CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

This thesis describes a study, which was undertaken by the writer, of the principalship of a public secondary school for boys and girls in a provincial city in New Zealand. The writer employed an ethnographic approach to the study and placed his research focus on Jim Carr, Principal of Manoa College in Farmington, New Zealand. The fieldwork phase of the study took place throughout 1981 during which time the researcher endeavoured to "get inside" the principalship of Jim Carr as the year progressed. The intention was to describe and interpret the principalship from the perspective of Jim Carr himself.

In the first chapter of the thesis, the reader is provided with an introduction to, and overview of, the research. In explaining the background to the study, the researcher has taken the unusual liberty, for the only time in the thesis, of writing in the first person. This stance, at the very beginning of the thesis, was deliberately chosen for two reasons. The researcher wanted to outline the beginnings of the study from a personal perspective in order to try to convey some of the excitement inherent in an ethnographic study as the ethnographer shapes the study, follows leads and strives to make sense of the research experience. At Manoa College, the researcher continually experienced the thrill of coming to grips with the research field and the challenge of bringing some order to the events and people he encountered. The second reason for beginning this research story in the first person is to further

underscore the place of the ethnographer in the field.
This research experience entwines the researcher in the
whole research process. It is not possible to stand
back in true objective stance and to distance oneself
from the data. This characteristic of research in the
field has been clearly noted elsewhere:

> For the researcher in the field the image of
> the experimenter in the laboratory is not a
> fit analogue.... He claims no antiseptic dis-
> tance and noninterference from outside
> influence. When he enters the field, he does
> so with his skills and consequently with many
> of the situations, processes and perspectives
> .... that link him with models of work and
> thought long since established in former
> training institutions and modified by experi-
> ence. Also, when he enters the field, he
> maintains his links to institutions of current
> employment and association. Probably he is
> linked to kin and friendship groups which may
> affect him and his work through their mutual
> investment and obligations. Thus, both the
> field... and the researcher are inextricably
> linked to other "fields" and social situations
> - any or all of which impinge upon his research.
>
> (Schatzman and Strauss 1973: 2-3)

The ethnographer, therefore, comes to the study as
a thinking, feeling human being who is endeavouring to
understand life amongst a group of other people living
their daily lives together. This factor ensures that
the research work of the ethnographer is, in itself, a
very human undertaking.

In the remainder of the chapter, the writer
describes the nature of the study at Manoa College and
the process by which the research problem was generated
in the form of a question. The justification of the
study is discussed and its limitations are detailed.
The chapter concludes with an overview of the organiza-
tion of the whole thesis.

THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: THE RESEARCHER EXPLAINS

When I first became interested in the study of educational administration, a question arose in my mind. The question was deceptively simple but it became an important starting point. That initial question was, "Why do schools work the way they do?" In my subsequent thinking about schools, I found myself returning to that question. My further investigations uncovered "Departmental" circulars telling people what they should do in their schools, handbooks and manuals for principals and other people with administrative responsibilities and a wide range of textbooks on school administration telling how things should be done. Few writers, however, based their work on what actually goes on in schools. Few people seemed to have taken the time to document the actual administrative operation of a school. It was on this latter task that my attentions became focussed.

I decided that I would like to investigate the administrative operation of a school environment - one with which I had little familiarity rather than one of which my past experience would be likely to have given me considerable understanding. I had worked in a number of types of primary and intermediate schools, two teachers colleges and two university departments. This working experience had not encompassed a secondary school. The task, therefore, became one of finding out - in the case of one New Zealand secondary school - the answer to that question, "Why do schools work the way they do?" To determine that answer it would be necessary to find out how the school worked.

Prior to this point, the writer was aware of the Mintzberg (1973) study of managerial work although finding this account to be somewhat "time and motion" in emphasis. On the other hand, Wolcott's (1973) study of a year in the life of an elementary school principal, Ed Bell, presented a faithful word picture of events and behaviours with a depth of authenticity and sensitivity that I found exciting.

Subsequently, I was able to undertake a small-scale study of the work of five New Zealand primary school principals. (Edwards 1979a) In this study, data were gathered by means of observational and interview techniques although the very short period of time spent in the five schools provided the researcher with only a taste of the flavour of the task and the principals' worlds and raised more questions than were answered. A wish was felt to pursue such questions over a longer period of time and in greater depth. However, I had found that, what Wolcott termed an "ethnographic approach" to investigation had allowed a focus to be made on the actual day-by-day life of each school, the five principals, in particular, and other individual participants in each school's life.

Ethnography, as Duignan has written, (1981) had provided the opportunity to experience the action of a group of people and to respond to the thrill and challenge invoked in the exploration of the inter-actions of these people in their daily worlds.

As in the case of the"five principals study" I decided that, to best answer my starting question, I should use a similar approach once more; this time, over the course of a year. The intent became to gain

access to a New Zealand secondary school which would allow
such an amount of regular contact by a researcher and to
place myself on the site as often as possible in order to
become immersed in the way of life of the school in the
same way as an anthropologist seeks to become immersed in
the village life of a small-scale society like, say, Tonga.
Should such a procedure be possible, the tools of the
anthropologist (observation, interview and document study)
might be most appropriate, too.

The first task was to find a school which would be
willing to be part of such an activity; a school in which I,
as researcher, could "come and go," "look and listen," "ask
and write." After considering a group of possible schools
in which to locate the study, a decision was finally reached
and an approach was made to the selected school. Manoa
College, at that time, provided secondary education to
slightly fewer than 900 boys and girls in a provincial New
Zealand city. The college had just completed its first
complete cycle of students through the period of entry to
the school in Form Three to school leaving after Form Seven.
It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to identify the
"typical" or "average" New Zealand secondary school or
principal. This, in fact, was not the intention of this
study. Rather, my hope was to explore and explain aspects
of life in a New Zealand secondary school.

The next task was to gather as much background informa-
tion as possible about Manoa College and to inquire how
access might be gained to the college for the purpose of
undertaking the research project forming in my mind. The
potential excitement of ethnography was scented, again,
when the Board of Governors of the College and its Principal,
Mr Jim Carr, readily approved the approach for permission
to carry out the study. The research adventure was poised
to begin.

THE NATURE OF THE STUDY

The study which was implemented at Manoa College was a research activity in which the researcher gained his information at first-hand as a close observer of people and events in the life of some aspects of the administrative operation of the school. Throughout the study, the researcher endeavoured to make a regular assessment of his learnings as the focus of his attention. This regular assessment provided the means by which the next step in the fieldwork could be shaped as a means of gathering data to explain events and interactions occurring around the fieldworker himself. Progressively, throughout the year's fieldwork, a closer focus was placed on Jim Carr, the school's principal, as he became the central figure of the study. Ultimately, this work became a study of the school world of Jim Carr at Manoa College. The researcher attempted to experience that world, as much as possible, in the same way as it was experienced by Carr himself. Experiencing that world from the inside, the researcher considered, would provide him with the perspectives of the participants themselves who, at Manoa College, were the actual insiders themselves. This perspective would allow that school world to be seen and explained from the inside as distinct from the view which might be gained by an outsider, an unaccepted stranger, looking in. Whyte (1955: 357) articulated the reason which supports this perspective when he commented on his experience of studying Cornerville at first-hand, "...I realized that I could explain Cornerville better through telling the stories of those individuals and groups than I could in any other way."

The approach taken to the study at Manoa College could be given any one of several names including

"observation," "field," "case" or "ethnographic" study. Smith (1978) wrote about this genre of research which can be termed collectively "qualitative" research. The present writer chose the term "ethnographic study" to describe his study at the college. Briefly, the term "ethnography" has been applied to similar types of studies in which partici- pant observation serves as the main data gathering method and in which the researcher seeks to describe and interpret life in the group under study from the perspectives of the inside participants themselves. Geertz (1975) has written about these descriptive and interpretive aspects as being the features which give ethnography its own character as an approach to research. The study was an attempt by the researcher to use the fieldwork approach of the ethnographer in combination with a series of techniques for gathering, recording, processing and presenting the research data. Having selected the ethnographic approach as being suited to the problem under study, the researcher made a decision to employ no specific, existing theoretical construct which he would seek to prove or disprove during the study. This is not to say that the study was atheoretical. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, a group of relevant concepts provided a guiding framework for initiating and implementing the study.

