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BEYOND BUREAUCRACY: NOTES ON THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERVISION IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

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In recent years, the number of historical studies in education has markedly increased. Interest in American educational historiography has focused attention to subspecialties within the field of education. Curriculum is a prime example. Unfortunately, however, supervision as a field of study has little by way of history. Present-day supervisors need to become conscious of their intellectual traditions and inherited modes of behavior. They need to know how their field came to be. Once we as supervisors understand where we have come from, we can plan for the future more intelligently by perhaps avoiding the pitfalls of the past. The intent of this article is to further our understanding of the historical roots of public school supervision. Supervision has a past worthy of study, and supervisors need to analyze that past.

The development of public school supervision has been varied and complex. For example, centralized control over urban schooling, scientific and measurement movements, industrialization, flurries of reform, war-time activities, post-war depressions, and other noneducational forces have all influenced supervision. The history of supervision is clearly a history of the interaction among people, their ideas, the institution of schooling, and the broad social and intellectual movements within American society. Here I will explore the factors that led supervisors, in the early 20th century, to move away from autocratic and bureaucratic methods and adopt more professional standards. This historical exploration will show present-day supervisors the antecedents of current practice and perhaps keep them from the pitfalls of the past.

SUPERVISION IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY

Throughout most of the 19th century, loosely structured, decentralized ward boards controlled city school systems. Little, if any, standardization of curriculum or uniformity of teaching methods prevailed. Beginning in the late 19th century, educational reformers sought to transform schools into a tightly organized and efficiently operated centralized system. They tried to

persuade the American people that a highly complex system of schooling would best serve the interests of all. Bureaucracy, a by-product of these reform efforts, brought order and organization to an otherwise chaotic, corrupt, and inefficient school environment. Although the emergence of bureaucracy and the battles waged in the late 19th century over the control of urban schooling are now familiar stories, an important theme has either been ignored or underemphasized. the important role played by the function of supervision amid the upheavals and conflicts over the control of schooling.[1] Supervision, as an integral component of the school bureaucracy, perpetuated bureaucratic mandates, such as standardizing curriculums and controlling teacher behavior The primary purpose of supervision was to attain obedience and compliance to hierarchical sources of authority. Supervision thus reflected the larger, more encompassing bureaucratic phenomenon. The bureaucratization of supervision occurred within the context of the bureaucratization of urban schooling.

To understand what supervision was like in the late 19th century, we need to address some questions. Who was the supervisor in the late 19th century? What role did the supervisor play in schools? What supervisory methods were employed? What was the overriding purpose or concern of the supervisor? How did the supervisor achieve his or her stated objectives? An analysis of supervisory practice during this period is important because the nature and character of supervision were formed then and changed little over the next 80 or so years. Supervision is still important in preserving bureaucratic role relationships in schools.

The centralization movement of the late 19th century sought to place power with the superintendent to expertly administer the urban schools. Superintendents during this period tried to remove schools from what they considered to be harmful, bureaucratic influences. The pervasive lay control was considered anathema to these reformers. Centralizers such as Nicholas M. Butler and Andrew S. Draper wanted to "remove the school from politics" by placing the superintendent in power to control, legislate, and assume responsibility. Indeed, these reformers eventually succeeded in shifting the direction and responsibility of schooling to the superintendent.[2]

Supervision, as the primary function performed by the superintendent, played a significant role in the movement toward centralization in large urban cities. Supervision was the chief mechanism by which superintendents would legitimate their control over the schools. After all, superintendents performing the "professional" technique called supervision were in a far better position

[1]Jeffrey Glanz, "Controlling the Schools. An Essay on the Bureaucratization of School Supervision in the Late 19th Century" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Ontario, March 1978).

[2]David B. Tyack, *The One Best System. A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

to run the school than incompetent lay officials. The belief that supervising instruction was "the most essential part of the work of a school superintendent" was widely held. "We must have supervision," stated J. P. Wickersham in 1872, "hence, we must have superintendents."[3] These superintendents must have absolute authority over the schools, argued Draper, a prominent late-19th-century educator: "I am not in favor of limiting the authority of city superintendents. If I could, I would confer upon them much broader authority than they now have."[4]

Draper was no exception. Israel H. Peres asserted, "I am a firm believer in one-man power." He maintained that the "superintendent should be superior to the teacher in mental power, culture, and experience."[5] Similarly, Emerson E. White, another leading superintendent, stated in 1895 that "a school superintendent should be a Caesar, a Solomon, and an angel, all in one person!"[6]

A skilled superintendent, some argued, when empowered by the function of supervision, could offer enormous assistance to teachers. In a revealing address delivered before the National Education Association in 1888, James M. Greenwood described what perhaps may have been the typical affairs of a superintendent performing the function of supervision:

> Going into a school, I try to put aside everything like authority, or superiority, and to approach the teacher in a proper spirit of helpfulness. . . .
>
> WHAT TO DO?
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> 1. I go in quietly. 2. I watch the teacher and pupils awhile. . . . 3. Sometimes I conduct a recitation, . . . and thus bring out points in which she may be deficient. . . . 4. If suggestions should be made to the teacher, I do so privately, or request her to call me after school. . . . I think the question may be put in this form. Given the teacher, the school, the defects; how to improve them?
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> . . . Very much of my time is devoted to visiting schools and inspecting the work.[7]

While Greenwood and others envisioned this professional management or supervision in the loftiest of terms and objectives, many other superintendents had less favorable views on their work in schools. Many superintendents did not favorably view most teachers' competency. In 1894, T. M. Balliet insisted that there were only two types of teachers. the efficient and the inefficient. The only way to reform the schools, he thought, was to "secure a competent superintendent, second, to let him 'reform' all the teachers who are incompetent and can be 'reformed', thirdly, to bury the dead." Character

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[3]J. P. Wickersham, "Discussion of Harrington's Paper," *NEA Proceedings* (1872), p. 257.

[4]Andrew S. Draper, "Plans of Organization for School Purposes in Large Cities," *NEA Proceedings* (1894), pp. 307–308.

