar boards had politicos in greatest numbers as well (71%) and saw their communities mainly as pluralistic. They were one of only two groups where the respondents clearly identified a community type that virtually the whole board agreed upon. This board was least supportive of the superintendent of the four board types with the only negative vote.

Discussion. Although the data obtained clearly found board polarity to exist, boards were not labelled solely by the perceived presence of conflict and patterns of voting blocs. The double label of polarity and disputatiousness provides a greater explanation of the nature of conflict within a board. The value of considering the nature of board decision-making from two dimensions is that measuring dispute provides insight into whether a board is able to work and act cooperatively and efficiently despite dissension. Boards may be polarized in their voting but the dispute label provides information as to what degree the polarization is conflict ridden and whether their operation is fractionalized by dispute or not. Polarity labels

voting pattern and presence of conflict, disputatiousness labels the type of board manifested by that polarity.

A quiescent unipolar board is a board that perceived limited conflict and is indeed almost always unanimous in its decision-making. These boards' respondents were not able to answer to patterns because the issue of recurring voting patterns does not arise. This board is characterized by its calm, quiescent nature and believes it operates smoothly and cooperatively.

The pattern similar to Blanchard's negotiator style board is the fractious unipolar board. The polarization is not complete enough to be labelled a bipolar board, yet some conflict is apparent. The label fractious indicates a degree of dispute high enough to cause conflict in decision-making activities. Such a board experiences conflict but can vote together when the time arises and they do not have entrenched patterns.

The bipolar board perceives frequent conflict and clearly sees recurring patterns of who sides with who in decision-making. The fractious bipolar board is a board that indicated they were never or almost never in agreement with each other, and their voting partners were the same from issue to issue. Such a board remains locked in conflict and indecision with the odd member breaking a tie. It would seem that a superintendent who is a political strategist would be most suited to handle such a contentious and fractious board.

Quiescent bipolar boards are those who perceive clear support

blocs but see little conflict amongst themselves in the final analysis. They believe they have an ability to decide questions co-operatively and are able to vote unanimously a great deal of the time.

The four board types differ in their composition when the governance style of the respondents is considered. Quiescent unipolar boards, characterized by amicability and a willingness to get along, have politicos and trustees equally within their boards. The balance between the two styles is further reflected in the almost equal split politically. This is not a group that commits to actual party membership when compared to the other board types. They tend to believe that they serve disinterested or powerless communities and speculation would be that the superintendent's role with this board would be quite influential, capitalizing on the absence of clear power blocs and the willingness to work consensually.

Fractious unipolar boards may be able to contribute their high level of disputatiousness to the great number of politicos on their boards, a governance style noted for its willingness to enter conflict as well as to cause it. They are not polarized due to strong commitment to political party membership but are supportive to individual parties. Their view of their community relates to their level of disputatiousness, believing them to be either pluralistic or factional, both community types where the board is clearly aware of competing outside groups. The high level of support for the superintendent is a reflection of the unipolarity, indicating a

superintendent who keeps the decision-making process going, despite the fractionalization and tension within the group.

Quiescent bipolar boards have more than twice as many politicos as trustees proportionately sitting on them, contributing to the polarized voting. This board type is also polarized politically, with respondents almost equally to be found in the NDP and the Socred support groups. This style board has the highest proportionate party membership (70%) of all types and the membership is split between the NDP and the Socred parties, indicating highly committed and politically charged individuals with diametrically opposed beliefs, yet they do perceive that they are able to work together. They tend to view their communities as inert or pluralistic and, while pluralistic communities are educationally aware, neither type is a threat to the board's ability to govern. This board has proportionately the greatest influence felt from the office of the superintendent (84%) of any board type with their response choices falling into 4 and 5, indicating he frequently or almost always influences their decision-making. Perhaps their quiescence is a measure of the superintendent's ability to keep them consensual, despite the great differences within the group.

The fractious bipolar board, characterized by the greatest degree of polarity and disputatiousness of all four types has, as might be expected, a high number of politicos sitting on it (71%). They are not committed to membership politically but have the same spread of

party support that other board types have. They tend to view their communities as made up of many groups, anxious for influence and recognition. It is possible some of the disputatiousness in this group comes from the cross-community board representation of the pluralistic community. This board, although still supportive, has the lowest recognition proportionately of all types for the superintendent. It appears to be a board composed of very political individuals, unable to work together and unwilling to allow the superintendent to control them either.