Three points must be made with regard to the issue of the theoretical bases of the study. First, Schatzman and Strauss (1975:5-6) note the attraction of naturalistic research approaches to the researcher who holds humanistic ideals. The present writer found himself feeling very comfortable with this combination. Schatzman and Strauss commented:

> For the naturalistically-oriented humanist, the
> choice of method is virtually a logical impera-
> tive. The researcher must get close to the
> people whom he studies; he understands that
> their actions are best comprehended when

observed on the spot - in the natural, ongoing
environment where they live and work. If man
creates at least some of the conditions for his
own actions, then it can be presumed that he
acts in his own world, at the very place and
time that he is. The researcher himself must
be at the location, not only to watch but also
to listen to the symbolic sounds that character-
ize this world. A dialogue with persons in
their natural situation will reveal the nuances
of meaning from which their perspectives and
definitions are continually forged.

(Schatzman and Strauss 1975:5-6)

Second, a decision was made to employ the notion
of "the development of grounded theory" as discussed
by Glaser and Strauss (1967) who outlined a research
procedure whereby the researcher generates his or her
own theory as the study unfolds, as new questions are
asked, as new situations are encountered and as new
leads are explored. Schatzman and Strauss
commented, (1973: 12) "The discovery process and
the questions raised by the researcher need not be
related to any "received" or prior theory." In the
study undertaken at Manoa College, therefore, the
researcher considered appropriate a blend of the
strands of the ethnographic approach of the ethnogra-
pher, and the development of theory grounded in the data
of the study itself - with both approaches being
consistent with a personal world view stressing humanism.
The ethnographic approach allowed the researcher to
experience Jim Carr's school world at first-hand in the
same way as an ethnographer might experience life in
any social situation ranging from a Trobriand Islands
community to a motorcycle gang. The grounded theory
approach enabled the researcher to investigate and
conceptualise aspects of Manoa College while he was
"on the job." The continual shaping of questions and

generating of grounded theory allowed and helped the
researcher to gain an increasing understanding of the
life being experienced and to gain an increasing
facility in interpreting and explaining that life.
The humanist position fitted comfortably with the way
in which the researcher views people in the world
around him - a view, very simply and heavily under-
stated, which holds that people as individuals are
important.

Third, in this particular study, the researcher
brought a background of preparation from the field
of anthropology. The anthropologist places his or
her specific focus of concern on the concept of
"culture" which can be simply stated as the way of
life of an interacting human group. Manoa College
was viewed as a cultural entity in itself and the
concept of culture ensured a continual focus through-
out the study on the people in the college and the
ways in which their interactions as social beings
occurred. The cultural orientation of the study was
in harmony with both the ethnographic
approach to the research and the flexibility to
respond to situations encountered at Manoa College
which was offered by the grounded theory approach.

Brief comments on two further features of the study
are important in providing an understanding of the work
at Manoa College. The study proceeded through a series
of phases during the fieldwork period of one school
year. Considerable effort was required in the early
setting up stage of the research. Such a study is not
readily accepted when likely participants feel threatened
or open to exposure or unsure about the work being under-
taken by the researcher. Once the study began, three

phases were planned and undertaken; these being an extension of Blumer's (1969: 40-47) two stages in research - i.e. exploration and inspection. An exploratory phase during the first month of the school year provided a time for the researcher to become known within the college and to become oriented within the college. In the succeeding months, the researcher undertook closer inspection of events occurring at the site as the focus of his observations of Jim Carr's school world. In October, Jim was "shadowed" constantly, for a week, by the researcher, while in November and December, the researcher conducted a series of open-ended interviews with a sample of participants selected from Jim's school world. At this point, the inspection phase concluded the on-site work of the researcher.

Finally, when working as an ethnographer, the researcher must function as his own most important tool for gathering data in the field. Interviews were undertaken and documents were gathered but the researcher spent almost all of the year in the role of a participant observer so that participant observation served as the main data gathering technique used during the study. This technique involved the researcher in intense social interaction with people whose lives are bound up with Manoa College — particularly Jim Carr. Through-out the year's study, the researcher faced many tasks: gaining acceptance, recording data, developing relationships, asking questions and observing behaviour - to name only a few of those tasks. Bogdan and Taylor's summation of the task accurately portrayed participant observation at Manoa College:

> Observers immerse themselves in the lives of the people and the situation they wish to under-stand. They speak with them, joke with them, empathize with them, and share their concerns and experiences.... They therefore enjoy a unique vantage point....

(Bogdan and Taylor 1975:5)

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem for investigation in this study evolved
over a period of time before the fieldwork phase was
begun and in the early stages of that part of the project.
The researcher began with an interest in a broadly stated
problem. That initial interest was in seeking to further
his own knowledge of the working of schools by endeavour-
ing to answer the broad question, "Why do schools work
the way they do?" As the researcher's reading and
thinking proceeded, that question, it was realised, was
too broad in scope and nebulous in nature for one person
to be able to answer in the timeframe and with the resources
which the researcher felt able to commit to the study
being planned.

By the time contact was made with Manoa College in
order to determine its availability as a site for
research, a second, more specific but still flexible,
question was developed as a basis for the research.
This second question followed an extensive series of
readings about life in schools and, in the researcher's
mind, the development of an interest in the administra-
tion of schools. The question became, "How does a New
Zealand school work and how can those workings be
explained?" The question itself was still broad in
its scope but did begin to provide some guidance for
the study. Embodied in the question was an interest in
studying a single school - a task which would require depth
of time and study - and an interest in not only
finding out about the administrative workings of a
New Zealand school but also an interest in developing
some explanation for those workings. A decision was
made to locate the study within a secondary school as,
first, the researcher's past professional experience

had been in other sectors of education and, second,
the literature on school administration in New Zealand
did not provide any suitable basis for answering the
question in relation to a New Zealand secondary school.
The study, then, would take the researcher into a
sector of the New Zealand education system which was
outside of his   past professional experience. The
question provided the basis on which the first approach
was made to the school selected for the study. The
researcher considered that a single site and an approach
based largely on participant observation would combine
to offer the most fruitful answer to the question which
had been developed.

This development of the research question was not
undertaken lightly. The research approaches and
methods carrying such names as field studies, participant
observation, and qualitative and ethnographic approaches,
allow for - and consider to be inherent - this develop-
ment of research questions from a general orientation
toward a more specific question which forms the basis
of a problem for study. Bogdan and Taylor make this
point:

> What distinguishes participant observation and
> all qualitative methods from other methodologies
> is that the participant observer's questions are
> framed in general terms. Most practitioners of
> the methodology attempt to enter the field
> without specific hypotheses or preconceived
> notions....the observer may find that his or her
> ideas and areas of interest do not fit the
> setting. His or her questions may not be
> relevant to the concerns and behaviour of the
> subjects. The participant observer will begin
> to formulate a new research design or new tactics
> and begin to ask different questions....

(Bogdan and Taylor 1975: 27)

Therefore, clear definition of a question as a

specific basis for the study, at an early point of the
project, would not have been in accord with the tenets of
the approach on which the study came to be founded.

The final development of the research problem occurred
when the study had been under way for a month. Again, the
problem was stated in the form of a question. The question
arose from the writer's interest in the principalship which
had been developed during the literature survey and which
indicated a lack of documentation and analysis of the real
world of New Zealand school principals - and secondary
principals, in particular. However, even more significantly,
the question arose from the early experience of the researcher
in the field. During this first month at Manoa College, the
researcher became increasingly aware that the school world of
the principal was a phenomenon of importance and uniqueness.
In addition, it became increasingly more obvious that Jim
Carr was a central figure in the school. Jim Carr's school
world, the researcher believed, was worthy of study. Further,
he believed that such a study could be undertaken manageably
by a single researcher during the course of the school year.
The research problem which finally emerged was stated in
the form of a question:

> "What is life like in the school world of one
> New Zealand secondary school principal and
> how can that life be explained?"

The term "life" is used in this study to encompass
the range of features, such as activities, interactions
and events, which constitute Jim's incumbency of the
principalship. The term "school world" was derived from
Wiseman and Aron who discussed (1970:237-245) a "small
world" as being "any setting or behaviour system that
offers a self-contained subsociety." (ibid:245) In
this study the "school world" has been perceived as such
an identifiable, self-contained entity.

During the remainder of the fieldwork phase, the question provided direction to the researcher and, as had been originally hoped early in the study's origins, was able to be answered by the description and interpretation of data which were collected and processed by the researcher in the role of the ethnographer. The case of Jim Carr, in his principalship at Manoa College, was used to answer the question. The researcher anticipated that the question embodying the research problem would require him to investigate many aspects of Jim Carr's school world, such as: What does Carr do at Manoa College? What factors influence his behaviour as principal? How can his job be explained? These were just a few of the possible beginning questions for the research.