[5]Israel H. Peres, "What Constitutes an Efficient Superintendent?" *NEA Proceedings* (1901), p. 827.

[6]Emerson E. White, "Discussion," *Committee of Fifteen Report* (New York. American Book, 1895).

[7]James M. Greenwood, "Efficient School Supervision," *NEA Proceedings* (1888), pp. 519–521.

istic of the remedies offered to assist incompetent teachers was the suggestion that "weak teachers should place themselves in such a position in the room that every pupil's face may be seen without turning the head."[8]

Another supervisory technique to improve teacher competence was explained by William Torrey Harris, perhaps the most well-known superintendent of the time. He contended that this device proved most effective in "strengthening the power of governing a school." The device, said Harris, "is the practice of placing teachers weak in discipline on the 'substitutes' list and letting them fill vacancies here and there as they occur through the temporary absence of the regular teacher." He claimed, "I have known teachers that had become chronic failures in discipline entirely reformed by a few weeks of such experience."[9] The 19th-century superintendents believed that employing such supervisory methods would beneficially affect instruction and teaching in the schools.

Supervision before 1900, then, consisted of (1) rigorous implementation of autocratic and impersonal rules and regulations, (2) emphasis on centralized control, and (3) conformity and strict adherence to hierarchical notions of school management. Bureaucratic supervisory management was highly compatible with the widespread growth of centralization in the urban setting. As standardization of urban education became commonplace, the importance of the superintendent for maintaining control over the schools also increased. Therefore, the function of supervision as carried out by the superintendent was seen as a valuable tool in accomplishing the desired objectives: standardizing and centralizing authority.

Before 1900, the function of supervision was primarily controlled and performed by the school superintendent. As schools increased in population, the need for additional "supervisors" became readily apparent. The lone superintendent could no longer visit, inspect, and supervise schools personally as he could, for example, in a small, rural community of 19th-century America. Several administrative and supervisory positions had to be established to meet the growing needs of a complex, bureaucratic school system. Supervisors, general and special, and principals who bore responsibility for supervising teachers increased in number as the school system grew in size and complexity. Supervision, then, after 1900 became the responsibility of someone other than the superintendent.

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE GENERAL AND SPECIAL SUPERVISORS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

After 1900, the number of supervisory personnel increased considerably In 1911, the commissioner of education stated that for the year 1906, the

[8]Thomas M. Balliet, "What Can Be Done to Increase the Efficiency of Teachers in Actual Service?" *NEA Proceedings* (1894), p. 377.

[9]William T. Harris, "City School Supervision," *Educational Review* 3 (February 1892): 171–172.

Bureau of Education reported 6,600 supervisory officers and 106,026 teachers in cities with populations of at least 8,000. For the years 1909–10, the corresponding numbers were 11,144 and 125,246. Thus, over five years, supervisory personnel increased 68.8 percent, but the number of teachers increased only 18.1 percent. "The ratio of teachers to supervisors in 1906 was 16.6; in 1910, it was only 11.2." These figures and statistics, said the commissioner, represented a "tendency towards a closer professional supervision of the schools."[10]

Who were these supervisors? They were often former teachers who moved up the ranks into supervisory positions. Sometimes they were outside people who had influence in the community or in business. In either case, the school superintendent appointed them to their positions. Basically, however, there were two categories of supervisors after 1900: special and general supervisors and principals. The principal as school leader and chief supervisor gained in stature and authority in the early 20th century Although present in the 19th century, the principal did not wield any power or significantly affect the nature and character of schooling. The principal in the 19th century was essentially relegated to a relatively uninfluential position as "head teacher." Not until after 1920 was the principal relieved of teaching duties. As Elsbree and Reutter point out, the principal, up until the 1920s, was responsible "to take over classes on occasion, and to demonstrate to the teacher exactly how the job should be done."[11] Before then, the principal concentrated on offering assistance to less experienced teachers in areas such as instruction, curriculum, and general classroom management. In a way, the mentorships prevalent today serve not unlike the principals of long ago. In the late 19th century, the principal was expected to obey the directives of city superintendents. In fact, the superintendent usually appointed an individual "principal" or head teacher. There were no fixed criteria for becoming a principal in the late 19th century. Selection was based on presumed excellence in teaching and essentially was determined by the whim of the superintendent. The principal was given little authority to do more than complete attendance and other administrative reports. Supervisory authority to make decisions on teacher competence, for instance, rested solely with the superintendent. The situation changed dramatically after the turn of the century.

In 1904, Aaron Gove addressed the National Education Association.

> No one official can do all the work which falls upon the duties of his [the superintendent's] office; he must have assistance. . . . In older and well-organized institutions but one head exists. As many men and women as are needed should be appointed and nominated school inspectors. A great part of the actual labor connected with the superintendent's office is in the department of inspection. The superintendent of large

[10]U.S. Bureau of Education, *Annual Report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education*, Volume I (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1911).

[11]William S. Elsbree and E. Edmund Reutter, Jr., *Staff Personnel in the Public Schools* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1954), p. 231.

interests cannot be also an effective inspecting officer. He must call about him a corp of inspectors whose duties should be to inspect and to report.[12]

As a result, the building principal assumed greater supervisory and inspectorial responsibilities. In fact, the number of principals tripled between 1920 and 1930.

According to Elsbree and Reutter, "The principal was looked upon as a kind of foreman who through close supervision helped to compensate for ignorance and lack of skill of his subordinates."[13] The principal's duties, however, broadened and became more comprehensive and complex after 1920. Principals became actively engaged in curriculum development, staff training, and school-community relations. Because of increasing administrative exigencies, however, the principalship gradually shifted away from direct inspections, classroom supervision, and instructional development and assumed a more managerial position. Therefore, to focus solely on the principal will give a biased and provincial view of supervisory practice in the schools.

