

**Student Authority: Antidote to Alienation<sup>1</sup>**

(in press)

Joan F. Goodman  
University of Pennsylvania  
Graduate School of Education  
3700 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

[joang@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:joang@gse.upenn.edu)

**Keywords:**

Student authority, schools, power, freedom, mission

**Biographical Note:**

Joan F. Goodman is professor of education at the University of Pennsylvania who has written extensively on school discipline, missions, and moral education as well as on childhood disabilities. She is co-author of *The Moral Stake in Education: Contested Premises and Practices* (2000), *Teaching Goodness: Engaging the Moral and Academic Promise of Young Children* (2003), and *Moral Education: A Teacher-Centered Approach* (2004).

**Joan F. Goodman**  
**Student Authority: Antidote to Alienation**  
**Abstract**

The widespread disaffection of students from school is manifested in academic failure, indifference, and defiance. These problems can be alleviated, I argue, when an authority structure is developed that combines three components – freedom, power, and legitimacy. Authority understood as either power or freedom is apt to subvert students' school attachment even while attempting to strengthen it; authority that combines power and freedom, when understood by all parties as serving a legitimate mission, is apt to enhance engagement. The bonding potency of authority is increased when it is dispersed to students. The three components of authority are interwoven in various patterns: some schools lean more towards power, others more towards freedom; some operate under highly moralized and totalizing missions, others under vaguer, less moral, and less encompassing missions. The nature and interdependence of the three components, as well as the trade-offs of various balances, are discussed. While legitimate authority has many faces, if schools are to be valued by students it is essential that the values schools promote are welcomed by them; critical to that process is ordaining students with authority to advance prevailing norms.

## **Student Authority: Antidote to Alienation<sup>1</sup>**

If anyone doubts that students are disengaged from schooling, she should be disabused by the finding that, as of 2005, 27% of the nation's 12<sup>th</sup> graders scored below a basic reading level (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007). Among Black, Hispanic and American Indian seniors 46%, 40% and 33% respectively registered below basic. How can it be that children exposed to 12 years of instruction are still incompetent in the fundamental skill schools exist to impart? Beyond problems posed by weak teachers, poor pedagogy, and large classes, it must be that failing children are deliberately disengaging themselves from learning, a condition further exemplified in high absenteeism, low graduation rates, disruptiveness, and violence (Fullan, 2007; Mitra, 2004; Newmann, 1981; Pace, 2003). Some have attributed student estrangement to the excessive and pervasive authority of school life. Teachers are in control. Children, actively or passively, resent and resist their authority. This is not news. In the 1930's Willard Waller put it bluntly: the teacher-pupil relationship is "a form of institutionalized dominance and subordination" (1932/1967):

Teacher and pupil confront each other in the school with an original conflict of desires, and however much that conflict may be reduced in amount, or however much it may be hidden, it still remains. The teacher represents the adult group, ever the enemy of the spontaneous life of groups of children. The teacher represents the formal curriculum, and his interest is in imposing that curriculum upon the children in the form of tasks; pupils are much more interested in life in their own world than in the desiccated bits of adult life which teachers have to offer (p.195-196).

The inevitable hostility between teacher and student is expressed from a more psychological perspective, but with equal inevitability, by Jerome Kagan (1971). Children want to be in charge of their own activities, he points out, and the sensory and motor activities that draw them are often contrary to school mandates. "Speaking, running, and climbing are natural activities that the child wants to perfect; reading, writing and arithmetic are not" (p.146). Inevitably, the spontaneous desires of children must be suppressed. "[I]f multiplication were a skill that children naturally yearned to acquire, we might not have invented the school" (p.145).

But it is only from a students' perspective that teachers are in charge. Students' alienation as a response to their lack of self-determination is paralleled by teachers' alienation as a response to their own powerlessness. Teacher authority has steadily eroded as controls from federal and state governments over standards and outcomes, externally designed curricula, accountability demands, and student rights have increased (Arum, 2003; Grant, 1988; Ingersoll, 2003a). In contemporary American schools teachers have scant discretion over such student issues as assessment, tracking, class assignment, promotion, curriculum, and expulsion; and over such administrative issues as staff hiring, firing, teacher transfers, dropping/adding students from class, schedules, class size, space, funds for classroom, or budgets more broadly. The de-professionalization appears to matter, for greater teacher authority is inversely correlated with faculty turnover and school conflict (Ingersoll, 2003a). Teachers

and students are in a common predicament: Both have high performance responsibilities with superiors judging their compliance and success, in tandem with scant authority to alter the demands made upon them.

The decline in teacher authority since the 1960's has been associated with rising student deviance (Grant, 1988; Hurn, 1985). Students, particularly those in the inner cities, subvert adult authority by rejecting the school curriculum and social expectations – punctuality, neatness, behavioral compliance (Apple, 1982). Some become contemptuous of the rules and sanctions as Ann Ferguson describes:

[G]etting into trouble in school did not necessarily arouse fear and shame in children, nor induce a resolve to turn over a new leaf and be good. Getting in trouble and making a trip to the Punishing Room was, for some children, also the occasion for escaping from classroom conditions of work, for self-expression, for making a name for yourself, having fun, for both actively contesting adult rules and power, as well as for the sly subversion of adult prohibitions (2000, p.31).

Teachers' respond to the subversion by retrenchment: students are more closely monitored and denied previously held minor freedoms (Hurn, 1985). Continuing the cycle, students are apt to exert more resistance while administrators, themselves under strong external pressures, hold teachers to ever-stricter demands for student performance and decimate their discretionary realm. The mutual unhappiness probably contributes to high faculty attrition (46% of teachers leave the field within five years, Ingersoll, 2003b) and high student dropout rates (over 40% of urban high school students do not graduate, Swanson, 2008). This is an alarming state of affairs: All parties seek to possess authority, yet resist subservience to it. The question arises, if student and teacher alienation is partially a protest against authority, yet authority is intrinsic to schooling, what can be done?

One proposal is to increase teacher authority. Assuming that schools are responsible for introducing children into the culture then teachers, with expertise over aspects of that culture, must be given a freer hand in disseminating their knowledge. Discarding authority, claims Hannah Arendt, means refusing to accept responsibility for the world into which adults have brought children and enabling them eventually to reform it. As she writes: education

is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world (1968, p.196).