The degree of polarity and disputatiousness do indeed indicate substantial differences in the political pattern of a board. Boards that are highly fractionalized tend to be composed of political individuals who view their communities as possessing groups of influence wishing to have a say in educational governance. Boards that perceive themselves as consensual and quiescent (and that is most boards) tend to be tempered by mix of governance styles and allow the superintendent greater control.

Summary

This chapter has reported the findings of the data collected and discussed the data in relation to the eight sub-problems. School boards' degree of polarization and disputatiousness has been considered in sub-problems 1 and 2. The three trustee governance styles have been reported and compared in sub-problem 3, and sub-

problem 4 compared partisanism and governance style and board conflict. Sub-problem 5 examined the relationship between community type and trustee governance style and board polarity and disputatiousness. Sub-problem 6 looked at the role of the superintendent in board type and trustee governance style and sub-problem 7 compared community type and the influence of the superintendent. Sub-problem 8 examined the four types of board in relation to the four potential sources of influence on their functioning: trustee governance style, partisanism, community type and the superintendent.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Implications

Summary

The make up of a school board is complex, composed of individuals of unique background and usually of strong personal beliefs and commitment. The degree of conflict and polarization present is the clue to the nature of a board and manifests itself in how that board perceives itself, the community they serve and how the board behaves as a unit. The variety provides the fabric for a recurring pattern of action within that single functioning unit. Once the factors providing the diverse and varied backgrounds are identified, the degree and nature of conflict can be identified and labelled.

The data obtained indicate that school boards are indeed polarized and that polarity has a degree of conflict present that is recognizable and measureable. The degree of conflict is measureable as a degree of disputatiousness and the conflict present within a board has an impact on the functioning of that board as a political unit.

Boards were characterized using four possible labels and the labels indicate the polarity of the board and its disputatiousness. The four types of board found are: 1) fractious unipolar, 2) quiescent unipolar, 3) fractious bipolar and 4) quiescent bipolar. The value of labelling a board with a two-dimensional character lies

in extending the understanding of the nature of a board past polarization to the degree of conflict within the unit. Boards may not be polarized but still fractionalized by dispute. All boards are polarized to some degree, whether it be very little or very great, but the additional dimension of the degree of dispute explains the nature of that polarity.

Several factors believed responsible for conflict on a board were examined for their impact on the overall board type, as well as for their influence on the individual trustee's perception of his role.

The role of provincial politics in trustees' perceptions and board make-up was examined as was the educational governance style of each member. The trustees' perception of the community they represent yielded the view that trustees are not as closely attuned to their constituency as may reasonably be assumed. Finally, the role of the superintendent in school board politics was surveyed. The data were examined for his influence with the board and any possible relationship between board type and community type and support for and reliance on the superintendent.

Conclusions

A variety of factors must be responsible for the make-up of a board and its inclination to behave in a particular pattern. Some personal characteristics of trustees and contextual actors were explored in the questionnaire behind this project, but they comprise

by no means an exhaustive list. The factors considered were logical sources to tap regarding political philosophy, practice and belief in order to extend the knowledge of a board's nature. The following are some indications of forces shaping board politics based on the data obtained and the discussion of the preceding four chapters.

1. British Columbia school boards are indeed polarized; however, the majority of boards perceive themselves as unipolar, with low conflict and no specific voting blocs.
2. British Columbia school boards have a measureable label of disputatiousness, although the majority of boards believe they are characterized by a quiescent nature.
3. Boards may be labelled by a two-dimensional label of polarity and disputatiousness, indicating that varying degrees of polarity and disputatiousness are possible within one board. A board may be highly polarized but quiescent or may be unipolar with a high degree of disputatiousness.
4. Polarized boards with a high degree of conflict (for example, fractious bipolar) tend to have a wide range of beliefs and varied backgrounds in their individual members with regard to their political beliefs, governance style and view of community. The more disparate the background the greater the chance of

conflict.