In undertaking his data gathering and examination of the data, the researcher worked toward generating some theoretical explanation of Jim Carr's principalship - theory which, itself, was grounded in the school world of Jim Carr himself. The intentions in generating theoretical ideas were: to explain Carr's principalship and to do this with honesty and accuracy; and, to provide theoretical ideas which could be further tested with other principals and used to predict behaviour which might be observed in other principalships.

The writer next discusses the justification of the study.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is justified, in the view of the researcher, in that it helps to fill a gap in our knowledge of an important feature of the operation of schools. The study provides an extensive description and interpretation of the school life of a New Zealand secondary school principal. In his reading about the principalship in New Zealand, no similar studies were identified by the researcher. Three issues of The Journal, the magazine published by the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association, carried articles reporting various aspects of a survey administered to all principals of state and independent secondary schools in 1975. (Johnson, Adams et al 1977, Adams, Boswell and Johnson 1977, and Johnson, Adams and Boswell 1978). Four studies were located which reported different types of investigation of the principalship in primary schools in New Zealand. (Coleman 1976, Schimpf 1979, Edwards 1979a, and Prebble 1980).

The nature of the present study makes it different to any of its forerunners in the New Zealand literature on school administration. In considering the literature gained from overseas sources, the researcher identified a number of observational studies of the principalship. Few of these works, however, concerned the secondary school principalship while those which did focus on this area tended to be more concerned with the nature of the principal's work activities rather than making any wider examination of the school world of the principal. The most comparable study to the present work was the research reported by Wolcott (1973) concerning his ethnographic study of an American elementary school principal.

The distinguishing feature of the present study, therefore, is its use of ethnographic techniques over a sustained period of time as a means of describing and interpreting the actual day-to-day life of a New Zealand secondary school principal in his school. This study provides a record, in the form of description and interpretation, of a year in the school life of one such principal. The reader will encounter the school world of Jim Carr - the events, people, issues and concerns with which he is involved at Manoa College and against which readers will be able to consider their own likely behaviour as the school world of Jim Carr unfolds throughout the thesis. The study ends with a set of conclusions, in the form of a theory of the principalship, which are developed from the data of the study itself and which are available for further testing by subsequent researchers.

The writer now turns to a consideration of the limitations and delimitations of the study.

THE LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is delimited in several ways.
First, the scope of the data gathered has been limited
by the physical ability of the researcher to be present
and to collect material. The researcher was employed
in a teaching position in a New Zealand university
throughout the study. This employment involved
commitments on the university campus on a number of
occasions each week. Therefore, full-time presence at
Manoa College was not possible apart from the month of
February after which the researcher selected times at
which he would be present in the school in order to
gather data. Apart from limitations on being present
in the school at all times, the researcher gathered data
to the fullest extent of his ability to follow and record
events during his periods on-site. However, it is not
possible for an observer to record every event, in full,
due to the sheer physical limitations of keeping track
of every utterance and activity which occurs, even in a
location involving only a few participants.

Second, the scope of the study is limited by its
focus on the adult involvement in the administrative
operation of the school. The researcher gathered raw
data from pupils on only a few occasions. He acknow-
ledges that students have an influence on many features
of school life. However, the arenas chosen, ultimately,
for data gathering were largely arenas populated by
adults. Again, physical limitations meant that the
researcher had to decide on the scope of his data search
and the decision was made to observe or interview
students only to the extent that students were involved
in the arenas in which data were gathered.
The group of girls, for instance, who attended a meeting

of the Board of Governors was subsequently interviewed
by the researcher, who also attended a number of events,
as an observer, in which students were involved. The
writer attended such functions as PTA meetings, meet-the-
teacher evenings and a meeting of the Manoa College
Educational Trust. However, additional interviews of
parents or community members were considered to be beyond
the study's scope and the physical resources of the
researcher.

Third, the study is limited in time to the year in
which the fieldwork was undertaken. An in-depth
investigation into the history of, and its influence on,
the college was beyond the scope of the study. Similarly,
although the researcher has remained an interested
bystander in events at the school since the fieldwork
concluded, again, further systematic involvement in the
life of the school was not possible in subsequent years.

Finally, the researcher does not claim with absolute
certainty that either Manoa College or Jim Carr is the
average or typical New Zealand secondary school or
principal. This principal and college do match, in
general, the descriptions compiled by Johnson, Adams et
al (1977:15) of the "average" New Zealand secondary school
and principal. However, as will be discussed in Chapter
Five, this college and principal were selected for reasons
appropriate to this study only and not for the purpose of
representing any wider population of schools or principals.

In the next section, the writer outlines the way in
which the thesis is organized.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Having set the scene for the study in the first
chapter, the writer develops in considerably greater
depth the main conceptual foundations of the study in
the second chapter. Chapter Two contains a discussion
of the concept of culture which is central to the work
of an ethnographer who comes from an anthropological
position. The use of an interpretive paradigm for
understanding research data is discussed and shown to
be well-suited to this study in which the writer sought
to generate theory grounded in his data. On this point,
the writer explains his use of the process of developing
his own theoretical ideas as they emerged from the data
gathered in the study. The nature of ethnography and
ethnographic research are then clarified as these
concepts formed the basis of the approach to the research
which was undertaken at Manoa College.

Chapter Three contains a review of the literature
on which the study is based. This review moves from an
exploration of several well-known ethnographic works
drawn from anthropology and sociology to a consideration
of a series of ethnographic or qualitative studies of
life in schools. The focus then moves to the literature
existing on the field of the principalship itself.
Overseas studies are considered first; then, the writer
surveys the published material available on the principal-
ship in New Zealand. Several studies are noted in the
literature review which themselves provided important
guidance for the present study.

Chapters Four and Five detail the approach used in
the research and the specific aspects of the methodology
which was adopted as being best suited to the problem

under investigation. Chapter Four, therefore, reports
on the ethnographic approach to research; while, in
Chapter Five, the writer details the many issues and
strategies which were used to employ the approach in
his role as participant observer - e.g. selecting the
site, gaining entry to the school, establishing rapport,
gathering and recording data and attending to ethical
considerations. The chapter includes profiles which
introduce both Manoa College and Jim Carr to the reader.

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight contain the ethnographic
material which forms the basis of the study. This material,
which is largely descriptive, in Chapters Six and Seven,
provides the story which unfolded for the researcher and
guided each successive step of the study. The first month
of Jim Carr's school year is portrayed in Chapter Six.
The arenas which were observed throughout the year and
which constitute Carr's school world are presented in
Chapter Seven. A week in October in the principal's school
life is depicted in Chapter Eight, which is largely
interpretive, as the writer discusses Carr's principalship
and examines a series of propositions to explain this
principalship. These propositions form the grounded
theory of the study. In these three chapters, the writer
includes a description of the way in which the study
proceeded throughout the phases of investigation which
evolved. Commentary on the study itself and the develop-
ment of research questions are presented and the generated
theory is refined.

Chapter Nine contains a summary of the study and the
researcher presents his conclusions in the form of a theory
of the principalship. The methodological approach used in
the study is reconsidered from the perspective of hind-
sight and some suggestions for further research are made.

CONCLUSION

This first chapter, therefore, has set the scene for the study. It is necessary, next, to examine the conceptual foundations of the study. In the next chapter, the writer discusses four concepts which were central to the study of Jim Carr's school world. First, the concept of culture is examined; second, the use of an interpretive paradigm in the research process is discussed; and, third, the writer outlines an approach to the generation of theoretical ideas which proved to be well-suited to answering the research problem throughout the whole research experience. A discussion of the nature of ethnography and ethnographic research prepares the reader for the later consideration of methodological issues and strategies which are discussed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a discussion of the
conceptual foundations which provided a guiding framework
for undertaking this study. These concepts are: the
concept of culture - which is the major focus of
researchers who bring an anthropological background to
the study of human interaction; the concept of an inter-
pretive paradigm - which is a view of reality in the
social world as having both pattern and order which the
researcher seeks to discover from the standpoint of the
participants themselves; the concept of grounded theory
- which provides a method for the generation of
theoretical ideas which are discovered from and
throughout the research process; and, the concept of
ethnography - which describes an approach to research in
which the researcher gathers data in the field and seeks
to present that data faithfully and accurately from the
viewpoint of the people who inhabit that field.

In describing this chapter, the writer has used the
term "conceptual" foundations rather than "theoretical"
foundations. The use of the former term provided
a means of indicating that the study rested on
carefully reasoned and appropriate bases. A significant
feature of the study, however, was that the researcher
purposely came to the work without bringing any special
set of theoretical ideas to prove or disprove or modify
as a result of the study. The intent was not to apply
or test any administrative theory or theory of the
principalship which might have been developed by other
researchers.