The process of transmitting a common world, according to this perspective, involves student submission to the institutionalized requirements of schooling: mandatory attendance, a largely prescribed curriculum, established criteria, age-graded expectations, evaluation of participants. Schools are less like cafeterias catering to the wishes of individual consumers than like food distribution centers filling the bellies of the hungry. Their obligation is to determine what fare will serve the common good consonant with the individual

good. To support these collective purposes and withstand threats of fragmentation, substantial authority is required (Benne, 1970, Durkheim, 2002; Selznick, 1992; Simon, 1940). But what if the authority is rejected?

Alternatively, some advocate stemming alienation by reducing teacher authority; freedom schools are the extreme example. The essential premise is that children are naturally curious knowledge-acquiring creatures – just look at what they achieve in the first three years of life – whose innate capacities are destroyed by the rigidities of schooling. Creativity, independent thinking, and intrinsic interest are released as authority, accompanied by oppressive rules, discipline, grades, competition, hierarchies, mandatory curriculum, and emphasis on orderliness, is removed. (Graubard, 1972; Holt, 1964; 1970; Neill, 1960). Accordingly, teachers should be resources for children's independent learning and authority structures dismantled. Waller's "natural" antagonisms, by this account, are not natural but rather an artifice of authority ridden institutions (See Ingersoll, 2003a, for a recent description of this debate). The anti-authoritarianism, however, should not be exaggerated. John Holt (1972), a major spokesman for free schools, acknowledged that in any collective group there is need for some order, protecting and sharing property, resolving tension between individual and group needs, and instruction. Reading, for example, is a skill children must acquire; only some will do so spontaneously. Many, Jonathan Kozol estimated a quarter to a half, need to be taught it "in a highly conscious, purposeful and sequential manner" (1972, pp 30-31); it is inexcusable not to do so.

A third suggestion for avoiding alienation is maintaining closer, more caring relationships. Rather than ministering to the ignorant, this model suggests an interactive mutual practice of close listening, attentiveness, and individualized responsiveness. Teachers should aspire to a condition of "motivational displacement" in which the care-taker's desires flow to the cared-for (Noddings, 1995; 1996; 2003; 2008; Tronto, 1995). Teaching, grounded in such relationships, is based on trust rather than authority. This trust is not granted to the larger institutional purposes, what Bryk and Schneider (2002) call "organic trust," but is a personal web binding the players – administrators, teachers and students. Caring, in its de-emphasis on the schools' induction functions, tends to be anti-authority. Noddings is skeptical of the assumption that children's best interests are known by adults. I have argued that caring has multiple faces (Goodman, in press). Along with pure receptiveness, it can and often does mean deliberately leading children to places they know not of "to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world" (Arendt, 1968, p.196). In the same vein, Benne writes of authority enabling "persons to grow into membership in some more inclusive human community" (1970, p.402). While caring is obviously foundational to good teaching, alone it is devoid of necessary commitments external to the relationship; it offers "[n]either a shared culture, nor a shared creed, nor a shared conception of goods to be sought and the virtues to be cultivated" (Strike, 2003, p.76).

It is a mistake, I believe, to frame the debate over authority as one of domination versus freedom or caring. As I will elaborate, authority is composed

of three elements: power, legitimacy, and freedom. When understood as this hybrid, it is no longer the looming oppressive force preventing members of the school community from productive partnerships, but an essential and welcome aspect of schooling formulated around shared norms and fully compatible with caring relationships. More hopefully, when distributed amongst all parties, particularly students, it can be a means of creating attachment and reversing estrangement. The problem is less the amount of authority in a school, though that is not an issue to be dismissed, but what values the authority supports and who possesses it. The challenge is how authority can be prevented from degenerating into mere power, for power alone prompts resistance and alienation or, when given to children, potential anarchy. In what follows I consider the components of authority and its distribution to students, taking into account the connection between authority and school missions that legitimate it.

### **What is authority? Power constrained by legitimacy**

A 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher assigns a student the task of leading the class down a corridor to the library, stopping at the stairs to make sure everyone is together, and reporting to her anyone who is out of line. The student, following instructions, makes note of a dawdler whom he reports to the teacher. On arrival, the librarian invites the each student to select a book from the shelf. Two girls squabble over the latest *Harry Potter*. The librarian, without discussion, removes the book in contention and directs them to make other selections. The students claim she is not being fair and sullenly return to their seats.

Each of these moments might be considered an expression of authority; I suggest none of them are. In authorizing a child to be line-leader, while heavily restricting his scope, the teacher has only temporarily deputized him to assume her power. In allowing children to select books without encouraging them to resolve potential conflict, the librarian has granted only a moment of freedom. When confronting the squabbling girls the librarian exercised failed authority, for they perceived her vacating the books as illegitimate.

Consider another scenario: The line leader designated by the teacher understands the responsibilities associated with the role for they have been previously discussed in class meetings. Anticipating some difficulties with a couple students he reminds everyone of the rules as he organizes the line. Sure enough, two students begin to run. When they comply with his request to stop, he determines there is no need to report the incident to the teacher. In this instance he was not merely a proxy for the teacher but exerting his own judgment, within the bounds of class-determined norms. The librarian invites the students to select their books adding that if two or more make the same selection they need to work out an equitable solution. Again, two jointly select the recent *Harry Potter*. Based on prior negotiating experiences, they agree that since Student A lives near a public library he will cede the book to Student B, but if the book is not available at the library, then Student B will return it in one week rather than the customary two allowed for borrowing. In this instance students had authority to work out conflicts as well as freedom of choice, again according to precedents legitimated by the subculture's mores.

Because authority is associated with constraint and submission, it is often confused with power and coercion. This is a mistake. Where power or force is employed, authority has failed. Power, according to Max Weber (1947), "is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests." (p.152). Authority, by contrast, is "the probability that certain commands (or all commands) from a given source will be obeyed by a given group of persons" (p.324). A criterion for obedience "is a certain minimum of voluntary submission" (p.324). Authority, explains Phillip Selznick (1992), may be defined as a rightful claim to deference or obedience....We cannot make sense of authority if we do not distinguish it from naked power. Authority generates a *kind* of power – the power to win assent, deference, obedience – but its distinctive basis is a recognized claim of right. The claim to deference must be accepted as rightful by a relevant class of persons. (p. 266, italics in original).

