Next, what I should like to do is provide a perspective of what I believe to be the “historical moment” in educational leadership. Aspects of this analysis have appeared in many publications over the past six years (English 2001; 2002; 2003a; 2004; 2005; 2006b; 2007), but this is the first time in which I have collected all of them along with some different pieces of that moment for presentation and discussion.

Figure 2 reveals what I am choosing to call “The Nature of Ideologies in Scientific and Professional Discourse.”

Originally the term “ideology” was created by Destutt de Tracy for the analyses of ideas emanating from sensory inputs (Boas 1984, 156). Karl Marx appropriated the idea to refer to the “false consciousness” of a specific social class (Sterba 1999, 416).

Today “ideology” is used by laypersons and scientists alike as a term to connote something that has the trappings of science but is actually pseudo-science (Boudin 1989). However, science and ideology are not two separate processes, for as Boudin explains, the creation of ideologies is a natural part of the scientific process (1989, 91). J. Watt (1994) indicates that “any statement about the world must be framed in terms of one repertoire of conceptual schemes or another” (185), and therefore, “any scientific question or conclusion must exist within the framework of one ideology or another” (87). But it isn’t only the question of conceptual frames, it is also a question of the hidden influences of the adopted frame or frames. The reason is as Lewontin explains:

The problems that science deals with, the ideas that it uses in investigating those problems, even the so-called scientific results that come
out of scientific investigations, are all deeply influenced by predispositions that derive from the society in which we live. Scientists do not begin life as scientists... but as social beings immersed in a family, a state, a productive structure, and they view nature through a lens that has been molded by their social experience. (1991, 3)

Lewontin (1991) also warns us that one of the social purposes of science is that of explaining how things work not only to scientists but to the general population. When science tends to support the existing social institutions, especially in a society where wealth and power are distributed unevenly, then “that is... when we speak of science as ideology” (4). The purpose of explaining the existing relationships maintained by social institutions amounts to legitimation, “irrespective of the practical truth of scientific claims” (5).

What appears as scientific may in fact be an ideology. The influence on scientists is pervasive and subtle: “It comes in the form of basic assumptions of which scientists themselves are usually not
aware yet which have a profound effect on the forms of explanation and which, in turn, serve to reinforce the social attitudes that gave rise to those assumptions in the first place” (Lewontin 1991, 10).

I have repeatedly pointed out that in descriptions of the preparation standards for educational leaders we have avoided raising these issues (English 2000; 2003a; 2003b; 2004; 2005; 2006b). I want to do so once again as a matter of illustrating some of the ideologies at work in the creation of the standards, the assumptions made about the existing role of schools in our society, and the assumptions rendered about the theories in use and the concept of a knowledge base, which is central to the creation and political sustenance of the standards.

I proffer that the creation of the standards and their utilization in accreditation, a policing function, represents an exercise in politics and power first, and second, to a much lesser extent, an exercise in empiricism and professionalism. I also want to argue that the standards are laced with ideologies regarding efficiency as the paragon of leadership practice as exemplified in the world of commerce and profit and point us away from what J. R. Wiens has called “civic humanism” (2006, 223) and E. A. Samier (2007a) identifies as a “public service ethos.” As such, leadership in schools embodied in these standards will reinforce existing social and economic inequalities in the larger social fabric. In short, they lead us away from social justice. While they may embrace caring, they are devoid of compassion in the Gandhian sense.

However, in this examination I want to underscore that consideration of the interlocking agencies and agendas comprising an ideology is, as J. Watt indicates, “neither true nor false itself, but it [an ideology] can accommodate a domain of true statements about the world (as well as a domain of false statements)” (1994, 185). My point with the examination is not whether the statements comprising standards are true or false but that if we are going to use them as if they were true, we understand the epistemological, conceptual, and practical problems if they prove not to be, and that we consider the distinct possibility that many may not be, true.
I see little willingness at the moment to even consider the possibility and the implications. Such questions are overwhelmed by the requisite political requirements to engage in accreditation, licensure, and a variety of other for-profit activities in the marketplace, such as holding copyrights and profiting from the fees derived from licensure testing. To admit that some of the content of the preparation standards may not be true is politically untenable and undermines a host of other activities and assumptions.

The notion of an interlocking ideology represented in figure 2 comes from B. Dunham’s *Heroes and Heretics: A Social History of Dissent* (1964). Dunham indicates that organizations have their own special “ideology.” It consists of a special need to explain and support their activities and actions: “They must do this for their own members, who, otherwise, might doubt the value of membership. They must do it for non-members, with a view to recruiting or to being tolerated” (15).