5. Board members appear to know each other and their board style well. The results were very consistent across a board.

6. a) It appeared boards did not know their communities as well as they knew themselves. There were widely varying views on the type of community they served within a single board. This perception is either very coloured by their beliefs about their own role and responsibilities, or they simply do not clearly see a community tone or characteristic.

   b) Trustee's individual political beliefs do not appear to be related to governance style or board conflict. There is no clear relationship to be drawn between professed provincial party support and the trustee's perception of their role or their board's polarization. However, generally, school board trustees tend to be card-carrying members of an organized party of some type. This, considered in connection with the above conclusion about their knowledge of their immediate community, leads to the speculation that trustees' political ambitions are wider-ranging than their own constituency and that they may see the local school board as a starting place.

7. Trustee governance style may share a relationship with perception of community style. It appears that both trustee and politico style trustees believe their communities to be inert or at their most politically responsive, pluralistic. None of the three governance styles sees their community group to be actively seeking power in the way a fractionalized or dominated community might evidence. It must be remembered these are perceptions through the eyes of trustees.
8. Trustee governance style and board polarity share a relationship. Politicos are more likely to be found in greater numbers in a bipolar board and trustees more likely to be found in greater numbers on unipolar boards. Politicos have the numerical edge in boards that are polarized or fractionalized.
9. When the perception of a community's characteristics are examined in light of board polarity it appears that both bipolar and unipolar boards see their communities as inert or pluralistic--neither type which is threatening to a board's power and integrity as a group.
10. Regardless of polarity, governance style or community characteristics a central figure of influence for virtually any board type is the superintendent. The

survey tool use was limited in its capacity to tap this particular area in depth, but the overall indication was that trustees perceive the superintendent as a first source of information and one whose opinion about what is best for the system to be an opinion worth heeding.

Implications for Research

Firstly, the study makes a contribution for a wide field of research in school board governance. In order to consolidate the specific findings of this study it would be valuable to have a larger study. Although the sample was adequate, a study of greater scope would provide confirmation of the results.

Secondly, in examining the disputatiousness of a board and the underlying sources of conflict, it may be valuable to consider other methods of gathering the information. While mailing out written surveys is convenient for the researcher, it is impersonal. Many of the questions are introspective and require perhaps more thought and time than a busy board is prepared to allocate during a meeting. In particular, the questions regarding trustee style and community style may have elicited more thoughtful responses if a personal interview technique had been used. In any case, utilizing such a method in addition to an anonymous form would provide feedback to the researcher on any problems or concerns with the nature of questions on the survey.

Thirdly, although the information gathered on the influence of the superintendent was valuable and appeared very consistent, this is an area that could benefit from further exploration, clarification and detailed examination. The style and method of the superintendent's handling of the board would be valuable to examine in light of the type of board and community he or she serves and this area was not deeply considered in the present study.

Implications for Practice

There are several implications for practitioners that can be drawn from the data obtained in this study. It appears that school board politics and the resultant decisions of that machine are complex and affected by a variety of factors. Those factors examined indicated that some have a great deal of influence and others, considerably less. The dual nature of polarity and disputatiousness of a board provides understanding of the nature and predictable pattern of the unit in the decision-making process. It seems clear that making assumptions about a board without observing the nature of their governance style, the constituency they believe they serve and the degree and pattern of conflict present could prove costly for those working with that board, for it is those very factors that are the framework of perception and understanding the trustees operate within.

The clarity and consistency of whole board responses regarding polarity, disputatiousness and the influence of the superintendent on their group indicates school board members know themselves well, and

there is a consistent, predictable pattern to their purpose and operation. Those more directly and immediately affected by the nature of a local school board are the local district staff. The framework of perception that board members bring to their own responsibilities, as well as to the group, explains why boards take on a particular nature or personality and why it is possible to have such a wide variance in attitude from board to board and district to district. The informed executive officer utilizes the information and observations available to him, not only to avoid unnecessary conflict and confrontation but to enhance communication and cooperation between various levels of the organization.

The partisanism of elected boards appears to be less of a concern for the superintendent of a polarized board than the combination of governance styles and degree of dispute present within that board. The beliefs about their own role and the constituency they serve are factors with an impact on the way they will be able to work together and the degree of amicability present.