What most distinguishes authority from power is that the "relevant class" grants its consent. The *voluntary* submission by individuals or groups to commands accepted as valid makes authority legitimate, just as *involuntary* submission to commands perceived as illegitimate marks power relationships. The domination and repression manifested in authoritarianism eradicates the will; authority engages it (Arendt 1968; Benne, 1970; Grant, 1988; Metz, 1978; Nisbet, 1953; Sennett, 1981; Simon, 1940; Weber, 1947). When an administrator secures a teacher's compliance through threat of sanctions she has lost her authority as the teacher, whose student refrains from cheating because of the consequences he anticipates, or whose conduct more generally is ruled by grades and external discipline, has lost hers. Such a student, rejecting the legitimacy of the demand, is unwilling to be bound by it. Grades and discipline may serve as bulwarks or incentives of authority; alone they cannot establish it.

The active consent that keeps the will of the subordinate engaged is an antidote to passivity and resentment. When the subordinate agrees that a rule is fair, that cheating, for instance, violates a foundational principle to which he, as well as the teacher, subscribes, then his obedience feels self-imposed rather than commanded from above. It is an act of freedom not repression. But the notion of consent when applied to students is problematic. Young children are incapable of making rational commitments to a set of principles; they are docile, eager to please the teacher by complying with her rules as long as the rules do not conflict with parental values. Theirs is a heteronomous morality based on fealty to the adults who care for them (Piaget, 1965). Limited by a meager exposure to the world, they are also unable to discern and compare their interests to those of others. Consent may be given, but can it be called voluntary when a child lacks the capacity to actively and independently consider the merits of rules? In the context of young children, what does voluntary consent mean? With older children, capable of granting consent, there is the difficulty of securing it, particularly from those with generalized negative attitudes toward school who perceive the curriculum irrelevant, teachers oppressive and boring, and the

school without prospects of delivering a better life – hardly conditions designed to elicit student belief in, or approval of, school authority.

Is the withholding of student consent a serious obstacle to establishing school authority? According to Selznick (1992), the subjects of authority are not necessarily the "relevant class" to give consent. In the school context, community and parental endorsement are sufficient. This seems problematic. While for the young child parental approval probably suffices, for older ones authority not accepted as rightful will be experienced as pure power and induce an alienation that genuine authority, by incorporating the consent of the subject, is supposed to prevent. There seems no way to side-step the necessity of securing at least qualified student acceptance.

How do schools secure consent? Unlike the hypothetical person in Rawl's original position, children cannot rationally determine those broad principles of justice that legitimate authority. They are highly suggestible with weak capacities for making disinterested judgments, particularly when collective long-term goals are involved. The needs of marginal students are not compelling to those seeking membership in the popular crowd. Moral principles aside, only a minority of students, pursuing their own interests, would likely write a curriculum with any resemblance to those ordained by schools. Were it otherwise, were they drawn to the prescribed learning activities, they would embrace them in their free time.

Students, therefore, need to be persuaded that their lives at school are worthwhile. In the early elementary grades this is unproblematic; they readily identify with school goals as they have with parental values and interests, viable alternatives do not get a beach-head. With maturity, however, the child is pulled towards non-parental and non-school identifications and for the vast majority consent to authority must be co-opted. I do not use the term pejoratively. The induction of children into a belief system that they can hold onto at least provisionally is part of their identity formations.

While co-opting is an essential method of socialization, it varies in its coerciveness and source. An adult may do no more than set a tone or be minimally suggestive, as when a teacher entices a group to donate the proceeds of an event to charity rather than spend them on a trip. As more pressure on students is required to capture consent, light persuasion moves closer to coercion and authority moves closer to power. As persuasion fails, schools default to the external discipline of grades and discipline. As consent grows weak to non-existent students may withdraw approval, become indifferent to sanctions, and game the system to secure their own ends – getting good grades by cheating without study.

A teacher will often activate consent to her authority through superior knowledge or a strong personality. She may present herself as vivacious and dramatic, select captivating material, offer sympathetic care manifested in flexible assignments, stimulate and respond to student interests. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot (1983) vividly describes a teacher adept in using text and personality to lure students into topics remote from their everyday lives. Using stage whispers and a cockney accent she enacts the mystery and magic, the bizarre and supernatural intrinsic to the early ballad tradition. (For a good description of a



teacher's difficulties in trying to secure student consent to her authority see Pace, 2003.) The authority of a teacher premised on expertise has been analogized to the doctor-patient, or more generally professional-client, relationship (Benne, 1970; Hurn, 1985, Pace, 2003). As the doctor's goal is to make her patient well the teacher's is to make her student knowledgeable. Submission by the patient/student is premised on an appreciation of the professional's expertise.

While securing authority through personal achievement is much to be admired it is fragile, reliant upon the gifts of particular teachers. More compellingly it lacks the connection between an individual and those stable, school-wide (or more broadly based), publicly endorsed shared values to which students can attach themselves (Swidler, 1979). As Arendt puts it, the "teachers' *qualification* consists in knowing the world and being able to instruct others about it, but his *authority* rests on his assumption of responsibility for that world" (1968, p. 189, italics added). When consent emanates from institutional mandates or missions, legitimacy comes "from above" and the personal appeal of the teacher is not required to secure it. Teacher and student are bound to an authority not of their own devising. Kenneth Strike has summarized the nature of a school mission.

*A shared educational project has a vision of the education it wishes to provide, which is known to and agreed upon by the members of the community. This vision is rooted in a common vision of human flourishing, and it involves aims that require cooperation in order to secure. This is the basis for articulating roles within the community. It grounds the community's educational practices, rituals, and traditions, grounds the community's governance practices, and is the basis of the community's ability to achieve the goods of community such as belonging, loyalty, mutual identification, and trust (p.74. italics in original).*

Strike emphasizes the social values of commonality, community, and cooperation. The presumption is that humans flourish best when seeking a common good. For others, a school mission is more individualistic: the maximization of academic and personal growth, promotion of high expectations, opportunities for inquiry and participation (Hansen, 2006; Louis and Miles, 1990; National Research Council Institute of Medicine, 2004; Newmann, 1996; Mosher, Kenny and Garrod, 1994). What Strike considers central, individual growth models seek to avoid. Sensitive to the danger of oppressiveness latent in a collective encompassing world-view, missions focused on individual achievement encourage diversity and self-expression.

