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**ABSTRACT**

Before there can be an understanding of politics, policy, and action in education, there must be an understanding of the value systems of policymakers. Policymakers, in their talk, in their choices of symbols and metaphors, in their choices of strategies for dealing with conflict, reveal their own needs, their role orientations, their group affiliations, and their assumptions about how the decisionmaking process should occur. This paper draws on research conducted by the Alternate State Policy Mechanism (ASPM) study, which used common interviewing protocols and methods with people in comparable positions in six different state policy systems. Using data showing the relative influence rankings of a wide range of policy actors (including lobbyists and bureaucrats), this paper focuses on the words of policymakers--their modes of expression and obfuscation--as well as their rituals, assumptions about appropriate behavior, and sanctioning systems as a means of understanding power and policy systems at the state level. The paper also identifies the commonalities and significant differences displayed in the relative rankings of influence of policy groups in the different states. The data collection instrument used in the survey findings for each state and four pages of references are appended. (IW)

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POLICYMAKERS' ASSUMPTIVE WORLDS:  
INFORMAL STRUCTURES IN STATE EDUCATION POLICYMAKING

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## STATE-SPECIFIC ASSUMPTIVE WORLDS OF EDUCATION POLICYMAKERS

The development of theoretical taxonomies encompassing the policy mechanisms available to state policymakers must incorporate the particular idiosyncratic cultures which affect the ways of thinking and the sense of available options of the key actors in each state -- the assumptive worlds. The assumptive worlds of policymakers are the common understandings of the history, the general status of education, the sense of what local education agencies will tolerate, the degree of organization and coalition among the education interests groups, the sense of the public's willingness to allow state policymakers to determine the operations of the state schools, the sense of pride (or shame) in the education system, and the kinds of considerations that are allowed to affect education policymaking. The assumptive worlds are also the understandings and agreed upon symbols, ceremonies, and rituals that are part of education policymaking.

To what extent are there particular assumptive worlds among state level policymakers who are key actors in education? The Alternate State Policy Mechanism (ASPM) study, by using common interviewing protocols and methods with people in comparable positions in six different state policy systems, provides rich data for exploring assumptive worlds. Using qualitative data showing the relative influence rankings of policy actors in the six states, I explored the qualitative data to identify explanations -- reasons why some policy groups have influence and others do not, and why the rankings are so different across states can be discovered from qualitative data. Rules for exercise of influence can be identified for each state. In an exploratory content analysis of interview data from two of the six

states, I sought to discover:

1. are there distinctive assumptive worlds in the states?
2. what sort of evidence constitutes ample evidence for saying something is part of the assumptive world?
3. do legislators, legislative staff, lobbyists, and SEA officials have different assumptive worlds? That is, are there subcultures within a state policy arena? How do these groups perceive each other; what boundaries and rules do they understand guiding policy culture behavior?
4. how do these assumptive worlds interact with particular policy initiatives?

In order to explore these questions, this paper uses ASPM data showing the relative influence of state policy groups and qualitative data. It demonstrates the promise of combining qualitative and quantitative data and cross-case analysis for understanding the patterned interactions and cognitive maps of policy actors; it emphasizes the promise of focusing on words to understand the policy culture.

#### THE ASSUMPTIVE WORLDS OF POLICYMAKERS

Coombs argued for the examination of culture, assumptive worlds, saying "policy decisions are made every day based upon intuition, misinformation, or tradition" (1980:23). Our models for examining education policymaking are deficient if they fail to examine how the values and role orientations of individuals enter the cracks in the formal structure of policymaking (Grodzins, 1966; Wolke, Eulau, Buchanon, and Ferguson, 1962; Nelson, 1977; and Allison, 1971). Milstein and Jennings (1973) label the personal motivations and

histories as key throughput variables in their model of state education policymaking. In order to examine those variables in education policymaking, one must learn about the "assumptive worlds of policymakers" (Young, 1977), the "policymakers' subjective understandings of the environment in which they operate"(p.2) incorporating "several intermingled elements of 'belief, perception, evaluation, and intention as responses to the reality 'out there'"(p.3) as a crucial and unexplored variable in education policymaking.