Instead, the researcher sought to suspend any
theoretical orientation until the study was in progress.
In this way, any theoretical ideas developed during the
course of the study would be generated from the study
itself. The intention of the researcher was to develop
theoretical ideas as they emerged from the fieldwork
experience and the data which were gathered and later
analysed. The researcher considered that the bringing
to the study of any preselected theoretical frameworks
would have resulted in these frameworks being imposed on
his attempts at understanding the field in which the
study was based. This imposition of theoretical ideas
from "outside" was considered inappropriate to a study
in which the researcher was seeking to penetrate the
theoretical constructs of the people "inside" the field
of study.

The researcher, therefore, sought to develop
theoretical ideas from the study itself rather than
seeking to apply or test existing theoretical ideas. In
this sense, the researcher came to the task "with clean
hands." However, the researcher's selection of the
study's conceptual foundations meant that, in another
sense, the researcher came to the task with some preferred
ways of perceiving and trying to understand life in
Jim Carr's school world. The researcher considered that
the four concepts discussed in the remainder of this
chapter were suited to use in combination with each other
as being appropriate means of addressing the research
question. Together, the concepts formed a cohesive
foundation to guide - without inflexibly structuring -
the study. The concept of culture will be discussed at
this point.

THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

Introduction

The intent of this study was to learn at first-hand about life in the school world of a New Zealand secondary school principal - in particular, the school world of Jim Carr. The researcher wanted to enter and explore Jim's school world and - as an understanding of that world grew - to describe and explain that world. In addition to his studies in educational administration, the researcher brought a background of study in the field of anthropology. In effect, this was a study of the way-of-life experienced in Jim's school world. The intent was that the researcher would delve deeply into that way-of-life in order to observe the people and events which formed that school world and to be with those people as they went about their daily lives with the pressures, challenges, joys, relationships, tasks, responsibilities, hopes and feelings that combined to form daily life in Jim Carr's school world. The concept of culture is central to the mind-set of the researcher undertaking such a task. Leacock has commented on this point:

> The culture concept, central to the field of anthropology, is becoming increasingly familiar....When properly applied, the idea of "culture" can be extremely useful for the understanding of behaviour....True cultural insight enables us to see behind superficially, socially patterned differences to the full integrity of an individual. It prevents us from misinterpreting behaviour different from that to which we are accustomed.
> (Leacock 1976: 418)

Toward an Understanding of the Term "Culture"

The concept of culture has been given many defini-
tions. Kroeber and Kluckhohn, (1963) in the republica-
tion of their 1952 work, identified 164 definitions of
the term "culture" and categorised the definitions in
a series of seven groups:

Group A: Descriptive definitions which are broad in
nature. Examples include:

"...that complex whole which includes know-
ledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and
any other capabilities and habits acquired
by man as a member of society."

(Tylor 1871, in Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1963: 81)

"...the sum total of ideas, conditioned
emotional responses, and patterns of habitual
behaviour which the members of that society
have acquired through instruction or
imitation and which they share to a greater
or less degree."

(Linton 1936, ibid: 82)

"It (culture) obviously is the integral whole
consisting of implements and consumers' goods,
of constitutional charters for the various
social groupings, of human ideas and crafts,
beliefs and customs."

(Malinowski 1944, ibid: 83)

"...culture is essentially a construct that
describes the total body of belief, behaviour,
knowledge, sanctions, values and goals that
mark the way of life of any peole. That is,
though a culture may be treated by the student
as capable of objective description, in the
final analysis it comprises the things that
people have, the things they do and what they
think."

(Herskovits 1948, ibid: 84)

The remaining six groups of definitions in Kroeber
and Kluckhohn's typology can be simply described as:

Group B: Historical definitions which emphasise
           tradition or social heritage;

Group C: Normative definitions which emphasise rule
           or way, or, ideals or values plus behaviour;

Group D: Psychological definitions which emphasise
           adjustment (culture being a problem solving
           device) or learning or habit;

Group E: Structural definitions which emphasise
           patterning or organisation of culture;

Group F: Genetic definitions which emphasise culture
           as a product or artifact, or, which
           emphasise ideas, or, which emphasise
           symbols; and,

Group G: Incomplete definitions.

     Kroeber and Kluckhohn avoided propounding a further,
165th, definition in their work although they did discuss
the "general features of culture" and demonstrated that
these features included: integration, historicity,
uniformities, causality, significance and values, and
values and relativity. (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1963:
311-354)   In addition, the writers endeavoured to sum
up the portrayal of culture which social scientists
seemed to be professing:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and
> implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and
> transmitted by symbols, constituting the
> distinctive achievement of human groups,
> including their embodiments in artifacts;
> the essential core of culture consists of
> traditional (i.e. historically derived and
> selected) ideas and especially their
> attached values; culture systems may, on
> the one hand, be considered as products of
> action, on the other as conditioning
> elements of further action.

> (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1963: 357)

Merrill (1961: 81-83) further discussed the battery
of Kroeber and Kluckholn definitions and presented a
picture of the concept of culture embodying eight
significant aspects. The discussion of these aspects
both integrated the large number of definitions which
were considered and pointed to the features which
seemed to be characteristic features of culture.
In summary, Merrill's eight aspects of culture included:

1. The all encompassing nature of culture which
   includes the non-material products of group
   life (mores and norms) which play a normative
   function, material products, and, meaningful
   relationships between the parts of a culture
   and the symbolic interpretations they hold
   for group members;

2. The symbolic nature of culture which includes
   acts, objects, ideas and sentiments which are
   dependent on the use of symbols and which is
   continuous and cumulative;

3. The learned quality of culture which is passed
   from person to person or group to group;

4. The intellectual quality of culture which
   perceives culture as an intellectual process
   in which man gains, develops and transmits
   his culture through the use of language and
   other symbols;

5. The "system for action" or behaviour which is
   embodied in culture and is a guide to the
   actions of individuals and groups;

6. The relationship between society, culture and the
   individual in which society is viewed as an
   organized group of individuals, culture is viewed
   as an organized group of learned responses and

the individual is viewed as a living organism
capable of independent action but modified by
his contact with the society and culture in which
he or she functions;

7.   The "superorganic" nature of culture which implies
that culture transcends the individual and although
it may be influenced by individuals, culture
continues with or without the presence of any
particular person; as shown by the continuity of
a language which is not dependent on the life of
any single person; and,

8.   The centrality of "culture" as a major organising
or operational concept in the social sciences -
which is borne out by the scope of Kroeber and
Kluckhohn's collection and analysis of the 164
definitions.

The key characteristics of the concept of culture
can be summarised form Merrill's series of aspects. A
picture emerges of culture being learned, cumulative
and able to be transmitted. Culture is normative in
that it embodies ideal patterns of behaviour which
modify the behaviour of individuals. Culture is
adaptive to forces both inside and outside the group
and provides for the needs of the group's members.
Finally, the various "parts" of a culture tend to form
a consistent whole. The things people do, the ways in
which they do them and with whom, the ways in which
they think about those things, together, constitute the
culture of the group. This perspective on culture began
to provide the researcher with an understanding of the
culture concept from which to explore Jim Carr's world
at Manoa College. However, Merrill noted a caution of
which the researcher must be aware: culture is not a
"thing" which can be touched or brought out or put away.

He also suggested a key to understanding culture by
seeking to understand its patterned nature:

> We cannot see culture as such; we can only see
> behavior. The latter occurs in regular,
> patterned fashion and from this regularity we
> infer the existence of something that we call
> culture. Interaction occurs in accordance
> with group expectations, which can be inferred
> from the action but cannot be envisaged as
> such. We can see people eating, drinking,
> fighting and engaging in various forms of
> social interaction. When we examine these
> activities, we see that they are not random,
> but instead assume definite forms. At the
> same time, the participants are rarely aware
> of the patterned character of their actions.

> (Merrill 1961 : 84)

Merrill's "pattern of regularised behaviour" (ibid:
85) concept of culture exists on two levels - first,
the material products of a group and, second, the non-
material or ideological products of a group. The
second level includes the meanings, values, norms and
relationships which a group uses to regulate its life.
"Ideas are the real foundation of culture. Material
objects are useless without the knowledge of how to
use them," wrote Merrill. (1961: 85) However, Merrill
cautions the researcher that coming to understand the
culture of another group is no easy task. Continued
observation, Merrill suggested, can determine the patterns
of behaviour:

> Culture patterns are intangible and exist only
> in the minds and habits of human beings. The
> person who enters another society - whether
> primitive or advanced - for the purpose of
> studying its culture cannot experience the
> patterns with his senses. All he can see is
> human behaviour, occurring in more or less
> regular fashion. In the final analysis,
> culture is an abstraction from observed and
> regularized behaviour ....Human beings engage
> in behaviour that, upon continued observation,
> is found to have regularity. This regularity
> is the pattern. The sociologist or cultural
> anthropologist is chiefly concerned with
> patterns rather than with individuals who
> carry them out.