The distinctions, however, should not be overblown. Liberal ideologies, associated with respect, care, individual rights, and liberty can readily translate into collective norms. An example is the democratic schools of the 1970's. Thus Mosher, Kenny and Garrod (1994), describing such schools, write that there must be "agreement on the common purposes, rights, and obligations of all embodied in a social contract or constitution" (p.2). While these institutions stress student autonomy and initiative, they are infused with notions of the general good expressed through collective responsibility and mutual care. Students in democratic schools who generate choices by popular vote are restricted by at

least an implicit normative consensus so that, for example, cheating, stealing and vandalism are unacceptable.

In schools with more obviously external missions legitimacy comes from above; students submit to a set of norms as a *precondition* of membership in the community. Students in democratic schools, attentive to processes of deliberation in determining the common good, likely feel as though the mission comes from below (Higgins-D'Alessandro and Power, 2005). In both varieties, however, the legitimacy of authority is generated by a set of universal moralized norms. There is a shared assumption that when students voluntarily grant allegiance to a common moral order, the curriculum will be seen as worthwhile (Metz, 1978). In this respect schools with missions from above or below are distinguishable from schools without missions where the default position is to rely heavily on teacher (and principal) generated authority. Whatever the legitimizing source of authority, however, and no matter its benevolent intentions, it cannot succeed without students (beyond an early age) voluntarily agreeing that it indeed does serve their welfare. We turn then to the role of freedom in relationship to authority.

### **What is authority? The inclusion of freedom**

Authority and freedom appear to pull in opposite directions: Authority removed releases freedom, authority imposed limits freedom (Simon, 1940). For the most part, however, it is more accurate to consider them as interactive. Freedom is never pure: It involves making choices and choices are constrained by one's experiences and abilities. Parental authority that provides influence and opportunities allows a child to consider alternatives; a child raised without parental authority, a feral child for instance, has no choices. To live entirely by wants is to be enslaved. An independent reflective decision requires exposure to a range of possibilities, criteria to direct the choice, often self-discipline to follow through, and all these operations are socially embedded. Indeed self-control, though closely allied to autonomy and freedom is often referred to as authority and viewed as emancipating rather than repressive. (Durkheim, 2002; Reich, 2002). In order to distinguish control over self from control over others, for present purposes I limit authority to the latter.

Just as freedom has elements of restraint so authority has elements of freedom. Even in Weber's description of hierarchical bureaucratic organizations, where employees fulfill delineated roles, the bureaucrat is expected to perform independently and imaginatively. His selection for the job is premised on expertise; exercising judgment is essential to his success (Weber, 1947; 1968). However, the extent of freedom will vary from one organization to another. Presumably a physician in a managed care setting has more independence than a dental hygienist in the same practice. In schools, principals have more freedom than teachers, teachers more than students. But wherever there exists genuine authority, power and freedom are combined in authority relationships (Simon, 1940).

Democratic schools stress freedom by disseminating substantial authority to students who, directly or through representative legislatures, make decisions binding on others and accepted by them. Students may have substantial say

over the agendas and extensive decision-making power, but to sustain their power they must abide by common premises that legitimate and shape the freedom, such as respect for basic human rights, responsibility of all to the community wellbeing, honesty in communications, the value of learning, protection of property, to say nothing of the limits imposed by laws and finances. Students in certain types of centrally mission-driven establishments, such as a military school, will emphasize power over freedom but, as we shall see, they grant considerable discretion to those exerting authority.

While authority can be weighted towards freedom or power, it dissolves when they are completely unbalanced. When freedom approaches zero and the exercise of discretion is stifled, one (teacher or student) is increasingly either subject to, or an enactor of pure power. As we saw, the child assigned to be a line leader, exercising only proxy power, has no authority because he has no freedom. It is only when he can consider options, in the second scenario, that he possesses authority. When freedom approaches 100% it operates in a vacuum of constraints and social behavior cannot be regulated; there is no legitimate power that can compel adherence to any decisions. In a shift to extreme freedom, the support provided by higher order purposes that framed it is lost. Instead of making self-regulated choices, drawn from accepted premises of the school, students may become increasingly bored or turn to antisocial assertiveness and destructiveness (as described by Grant, 1988; Swidler 1979; Willis, 1977). Even if administrators have tried to buttress teachers' authority with school rules, once students in their quest for freedom no longer endorse those premises the teacher is at a loss to curb the unregulated freedom short of stricter discipline. And once students become indifferent to school norms, the stricter discipline may also be ineffective; being sent to the punishment room or put on detention has no bite (Ferguson, 2000)

Advocates for increased student freedom maintain that student investment in school is a function of the voice they are given (Galloway, Pose, and Osberg 2007; Mitra, 2004; Rudduck, 2007), freedom is an antidote to alienation. But what kind of voice, and over what matters? At the highly constrained pole the freedom can be no more than adults listening to students' views while preserving their own authority intact (Cook-Sather, 2002), or adults granting students minor choices in what is fundamentally a teacher-prescribed curriculum (Rudduck, 2007). At the opposite pole, freedom can obliterate the power and legitimacy elements of authority, as in permitting students to determine what they study and even whether they study (Cusick, 1983, Hemmings, 2006; Swidler, 1979).

Within the school reform movement there are rich examples of middling positions where students have undertaken significant initiatives against the background of shared norms. Such distributed authority allows students to make important contributions to their school life and collectively collaborate, while the range of innovations is safeguarded. Students in these circumstances are not acting at will – the freedom end of the continuum – but, with the consent of the school. Thus, for example, Newmann and Associates (1996) portray an elementary school in which students produced a student newspaper, constructed a museum of state history, built a space museum, researched the costs and

benefits of options for improving a playground, and organized discussions of gangs – why people join them, consequences, alternatives – following-up with a letter to the local radio station offering solutions. While the authority structure in these collective activities may have been organized by the group itself, it was legitimated by the school's values and purposes. Mitra (2004) describes a California high school where, through a Student Forum, students organized neighborhood tours, engaged in translation and tutoring activities, hosted discussions of how their ghetto school was perceived, and took on efforts to improve teacher-student relationship. Again, the initiatives (freedom) of the students occurred against a sanctioned normative background as well as an agreed-upon authority structure amongst the students.