Besides the building principal, a new cadre of administrative officers known as supervisors emerged who assumed major responsibility for day-to-day classroom supervision. Two specific groups of supervisors were commonly found in schools. First, a *special supervisor,* most often female and chosen by the building principal, was relieved of some teaching responsibilities to help assist less experienced teachers in subject-matter mastery Larger schools, for example, had a number of special supervisors in each of the major subject areas. In the '20s and '30s, some schools even had special supervisors of music and art. Second, a *general supervisor,* usually male, was selected to "assist" (the general supervisor later became known as the assistant principal) the principal in the more administrative, logistical operations of a school. The general supervisor would prepare attendance reports, collect data for evaluation purposes, and coordinate special school programs. After 1920, the general supervisor was chiefly responsible for supervising teachers and maintaining school programming. As the position of principal gradually, yet steadily, became more managerial, the general supervisor assumed greater responsibility for promoting pupil learning and improving teaching. Parenthetically, the title *general supervisor* later changed to *assistant principal,* which more precisely defined his relationship to the building principal in the school hierarchy.

The position of special supervisor did not endure for long in the public schools. The duties and responsibilities special supervisors assumed were gradually yet steadily usurped by general supervisors. Although in-depth anal-

[12]Aaron Gove, "Limitations of the Superintendent's Authority and of the Teacher's Independence," *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses* (Winona, MI: National Education Association, 1904), p. 155.

[13]William S. Elsbree and E. Reutter, Jr., *Staff Personnel in the Public Schools* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1954), p. 231.

ysis of this trend certainly is needed, it seems likely that special supervisors were phased out for three related reasons.

First, special supervisors never succeeded in forming an organization or union to bolster their efforts and concerns. No leader emerged voicing support for special supervisors. In most cases, these supervisors, when terminated by principals (usually without the consent of school boards and superintendents), either returned to the classroom or were prematurely retired.

Second, there was an effort after 1922 to streamline the supervisory positions in the school system. In 1920, there were 6,583 supervisors, excluding principals. Two years later, the number almost doubled. By 1924, the number of supervisors dropped to 7,924.[14] This significant reduction in supervisory staff was largely due to streamlining mostly special supervisors. The duties of special supervisors could, it was thought, be assumed by general supervisors and principals. Streamlining supervisory officers was in consonance with the tendency to make the schools more efficient and to eliminate waste.

But for the reason that special supervisors, in particular, were expendable, a third factor needs analysis. The relative obscurity of special supervisors after 1922 can be attributed to discrimination based on gender. Consisting of an overwhelming number of women, special supervisors were not perceived in the same light as were the mostly male general supervisors, principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents. Women were not afforded equal access and opportunities for managerial positions in school systems because of prevalent sexist and discriminatory practices. The subject of gender and the sexual division of labor has recently received wide attention.[15] An ideological bias of sex-role stereotypes in education as a whole was commonplace and in consonance with bureaucratic school governance. Curriculum and instruction, as well as hiring, promotion, and salary scales, were all standardized.

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[14]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1960), p. 208.

[15]Linda Murgatroyd, "Gender and Occupational Stratification," *Sociological Review* 30 (November 1982): 574–602, Barry H. Bergen, "Only a Schoolmaster. Gender, Class, and the Effort to Professionalize Elementary Teaching in England, 1870–1910," *History of Education Quarterly* 22 (Spring 1982): 1–21, Myra Strober, "Segregation by Gender in Public School Teaching. Toward a General Theory of Occupational Segregation in the Labor Market" (unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, 1982); Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers, Gender, and Bureaucratizing School Systems in 19th-Century Montreal and Toronto," *History of Education Quarterly* 24 (Spring 1984): 75–100; Sheila Rothman, *Women's Proper Place* (New York. Basic Books, 1978); Michael W. Apple, *Teachers and Texts. A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education* (New York. Routledge, 1986); Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier* (New Haven. Yale University Press, 1984); John Richardson and Brenda Wooden Hatcher, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching, 1870–1920," *Work and Occupations* 10 (February 1983) 81–89; Myra Strober and David Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage? A Report on Research on Schools," *Signs* 5 (Spring 1980): 484–593; Carl A. Grant and Christine E. Sleeter, "Race, Class, and Gender and Abandoned Dreams," *Teachers College Record* 90 (Fall 1988): 19–40.

Along with the newly emerging bureaucracy came the expansion of managerial positions that were filled almost always by men.

Certainly representative of the bias against women in the educational workplace were the notions espoused by William H. Payne in 1875 on the school hierarchy and the sexual division of labor: "Women cannot do man's work in the schools."[16] Like many of his colleagues, Payne believed that men were better suited for the more prestigious and lucrative job opportunities. This widely held view of patriarchal dominance in the educational milieu is consistent with structured forms of control highly valued by urban school reformers. Strober and Tyack have explained this relationship between gender and social control:

> By structuring jobs to take advantage of sex-role stereotypes about women's responsiveness to rules and male authority, and men's presumed ability to manage women, urban school boards were able to enhance their ability to control curricula, students, and personnel. . . . Rules were highly prescriptive. . . . With few alternative occupations and accustomed to patriarchal authority, they mostly did what their male superiors ordered. . . . Difference of gender provided an important form of social control[17]

In short, general supervisors gained wider acceptance simply because they were men.

While the general supervisor (or assistant principal) and building principal were instrumental in maintaining supervisory control in each school, serious difficulties enormously impeded their effectiveness in the schools. They found themselves in a tenuous position in the educational hierarchy On the one hand, their major responsibility was to maintain control of the school organization by weeding out incompetent teachers, ensuring adherence to school regulations and policies, and evaluating overall personnel performance. In this sense, the supervisor and principal were system-oriented. On the other hand, supervisors wanted to assist teachers in solving classroom problems, in this sense, they were people-oriented. Thus the basic conflict that all engaging in supervision face. the unresolved dilemma between the demands of the system to evaluate and the desire of supervisors to assist teachers in instructional matters. Supervisors tried to resolve this conflict by minimizing administrative hierarchical pressures and maximizing professional engagement with teachers to improve the educational process.