> (Merrill 1961: 89-90)

The endeavour in the present study was that the researcher would immerse himself in the life of the school in an attempt to experience that life in as close a way as possible to the way in which that life is experienced by the principal. This experience would enable the researcher to learn about the culture at first-hand in order to be able to describe and interpret life in his school world from the perspective of the principal. Wolcott,(1975a : 112) in discussing his study of an elementary school principal, implied that the anthropologist sought to come to grips with the "way of life", of an interacting human group and Roberts(1976:1) noted the same understanding of the concept:

> Culture, the total way of life developed
> and lived by a group of people, encircles
> the separate and idiosyncratic meanings
> of persons, defining the bounds of
> collective understanding.

However, the definition which provided the clearest understanding of the concept of culture for the present researcher was a definition which embraced a number of themes raised in this discussion:

> Culture refers to a people's way of life.
> Everywhere that people live on earth, they
> follow customary ways of behaving - of eating,
> hunting, expressing affection, raising
> children, reacting to death, and the like.
> Culture is expressed by these patterns of
> behaviour; the patterns reflect the codes or
> rules that guide how people behave - how they
> speak, make love, wage war, greet strangers,
> or whatever else it is they do. Everywhere,
> these patterns and the codes behind them give
> human existence its regularity, purpose, and
> meaning. Man creates culture, and he passes
> it on to his children; but in the same way,
> culture shapes man. Human beings behave and
> think in a cultural world, and each group of
> people lives in a somewhat different cultural
> world. To understand mankind it is necessary
> to understand these different cultures and
> how they have come about. That is the task
> anthropologists have set for themselves.

(Edgerton and Langness 1974:1)

This definition stressed the central position of culture in the work of the anthropologist and suggested to the researcher that becoming immersed in the way of life of Jim Carr's school world would enable patterns of behaviour to be identified. Data might come from many sources and situations in the research site. Finally, Edgerton and Langness stressed the place of human beings in relation to their culture and suggested that we can add to our understanding of mankind when we come to understand the culture of another group. The definition can be applied not only to exotic groups studied by the classical anthropologists but also to groups in contemporary, complex society. A note follows on this particular point.

A Note on the Concept of Culture in Complex Society

Traditional anthropologists applied the concept of culture to distinctive, geographically discrete groups of people on the assumption that the group's members shared a common culture or way of life. Ethnographies recorded many aspects of the way of life of any group. When the techniques of the anthropologist are employed in complex, contemporary society, it may not be as straightforward a process to identify the group for study. The concept of culture can be applied, however, in an organizational setting. Handy made this point:

> ...anyone who has spent time with any variety of organizations, or worked in more than two or three, will have been struck by the differing atmospheres, the differing ways of doing things, the differing levels of energy, of individual freedom, of kinds of personality. For organizations are as different and varied as the nations and societies of the world. They have differing cultures - sets of values and norms and beliefs - reflected in different structures and systems. And the cultures are affected by the events of the past and by the climate of the present, by the technology of the type of work, by their aims and the kind of people that work in them.

(Handy 1981 : 176)

Handy noted that a number of factors contribute toward an organization's culture: it's history, size, goals and objectives, environment, population and the nature in which its participants perceive and experience such features as power and authority. (ibid: 185-195)

Even within organizations, cultures will differ, Handy stated,(1981: 178) using the example of differences between the various departments of a business enterprise: "The invoice department would not be mistaken for the market research department, or the factory for the sales division."

Similarly, but by no means unexpectedly, like organizations will differ in cultural terms, too. A simple example of this feature is that the present writer taught in two different teachers' colleges - each of similar sized student body and physical facility, each providing training for student teachers in a three-year course of study. However, the writer needed only to have spent a short period in the second college to realise that its way of life, or culture, was markedly different to that of the first college - as a result of factors such as those noted above by Handy. Leacock provided a clear statement on the fact that the concept of culture can be readily applied across multiple groups:

> True, any definable group has what can be called a "culture." One can speak of the "culture" of different institutions - hospitals have different cultures on the whole from schools, and both from business houses. Within certain general patterns of "school culture," each school develops its own traditions. One can even speak of a certain "classroom culture"....

(Leacock 1976: 421)

The concept of culture, then, can be applied to a school and, in a place like Manoa College, the researcher could expect that certain definable groups would have their own unique culture. Any understanding of Jim Carr's school world and Jim's principalship, the researcher considered, would depend on the extent to which the fieldworker could penetrate, observe and reflect upon the patterns of behaviour manifested in the groups with

which Jim Carr was involved. The interpretive paradigm
was helpful in providing a viewpoint from which the
researcher could perceive Carr's school world. This
concept will be discussed in the following section of
the thesis.

THE INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

Introduction

In the research to be conducted at Manoa College, the researcher sought to "come to grips" with some aspects of the culture in the college, chiefly by exploring the college alongside its principal, Jim Carr, in an endeavour to see the people and events through his eyes and to seek to find out how Carr himself made order out of his own school world. The culture, or the way of life, which was investigated has been expressed metaphorically by Geertz as a series of webs:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an
> animal suspended in webs of significance
> he himself has spun, I take culture to be
> those webs, and the analysis of it to be
> therefore not an experimental science in
> search of law but an interpretive one in
> search of meaning. It is explication I
> am after, construing social expressions
> on their surface enigmatical.
>
> (Geertz 1975: 5)

Geertz, therefore, pointed to the possibility of being able to interpret aspects of a culture which are experienced or observed by the fieldworker. By exploring those webs of significance which, themselves, are puzzling or enigmatical, the researcher hoped to be able to add to our understanding of, in particular, the life of a New Zealand secondary school principal in his school world.

Interpretive Paradigms and Their Metaphors

Morgan (1980) suggested that an interpretive paradigm provides a means of understanding the nature of reality and social behaviour in a subjective context.

At Manoa College, the researcher sought to gain an understanding of reality and social behaviour as perceived by Jim Carr in his school world.

The term "paradigm" is used by Morgan (1980: 606-607) to denote an implicit or explicit view of reality. Morgan postulated four paradigms which can be used to view the world. Each paradigm is based on its own particular set of assumptions about the nature of science, reality, society and behaviour in a subjective context. The difference between subjective and objective contexts is able to be shown easily: a subjective context is one in which behaviour occurs in its natural setting as distinct from the behaviour which occurs in an objective context such as a clinical laboratory or under experimental conditions. The paradigms, however, do more than provide a perspective for ordering and developing perceptions. Morgan described different types of metaphors which are characteristic of each paradigm. The metaphors, he explained, provide "tools for capturing and dealing with what is perceived to be "out there:"

> For the process of metaphorical conception is a basic mode of symbolism, central to the way in which humans forge their experience and knowledge of the world in which they live. Metaphor is often regarded as no more than a literary and descriptive device for embellishment, and, but more fundamentally, is a creative form which produces its effect through a crossing of images.

(Morgan 1980: 610)

Noblit (1984) commented similarly on the use of metaphors as "ways of synthesizing data" and, thus, playing an important part in ethnographic studies, in particular. Metaphors, Noblit noted, can reveal something to us about the nature of the world and the life of a group.

Morgan's four paradigms and their metaphors will
be described at this point.

The functionalist paradigm rests on the assumption
that society has a concrete, real existence and a
systemic character oriented towards an ordered state
of affairs. Behaviour is considered to be contextually
bound in a real world of concrete and tangible social
relationships. Understanding the role of human beings
in society is the basis for social theory and the
possibility of an objective, value-free social science
is an important belief in which the researcher is
distanced from the field of investigation by means of
the rigor and techniques of the scientific method.
The functionalist paradigm is regulative and pragmatic
and concerned with generating useful empirical knowledge
as the means of understanding society.

The metaphors which have been used to capture the
functionalist paradigm have commonly been of organizations
being seen as machines or organisms. The machine
metaphor underlies much theoretical work in classical
management theory. The notions of goals, rationality
and bureaucracy are examples of the machine metaphor
which presents an image of a well-ordered world which
operates, or seeks to operate, with the drive of a piece
of machinery. The organism metaphor portrays the
interdependent parts which interact and develop
dynamically as life occurs. The open system approach
is an example of an organismic metaphor. Finally,
the loosely-coupled system is an example of cybernetic
metaphors which portray organizations as being patterns
of information.