Operating with fewer background norms, namely cordial relations and order, Cusick (1983) chronicles a high school class in which attendance is low, classrooms are extremely disorderly and students do no work. When the teacher gives an in-class assignment, students talk to friends, throw objects from the back to the front of the class, talk, laugh, touch one another, play cards, wad paper balls and shoot them into the wastebasket. When reprimanded, a student tells the teacher to get out of his way. At this extreme, freedom has descended into anarchy; the minimal order required to sustain a proclaimed ethos of cordial relations between adults and students was destroyed. No mutually accepted set of norms constrained the freedom and the teacher had nothing to summon when trying to restrain the students. "No principal of those schools ever talked about the school philosophy or beliefs or adherence to some common goals" (p. 95). This is not to say that granting students considerable freedom without attaching that freedom to strong authority arrangements will always be disastrous. One can imagine intense learning occurring in classrooms where a teacher serves more as consultant to, than driver and restrainer of, activities. However, success of this sort depends upon students' affiliative dispositions that in turn depend upon prior socialization. The apparent freedom has been channeled by the internalization of a common normative structure; in short there is voluntary submission to implicit authoritative expectations.

### **Distribution of authority and school norms**

The nature of authority in schools will vary, as we have seen, depending upon which of the constituent elements is emphasized. It is further shaped by where it is vested and what norms it upholds. The allegiance of students to their school, I have argued, improves with the perceived legitimacy of the school's values. These allegiances are further tightened when students themselves become bearers of authority. A child at a school charged with greeting and directing visitors is likely to affiliate with the institution and simultaneously enjoying enhanced self-esteem. Exertion of student authority increases loyalty to the legitimating principles while simultaneously reversing student passivity, apathy, and despondency. There are obvious hazards: Whether the co-opting process serves students well depends on whether the norms are consistent with foundational values of equality, human dignity, and liberty. Granting students' power raises the possibility of hierarchies that may undermine peer relations. Granting freedom may undermine the school's obligations as educational

fiduciaries. We turn then to an exploration of schools with various missions – strong, weak, moral, amoral – and consider how they condition the distribution of authority. The review is purely suggestive and non-exhaustive, its purpose only to explore possible relationships between student authority and the prevailing school ethos.

The more embracing and moralized the school's norms, the easier it is for authority to be shared with students. Where all members of a school community are attached to a set of pre-existing values from above, the school is well situated to distribute authority. This is true whether the authority stresses power or freedom. With less totalizing norms the possibility of dispersing authority (as opposed to power or freedom) and building strong attachments to the school may be diminished.

We start with examples of highly moralized and embracing missions promulgated by a religious and military school. Bethany Baptist Academy, as described by Alan Peshkin (1986) is a fundamentalist born-again k-12 school with 350 students. All aspects of the curriculum and behavior are driven by an interpretation of the bible. Doing God's work requires obedience to a vast set of rules that dictate students' attire, activities in and out of school (no movie theatres or popular music), speech (no swearing or lying), and friendships (fellow born-again Baptists). The governance is authoritarian. Though infractions are rare, the principal determines how many demerits a student receives and the appropriate punishment (including a corporal option authorized by the bible). At the same time he recognizes that excessive discipline indicates school failure, for students are expected to obey the strictures willingly. They are united in a shared belief system, responsible for carrying out its tenets and to one another. Students earnestly believe that obedience is the gateway to becoming one with Christ.

Under background conditions of this saturating moral mission, authority is distributed down the line. From a slate of potential student leaders compiled by the principal and faculty, students vote for class officers who show their faithfulness by signing a weekly pledge promising to attend all school sponsored activities, including those held on weekends. These star student leaders are included on disciplinary committees (without a vote), "try to keep their class under control in a teacher's absence, caution fellow students who break big-demerit regulations (e.g., drinking and smoking), and inform the administration about potentially disruptive situations" (p. 273). They are responsible for being their brother's keeper and reporting misbehaviors.

Military boarding schools, as described by Kim Hays (1994), provide another example of authority structures, supported by a common moral vision, that allow students to take responsibility for rule enforcement and for other students. As with Bethany, authority is legitimated by sacred laws from above, in this case premised on virtues of honor, duty, bravery, and loyalty. Students are "joined both to one another and to something greater than the self; for them, it is war that supplies comradeship and a sense of mystical enormity" (p. 209). Leadership descends from the mission to the faculty and then to the cadet officers who have considerable control over those under them including enforcement of the honor code. At the same time leaders are expected to work

hard for the wellbeing of their subordinates and held responsible for their failures. Along with power and responsibility, the cadet officer "has the right and the responsibility to make his own choices: to consider the safety of his men, the morality of his orders, and the dictates of his conscience in the context of the group's goals, and then to decide what steps to take" (p. 48). Further, before issuing an order, leaders consult underlings who can object, offer suggestions and criticisms, and even decide to disobey if they think it illegal. Though difficult to carry out, there is an "ideal of shared authority based on trust and dialogue" (p. 175).

The problem with totalizing missions, of course, is that they are totalizing; homogeneous thought and action are required, debate and diversity are repressed. Student leaders may have discretion, but the range in which they operate is narrow. There are versions of religious schools where the mission, though strong, is less controlling. Anthony Bryk and colleagues (1993) have described the weakening of mission in Catholic high schools from the 1950s to the 1980s as the population became increasingly non-Catholic. Service to God, daily prayers and religious classes were replaced by engagement in moral issues such as peace, justice, and collective responsibility. The commitment to an ethic of care and collegiality was "based on a larger conception of a properly humane social order" (1993, p.289). The classroom was not intended to be a self-enclosed unit but "a microcosm of the society – not as it is, but as it *should be*" (1993, p.289, italics in the original). Bryk comments that this community social justice mission created a "social solidarity" that significantly shaped and controlled student and faculty behavior. Students displayed high levels of engagement and were rarely disruptive. Teachers were unusually committed, participating in evening and weekend activities; some described their work as "a kind of ministry" (p. 97). Their authority was broad extending from concern over student wellbeing to promoting the social justice mission. Although Bryk does not discuss student authority, perhaps because of the strong emphasis on community, these are conditions that would seem rich for such distribution.

While conservative schools, such as Bethany, emphasize the power dimensions of authority, democratic schools emphasize student independence. These schools can be associated with strong moralized missions, as in the Just Schools and Quaker schools, or with weak missions, as in Summerhill. The Just Schools, initiated by Lawrence Kohlberg and colleagues, are explicitly committed to a moral vision. The "most distinctive feature," according to their major chronicler F. Clark Power, "was not the use of participatory democracy but the goal of becoming a moral community...a group that shares an explicit commitment to a common life characterized by norms embodying high moral ideals" (2004, p.50). Although specific norms percolate from below, through group discussion and collective experience, the schools operate against the background of master virtues: "caring, trust, collective responsibility, and participation" (Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg, 1989, p.138), often summarized simply as justice. Rules determined by democratic practices must reflect the virtues, and behaviors that violate them are cause for concern. So, for example, exclusion of individuals from groups in a democratic school violates the principle

that friendships should be inclusive and therefore precipitates a call for further group discussion (Power and Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2008).

