

INTRODUCTION

Ray Barnhardt

The place is a small Eskimo community in Southwest Alaska, the month is February, and the raconteur is a new teacher reflecting on the lessons he has learned during the past few months. He arrived here in August bright-eyed, brimming with confidence and eager to tackle a new job in a new physical and cultural environment. He has just completed two years overseas in the Peace Corps and considered himself well-experienced in cross-cultural affairs. He also held a master's degree in physics and, therefore, considered himself well equipped to challenge the raw physical elements of the Alaskan tundra.

His arrogance was short-lived, however, for in the midst of the first blizzard of the long winter season as the temperature hovered around twenty below zero, his snow-machine wouldn't start. He had methodically checked the spark plug, wiring, magneto, carburetor, and fuel line, but all to no avail. Desperate to get his "sno-go" going, the teacher finally swallowed his pride and approached an Eskimo man whose machine always seemed to be running, even on the coldest days.

"Peter, how about helping me get my sno-go started? I've been having trouble with it lately."

"Sure, Mr. Moore, but where's your water?"

"Water! What do you mean? This is an air-cooled engine. It doesn't need water."

"No, Mr. Moore, not to put in the engine: warm water to pour over it."

"Are you serious, Peter? That'll short-circuit the ignition, freeze up the carburetor, and cover the whole engine with ice."

"O.K., Mr. Moore, but let's try it and see."

Reluctantly, the teacher brought out a can of warm water and Peter poured it over the carburetor and manifold of the engine. The teacher stood by to watch the transformation of his sno-go into an iceberg. However, to the teacher's amazement and delight, Peter flipped the ignition switch, pushed the fuel primer button, pulled the starting rope, and the engine started. Peter expressed no surprise—only satisfaction that what was expected had happened.

His scientific curiosity aroused, the teacher asked Peter how he came upon this unorthodox procedure for starting sno-go engines. Peter could not explain exactly why pouring water on the engine helped to start it, but he indicated that it was only reasonable that it should do so. If engines get warm when they are running, naturally one should warm them up to get them running, and what is an easier way than by pouring warm water over them. With that, Peter went on his way, satisfied that the problem had been resolved. The teacher, however, was not satisfied with just knowing how to start his engine; he wanted to know why it started. Though he could not argue with Peter's logic, he reviewed in his mind the principles of an internal combustion engine and the laws of physics, and only after he had systematically deduced that the thermal properties of the warm water helped heat the carburetor and combustion chamber, thus assist-

ing the atomization of the fuel and allowing it to ignite more easily, was he satisfied that Peter's starting technique was scientifically valid, though not necessarily reliable under all conditions.

The teacher had methodically examined each of the engine's critical parts, but in the process, he had overlooked the engine itself; whereas Peter looked at the engine as a wholly functioning unit and approached the problem from that perspective. The teacher, not finding the solution in the component parts, had to be reoriented by Peter to gain a new perspective on the problem. Herein lies the potential of anthropology for educational administrators—to break through the conceptual myopia of the "insiders" point of view and provide a framework and methodology for looking at the interaction of the components of an educational system from a holistic, integrative perspective. Just as a snow machine engine consists of an assemblage of interrelated, mutually dependent parts, so does a social system, such as the school. And just as the teacher became too narrowly focused on the parts in his approach to the engine to see the problem, so do educational administrators at times, become so immersed in the demands of day-to-day maintenance of the system that they are unable to stand back and see the system as a whole and develop genuine alternative perspectives on their problems. It is this function that anthropologists are uniquely equipped, conceptually and methodologically, to fulfill, though the potential has yet to be fully realized.

The articles assembled in this collection of readings show both the promise and limitations of anthropology for educational administration. On the one hand, they cover a broad spectrum of issues, ranging from a training program for school superintendents (Khleif) to the function of schooling in a state society (Cohen), thus demonstrating the versatility and broad applicability of the anthropologist's tools. On the other hand, they are almost totally devoid of the kind of prescriptive, how-to-do-it, action-oriented advice often sought by administrators to help them alleviate immediate problems. More often the advice, if offered, is in the form of an implied admonition regarding what not to do, as indicated by a description of the consequences of past actions, or a projection of consequences for future actions. While this "limitation" has led some observers to declare traditional anthropology of little use to administrators (Cochrane, 1971), others have attempted to identify the different patterns of interaction appropriate for the two roles and develop working relationships of mutual benefit to the administrator and the anthropologist (Foster, 1969). The descriptive bias of the anthropologist can be made compatible with the prescriptive bias of the administrator if the expectations regarding the anthropologist's role and contribution are mutually understood and agreed upon before a collaborative effort is initiated. The articles gathered in this collection are intended to contribute to that understanding by presenting a comprehensive picture of the approaches anthropologists have used in addressing administrative problems in the past. The following statement by Kimball (1970) summarizes the nature of those approaches:

The sharpest differentiation between educator and anthropologist is likely to appear in the perspective, definition, and solution of educational problems. Teachers, school administrators, and other educational specialists are primarily trained for and engaged in activities subsumed under instruction. In contrast, the anthropologist, proceeding from the perspective of his discipline, seeks to describe the social system and cultural behavior within the educational institution and to place it in the context of the community. By ordering this accumulated knowledge, the anthropologist may suggest modifications in organization or procedures that will increase the effectiveness of the educational system. When he works with

educators, he functions primarily as a consultant and refrains from direct intervention in the responsibility of those trained to operate the system, the professional educators ... The cross-cultural and holistic perspective of the anthropologist permits him to interpret the data from specific research in a wider context than the educator who usually is concerned with one specific situation. Furthermore, some aspects of behavior which educators may ignore, treat casually, or even be unaware of, such as informal groupings or induction of new personnel or students, may strike the anthropologist as of major significance. In particular, the anthropologist's perspective gives him a strategic view of the relationships among schools, the educative process, and the community.

Anthropology and Educational Administration

Anthropologists have shown an increased interest in education and schooling in recent years. Though the number of anthropologists and anthropologically-trained educators working in schools as researchers, evaluators, consultants or on regular school staffs has been relatively small, they became sufficiently coalesced as a group in 1968 to form the Council on Anthropology and Education (affiliated with the American Anthropological Association) and to begin publishing the *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*. Each year, an increasing number of symposia, journal articles and books in this "sub-discipline" give evidence of the expanding interest in the field, and set it off as a distinct area of study. Contributions of anthropologists to education, however, have been focused primarily on studies of the child, the teacher, the classroom, or the educational process itself, with only occasional and generally tangential attention to the administrative and organizational context in which schooling occurs. While studies of the educational process may be of value to the administrator, they usually do not address immediate administrative concerns. The closest most anthropological studies come to "grabbing" a school administrator's attention is when they discuss community-school relations, or comment on the failure of the school to achieve some stated objective. While this may be viewed as an indictment of both anthropologists and administrators, it is intended only to point out the lack of correspondence between the two groups in the past.

Anthropologists have not always shunned administrators or administration. In fact, they have a long, though sometimes controversial, history of administrative involvement. This past involvement, however, has been largely confined to particular circumstances where anthropologists were called upon to apply their cross-cultural expertise in assisting administrators who were responsible for the control and governance of a subjugated people. The four most prominent instances were in colonial Africa (Keesing, 1945; Malinowski, 1930), the New Deal period of American Indian Administration under John Collier (Kluckhohn, 1943; Kelley, 1956), the World War II Japanese Relocation Program (Leighton, 1945), and post-World War II Pacific Trust Territory Administration (Barnett, 1956; Drucker, 1951). While anthropologists participated in these administrative programs primarily as advisors in cross-cultural matters, such participation inevitably drew them into the administrative arena and generated a great deal of discussion regarding the interaction between the two roles and sets of role participants. The writings listed above are representative of that discussion, although they have not been included in this collection because they do not bear directly on educational issues.

Function and Format of the Book

The articles that follow have been selected and organized to accomplish several purposes. First, the compilation is intended to provide a reasonably comprehensive inventory of the work that has been done by anthropologists

that bears directly on the sphere of responsibilities commonly characterized as "educational administration." As with any endeavor to circumscribe a still evolving area of study, the boundaries are somewhat arbitrarily defined and remain fluid. Included here are articles addressing such administrative functions as organization, policy-making, evaluation, planning, and decision-making, and employing anthropological concepts such as cultural transmission, social organization, socialization and brokering. Practitioners that carry out these functions are taken to include the full range of educational administrators, planners and policy-makers at the local, state and federal levels. The articles have been grouped into categories reflecting anthropologists' contribution to understanding 1) the administrator's role, 2) the internal affairs of school administration (social organization), 3) the external affairs of school administration (socio-political context), 4) institutional change processes, and 5) anthropology's role in educational administration. Some articles transcended particular categories, but were placed where they appeared to contribute the most to the issue at hand. While most of the material focuses on American educational institutions, each section includes at least one case study from a non-Western context in an effort to provide some cross-cultural perspective, a very important ingredient if we are to see the respective issues in the broadest context. Articles that appeared to overlap in content were reviewed carefully and only the most appropriate selected for inclusion. Reference to articles reviewed but not included are contained in the bibliography for each section.