Morgan's description of the other three paradigms
and their accompanying metaphors provide alternatives
to viewing organizations from the functionalist
perspective. These three paradigms, in Morgan's view,
challenge the grounds on which functionalist theoretical
ideas have been constructed.

The radical humanist paradigm is based on the view
that reality is socially created in a process by which
human beings become imprisoned within the bounds of the
reality that they create and sustain. The view is held
that the mind is chanelled, constrained, and controlled
and that human beings are prevented from reaching their
full potential abilities. In a capitalist society, for
example, the dominant ideology determines the nature of
work, rewards, roles, leisure, technology, etc. The
radical humanist is concerned to find out how humans
can link thought and action and, so, rise above or
break out of this state of ideological domination.
The guiding metaphor of this paradigm is that of the
psychic prison as the symbol of alienation and domination
which comes from organizational life. Critical theory
would be classified in this paradigm.

The radical structuralist paradigm arises from the
view of society as a potentially dominating force in
which a materialist conception of the social world
believes in concrete, ontologically real structures.
Reality is seen as existing on its own account -
independent of the way it is perceived by people in
their daily lives and characterised by intrinsic
tensions and contradictions between opposing elements
which ultimately result in radical change in the
system as a whole. The researcher in this mode
endeavours to understand those tensions and the means
by which they are manipulated by those people who
occupy the dominant positions of power. Action is the
key means of overcoming this domination. The guiding
metaphor of this paradigm is somewhat comparable to
that of the radical humanist paradigm - the metaphor
of the machine as an instrument of domination and
oppression.

The _interpretive_ paradigm embodies the view that
the social world is precarious, fragile and complex
in its very being. Social reality is the outcome of
the subjective interactions and experiences of the
members of society and does not exist in any concrete
sense. The researcher endeavours to understand society
from the standpoint of the participant in action
rather than the observer. The interpretive paradigm
is based on the assumption that the social world has
an underlying pattern and order, and the status of
scientific knowledge is considered to be as problematic
as the common sense knowledge of everyday life. Science
is perceived as a complex pattern of language games
based on sets of subjectively determined rules and
concepts.

The guiding metaphors of this paradigm focus on
the means by which reality is created and sustained in
an organization. Being a member of an organization
might involve a particular way of being and seeing and
functioning in the organization and, indeed, in the
wider world. The ethnomethodology of Garfinkel is an
example of the metaphors which have developed around
this paradigm. Garfinkel's (1967) description of
ethnomethodology portrays a way in which human beings
construct and maintain social situations which have
meaning for themselves and others. Other metaphors
in the group include language as a series of codes
and practices for portraying reality and "text" as a
means of treating organizational life as a document
which can be translated and understood.

Different paradigms, Morgan noted, (1980: 620)
embody different world views which require particular
kinds of metaphors to portray and symbolise the view
which one finds from the perspective of that metaphor.

Morgan shows that there are clearly alternatives to the
traditional functionalist paradigm for perceiving such
phenomenon as the world about us, organizational life,
reality and the behaviour which occurs in the subjective
world. Morgan summed up the alternative perspectives
provided by the other three paradigms and concluded with
a note on the potential of the interpretive paradigm.
In essence, the alternative paradigms suggest that life
in organizations is not as clearly structured or under-
stood as the functionalist paradigm suggests:

> They generate a variety of metaphors for
> organizational analysis, resulting in
> perspectives that often contradict the
> tenets of orthodox theory. For example,
> whereas functionalist theory emphasises
> that organizations and their members may
> orient action and behaviour to the achieve-
> ment of future states, interpretive theory
> emphasises that action is oriented as much
> to making sense of the past as to the
> future. Whereas functionalist theory views
> organizations and their members interacting
> and behaving within a context or environment
> of some kind, interpretive theory questions
> the status and existence of such contextual
> factors, other than as the social construc-
> tions of individuals which have become shared.
> Functionalist theory builds upon premises
> which interpretive theory suggests are
> fundamentally ill conceived.

(Morgan 1980: 619)

The research task at Manoa College, by virtue of
its focus on the concept of culture as a phenomenon
which could be understood from the "inside" and of
which its "webs" of subjective interaction and
experience could be shaped into patterns of meaning,
clearly placed the researcher within the interpretive
paradigm. The researcher, responding to the paradigms,
found that his view of the world embodied the idea that
people in the world interact subjectively with each
other and that those patterns of interaction and the
meaning contained within them could be ordered and
comprehended. The concept of culture was perceived, too,
as a suitable metaphor for "capturing and dealing"
(Morgan 1980: 610) with the subjective data of Jim

Carr's school world. An interpretive paradigm,therefore, was suited to the purposes of the planned research activity at Manoa College.

The grounded theory approach will now be discussed. This approach provided a suitable means of generating the direction of the study and ideas emerging from it.

THE GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH

Introduction

In having decided to explore some aspects of the culture of Manoa College and in having determined that culture is best studied in context, if it is to be interpreted accurately and from the perspective of its actual participants, the researcher next faced the issue of determining an appropriate approach for making his interpretations. The conceptual foundations which were beginning to guide the planned study provided the researcher with an awareness that it would be inappropriate to enter the school world of Jim Carr with a pre-determined theoretical underpinning or set of testable hypotheses on which to base the study. Such underpinnings or hypotheses might have no meaning at all to the participants in the school world which was going to be investigated. The researcher considered that it would be more appropriate to seek patterns and links in his data as it was gathered during his experiences in the field. Therefore, the concept of "grounded theory" was found to be suited to use with the concepts of culture and an interpretive paradigm. The researcher had begun to structure a focus question and to develop a clear idea of the kind of study in which he wished to be involved in order to begin to answer the initial research question.

The Development of Theoretical Ideas as a Study Proceeds

The researcher decided to apply the grounded theory approach of Glaser and Strauss. (1967) The flexibility and responsiveness of this approach to the question of theory was considered by the researcher to be suited to the study. The researcher planned to enter the field of investigation and to experience that field from Jim Carr's perspective, in particular, as much as possible to learn as new discoveries were made during the fieldwork phase. The grounded theory approach postulates

the discovery and development of theory as it emerges
from the data gathered by the researcher - i.e.
theoretical ideas are "grounded" in the data. Glaser
and Strauss explained the process:

> Generating a theory from data means that
> most hypotheses and concepts not only come
> from the data, but are systematically
> worked out in relation to the data during
> the course of the research.
>
> (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 6)

The clues gathered and situations encountered
during the research, therefore, effect the emergence
of theoretical ideas. The researcher is able to explore
the data continually, to ask new questions of the data
and the world being explored and pursue new leads in
an on-going, dynamic research process of investigation
and theory building.

Strauss, in collaboration with Schatzman, further
articulated the grounded theory approach in a manner
which impressed the present researcher due to its
clarity of presentation of a suitable research approach
and the practicality of the strategies described for
field studies such as that being organized by the
writer. Schatzman and Strauss wrote:

> The discovery process and the questions
> raised by the researcher need not be related
> to any "received" or prior theory....The
> researcher is free to think of any or all
> pertinent theories and assumptions about his
> subject matter, and thereby frees himself
> from substantive orthodoxy. What he does need
> is some theoretical perspective or framework
> for gaining conceptual entry into his subject
> matter, and for raising relevant questions
> quickly.
>
> (Schatzman and Strauss 1973:12)

The flexibility and responsiveness of method enables
the researcher to ask questions, test emerging hypotheses
and seek answers during the research process itself.
Schatzman and Strauss commented that the research process

might be viewed as beginning with a rough idea and
ending with the presentation of refined ideas, while
the research design might be refashioned as the work
proceeds in response to the development of new ideas
and data. This process makes it "possible for new
questions to be asked and answered through research."
(ibid: 13) The authors proceeded to detail a series
of strategies appropriate to the present study - each
of which will be noted in greater detail at appropriate
points later in this thesis. In brief, their strategies
include: means of gaining entry to the research site
and then getting organized for the research; watching,
listening and recording; analysing the data which is
gathered; and finally, presenting the data. They do
not consider their suggestions to be a recipe for
undertaking field studies. Instead, they speak to the
researcher about the issues which must be addressed
during a study such as that undertaken at Manoa College.
It is a book which focusses on preparing the researcher.
The writers stated:

> This book describes a mode of research and
> links its operations to the social psychology
> of the researcher, to the social situations
> in which he finds himself... and to the logic
> of the inquiry in which he is engaged.
> Although the book is concerned with the
> method of field research, its principal focus
> is the field researcher himself; "method" is
> seen as an abstraction of the ways the
> researcher handles, or might handle, the
> many real situations, problems, and options
> which present themselves as he makes his
> inquiry.
>
> (Schatzman and Strauss 1973:vi)

The endeavour with the Manoa College study was to
undertake an ethnographic study from which grounded
theory might be developed in tandem with the fieldwork
itself. The "development of grounded theory" concept
presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further
articulated by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) provided a
suitable basis for generating theoretical ideas from

the data itself. The research process does not proceed devoid of any theoretical base at all. Rather, such a base is developed from the earliest days of the research experience. Schatzmann and Strauss wrote:

> ...if he (the researcher) is intent upon developing grounded theory, he will have to take the "long route" until he discovers a grounded key - one that is both original to him and faithful to his data.