In Quaker schools, as described by Kim Hays, there appears to be a similar tension between their pledge to individual decision-making (following the Inner Light) and overarching moral principles that restrict the range of independence. The commitment to personal conscience and open expression encourages students to find themselves, yet the Quaker concern for others, drive for consensus, daily Meetings for Worship, and belief in simplicity, equality, and community curb what is tolerable. Students sense "that there is a special type of true self they are supposed to be" (p.198). While the common good is protected by rules and enforced by discipline, students are given authority positions: sitting in on faculty meetings, serving on disciplinary committees, supervising dormitories. Some willingly take on leadership roles but many are apathetic to disobedient. Encouraged to look inward, a student in Hays' study recounts, "Basically I stick to the rules that...I think are right for me to do"; the "just ridiculous" ones are disobeyed (p.173). Insofar as there is an accepted value frame, students can be slotted into authority roles and have their say; insofar as the moral dictates are non-persuasive, students distance themselves from an attachment to school or rebel against it.

The extreme example of delegated authority combining maximization of freedom without an enfolding mission (other than freedom) is the famed Summerhill where "all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious instruction" (Neill, 1960, p.4) was renounced. Rules were generated by a General School Meeting at which staff and students had one vote apiece with only minimal background norms – respect for privacy and personal property, reparations for stealing, prohibitions on force –to prevent license. It was the democratic process, rather than any school purpose, that legitimated the rules. Under such conditions authority was collective and unstable lasting only until the next vote, with changing rules perceived as exhibiting sensitivity to community views rather than oppressive of them.

What of schools whose commitments are individual rather than communal, such as academic excellence; weakly moralized, such as a vague set of virtues; or collective but amoral, such as a specialized school themes – can they legitimate student authority or secure engagement without dispersion of authority? Yes. Younger students are disposed towards school affiliation regardless of the articulated purposes. Those students who come from communities where it is customary to consent to school authority, who are convinced their self-interest is served by the school, or who find a teacher compelling will affirm the authority structures. But, as the legitimating source grows weaker, dispersing authority or maintaining school loyalty may become more difficult. (However, the process could be reversed: where substantial numbers of children are already disaffected, it might be possible to grant them authority if the authority was simultaneously nested in accepted values.)

Take, for example, the mission of high academic performance – getting good grades, instructor approval, making it to college. Given that it is weakly moralized, and may even undermine moral objectives by promoting rivalry and

anti-communal incentives, what happens when students take authority for school-related tasks? Possibly there is sufficient goodwill and fellowship for leaders and followers to acquiesce to student control. But, absent a coherent set of principles claiming the loyalty of all, there may be insufficient glue to cement adherence. When the legitimating force relies upon fellowship, students will see no reason to obey appointed leaders and may even wish to undermine them once bonds of goodwill fracture. Lacking loyalty to the school in general, loyalty to one-another alone may not sustain the legitimacy of student authority. Imagine a student given authority to supervise a study hall. The expectation is that he will keep the room quiet and orderly. The students like the leader well enough and have no wish to undermine him, but they are tempted by social distractions. Beyond a personal claim, the student's authority rests on the rationale that quiet and order are required for learning. If, however, students do not perceive order as critical for learning, or at least not sufficiently legitimating, they may balk at the authority. Success then depends solely upon the commanding presence of the authority figure or on the sanctions he can deploy. But resorting to sanctions leaves him with power and without authority.

As with democratic schools, the mission of academic excellence can take on a more moral and collective texture when excellence is extended from self-serving attainments to valuing deep exploration and articulation of issues, high standards in a range of endeavors, and personal attainments oriented to improvements outside the school doors. These grander more moral objectives, I suggest, are platforms that better legitimate authority and its distribution.

Increasingly there is a proliferation of specialized schools organized around themes not ostensibly moral, such as drama, architecture, communication, environment, health, government, engineering, music, art, etc. They would seem to provide the collective purpose that can legitimate a spread of authority. But even in these circumstances, I suspect that inspiring students by the moral worth of the activities – building green, politics as an instrument of justice, art as the expression of unpopular views and tastes – would enhance the likelihood of justifying and spreading authority amongst students.

Finally we come to the school whose mission is, loosely construed, the overall wellbeing of students. Commonly their ambitions are inscribed in lists of moral virtues: e.g., freedom, responsibility; hard work, respect, excellence, integrity, community, caring. (For a discussion of the virtue-oriented approach see Goodman and Lesnick, 2000). The words, when not supported by other contextual frames (as in some democratic schools), are vague enough to generate broad agreement, but insufficiently specific to ground distributed authority. For example, Teach for America recommends stoking student motivation by providing responsibility (and choice). Responsibility refers to self-direction (authority over self). Good teachers "hold their students responsible for their own achievement, encouraging them to make good choices" (2008, p. 68). Leadership here is the freedom to choose one's destiny but not power over others.

A wellbeing approach to school reform cultivates a context of strong, trusting, caring, secure relationships and respect for diversity, (Lightfoot, 1983;



Louis and Miles, 1990; Newmann and Associates, 1996). In describing an ideal, the National Research Council Institute of Medicine (2004) affirms:

High schools, like other programs for youth, promote positive development in adolescents by addressing their needs for safety, love and belonging, respect, power, and accomplishment. They do this by establishing caring relationships with adults, maintaining positive and high expectations, and providing students with opportunities to participate and contribute (pp. 17-18)

Recognition of, and attention to, students fosters engagement as does broad participation, genuinely open dialogue, and serious attention to their views. Authority is described in part as individual control over one's learning, with control understood as mastery and personal competence that produces self-confidence; in part as insuring students' choice and designating space for their ideas, that is "authorizing student perspectives" (Cook-Sather, 2002, p. 3). With older students, shared authority may consist of co-constructing a curriculum (Shore, 1996); with younger ones, accepting their initiatives and permitting choices – about what to write, read and with whom to partner (Oyler, 1996). The interpretation of authority tilts strongly towards freedom of action. While welcoming students' input may result in their effecting decisions, the power is unstable, dependent on teacher discretion. Privileging dialogue takes precedence over durable student authority (Mitra, 2004). Goals seem emergent and the acquisition of student authority, when it occurs, more impromptu than formally integrated into school policy. For example, a long-term multi-school effort to increase student participation in Manitoba included the creation of an annual forum for school reform suggestions, networking with community organizations, engaging in action research, and participating in long-term planning (Pekrul and Levin, 2007). These initiatives appear to stress student agency not student authority, the interrogation rather than enforcement of school expectations. Whether the spirit of benevolence manifested by faculty and the fluid authority acquired by students are sufficient to sustain school attachment remains uncertain, its success probably a function of whether student criticism remains consonant with educational aspirations, and student energy sustained.