These middle-management personnel were caught between teachers and principals. Later called assistant principals or district office personnel, they attempted to bolster their vulnerable position in schools by organizing and gaining support for their plight in the schools. However, their influence and authority were severely restricted and limited. Their job specifications remained nebulously defined. In the early '20s, for example, the editors of the *Journal*

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[16]William H. Payne, *Chapters on School Supervision* (New York: Wilson, Hinkle, 1875), p 49

[17]Myra Strober and David Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage? A Report on Research on Schools," *Signs* 5 (Spring 1980): 500.

of Educational Method admitted that "the present status of supervision is one of confusion, not to say of chaos. We have a multiplicity of names that plague us just as our unscientific alphabet does, the same function is called by different names, and each name stands for a variety of functions."[18]

There are several explanations for this apparent inattention to the supervisor. First, during this time the superintendency was emerging as a specialized profession and field of study. Influential men, such as Frank Spaulding, George Strayer, William Chancellor, and Ellwood Cubberley, and their ideas of business and management helped to formulate the basic theories of the emerging field. Administration, not supervision, was the prime concern. Supervision, if anything, was seen as an extension of school administration, or as one authority said, "supervision was merely the arm of administration."[19]

Second, supervision did not dominate thought and discussion because the 20th-century supervisor had no voice or advocate. The days of Harris's enormous influence had passed. Administering and managing a school system was of utmost concern, not supervising and improving instruction in the schools.

Supervisors during the first two decades of the 20th century realized the tenuous position they occupied in schools. The ill-defined nature of supervision and the indefinite and obscure status of supervisors within schools contributed to the attempt to find institutional legitimacy for their work. As a result, after about 1910, these supervisors made a concerted effort to clarify their role and function in schools. Supervisors, in effect, tried to eschew their bureaucratic roots and achieve for themselves a more professional working base.

THE BUREAUCRATIC-PROFESSIONAL MODEL APPLIED TO PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERVISION

The bureaucratic-professional model, as a framework for interpreting American educational historiography, has contributed much to our understanding of the nature and mechanisms of public schooling. Although this work is influenced by much of the work on bureaucratization and professionalization, an analysis of public school supervision must be viewed in the light of its own unique circumstances and development. No single theoretical model of bureaucracy or professionalism can be readily adopted or superimposed over the historical developments of supervision to neatly encapsulate and interpret events. The story of public school supervision does not lend itself to such a simplistic interpretation. The development of public school supervision in this country was influenced by several factors that are dissimilar

[18]Editorial, *Journal of Educational Method* 7 (May 1928): 343.

[19]William H. Lucio and John D. McNeil, *Supervision. A Synthesis of Thought and Action* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p. 11.

in many respects to other occupational groups seeking professional recognition. Doctors, for instance, although subjected to the hospital bureaucracy, have "participated in a free-contract model that largely preserved professional autonomy."[20] Supervisors never experienced the freedom, in this sense, that doctors and other professional groups enjoyed.

The emergence of the supervisor as a distinct occupational category does, however, mirror some of the more common characteristics shared among other such groups. Supervisors did in fact try to organize, as a body of experts, with a particular knowledge base suited to their special social situation. They attempted to devise a system, albeit not very elaborate, of instruction and training. They, not unlike other occupational groups striving for professional autonomy, also established formal prerequisites for entry into the field, as well as standards for evaluating on-the-job performance. Although we need to study and understand supervision in its own context, certain similarities to other occupational groups help shed light on the emergence of supervision as a distinct occupational category.

A historical overview of American education over the last 100 years reveals that two processes, bureaucratization and professionalization, affected the character and nature of public schooling. Both processes, though occurring in almost simultaneous fashion, influenced different aspects of American education. Bureaucracy affected the underlying structure and form of schooling. The creation of a centralized, standardized, hierarchical administrative structure is representative of the bureaucratic influence. Professionalization, on the other hand, enabled various groups to achieve domination and an almost monopolistic status within the division of labor. The emergence and dominance of the superintendency between 1890 and 1920 is illustrative of a special group of educators achieving professional autonomy in schools. In this light, bureaucracy and professionalism become not two entirely separate and contradictory frames of reference but rather complementary, and at times synchronic, processes influencing American education and schooling. The bureaucratic form of governance was indeed compatible with the efforts of professionalism and in fact was adopted into the internal operations of most professional groups.[21]

While bureaucracy and professionalism may not necessarily be opposing ideologies, in some circumstances the two processes may conflict, as was

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[20]Max Abbot, "Hierarchical Impediments to Innovation in Educational Organizations," in *Organizations and Human Behavior*, ed. F. D. Carver and T. J. Sergiovanni (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p. 45.

[21]Medicine, law, architecture, and accounting were in fact bureaucratic from their origins. The growth of professionalization of these groups was enhanced by bureaucratization. As Abbott recently explained, "Bureaucratic organization among professions enabled them to meet the challenges of the modern world and transformed the nature and location of interprofessional competition." See Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 155.

certainly the case for supervisors in the public schools. Andrew Abbott, in a theoretical discussion demonstrating synthesis between professionalization and bureaucratization, admits that "the two processes may come in direct conflict with one another." Abbott makes the point that bureaucratization "may have affected professions' ability to provide service." Supervisors did have difficulty providing services to their clients, which can be attributed, in large measure, to certain bureaucratic constraints. Abbott explains that professionals have lost control of their work because of organizational constraints. He gives an example based on teachers' loss of control over "curriculum planning to supervisory personnel." Similarly, supervisors have "lost their work" to administrators in higher levels of the administrative hierarchy."[22]

The bureaucratization of supervision occurred in the context of the larger bureaucratization of urban schooling. Urban school reformers of the late 19th century sought radical changes that resulted in a system of schooling based on centralized control and inculcation of bureaucratic ideology and values. Supervision played an important role in the bureaucratization of urban school ing. Supervision became an indispensable function of controlling and pre serving bureaucratic role relationships in schools. The hierarchical and elitist notion is even implied in the name itself: *super*vision. That the function of supervision is autocratic is not surprising, since the delivery of supervisory services has always mirrored the patterns most compatible with the values and assumptions that the bureaucratic organization of a school is based on.