A second purpose for this collection has been to assemble the material that is available on the subject in such a way as to make it potentially useful to persons teaching university (graduate) level courses in "anthropology and educational administration" to aspiring or practicing administrators. The articles have been organized into broad categories, each with an introduction outlining the common themes and discussing related issues. Following each chapter are some suggested teaching activities that can be used in conjunction with the appropriate articles. The chapters have been sequenced to allow the student with little or no background in anthropology to move from the familiar ground of the administrator toward the more holistic view of the anthropologist, thus acquiring a new perspective on administrative issues while gaining familiarity with the anthropological approach. While one course (or book) does not an anthropologist make, the compiled articles, complemented with in-depth case studies and some intensive field experience, can go a long way in acquainting the administrator with the potential of anthropology for his profession.

The third purpose of this collection is to alert anthropologists and students of anthropology and education to the often neglected influence of the administrative structure on the educational process, and thus encourage greater interest in the application of anthropological skills to the study of administrative issues. Anthropologists have much to offer and much to gain in the complex cultural milieu of the educational administrator. Students of political and economic anthropology, for example, have acquired a perspective drawn from cross-cultural analysis that could be productively applied to an analysis of the political and financial structure of schools in American society. Even physical anthropologists could apply their expertise in the design of appropriate facilities and furniture for an institution that attempts to create a productive working environment for a wide variety of the human species. The possibilities are limited only to the imagination, inclination, and perseverance of the individual anthropologist. The articles included in the last chapter indicate how and where some of the potential might be realized. The task is to prove the usefulness of an anthropological approach by actively pursuing all opportunities to use it in an educational setting.

The methodological and conceptual tools and the cross-cultural perspective that have been developed and employed by anthropologists to address a wide range of socio-cultural phenomena around the world are now needed to help revitalize our own institutions at home. We have lost our perspective of the forest in our determined preoccupation with the trees, and we need the kind of assistance the Alaskan teacher received on his snow-machine to help us stand back and see the disjointed parts in relation to the whole again. While anthropology should not be viewed as a panacea, it has the potential for helping us see things in unaccustomed ways, which may, in turn, allow us to discover alternative approaches to the solution of our educational problems. For the educational administrator then, the perspective illustrated in the following articles should serve as a point of departure for a renewed assault on the vagaries of our educational system. For the student interested in the relationship between anthropology and administration, however, they represent important steps in the development of an understanding of the potential contributions of each to the other, and should be referred to for that historical perspective.

With this past involvement in administrative affairs and a more recent surge of activity in the field of education, anthropology should be well positioned to address the problems faced by today's educational administrators. Few anthropologists have given more than token consideration to such issues, however, and only a handful have actually ventured into the schools to conduct comprehensive studies focused specifically on the administrator or administrative issues (Wolcott, 1973; Fuchs, 1966; Vidich and McReynolds, 1971, Spindler, 1963). As a systematic field of inquiry then, "anthropology and educational administration" does not exist. Nor does it exist as a sub-speciality in the Council on Anthropology and Education, where the most closely aligned interests would be in the committee on "anthropological studies of school and culture."

Why then, assemble a book of readings on the subject? Because the issues facing contemporary educators can no longer be adequately resolved by focusing only on the child, or the teacher, or the classroom, but require attention to the total institutional framework within which schooling takes place. Fundamental changes in the socio-cultural milieu in which schools operate today, such as the impact of mass media, call for a realignment of the basic schooling processes to more adequately address the needs and capabilities of young people growing up in a cosmopolitan society. We can no longer accept the traditional administrative and organizational structure of the school as a "given" and expect relatively insignificant changes within that structure to resolve the recurring "crises in education." We need to step back and examine the influence of that structure and those who maintain it on the educational process and explore alternative forms of social organization and administration that might be more compatible with the changing role of the school. Recent efforts such as the "Social Organization Study Program" (Ianni, 1974) are encouraging signs in this regard.