Certainly authority interrogated can be authority reinvigorated – up to a point. Too much of an assault on shared and respected purposes, however, will leave students adrift. Without norms to follow (or fight against) students find it more difficult to know what they want to do (Haidt, 2006). School reform experts paint the upside of challenging authority and initiating changes (National Research Council Institute of Medicine, 2004; Newmann, and Associates, 1996; Thiessen and Cook-Sather, 2007). Paul Willis' (1977) study of working class students paints the downside. In a progressive English working class school, with a vague emphasis on autonomy and caring, students organized in opposition to formal educational practices. Their resistance went beyond individual challenges. The counterculture they sponsored – goofing off, bugging teachers, skipping classes, resisting learning, creating diversions, and fighting – functioned to preserve cohesion and power over daily life in the absence of any respected school-wide norms. Willis' work suggests that without shared purposes, students

rather desperately coalesce around their own normative inventions, growing authority structures through group dynamics much as in William Goldings' *Lord of the Flies*.

## **Conclusion**

The argument of this paper is that student estrangement and engagement are related to the authority structures of a school, though obviously other factors contribute – qualified and warm-hearted teachers; students oriented to education; family, school and community resources; interesting curricula sensitive to student interest, etc. When the components of authority – freedom, power, and legitimacy – are combined, authority can connect students to, rather than separate them from, school, particularly when they become possessors of authority.

Distributing authority to students, however, is riskier than offering freedom or proxy power both of which, easily curbed or entirely withdrawn, keep the teacher in charge. Freedom without power offers individual expression but not social control. Power without freedom duplicates a teacher's directives without the possibility of challenging them. Freedom and power are in a complementary but also unstable dialectic relationship – my power over you restricts your freedom but your exercise of freedom restricts my power. Yet, I've argued, students' possession of power or freedom alone will be less likely to bind them to schooling than possession of authority. We have noted that the distribution of authority is simpler when the legitimizing purposes of a school transcend the classroom and are broadly acknowledged, though strong missions may throttle doubt and criticism. When schools have mutable, inconstant, or nonexistent purposes, the authority teachers can distribute to students is likely to be relatively anemic – taking over small pedagogical tasks as in tutoring, or monitoring behavior as with the line leader – though even this is not to be discounted. The teacher simply does not have sufficient legitimated authority to distribute much.

The tension in establishing common purposes that are compelling but not repressive remains a source of controversy and uncertainty: How pervasive must the values be? In what should they consist? How are the trade-offs managed between co-opting students by pressing a strong mission and encouraging ideological diversity? To what extent, at what ages, and in which arenas can the mission support student assumption of authority? While there is limited evidence that schools with clear norms in which students hold supervisory positions have better outcomes than schools without (Rutter et al., 1979; Grant, 1982), empirical studies cannot touch the moral issues. Schools are likely to be more comfortable standing under a canopy of vague virtues, below the threshold of controversy, than to promote heavily moralized missions. However, a moral claim may be required to powerfully engage students (Grant, 1988; Metz, 1978). As Jonathan Haidt (2003) has written, strong moral emotions "uplift and transform" the individual and the group. Moral inspiration, he calls it "elevation," adds a third dimension to social life beyond the horizontal dimension – variations in the quality of relationships – and the vertical dimension – hierarchical variations in status. Making the moral purposes of schools palpable to children, offering them an opportunity for moral elevation through attachment to and participation in

those purposes may be a healthy tonic to the current alienation of students and teachers.

## References

- Apple, M. (1982) *Education and Power*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Arendt, H (1968) *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*. NY: Viking Press.
- Arum, R. (2003) *Judging School Discipline: The Crisis of Moral Authority*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Benne, K. (1970) 'Authority in education', *Harvard Educational Review*, 40: 385-410.
- Bryk, A., Lee, V., and Holland, P. (1993) *Catholic Schools and the common good*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bryk, A, and Schneider, B. (2002) *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. NY: Russell Sage.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2002) 'Authorizing students' perspectives: Toward trust, dialogue and change in education', *Educational Researcher*, 31: 3-14.
- Cusick, P. (1983) *The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School: Studies of Three Schools*. NY: Longman.
- Durkheim, E. (2002) *Moral Education*. Mineola, NY: Dover.
- Ferguson, A. (2000) *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Fullan, M. (2007) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. NY: Teacher's College Press.
- Galloway, M., Pope, D., Osberg, J. (2007) 'Stressed-out students-sos: Youth perspectives on changing school climates', in, D.Thiessen and A. Cook-Sather (eds) *International Handbook of Student Experience in Elementary and Secondary School*, pp. 611-664, Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Goodman, J. (in press) 'Responding to children's needs: Amplifying the caring ethic', *Journal of Philosophy of Education*.
- Goodman, J., and Lesnick, H. (2000) *The Moral Stake in Education: Contested Premises and Practices*. NY: Addison, Wesley, Longman.
- Grant, G. (1982) 'The character of education and the education of character', *American Education*, 18, 37-46.
- Grant, G. (1988) *The World we Created at Hamilton High*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Graubard, A. (1972) *Free the Children: Radical Reform and the Free School Movement*. NY: Pantheon Books.
- Haidt, J. (2003) 'Elevation and the positive psychology of morality', in, C. L. M. Keyes and J. Haidt (eds) *Flourishing*, pp. 275-289. Washington, D. C. American Psychological Association.
- Haidt, J. (2006) *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. NY: Basic Books.
- Hansen, D. T. (2006) 'Epilogue: The sources and expressions of classroom authority', in, J. L. Pace and A. Hemmings (eds), *Classroom Authority: Theory, Research, and Practice*, pp175-185. Mahwah, MJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hays, K. (1994) *Practicing Virtues: Moral Traditions at Quaker and Military Boarding Schools*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hemmings, A. (2006) 'Moral order in high school authority: Dis/enabling care and (un)scrupulous achievement', in J. L. Pace and A. Hemmings (eds) *Classroom Authority: Theory, Research, and Practice*, pp. 135-150. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Higgins-D'Alessandro, A., and Power, F. C. (2005) 'Character, responsibility, and the moral self', in D. Lapsley and F. C. Power (eds) *Character Psychology and Character Education*, pp. 101-120. Norte Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame.