The information has implications for trustees themselves. Townsend (1988) noted in They Politick for Schools that trustees commonly commented on how different actual trusteeship was from what they expected before they were elected. Board members go into their commitment with a set of beliefs about what they can impact and what they can accomplish. It appears from Townsend's work that their experience is different from their perceived notion of what they thought it would be. Some of the difference is due surely to the

polarity and dispute they discover to be the on-going nature of a board, the nature of the community they represent, and how they reconcile these factors with their beliefs about their own governance and their relationship with the superintendent. Knowing about possible sources of conflict does not remove or reduce friction but awareness of their existence and influence can provide insight and depth of understanding when a trustee or board must work within a potentially frustrating framework. The patterns of boards, trustees and their communities are not static. Power and influence change, leadership styles and personalities leave their mark and politics, while not appearing directly related, affect tone and attitude in communities in an overall fashion and influence individual's thinking about public bureaucracies.

Communities are comprised of a wide variety of people but tend to have some beliefs and behaviours that mark their attitude toward public services such as schools. The data obtained on this survey indicated a tendency for most trustees to believe they serve disinterested or, at best, disorganized interest groups. The answers across boards that were consistent in everything else, were very inconsistent in their perception of their constituencies. It may be that trustees are not as attuned to their communities' characters as the researcher believed they would be. The implication here for trustees may be that since some confusion exists over the nature of their constituency, trustees cannot be clear as to how best serve that constituency.

APPENDIX A

Styles of Trusteeship

Directions: Most of the questions can be answered by simply circling your choice. Questions 3 and 9 ask you to note a fellow board member. As a group, assign each member a number (I suggest doing it alphabetically). That number is the way you will refer to a fellow trustee on the form.

1. How often would you say this board is unanimous in its decisions on other than routine business?

Almost Never	Not Often	Regularly	Frequently	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

2. When the board disagrees on issues would you say there is more or less the same division on the board? That is, do the same members seem to stick together from one issue to the next?

Yes No

3. If you answered "yes" to #2, with whom do you usually agree?

___ ___ ___ ___

With whom do you disagree? (Please use your numbering system)

___ ___ ___ ___

4. Which of the following most closely describes you as a trustee?

___ I was elected to make decisions that clearly reflect the beliefs and wishes of my constituents. It is my responsibility to act based on what my constituents feel is necessary and appropriate.

___ I was elected to make decisions using my own best judgement. My constituents trust me to decide what is best for them based on my own values and beliefs.

___ I was elected to make decisions that sometimes are my own judgement and other times the wishes of my constituents, depending upon the circumstances.

5. In the school board elections were you representing a specific group or party or slate?

Yes No

6. Which provincial party do you usually support?

_____

Are you a member of a provincial political party?

Yes No

If so, which one?

_____

7. Board members make decisions on a wide variety of issues. When you seek information to educate yourself on an issue, indicate your most favoured source. Circle one number.

1. Superintendent
2. Assistant Superintendent
3. Secretary-Treasurer
4. Principals and teachers
5. Board members in other districts
6. B.C.S.T.A. (British Columbia School Trustees Association)
7. Fellow board members
8. Parents
9. General public
10. Articles, books
11. Television, radio, newspaper

8. How often does the superintendent offer advice when the board is faced with critical issues?

Almost Never	Not Often	Regularly	Frequently	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

How often is the board likely to follow that advice?

Almost Never	Not Often	Regularly	Frequently	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

9. Which member or members (if any) often oppose the Superintendent's recommendations? (Please use your numbering system)

___ ___ ___ ___

10. Which of the following descriptions best fits your school district?

    1. In this school district there is little interest in educational issues or school board activities.

    2. In this school district there is a lot of disagreement on what is important in education with many groups putting forth opposing views.

    3. In this school district people usually split into two opposing groups on educational issues.

    4. In this school district there is one group whose influence is dominant in educational issues and school board activities.

APPENDIX B

Styles of Trusteeship

Directions: Most of the questions can be answered by simply circling your choice. Questions 3 and 7 ask you to note a fellow board member. As a group, assign each member a number (I suggest doing it alphabetically). That number is the way you will refer to a fellow trustee on the form.