The emergence of the school bureaucracy did not, however, occur in isolation of other processes affecting American urban education. Schooling also achieved a degree of dominance and monopoly in its sphere of influence, suggesting that professionalization, not just bureaucratization, occurred.[23] Although historians have explored the nature and character of the profession alization of schooling, another important aspect of this process has been neglected: an analysis of the particular professional efforts of various members of the school organization, especially teachers and supervisors. This strain of professionalization took a different course from what happened to schooling as a whole. The evidence demonstrates serious conflicts between the two processes for public school supervisors. Supervisors clamored for greater organizational receptivity in their pursuit of professional recognition. But what does the "professionalization of supervision" mean?

The term *profession* is often used in various ways in education. Certain characteristics, however, are commonly identified.[24] The term often refers to

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[22]Ibid., pp. 150, 155.

[23]Walter Doyle, "Education for All. The Triumph of Professionalism," in *Perspectives on Curriculum Development, 1776–1976,* ed. O L. Davis, Jr. (Washington, DC. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1976), p. 27.

[24]Ronald G. Corwin, *Sociology of Education* (New York. Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), Kenneth R. Howey and William E. Gardner, *The Education of Teachers* (New York. Longman, 1983); Robert B. Howsam, Dean C. Corrigan, George W Denemark, and Robert J. Nash, *Educating a Profession* (Washington, DC. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1976).

a group of people who possess high levels of skill, commitment, and trustworthiness.[25] According to Freidson, in his seminal study of the medical profession, a "profession," as distinct from other "occupations," enjoys a "preeminence" in the division of labor. In his words, "a profession has assumed a dominant position in the division of labor, so that it gains control over the determination of the substance of its own work." Given this superior position within a particular organization, members of a profession have the ability to define parameters of their work, establish standards, and carry out their own evaluation. Freidson explains that doctors, for instance, "have an officially approved monopoly of the right to define health and illness and to treat illness." Because of their ability to define their own destiny, a profession, according to Freidson, is free from major competition and from direct control by other groups within the organization.[26] According to Corwin, professionals achieve autonomy and control over their work because they establish well-defined procedures for "recruiting and policing members and for maximizing control over a body of theoretical knowledge and apply it to the solution of social problems." Professionals are not necessarily more skillful than non-professionals, continues Corwin, but they have based their skill on "theoretical knowledge and research." Since their knowledge is soundly based on research and theory, the clients of professionals are more likely to "rely upon the professional's judgment about their needs." He explains, "Professions have more legal control over their membership than other occupations through accrediting and licensing procedures and a code of ethics enforceable by law."

Although certain groups may clamor for greater recognition and claim technical superiority, they are not given "professional" status unless they are perceived by others, either members of the same organization or the general public, as having worth and importance. Legitimacy by others is an important factor for professional recognition. The public, for example, believes that doctors serve a valued purpose in society and that they possess technical competence. Professionals, therefore, are recognized as having a unique position in the division of labor, and they organize their work by establishing formal networks for decision making, training and research centers, and a highly specialized knowledge base.[27]

Dominance and recognition, then, are both associated with the professionalization of an occupation. These ideas are reflected in Corwin's definition of professionalism. "Professionalism represents the efforts of a vocation to

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[25]Myron Lieberman, *Education as a Profession* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1956); Morris L. Cogan, "Toward a Definition of Profession," *Harvard Educational Review* 23 (Winter 1953): 33–50.

[26]Eliot Freidson, *Profession of Medicine. A Study in the Sociology of Applied Knowledge* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. xvii, 5, 71–84.

[27]Ronald G. Corwin, *Militant Professionalism. A Study of Organizational Conflict in High Schools* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), p. 43.

gain full control over its work and to enhance its social and economic position in society."[28] A profession assumes a central posture in the decision-making process affecting the organization and is perceived by others as possessing skill and competence and serving a useful function. In this light, the professional model becomes an analytical and interpretive framework for exploring public school supervision. To what degree have supervisors achieved dominance within their sphere of influence, and to what extent have they been recognized as professionally competent? After the turn of the century, supervisors realized their tenuous position in the educational hierarchy Concerned about their obscure status in schools as well as the mounting criticism leveled against them by teachers, supervisors attempted to downplay bureaucratic methods and autocratic role relationships. They, in effect, tried to achieve dominance and professional recognition for their work in schools.

Two factors have created enormous problems for public school supervisors. By the nature of their position in schools, supervisors are empowered to maintain and enforce organizational mandates and to ensure administrative efficiency. They are compelled by bureaucratic influences. But they are chiefly responsible for promoting teacher effectiveness and student learning as well Supervisors' professional conduct depends on sustaining individual interests and pursuits. Individual objectives, however, are often diametrically opposed to organizational interests. Supervisors have experienced these strong tensions in their pursuit of professional recognition. The literature is replete with examples of teacher disapproval of invasive supervision and evaluative measures. Teachers perceive supervisors as bureaucratic functionaries whose chief purpose is ensuring organizational security. Despite numerous attempts to dispel these notions throughout its history, supervision still represents an overseeing, controlling, and bureaucratic function.