> (Schatzman and Strauss 1973:11)

Schatzman and Strauss (1973) proved to be an important resource as the researcher prepared for and undertook the study at Manoa College. The book was valuable as a practical guide to the development of grounded theory. However, the grounded theory approach, as Glaser and Strauss noted, is suited to use in ethnographic studies,too:

> Ethnographic studies,substantive theories and data collection are all necessary for building up by comparative analysis to formal theory.

> (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 35)

It is appropriate to discuss the ethnographic approach at this juncture.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Introduction

The research approach best-suited to the study of
Jim Carr's world at Manoa College was that of ethnography.
It is clear, as Hymes noted, (1977: 3) that ethnography
involves participation and observation. However, the
approach embodies a conceptual basis which is unique in
the field of research. It is appropriate that this basis
should be discussed at this point of the thesis in order
to clarify the concept of ethnography and because the
approach provided the ultimate foundation for the study.
Technical and practical aspects of the approach are
discussed in Chapters Four and Five in which the writer
indicates the methodological features of the study.

Ethnography is part of a genre of research which
embraces such terms as: case study, field study,
participant observation and qualitative observations.
Smith, (1978) in fact, uses the terms synonomously in his
discussion of the place which ethnography can play in
educational research. In practice, the terms do not
necessarily have the same meaning. The more all-embracing
term is that of "qualitative" research. The qualitative
approach to understanding subjective human behaviour has
been summarised by Bogdan and Taylor:

> Qualitative methods allow us to know people
> personally and to see them as they are
> developing their own personal definitions
> of the world. We experience what they
> experience in their daily struggles with
> their society. We learn about groups and
> experiences about which we may know nothing.
> Finally, qualitative methods enable us to

explore concepts whose essence is lost in
other research approaches. Such concepts
as beauty, pain, faith, suffering, frustration,
hope and love can be studied as they are
defined and experienced by real people in
their everyday lives.

(Bogdan and Taylor 1975: 4-5)

The writer now addresses two questions: What is
ethnography? What is "doing ethnography"?

What is Ethnography?

Hymes (1977) pointed out that anthropologists do not
have a unified conception of ethnography, especially in
relation to the study of institutions in our own
contemporary society. He commented:

One difficulty with the notion of "ethnography"
is that it may seem a residual category. It is
associated with the study of people not our-
selves, and with the use of methods other than
those of experimental design and quantitative
measurement.

Clearly not everything that is not those two
things should be considered "ethnography,"
but a positive definition is not easy to
provide. A major reason for the difficulty
is that good ethnography has been produced
under a great variety of persons, some of it
before there was a profession to train such
people: and professional training has been
very much a matter of the transmission of a
craft and of learning by doing, by personal
experience.

(Hymes 1977: 2-3)

Hymes noted, then, that clear definition of
ethnography is not easy. Ethnography has been somewhat
idiosyncratic and training has involved the transmission
of a craft and of learning from one's own personal
experiences in the field. "Good" ethnography is

systematic in the sense of being comprehensive, topic-
oriented and going beyond curiosity to seek to document
and explain events. Hymes considered these three
features as the essential ingredients of anthropological
research. "Ethnography," Hymes stated, "is more than a
residual technique, but the name of an essential method
when all three are united." (Hymes 1977: 5) Hymes
viewed ethnography as being a disciplined way of looking,
asking, recording, reflecting, comparing and reporting.
(in Smith 1981: 76)

Traditional anthropologists, as ethnographers,
tended to confine their work to small groups of people
in non-Western, technologically undeveloped locations.
However, the sociologists of the Chicago School
focussed on studies within, in particular, areas of
urban society in Western settings. The urban
sociologists were interested in exploring the
relationships within small groups within a society
and the relationships between the small group and its
larger society.

Even this movement has shifted from endeavouring to
explore and explain the deviant, the different and the
unusual, to investigating the ways in which people
function in many areas of what would be regarded as
ordinary society. Ethnographers today also investigate
life in groups which are part of the larger society but
"with their own special cultures." (Wiseman and Aron
1970: 239) The Manoa College study, in its modest way,
is an example of this latter type of research locale.

In answering the question, "What is ethnography?"
Wolcott (1970: 115) explained that ethnography is,
literally, a picture of the way of life of an interacting

human group. Ethnography arises from careful descrip-
tion. The task of the ethnographer, Wolcott explained
further, is to engage in the selective recording of
human behaviour in order to construct explanations of
that behaviour in cultural terms. Culture, in this
sense, is the central focus of ethnography. Wolcott's
comment is more applicable among anthropologists in
general than the Americans to whom he referred directly
when he wrote:

> "Culture" is the major concept and point of
> departure for most American anthropologists,
> and ethnography is the anthropologist's
> descriptive account of what he has observed
> and understood of another culture. The
> anthropologist is duty-bound to look for
> cultural patterns and cultural forms shared
> by members of a social system or subsystem....

> (Wolcott 1975a: 112)

Wolcott's explanation of the term "ethnography,"
then, provided a useful definition for the present
study. The definition places a primary focus on the
concept of culture as the feature with which an
ethnographic study is concerned. The "anthropologist's
picture" analogy implied the importance of careful
description which, Wolcott stressed, must be explained
in cultural terms. Almost any aspect of human life,
he suggestedcan be studied by means of an ethnographic
approach. Wolcott stressed, too, that the anthropologist
is committed to looking at people and events in a total
milieu rather than only at bits and pieces. (Wolcott
1975a: 113) Ethnography, therefore, is not simply
having an experience of living and working within a
group and then simply telling the story of that
experience. Rather:

> ....an ethnography focuses on a <u>whole</u> social
> subunit as seen from the point of view of
> participants. This is the important
> distinguishing feature of this method, which
> by its very nature provides the investigator
> with a directive for the breadth of data to
> gather and the type of analysis to pursue.
>
> (Wiseman and Aron 1970: 240)

Ethnography is not the equivalent of laboratory work. Some data gathered by ethnographic techniques can be analysed and portrayed in statistical form, or as graphs, charts, and abstractions which characterise laboratory research. Much data, however, resist interpretation by such means. Hymes (1977: 16) noted, "It seems to require, instead, presentation." The ethnographer endeavours to present his material in such a way that the quality and texture of events and relationships are portrayed. Mishler similarly noted (1979: 2) that researchers have tended to remove the subjects of studies from their natural social settings, with the "stripping away of contexts," in order for researchers to undertake experimentation and measuring. He presented a simple example from his own work: when the conversations between children bargaining with each other were analysed, the meanings of both the utterances and the bargaining process were difficult to understand, when taken out of context.

Mishler's simple example, therefore, underscores the importance of seeking meaning in context. This feature is of crucial importance for researchers working with subjective data and endeavouring to understand the culture of a group.

Another central feature of ethnographic research
is the researcher's endeavour to understand the day-
by-day interactions of a group of people whose world
is unfamiliar to him or her. The researcher locates
himself in the field with these people and endeavours
to experience and see that world from the viewpoint
of the participants. The methodology focusses on two
levels. On the level of description, the researcher
seeks to describe the events and relationships which
are being viewed and experienced. The ethnographer
records the actions which are observed, as well as the
setting in which those actions occur and - importantly
- the meaning which is placed on those events by the
participants themselves. From work in the field, the
researcher gains unique insights into people and
events which are observed, as a result of his close
proximity to the "action" and to his acceptance by,
and empathetic understanding of, the participants in
that action. On the level of explanation, the
researcher constantly seeks to make sense of his or
her material by explaining and interpreting the events
and relationships which are being discussed, considered
and observed.