The most influential place to inject these perspectives is in the administrator training programs at the universities. Administrators can no longer be trained to simply perpetuate the existing system. Public dissatisfaction with the schools, as reflected for instance, in the voters' rejection of ever-expanding school budgets, indicates a need for administrators to be able to reassess the means by which educational services are provided and to work with educational planners, policy-makers, and the public in designing alternative means for society to prepare its young for adult roles. Traditional school administrator training

usually does not prepare administrators for such an awesome task, though they are key figures in any reform that is to take place in the schools. Here then, is an opportunity for anthropologists to contribute their expertise in a way that can have immediate and far-reaching effects on the schooling process.

Although an increasing number of courses with titles like "Educational Administration in Anthropological Perspective" are being offered around the country, few are integral parts of a school administrator training program, and the resources available for such courses are extremely limited. The few available commercially published anthropological case studies focusing on administrative issues (Wolcott, 1973; Fuchs, 1966), while informative and useful in their specifics, are insufficient in number to reveal general patterns broadly applicable in the solution of administrative problems. Other statements by anthropologists on administrative issues, most of which are included in the following collection, are often the product of a temporary diversion or afterthought, limited in focus and incidental to other work, rather than a systematic, preplanned attempt to conduct a full-scale study. Thus, there has been no consistent pattern in the anthropologist's approach to the study of administrative issues, and virtually no attempt to draw comparisons and discern common patterns that could be passed on to administrators-in-training. The position paper by Wolcott (1976) listing "criteria for an ethnographic approach to research in schools" is an initial effort to overcome this problem in the field of "anthropology and education" in general. But before anthropologists can expect to have any cumulative, long-range impact on administrator training programs, a great deal of additional fieldwork will have to be done demonstrating the applicability of an anthropological perspective in illuminating administrative issues. We must begin with where we are, however, and the first step is to assess what anthropologists have contributed to an understanding of educational administration to date, and then we can look more critically at the role anthropologists might play in the future—which brings us to the purposes of this book.

REFERENCES

- Barnett, Homer, 1956, *Anthropology in Administration*, New York, Row Petersen and Company.
- Cochrane, Glynn, 1971, *Development Anthropology*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Drucker, Philip, 1951, "Anthropology in Trust Territory Administration," *Scientific American*: 72:5:306-312.
- Foster, George 1969, "Problems of Cooperation in Action Research," in George Foster, *Applied Anthropology*, Boston, Little Brown and Co.
- Fuchs, Estelle, 1966, *Pickets at the Gates*, New York, Free Press.
- Ianni, Francis A.J., 1974, "Social Organization Study Program: An Interim Report," *Council on Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, V (2) 1-8.
- Keesing, Felix, 1945, "Applied Anthropology in Colonial Administration," in Ralph Linton, ed., *The Science of Man in the World Crises*, New York, Columbia University Press.
- Kelley, W.H., 1955, "Anthropology and the Administration of American Indian Affairs," paper presented at the Anthropological Society of Washington, D.C., January 18, 1955.

- Kimball, Solon T., 1970, "Education and Anthropology: Areas of Common Concern," in Otto von Mering and Leonard Kasden, eds., *Anthropology and the Behavioral and Health Sciences*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Gluckhohn, Clyde, 1943, "Covert Culture and Administrative Relations," *American Anthropologist*, 45:213-229.
- Leighton, Alexander, H., 1945, "Social Organization Under Stress," in Alexander H. Leighton, *The Governing of Men*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw, 1930, "The Rationalization of Anthropology and Administration," *Africa*, 3:4:406.
- Spindler, George, 1963, "The Role of the School Administrator," in George Spindler, ed., *Education and Culture: Anthropological Approaches*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Vidich, A.J., and C. McReynolds, 1971, "Rhetoric Versus Reality: A Study of New York City High School Principals," in Murray Wax, et al., eds., *Anthropological Perspectives on Education*, New York, Basic Books.
- Wolcott, Harry, 1973, *Man in the Principal's Office*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Wolcott, Harry, 1975, "Criteria for an Ethnographic Approach to Research in Schools," *Human Organization*: 34:111-127.