1. How often would you say this board is unanimous in its decisions on other than routine business?

Almost Never	Not Often	Regularly	Frequently	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

2. When the board disagrees on issues would you say there is more or less the same division on the board? That is, do the same members seem to stick together from one issue to the next?

   Yes No

3. If you answered "yes" to #2, with whom do you usually agree?

   ___ ___ ___ ___

   With whom do you disagree? (Please use your numbering system)

   ___ ___ ___ ___

4. Which of the following most closely describes you as a trustee?

   ___ I was elected to make decisions that clearly reflect the beliefs and wishes of my constituents. It is my responsibility to act based on what my constituents feel is necessary and appropriate.

   ___ I was elected to make decisions using my own best judgement. My constituents trust me to decide what is best for them based on my own values and beliefs.

   ___ I was elected to make decisions that sometimes are my own judgement and other times the wishes of my constituents, depending upon the circumstances.

5. Which of the following descriptions best fits your school district?

   1. In this school district there is little interest in educational issues or school board activities.

   2. In this school district there is a lot of disagreement on what is important in education with many groups putting forth opposing views.

   3. In this school district people usually split into two opposing groups on educational issues.

   4. In this school district there is one group whose influence is dominant in educational issues and school board activities.

6. How often does the superintendent offer advice when the board is faced with critical issues?

Almost Never	Not Often	Regularly	Frequently	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

   How often is the board likely to follow that advice?

Almost Never	Not Often	Regularly	Frequently	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

7. Which member or members (if any) often oppose the Superintendent's recommendations? (Please use the numbering system)

___ ___ ___ ___

APPENDIX C

Instructions

Most questions are very straightforward and only require making a choice and circling it. Questions 3 and 7 ask you to note a fellow board member. In the interests of consistency and privacy, I suggest you number your whole board alphabetically (including yourself) and use numbers to answer the questions. For example, the member whose surname is first alphabetically is #1, the one whose surname is second is #2, etc. Discard the list when you are through.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

LIST OF REFERENCES

Awender, M. A. (1985). The superintendent-school board relationship. Canadian Journal of Education, 10(2).

Bartley, M. (1977). The ways superintendents and board members coax each other to agree. The American School Board Journal, 66(1).

Blanchard, P. D. (1975). Small group analysis and the study of school board conflict: An interdisciplinary approach. Small Group Behaviour, 6, 229-237.

Brown, R. D., Newman, D. L., & Rivers, L. S. (1985). An exploratory study of contextual factors as influences on school board evaluation information needs for decisionmaking. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 7(4), 437-445.

Brown, R. D., Newman, D. L., & Rivers, L. S. (1985). Does the superintendent's opinion affect school boards' evaluation information needs? Urban Education, 20(2), 204-221.

Dawes, R. M. (1971). A case study of graduate admissions. American Psychologist, 26, 180-188.

Isherwood, G., & Osgoode, N. D. (1986). What makes boards tick? The chairperson speaks out. Education Canada, 26(1), 4-11.

Mann, D. (1976). The politics of administrative representation. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books.

McCarty, D. J., & Ramsey, C. E. (1971). The school managers. Westport, Conneticut: Greenwood Publishing Corporation.

Newman, D. L., & Brown, R. D. (1988). Patterns of school-board decison-making: Variations in behaviour and perceptions. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Newman, D. L., Brown, R. D., & Rivers, L. S. (1983). School board's and administrators' use of evaluation information. Evaluation Review, 7(1), 110-125.

Nielsen, B., & Robinson, N. (1980, April). School board elections: New evidence to support the case for them. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, Massachusetts.

Robinson, N., & Stacey, C. (1984). Serving on the school board: A political apprenticeship for higher office. Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 30(2), 115-125.

Townsend, R. G. (1988). They politick for schools. Toronto, Ontario: The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Wirt, F. M. (1976). Political turbulence and administrative authority in the schools. In L. H. Masotti & R. L. Lineberry (Eds.), The new urban politics. Ballinger Publishing Company.

Wirt, F. M., & Kirst, M. W. (1982). Schools in conflict. McCutchan Publishing Corporation.