It is important to understand policymakers' assumptions before we can fully understand politics, policy, and action in education. In fact, a quote from a legislative analyst illustrates this point, saying, "legislators really go by their feelings about a program but also about the department of education and education in general. They could be voucher advocates, they could be people who want to cut education expenditures, who think teachers are lazy." Policymakers, in their talk, in their choices of symbols and metaphors, in their choices of conflict-expanding or conflict-reducing strategies, reveal their role orientations, their group affiliation, their needs; they also display their understanding of how the policy process is affected by the control, authority, and reward systems in their policy environments.

### Practical Significance

State policymakers are increasingly active in formulating the policies that determine the programs, the testing, the structures, the standards for educators, and the priorities for resources for

education (Darling-Hammond and Marks, 1983; Kirst, Hastings and Wagoner, 1981; Murphy, 1980; and Boyd, 1983). Thus, those concerned with affecting education must understand the state policy culture.

Analysis of shifting powers and description of policymakers' assumptions will be useful for those who attempt to control education policymaking. Lutz and Iannaccone describe the 'dynamic nature of the power system, being "composed of patterned interactions and sentiments of a plurality of its elements....[it] can only be described at a point in time, as if time had stopped. Time never stops, so one can only describe a power systems after the fact. It is possible to offer a schematic diagram, based on systematically gathered data, that depicts the elements of a power system at a given point in time" (p.4).

Just as the anthropologist would prepare appropriate supplies and learn as much about the customs, language, and biases before travelling to New Guinea, the education policy researcher, the federal education policymaker, and the purveyor of national trends (the consultant) must prepare for entry into the culture of state policymaking. The street-level educator, trying to influence state policymakers through his/her professional association or as an individual, needs to understand the rhythms of policy activity and the preferences and ceremonies and rituals which characterize the arena.

As Grodzins said, "Social structures and processes ...exhibit intricate interrelationships so that a change induced at point A often produces unanticipated consequences at point Z. Changes introduced into an imperfectly understood system are as likely to produce reverse consequences as the desired ones" (1966:P.384-5).

ANALYZING POLICY CULTURES

Burlingame (1978, and Burlingame and Geske, 1979) have called for new research that (1) studies Iannaccone's theory, particularly looking at linkages among policy groups, (2) is longitudinal, (3) looks at the development of public opinion--whether legislators develop and agitate public opinion or whether they collect and reflect public opinion, (4) studies the relationships among federal, state, local governments (5) studies the development in the governors' offices of professional staffs who provide expertise to challenge the professional's and coalition positions, and, (6) looks at other dependent variables (other than state spending for education). They urged use of comparative case study methodology, recognizing the problems and strengths of it, including the following:

1. the need to assure representativeness, generalizability; ask questions like, what subjects are bellwethers, harbingers of change?
2. in data collection procedures: the need to standardize interviews, the issue of who did not get interviewed, the problem that you get only people who want to be interviewed, the need to keep raw data.
3. the problem of the study's sponsor polluting the findings.
4. the need to study states that have not previously studied; previous research has concentrated on states that are heterogeneous, urban, with strong party politics, strong ideological cleavages. The ASPM research, and the analysis in this paper, are attempts to address these methodological and theory-building concerns, using comparative methods and building case studies on six states selected to cover a range of regional, population density, and political cultures.

### Theoretical and Methodological Guides

This section outlines the direction from theory and the methodological traditions that guide this paper to focus on the policy arena's rules, boundaries, value systems, roles, patterned interactions, and modes for exercising influence and power. This section also provides background to demonstrate the promise and the rationale for combining quantitative data (in this case data on the relative rankings of policy groups' influence in state education policymaking) and qualitative data.

The quantitative data, in effect, stops the policy system and takes a flat photograph. The qualitative data, then, can be used to explore the rules, histories, interactions of the policy system culture as well as the current struggles and shifts in norms and influencers. The quantitative data take a snapshot of a ballet; the qualitative data provide information about the reasons for choosing certain stars, the logic of the choreography, and the meaning of the dance to the participants.

In a later section, the qualitative and quantitative data will be displayed and analyzed, showing how each facilitates explanation of the other, and showing the opportunities for developing deeper meaning and the potential for hypothesis-generation and theory building through comparative cross-case analysis, combining qualitative and quantitative data, to develop our understanding of policymakers' assumptive worlds.

Theory Building. Politics, the authoritative allocation of values,



can be studied by looking at the following:

1. who gets what (a focus on decisions and outcomes);
2. what is the process for deciding who gets what (a focus on the process);
3. what are the beliefs about how decisions should be made (focusing on ideology);
4. what are the structures in the organizations (a focus on formal and informal structure).