Dunham proffers that organizational ideology consists of three types of claims. The first are assertions that “describe the objective circumstances in which the organization acts and stating the moral values which the organization regards as ultimate” (15). The second assertions regard the purpose of the organization and its structure. The third claims involve how the purposes of the organization are to be achieved within its circumstances. What these three sets of claims do is establish a foundational platform for action. Dunham states:

It is plain that an organization which, in its ideology, lacked any of these three groups of sentences would be unable to explain or justify its existence and actions. Without a description of objective circumstances nothing can be explained; without a demonstrable system of values, nothing can be justified. Without a statement of purposes, it cannot be known what the organization intends; without a program, it cannot be known how the purposes are to be attained. (1964, 16–17)

The ultimate function of an ideology is to create unity within the organization. The binding of members together within an organiza-
tion is therefore intimately related to cohesive shared intentions, or as Dunham declares, “So long as this intent exists, unity will follow. What organizations fear is loss of the intent” (1964, 17).

I see in Dunham’s presentation the rationale that supports program standards in educational administration as stipulated by J. Cibulka (2004). The Cibulka statement is all about the need for unity, the need to agree on standards to promote quality with the accompanying accreditation mechanism with analogies to law and medicine. Cibulka says, “I contend that the debate [regarding standards] should not be about whether to have standards but how to write those standards and how to enforce them” (2004, 4). So Cibulka is not so interested in the actual content of the standards as in the need for them so that enforcement is possible. In figure 3 this is represented by the concept of a stable political platform on which rest licensure apparatuses, accreditation agencies, copyright holders, testing companies, and a variety of pro-profit activities where organizations make money from the standards.

![Diagram of Educational Leadership Practice](image-url)

**Figure 3.** The Interlocking Ideology of Standards-Based Practice and Its Principal Beneficiaries

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Requisite Assertions to Support the Ideology of Standards Based Practice

1. Theory-bashing—minimize or eliminate multi-paradigmatic inquiry as unnecessary downgrade role of the university
2. Create a "leadership crisis"—attack "harmful monopolies" and "the faulty pipeline": recast social change as social turmoil and threats to political stability and control by current political elites
3. Use business ideologies/metaphors to recast the dilemma as one of inefficiencies and not public service
4. Use standardized tests as a method to support the claim schools and current leadership are "failing"
Cibulka’s (2004) rationale is about the loss of intent and the loss of unity because without a stable political platform these are in jeopardy. But the rub comes in the actual formulation of the standards, for as Dunham describes:

Human beings have all sorts of limitations, and are therefore prone to error. Their senses, which connect them with the environing world, are not inclusive enough nor penetrating enough, even when helped with scientific apparatus, to present the world accurately in any single moment or series of moments. Men are therefore thrown back upon ratiocination to amend the incurable defects of the senses . . . alas, the intellect is brief in attention, prone to illogic, and subvertible to prejudice. Thus we sometimes assert what we do not know, and we sometimes do not know what we assert. (1964, 17)

The result, according to Dunham, is that organizational ideologies may contain very deep errors. However, once they are embedded in an ideology they become extremely difficult to correct because “their removal is not a mere scientific adjustment but a dislocation of the corporate body” (1964, 18). It is my contention that this is where we are with what has been accomplished with standards-based practice in this historical moment. I want to take the occasion, using figure 3 as a reference, to indicate where potential sources of error can be located in the interlocking ideology that binds all of the work accomplished together. In this respect Alan Wood’s remark about the work of Bertrand Russell is prescient when he said, “The way to clarify controversial questions is by ‘a more careful scrutiny of the premises that are apt to be employed unconsciously, and a more prolonged attention to fundamentals’” (1995, 197).

**THE IDEOLOGY OF EMPIRICISM**

At the stem of the interlocking ideology shown in figure 3 are claims about empiricism. In his analysis of post-Galilean empiricism, P. Fey-
erabend (1995) indicates that science is critical in that it allows revision to occur based on new data. This means that it possesses the capacity to become self-correcting, though new views may have to overcome initial resistance. At the same time, however, Feyerabend points out that “this critical practice is accompanied by a dogmatic ideology” (1995, 34). The dogmatic aspect of empiricism is that “it is assumed . . . All theories rest on one and the same stable foundation, experience. It is experience which supports, and gives content to, our ideas without itself being in need of support and interpretation” (34).