Corwin provides a neat theoretical framework for any discussion of bureaucratic-professional conflicts between school personnel He posits that clear-cut differences exist between bureaucratic and professional constructs Bureaucracy, by its nature, requires a high degree of standardization, with a stress on uniformity in both rules and conduct. Second, decision making is highly centralized in a bureaucracy. Little, if any, responsibility for decision making is given to members in low ends of the hierarchy. A third characteristic of bureaucracy is its highly task-oriented organizational specialization. Corwin includes three subcategories of task-oriented specialization: (1) based primarily on practice or experience, (2) involving the acceptance of a set of prescribed tasks, and (3) stressing efficiency and technical competence

Professionalism, however, is marked by a low degree of standardization. Corwin explains that stress is placed on the uniqueness and individuality of a client or member without reference to highly detailed and prescriptive rules

[28]Ibid., p. 12.

of conduct. Second, decision making is decentralized, and responsibility for decision making is placed in the hands of employees or members. Primary loyalty is to the client rather than to the organization. Third, specialization within a profession is client-oriented; knowledge is based primarily on theory and research rather than on experience or practice. Efficiency is not a primary objective in a professionally dominated organization. Effectiveness and the pursuit of excellence are the main considerations.[29] According to Corwin's theoretical analysis, professionalism as compared to bureaucracy is less standardized, less centralized, and more specialized, with an emphasis on the individual. In this light, professional interests and objectives may be antithetical to bureaucratic concerns.

TEACHERS' REACTION TO SUPERVISORY RATING

The professionalization of supervision began as an effort to gain legitimacy in the eyes of teachers. Supervisors thought they should devise objective, scientific methods for promoting "teacher efficiency." Franklin Bobbitt's ideas of school management, and particularly his call for "teacher efficiency," greatly influenced supervisors. Bobbitt was inspired by Frederick Winslow Taylor, who gained notoriety for his 1911 *Principles of Scientific Management.* Taylor's book stressed scientific management and efficiency in the workplace. The worker, according to Taylor, was merely a cog in the business machinery, and the main purpose of management was to promote the efficiency of the worker. Within a relatively short time, Taylorism and efficiency became household words and ultimately had a profound effect on administrative and supervisory practices in the schools.[30]

Bobbitt, then a professor of educational administration at the University of Chicago, tried to apply Taylor's ideas to the "problems of educational management and supervision." In 1913, he published a work sponsored by the National Society for the Study of Education, "Some General Principles of Management Applied to the Problems of City-School Systems." He presented 11 major principles of scientific management as applied to education. His fourth principle was particularly relevant for supervision; it focused on the qualifications of teachers and the attempt to raise their efficiency. Bobbitt decried the "subjective character" of supervision based on "frequently mistaken, and always quantitatively indefinite," judgments. Supervisors, he continued, must be equipped with scientific and objective means to measure the efficiency of teachers. "The way to eliminate the personal element from administration and supervision is to introduce impersonal methods of scientific administration and supervision." Rating teachers, thought Bobbitt, using

[29]Ibid., p. 19.

[30]Frederick W. Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911).

the latest principles of science would raise supervision to the "lofty status it deserved."[31]

Clearly, the significance of Bobbitt's work is his advocacy of scientific and professional supervisory methods. Supervisors looked to Bobbitt's ideas of scientific management and teacher efficiency as a means to accomplish their goal of heightened professionalism and legitimacy in the schools As a result of Bobbitt's work, educators advocated and developed a number of "rating scales."

Edward Elliott proposed one of the early methods for rating teacher efficiency. "The chief purpose of any teaching efficiency scheme," he stated, "is to serve as the means of promoting development and improvement of the individual teacher." His scale included categories ranging from physical and moral efficiency to social efficiency. Points, from 0 to 10, were awarded for each category.[32]

Arthur Clifton Boyce devised another widely disseminated "teacher efficiency rating scale." He first conducted a study of 350 cities with populations over 10,000; he asked schools to report their methods of rating teacher efficiency. Boyce discovered that most, if not all, schools relied on the "impression method" of supervision. This method included impressionistic and subjective conclusions drawn after a brief classroom visit. Boyce quoted one administrator in Newburgh, New York: "We have 70 teachers, and our means of judging them is by visiting their classrooms and observing their work."

Boyce concluded that the impression method used by many schools in rating teacher efficiency was inadequate for several reasons. "The weakness of these schemes," charged Boyce, was that they "result from (1) inadequate analysis, ... (2) a lack of definition of terms, resulting in vagueness and indefiniteness, and (3) the method of recording judgments, which is frequently wasteful of time or inaccurate or uncontrolled." Boyce claimed that his "scheme" would "overcome to some extent these difficulties by incorporating a comprehensive list of qualities, careful definition of terms, and the graphical method of recording judgments." His scale was composed of 45 different items, grouped in five main headings. "personal equipment, social and professional equipment, school management, technique of teaching, and results " Like many others during this period, his scale ranked teachers in each of these categories using value judgments such as very poor, poor, medium, good, or excellent.[33]

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[31]Franklin Bobbitt, "Some General Principles of Management Applied to the Problems of City-School Systems," *12th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1913), pp. 7–23.

[32]Edward C. Elliott, "How Shall the Efficiency of Teachers Be Tested and Recorded?" *NEA Proceedings* (1915), pp. 472–473.

[33]Arthur C. Boyce, "Methods for Measuring Teachers' Efficiency," *14th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II* (Chicago· University of Chicago Press, 1915), pp. 14–15, 77.

These scales were used extensively in many schools across the nation. Supervisors, again, hoped that the "latest scientific methods" of rating teacher efficiency would give legitimacy and acceptance to their work in schools. Unfortunately, criticism of the scales emerged almost immediately In 1920, H. O. Rugg said, "The movement to rate teachers . . . needs a new impetus and a new emphasis." He claimed that these "schemes" were "nearly always opposed by the teachers themselves, and frequently the [supervisors] have been skeptical of their value." He identified three shortcomings. First, the rating cards in practice were "not aimed at self-improvement" and have frequently been "an administrative scheme superimposed from above." Second, rating schemes were biased and abstract: "Rarely have such schemes been made concrete enough so that two or more rating officers rating the work of the same teacher could visualize precisely the same group of qualities." Third, concluded Rugg, the classification of traits was ambiguous and ill-defined.[34]

In 1922, Franklin W. Johnson criticized rating scales "because of their emphasis on qualities of teaching rather than on the results of teaching." Like other educators, he decried rating scales as autocratic devices used "to judge and assume to measure the fitness of their teachers for retention or for earning promotion."[35] Despite these criticisms, rating schemes were widely used in schools throughout the first 20 years of the 20th century.