Wolcott noted that the unique contribution of the
ethnographer is his commitment to gaining an under-
standing and being able to tell others how it is "to
walk in someone else's shoes" and to "tell it like it
is." (Wolcott 1975a: 113) This sounds an easy task —
which Wolcott stated in another way, too:

> A deceptively simple test for judging the
> adequacy of an ethnographic account is to
> ask whether a person reading it could
> subsequently behave appropriately as a
> member of the society or social group
> about which he has been reading, or, more

        modestly, whether he can anticipate and
        interpret what occurs in the group as
        appropriately as its own members can.

        (Wolcott 1975a:112)

In reflecting on this viewpoint, the present writer felt cautious about simply agreeing with the idea of being able to behave appropriately or to be accepted as a member of the group. At most, a "good" ethnography seems to provide honest description and accurate interpretation of the way of life portrayed within it. However, this writer considers that the picture presented after an intensive period of fieldwork of, say, one year is still based on a short timespan of experience in the field. The actual inhabitants of that field might have their cultural backgrounds built up over a lifetime or, in the case of a school principal, a number of years in the position and years of on-the-job preparation beforehand. In studying Jim Carr, the aim was not to be able, ultimately, to feel confident of filling Jim's job as principal of Manoa College or to be accepted as a fellow colleague in the school by the people with whom Jim interacted. An analogy of this point is that academic learning of a foreign language does not necessarily ensure that the learner will understand the people for whom that language is their first language. Geertz cautioned similarly on the difference between "clever simulations" and "what the "natives" really think:"

        "A society's culture," to quote Goodenough..."
        consists of whatever it is one has to know
        or believe in order to operate in a manner
        acceptable to its members." And from this
        view of what culture is follows a view,
        equally assured, of what describing it is
        - the writing out of systematic rules, an
        ethnographic algorithm, which, if followed,
        would make it possible so to operate, to

pass (physical appearance aside) for a native.
In such a way, extreme subjectivism is married
to extreme formalism, with the expected result:
an explosion of debate as to whether particular
analyses ... reflect what the natives "really"
think or are merely clever simulations, logically
equivalent but substantively different, of what
they think.

(Geertz 1975 : 11)

The present study was initiated in order to learn
about Carr's world as a secondary school principal. The
researcher sought to immerse himself in that world to
describe and explain it from Jim's perspective. The study
and the meaning sought by the researcher, then, were located
in the context within which Carr functioned at Manoa College.

The writer turns now to a second question in which he
addresses the issue of "doing" ethnography by drawing on
Geertz' (1975) explanation of "thick description".

What is "Doing Ethnography?"

The doing of ethnography involves the researcher on
two levels of activity. The first level involves the
ethnographer in selecting and entering a site, establishing
rapport with the people who inhabit that site, observing
events and interactions occurring at the site, talking with
key informants, making notes and recording data gained
from observation or interview or any other suitable data
gathering tool. Geertz explained that what the ethnographer
does in the field is ethnography but it is not the fieldwork
alone which gives ethnography its special character. Rather,
Geertz explained that a second level of activity was
involved in ethnography : "What defines it is the kind of
intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in ...
"thick description." (Geertz 1975 : 5-6)

Geertz (1975 : 20-21) considered that this type of
ethnographic description possesses three important features.
First, it is interpretive; second, it is interpretive of the
flow of social discourse; and third, the interpretation
"consists in trying to rescue the "said" of such discourse
from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms."
Geertz adds a fourth feature, too: it is microscopic. In
explaining this fourth point, Geertz wrote:

> ... the anthropologist, characteristically
> approaches such broader interpretations and
> more abstract analyses from the directions of
> exceedingly extended acquaintances with
> extremely small matters. He confronts the
> same grand realities that others - historians,
> economists, political scientists, sociologists
> - confront in more fateful settings: Power,
> Change, Faith, Oppression, Work, Passion,
> Authority, Beauty, Violence, Love, Prestige;
> but he confronts them in contexts obscure
> enough to take the capital letters off them.
> These all-too-human constancies, "those big
> words that make us all afraid," take a homely
> form in such homely contexts. But that is
> exactly the advantage.

(Geertz 1975 : 21)

These advantages of Geertz' homely contexts enable the
researcher to come to grips with a small world, to keep his
theory "close to the ground" (and, as Glaser and Strauss
would suggest, grounded in that real, small world) and to
converse with the people who inhabit that small world in an
effort to gain access to the conceptual world of those
people. The thick description of homely contexts is
extensively descriptive and interpretive.

The doing of ethnography, Geertz suggested, (1975: 10)
is much like trying to read (and translate, interpret and
understand) a unique manuscript which is new to the reader -
sometimes incoherent, sometimes seemingly missing elements
and at other times containing suspicious additions - but
written in "transient-examples of shaped behaviour rather
than in conventional symbols." Ethnographers pursue their
data collection, then - through data analysis - endeavour
to sort out the "structures of signification" (Geertz 1975 :
9) and to determine their grounding and importance in the
social world under consideration. Geertz explained:

> What the ethnographer is in fact faced with ...
> is a multiplicity of complex conceptual
> structures, many of them superimposed upon
> or knotted into one another, which are at
> once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and
> which he must contrive somehow first to grasp
> and then to render.

(Geertz 1975 : 10)

The ethnographer's task is to explain; to reduce the puzzlement of events and interactions rather than simply to display what he has seen in the same way as a tourist returns home with a random collection of postcards and souvenirs after a holiday abroad. Geertz stressed that explanation and interpretation are critical to ethnography:

> If anthropological interpretation is con-
> structing a reading of what happens, then
> to divorce it from what happens - from what
> in this time or that place, specific people
> say, what they do, what is done to them,
> from the whole vast business of the world -
> is to divorce it from its applications and
> render it vacant. A good interpretation of
> anything - a poem, a person, a history, a
> ritual, an institution, a society - takes
> us into the heart of that of which it is
> the interpretation.

(Geertz 1975 : 18)

Ethnographic research, for Geertz, is a personal experience of "finding one's feet" with a new group of people; seeking to communicate and converse with those people; trying to formulate and report the basis on which the researcher imagines that finding of the feet has occurred. Geertz provided an example of thick description:

> Consider, he says, two boys rapidly con-
> tracting the eyelids of their right eyes.
> In one, this is an involuntary twitch; in
> the other, a conspiratorial signal to a
> friend. The two movements are, as movements,
> identical; from an I-am-a-camera, "pheno-
> menalistic" observation of them alone, one
> could not tell which was twitch and which was
> wink, or indeed whether both or either was
> twitch or wink. Yet the difference, however
> unphotographable, between a twitch and a wink
> is vast; as anyone unfortunate enough to have
> had the first taken for the second knows. The
> winker is communicating, and indeed communicating
> in a quite precise and special way: (1) deliberately,
> (2) to someone in particular,(3) to impart a
> particular message, (4) according to a socially
> established code, and (5) without cognizance of
> the rest of the company....the winker has not
> done two things, contracted his eyelids and
> winked, while the twitcher has done only one,

contracted his eyelids. Contracting your
eyelids on purpose when there exists a
public code in which so doing counts as
a conspiratorial signal is winking. That's
all there is to it: a speck of behaviour
a fleck of culture, and - voila! - a
gesture.

(Ryle in Geertz 1975 : 6)

Thick description, then, is essentially a social
discourse-i.e. the recording of a flow of social behaviour.
The ethnographer's thick description traces that discourse
and fixes it into an inspectable form. In becoming fixed,
that discourse is taken from its moment of happening as a
fleeting event and recorded for later consultation and
reconsideration.

CONCLUSION

This second chapter has presented a discussion of the conceptual underpinnings which guided the study. A series of key concepts were discussed. Each concept was suited to addressing the research question. The concept of culture is central to the work of the anthropologist and places a major focus on identifying patterns and meanings in a group's way of life. The concept of an interpretive paradigm provided a view of the subjective world as having pattern and order which can be identified from the perspective of one's subjects. The concept of grounded theory provided a flexible method for generating ideas from the data itself. Finally, the concept of ethnography embodied an approach involving data gathering in the field in which a group's culture, or way of life, can be described and interpreted by means of thick description.

It is appropriate, now, to proceed to a review of the literature from which the present study developed. In the next chapter, the writer presents four areas of relevant literature. First, a selection of major ethnographic works from the general fields of anthropology and sociology are discussed. Then, a review is provided of selected works describing ethnographic studies of life in schools. Finally, the writer moves to the specific literature available in the field of the school principalship. The discussion contains, first, a review of literature from sources outside New Zealand, and, second, a consideration of the literature which addresses the principalship in New Zealand.