These presuppositions form the base of empiricism. Can there be a foundational base for empiricism that is itself not empirical? And even more importantly, Can such a foundational base remove doubt and establish certainty on which an empirical theory rests? H. G. Gadamer recalls that “the justification of knowledge, in the sense of a certitude removed from all doubt, was an impossible task” (1983, 163). At stake in this critical nexus is the relationship between assertions regarding what is truth and the nature of truth as derived from experiences. If there is no foundational level to empiricism other than faith, on what basis can experience be judged to be true or not if the answer is not within empiricism itself?

Charles Sanders Peirce (1955) dealt with the issue of using faith or revelation as a source of knowledge and certainty. Faith pretends to offer certainty, but Peirce noted three objections. Paraphrased, they were, first, that humans can never be absolutely certain that any given assertion is truly warranted. Second, such assertions can never be supported by reasoning. Finally, the foundation of faith cannot really be established as ultimately true. For these reasons Peirce noted that faith (or revelation as he called it) “far from affording us any certainty, gives results less certain than other sources of information” (1955, 57). If the foundation of empiricism is faith, the certainty we often ascribe to it, even if our research procedures are accurate, should be similarly circumscribed to a little less certainty, at least.

Karl Popper has argued that there is no way that scientific theories can be confirmed, justified, or verified empirically. However,
he has proffered that they can be falsified, but not necessary empirically. Rather they are falsified by basic statements that may be influenced by empirical means but are not necessarily empirical themselves (1968, 43).

When only human experience is proffered as the means by which one can determine if something is true or not, several problems arise. S. Haack indicates that “we cannot always perceive clearly, that we sometimes misperceive, that our senses can be fooled . . . we may, if inattentive or flustered, fail to see what is before us, that we may not recognize, or may mis-identify what we see, hear” (1996, 110).

Haack also acknowledges that there can be “pervasive interpenetration of background beliefs into our beliefs about what we see, hear, etc.” (1996, 110). In short, there is no “context-free” method of “seeing” anything.

My point in opening this very brief exploration is not to discredit experience or even empiricism as a method of knowing. The point is to show that the possibility of error is very large in empiricism generally and in science specifically. Also, there is an ideology present in scientific activities consisting of the presuppositions and assumptions upon which experience is identified, culled, and categorized and that observation is usually theory-embedded and not theory-free.

The idea that information concerning the external world travels undisturbed via the senses into the mind leads to the standard that all knowledge must be checked by observation: theories that agree with observation are preferable to theories that do not. This simple standard is in need of replacement the moment we discover that sensory information is distorted in many ways. We make the discovery when developing theories that conflict with observation and finding that they excel in many other respects. (Feyerabend 1993, 234)

The relevance of this brief exposition is to show that to make claims that practices should be incorporated into a knowledge base which is then molded into a stable political platform for accredita-
tion, licensure, and other for-profit activities because they represent "research-based practice" is likely to contain large errors and flat-out dead ends, even if the "rules" of "correct science" have been followed (English 2007). J. Murphy has admitted in the construction of the ISLLC standards that "no one associated with the ISLLC has ever claimed that the Standards are ‘actually true’" (2000, 412). This admission is telling because it means that not only were the framers of the standards working within a variety of ideologies which were not questioned as either scientific nor nonscientific but that they were either unaware or unconcerned about codifying bad practice in the process, even when it represented the “wisdom of the field” (412).

As I will try to point out in the next section, it does matter if we know how truthful our claims are in codifying professional practice. It does matter if we have some idea of how our presuppositions have shaped our perceptions prior to observation. It does matter if our recommended knowledges, skills, and values pertaining to leadership preparation reinforce or challenge the existing socioeconomic-political strata in which schools currently are located and reproduce. And if we don’t really know what is true within these activities sketched out in figure 3, how should our doubts be expressed? How much certitude is acceptable and in what ways in the preparation of educational leaders? What this revelation means is that wrapped within the empiricism embodied in the ISLLC/ELCC standards are any number of ideologies. Here is G. Canguilhem’s reminder of the problem:

For many scholars the notion of scientific ideology is still controversial. By it I mean a discourse that parallels the development of a science and that, under the pressure of pragmatic needs, makes statements that go beyond what has actually been proved by research. In relation to science it is both presumptuous and misplaced. Presumptuous because it believes that the end has been reached when research in fact stands at the beginning. Misplaced because when the
achievements of science actually do come, they are not in the areas where the ideology thought they would be, nor are they achieved in the manner predicted by the ideology (1988, 57–58)

I would like to illustrate this dilemma with an example from the medical profession, an applied field to which we are frequently compared (see Cibulka 2004). I call it “the Pasteur problem.”