Holt, J (1964) *How Children Fail*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books.

Holt, J. (1970) *How Children Learn*. NY: Dell Publishing.

Holt, J. (1972) *Freedom and Beyond*. NY: E. P. Dutton.

Hurn, C. (1985) 'Changes in authority relationships in schools: 1960-1980'. *Research in sociology of education and socialization* 5: 31-57.

Ingersoll, R. (2003a) *Who Controls Teachers' Work? Power and Accountability in America's Schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Ingersoll, R. (2003b) *Is there really a Teacher Shortage? A Research Report Co-sponsored by Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education*. Seattle, Washington: Center of the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.

Kagan, J. (1971) *Understanding Children: Behavior, Motives, and Thought*. NY: Harcourt Brace.

Kozol, J. (1972) *Free Schools*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Lightfoot, S. L. (1983). *The Good High School*. NY: Basic Books.

Louis, K.S., and Miles, M. B. (1990). *Improving the Urban High School: What Works and Why*. NY: Teachers College Press.

Metz, M. (1978) *Classrooms and Corridors: The Crisis of Authority in Desegregated Secondary Schools*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mitra, D. (2007) 'Student voice in school reform: From listening to leadership', in D.Thiessen and A. Cook-Sather (eds) *International Handbook of Student Experience in Elementary and Secondary school*, pp.727-744. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Mosher, R., Kenny, Jr.,R. A., and Garrod, A. (1994) *Preparing for Citizenship: Teaching Youth to Live Democratically*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

National Center for Educational Statistics (2007) *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities*. Washington, D. C: U. S. Department of Education.

National Research Council Institute of Medicine (2004) *Engaging Schools: Fostering High School Students' Motivation to Learn*. Washington, D.C: National Academies Press.

Neill, A. S. (1960) *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*. NY: Hart Publishing.

Newmann, F. (1981) 'Reducing student alienation in high schools: Implications of theory.' *Harvard Educational Review* 51: 546-564.

Newmann, F. and Associates (1996) *Authentic Achievement*. SF: Jossey-Bass.

Nisbet, R. (1953) *Community and Power*. NY: Oxford University Press.

- Noddings, N (1995) 'Caring [1984]', in V. Held (ed) *Justice and Care: Essential Readings in Feminist Ethics*, pp.7-30. CO: Westview Press.
- Noddings, N, (1996) 'The cared-for', in, S Gordon, P Benner, and Noddings (eds) *Caregiving: Readings in Knowledge, Practice, Ethics, and Politics*, pp.21-39, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Noddings, N. (2003) *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (2008) 'Caring and moral education', in L. Nucci and D Narvaez (), *Handbook of Moral and Character Education*, pp. 161-174. NY: Routledge.
- Oyler, C. (1996) *Making Room for Students: Sharing the Teacher Authority in Room 104*. NY: Teacher's College Press.
- Pace, J. (2003) 'Managing the dilemmas of professional and bureaucratic authority in a high school English class'. *Sociology of Education* 76: 37-52.
- Pekrul, S., and Levin, B. (2007) 'Building student voice for school improvement', in D. Thiessen and A. Cook-Sather (eds) *International Handbook of Student Experience in Elementary and Secondary School*, pp.711-726. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Peshkin, A. (1986) *God's choice: The Total World of a Fundamentalist Christian School*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Piaget, J. (1965) *Moral Judgment of the Child*. NY: Free Press.
- Power, F. C. (2004) 'The moral self in community', in D. K. Lapsley and D. Narvaez (eds) *Moral Development, Self, and Identity*, pp. 47-64. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Power, F. C., Higgins, A., and Kohlberg, L. (1989) 'The habit of the common life: Building character through democratic community schools', in, L. P. Nucci (ed) *Moral Development and Character Education: A Dialogue*, pp. 125-143. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing.
- Power, F. Clark, and Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2008) 'The just community approach to moral education and the moral atmosphere of the school', in L. P, Nucci, and D Narvaez (eds) *Handbook of Moral and Character Education*, pp. 230-247. NY: Routledge.
- Reich, R. (2002) *Bridging Liberalism and Multiculturalism in American Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rudduck, J. (2007) 'Student voice, student engagement, and school reform', in, D.Thiessen and A. Cook-Sather (eds) *International Handbook of Student Experience in Elementary and Secondary School*, pp. 587-610. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., Ouston, J. with Smith, A. (1979) *Fifteen Thousand Hours*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Selznick, P. (1992) *The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Sennett, R. (1981) *Authority*. NY: Vintage Books.
- Shore, I. (1996) *When Students have Power: Negotiating Authority in a Critical Pedagogy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Simon, Y. (1940) *Nature and Functions of Authority*. NY: Union Theological Seminar.

Strike, K. A. (2003) 'Community, coherence, and inclusiveness,' in, P.T. Begley and O. I. Johansson (eds) *The Ethical Dimensions of School Leadership*, pp. 69-87. Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Swanson, C. (2008) *Cities in Crisis: A Special Analytic Report on High School Graduation*. Bethesda, Md: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center.

Swidler, A (1979) *Organization Without Authority*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tronto, J (1995) 'Women and caring: What can feminists learn about morality from caring? 1989', in V. Held (ed) *Justice and Care: Essential readings in feminist ethics*, pp. 101-115. CO: Westview Press.

Waller, W. (1932/1967) *The Sociology of Teaching*. NY: John Wiley.

Weber, M (1947) *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. NY: Free Press.

Weber, M. (1968). *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. G. Roth and C. Wittich (eds) Vol 3. NY: Bedminster Press.

Willis, P. (1977) *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. NY: Columbia University Press.

---

<sup>i</sup> The author thanks Christopher Pupik Dean, Chris Steinmeier, and Erika Kitzmiller for their contributions to the conceptualization of authority advanced in this paper and for extensive documentation of teacher authority in classrooms.