Teachers in particular did not favorably view rating scales, and much opposition grew. Ava L. Parrott, a teacher speaking before the Department of Classroom Teachers in 1915, charged that rating scales were pernicious and bureaucratic devises. They are "fundamentally wrong . . entirely unnecessary, a detriment to good pedagogy." She continued, "rating gives those who rate too great power and places them in a position in which they are open to temptation. Let's rid ourselves of supervision of this sort."[36]

Jesse Newlon in 1922 presented a different outlook. He asserted that supervision and rating were necessary. He insisted that teachers wanted more, not less, supervision. In response, perhaps, to Parrott, he charged, "Many teachers resent supervision of any kind, and quite often these are the poorest and most talkative teachers in the school system." Often, Newlon lamented, these teachers were "accorded places of leadership in teachers' organizations." He said that these teachers were "a menace to our profession, and their numbers should be eliminated."[37] Similarly, H. C. Storm in 1923 insisted

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[34]Harold O. Rugg, "Self-Improvement of Teachers through Self-Rating. A New Scale for Rating Teachers," *Elementary School Journal* 20 (May 1920): 674, 676.

[35]Franklin W. Johnson, "The Supervision of Instruction," *School Review* 30 (December 1922): 745.

[36]Ava L. Parrott, "Abolishing the Rating of Teachers," *NEA Proceedings* (1915), p. 1168.

[37]Jesse H. Newlon, "Attitude of the Teacher Toward Supervision," *NEA Proceedings* (1923), p. 548.

that those who were supervised were overly sensitive and merely stressed "the destructive nature of supervision":

> We have classroom teachers who think themselves so perfect and so wonderfully professional that they need no supervision. These teachers would do away with all supervision and would sink all supervisors to the bottom of the deep blue sea. If they ever succeed, our public schools will go to the bow wows.[38]

Regardless of these defenses, the criticism against rating was virulent. In 1912, an editorial appearing in the *American Teacher* stated, "There is probably nothing, not even meager salaries, that frets and worries teachers more than supervision does."[39] Many teachers considered supervisory rating anti democratic and unprofessional. Sallie Hill considered rating "vicious".

> There is no democracy in our schools. . . . Here let me say that I do not want to give the impression that we are sensitive. No person who has remained a teacher for ten years can be sensitive. She is either dead or has gone into some other business. . . . [There are] too many supervisors with big salaries and undue rating powers.[40]

Thus, supervisors found themselves in a vulnerable position in the school hierarchy. They tried to legitimate their existence in schools by devising methods for rating teachers, hoping these methods would alleviate many of their problems. Despite good intentions, however, they encountered much opposition. So supervisors in the 1920s began to search for new methods and conceptions.

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF SUPERVISION

The early history of public school supervision indicates the prevalence of bureaucracy as the main focus for practice. Supervisors in the early 20th century tried to disassociate themselves from bureaucratic role relationships. However, the first two decades of the new century proved to be an arduous time for supervisors. They realized their precarious position in the school hierarchy. Somehow, as middle-management personnel, they were caught between teachers and administrators. They understood that their successful existence in schools depended on finding justification for their work.

Supervisors' drive for professional autonomy was a direct consequence of their efforts to gain greater recognition. To explore supervisors' professional efforts using a "trait" model, which focuses on general characteristics shared by various professions and then attributes commonly held traits to supervisors, gives an incomplete and inadequate picture of occupational life in school organizations. To define supervision based on common traits of

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[38]H. C. Storm, "Three Elements of Effective Supervision," *American School Board Journal* 66 (May 1923): 58.

[39]Editorial, *American Teacher* 1 (April 1912): 45.

[40]Sallie Hill, "Defects of Supervision and Constructive Suggestions Thereon," *NEA Proceedings* (1918), p. 506.

occupations recognized as professions is to "ignore the particular social and economic conditions that allowed one occupational group to achieve professional status while another did not."[41] The history of supervision is unique in its own right and defies any attempt to attribute preconceived notions of professional behavior. An analysis of supervision, therefore, requires an examination of how and why supervisors sought to become professionals. This "power" model, which focuses on the unique circumstances of how professions came to be, provides a more productive and accurate assessment of the evolution of public school supervision.

Since the 19th century, education and schooling have been bureaucratically controlled and state supervised. As the hierarchical structure of schooling was being set in place, and as roles and responsibilities became more separate and specialized, decisions about who bears authority and how power is distributed became a bureaucratic rather than professional function. What occurred in American education at the turn of the century was not a transformation from a loosely connected ward system to some sort of professional bureaucracy with high standards, technical rationality, and the like. Instead, what happened was a transformation from school as cottage industry to school as factory. The practice of supervision in schools reflected this bureaucratic inclination. The increase in supervisory offices in the early 20th century was not an indication of greater professionalism but of the establishment of a bureaucratic factory system of supervision. The professionalization of supervision was merely a label the bureaucracy captured and used to further its own ends. Bureaucratic governance had a vested interest in ensuring strict adherence to supervisory mandates. Supervision perpetuates bureaucratic ideals and values; therefore, supervisors fulfill similar ends.

Why did supervisors have difficulty in securing professional recognition for their work in schools? The answer has much to do with an inherent conflict that, by definition, is not easily resolved. Supervisors function within the school bureaucracy to oversee, inspect, and ensure the efficient operation and management of the organization. They are actively and continually involved in evaluating teachers' performance. Neagley and Evans, in their *Handbook for Effective Supervision of Instruction,* explain that one of the supervisor's major responsibilities is to "assist the principals in a staff capacity in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning."[42] The function of evaluation, according to Costa and Guditus, while necessary to remove "incompetent teachers," tends "to interfere with the helping relationship needed to work productively with other staff members."[43] Teachers, then, fearing a negative evaluation, may be

[41]Stephen T. Kerr, "Teacher Specialization and the Growth of a Bureaucratic Profession," *Teachers College Record* 84 (Spring 1983): 634.

[42]Ross L. Neagley and N. Dean Evans, *Handbook for Effective Supervision of Instruction* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 99.

[43]Arthur Costa and Charles Guditus, "Do Districtwide Supervisors Make a Difference?" *Educational Leadership* 41 (February 1984): 84.

reluctant to ask for assistance. In the eyes of many teachers, supervision is closely linked to an evaluation function. Teachers may eschew assistance and inservice education despite supervisors' efforts to allay fears and distrust of autocratic supervision. Supervisors encountered problems in professional identification because they were perceived, mostly by teachers, as intrusive functionaries whose chief purpose was to evaluate, not improve, instruction.

After 1920, supervisors' quest for professional autonomy to eradicate their ill-defined status in schools, to gain legitimacy in the eyes of teachers, and to distinguish their work from administration assumed unprecedented importance. Professionalism as a process affecting supervisors represented, especially during the '20s and '30s, a concerted effort to achieve some sort of internal organization, guidelines for expertise, professional training, a strong political power base, and control over their work. The advocated theme for supervision in the post-1920 period was "the improvement of instruction," not rating efficiency. An anonymous poem published in *Playground and Recreation* in 1929—"The Snoopervisor, the Whoopervisor, and the Supervisor"—reveals the attitudes, concerns, and aspirations of supervisors during this period:

> With keenly peering eyes and snooping nose,
> From room to room the Snoopervisor goes.
> He notes each slip, each fault with lofty frown,
> And on his rating card he writes it down,
> His duty done, when he has brought to light,
> The things the teachers do that are not right.
>
> With cheering words and most infectious grin,
> The peppy Whoopervisor breezes in.
> "Let every boy and girl keep right with me!
> One, two, three, four!
> That's fine! Miss Smith I see.
> These pupils all write well." This is his plan.
> "Keep everybody happy if you can."
>
> The Supervisor enters quietly,
> "What do you need? How can I help today?
> John, let me show you. Mary, try this way."
> He aims to help, encourage and suggest,
> That teachers, pupils all may do their best.[44]

This new emphasis on "democratic supervision" gained popularity after 1920. Supervisors tried to alter the perception of supervision away from "snoopervision" to a more humane, democratic function. After 1920, this advocacy of professionalism and democratic supervision manifested itself in several ways. Parenthetically, I am not equating professionalism with democ racy. Indeed, the medical profession is anything but democratic in its delib-

[44]Anonymous, "The Snoopervisor, the Whoopervisor, and the Supervisor," *Playground and Recreation* 23 (December 1929): 558.

erations with its clients. If I had used the trait model of professionalism, I might have missed the importance that democratic supervision played in advancing supervision as a profession. Analyzing supervisors as an occupational group struggling to gain acceptance within the school bureaucracy indicates that supervisors, wanting to raise their status and gain recognition in schools, sought to align themselves with democratic principles of school management. In this sense, professionalism and democracy can be equated, at least, in discussing the history of supervision during the post-1920 era.

Supervisors sought professional autonomy and development by forming a new organization and journal. In 1921, James Hosic lamented the dearth of literature in the field of supervision, despite the volumes written on administration. Hosic cited a growing need for an organization dealing with the particular concerns of supervisors and supervision. After all, even the teachers had an organization in the Department of Classroom Teachers, founded in 1914.[45] Hence, the birth of the National Conference on Educational Method. In May 1922, the editor of the *Journal of Educational Method* proclaimed, "Meanwhile, through every possible agency, we shall do well to publish the fact that supervision is a distinct occupation in itself, worthy of life-long devotion and demanding peculiar training and fitness."[46] An examination of the publications, statements, and activities of this new organization indicates supervisors' desire to redefine and reconceptualize their field as a professional enterprise incorporating "democratic" methods to improve instruction in the schools.

Indeed, the promotion of democratic ideals was an important theme in supervision during this time. Addressing the Department of Rural Education in 1923, Dunn maintained that supervision was "a highly professionalized, helping, coordinating, cooperating, inspiring function."[47] Similarly, inspired by Dewey's *Democracy and Education,* Hosic furthered the ideals of democratic supervision in a 1920 article in *School and Society:*

> Invested for the time being with a good deal of delegated authority the supervisor is not justified in playing the autocrat . . . To do so is neither humane, wise, nor expedient . . . . Supervision must be cooperative, creative, scientific, effective, and democratic.[48]

Supervisors realized that democracy must govern their relationships with teachers if they were to be accepted as professionals. Orville G Brim revealed supervisors' need to continue to pursue democracy in schools. Admitting that early supervision was "inspectoral and autocratic," Brim said the emphasis moved away from this conception because "teachers grew critical, bitter, and

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[45]James Hosic, "The Opening Meeting of the National Conference," *Journal of Educational Method* 1 (September 1921): 38–39.

[46]Editorial, "Supervision as a Profession," *Journal of Educational Method* 1 (May 1922): 34

[47]Fannie W. Dunn, "What Is Instructional Supervision?" *NEA Proceedings* (1923), p. 764.

[48]James Hosic, "The Democratization of Supervision," *School and Society* 11 (March 20, 1920): 331, 333.

antagonistic, so much so that the problem of good will became, and today is, a major supervisory issue." According to him, the idea of a "helping" supervisor emerged in direct response to autocratic supervision.[49] Indeed, beginning in the early 20th century, supervision tried to move away from bureaucratic supervision to a more democratic and cooperative function to attain a greater degree of professionalism.

A FINAL WORD

Supervisors need to examine their past. After considering supervisors' effort to attain professional status in the early 20th century, we can see the opposition to supervisory practice based on "snoopervision" and rating. If we are to empower teachers and promote learning, then we must learn from past mistakes and accentuate democracy in our relationships with teachers. Only then can we achieve our ultimate objective: improving teaching, promoting learning, and maintaining our professional status in schools.

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[49]Orville G. Brim, "Changing and Conflicting Conceptions in Supervision," *Journal of Educational Method* 10 (December 1930): 132.