I am most interested in the values systems of policymakers and their informal rules and beliefs about how the process of decisionmaking should occur. Others, e.g., Campbell and Mazzone (1976) Fuhman and Rosenthal (1982) have studied the structure of state education policymaking. Many have studied issues and decisions, policies, their implementation, and their outcomes, e.g., Crain (1969), Berman and McLaughlin (1978). Their work is useful for its identification of the impact of political processes on education, but because it emphasizes structures and issues it fails to examine the policymakers' assumptions.

One legislator's words direct policy researchers to explore and understand the informal structures in policy settings, to avoid assumptions of rationality, causal models, and instead, to recognize that there are rituals, norms, and policy dances whose outcomes are education policy:

The legislative process is a very imperfect instrument and also highly subjective so that oftentimes what it does does more out of default than logic and that it is essentially a reactionary process so that what may come out as the end of it with the label 'plan' or 'program' oftentimes is more the result of

circumstances that have mitigated against other issues that were not included....I'm a little wary of sounding like what exists in this state today is the result of a lot of precise thought .... more often its exhausted warring factions have settled for compromise. (PA,1,11).<sup>1</sup>

Research on "Social Circulation" Among Elites. Research on education politics must, necessarily, identify interaction and influence among elites -- things about trends in recruitment and career patterns, or, to use the term of Lasswell, Lerner and Rothwell 1952:8), "social circulation". Social circulation tells part of the story of control and replication and continuity in policy systems.

Merritt notes that elites are commonly studied by analysing their public and private statements -- diaries, letters, speeches, press conferences. He speaks of the difficulty of getting to elites and talks about how researchers must analyse the degree to which the informant is being open and honest.

Return rates are very low in survey research. Merritt poses the problem of personality affecting data; he also wonders about the existence of typologies -- are there 'types' identifiable in a policy setting. Do we find clear examples of the "game politician, the gain politician, the man of reason type, the man after status, the man who has lost his dedication"? (Merritt, 1970:133)

The ASPM study has important data in that we found Dexter's definition of elites -- that is those who are really important, not just those who are ceremonially important and knowledgeable. Our data will reflect the inside story derived from the real elites, the powerful, both in front of the scenes and behind the scenes. How do

these elites act, with what understandings, values, senses of what is possible, what is ethical? The informants are choosing their own words to describe policy culture activity openly and extensively in interviews of approximately 30-120 minutes each. The data are replete with stories, values, assessments of personalities, groups, history, and common understandings.

Analyzing Words and Information Flow. There is growing recognition and research tradition that asserts that the policy world cannot be understood by merely analysing issues, describing the agency structures and the formal legislative process. Wildavsky's (1964) work has explored how agency and political needs enter the budgetmaking process. Murphy (1980) has shown how personal preferences combine with structural constraints as policy is implemented in state education agencies (1980). Sharkansky, in The Routines of Politics (1970) has identified stabilizing forces in the policy arena.

None of these studies has focused on the words of policymakers -- their modes of expression, of obfuscation, of mobilization of bias (Schattsneider, 1960). Informal structures in state education power systems can be identified by analyzing their words to identify policymakers' assumptive worlds. Raab, in his description of elite interviewing of Scottish education policymakers, notes that "any theory of policymaking is simultaneously and necessarily (but of course, more than) a theory about how information flows through a system" (1982:13). Policymakers' assumptive worlds are the receptors and channels through which information, biases, and education goals must flow. Using their utterances as a key to understanding their

assumptive worlds will provide insights into policymakers' world views, their ways of understanding and wending their way through their own world to achieve their own ends.

Emerging Methodological Development. This paper follows a tradition of using a field study approach to identify how the intertwined ideology, attitudes and opinions that affect policymakers in their ability to hear and care about intertwine with their desire to act and their views of what is possible and valuable for education. This tradition of exploring the normative and cognitive bases for action has been used by sociologists and anthropologists for understanding cultures and subcultures and group interactions and for learning the subjective understandings of unknown subcultures (as with Spradley's (1979) exploration of the world of drunks, and Dalton's (1959) study of middle management's informal systems). This paper focuses on the words in the ASPM project qualitative data in order to discover policy actors' subjective understandings of their world, using quantitative data first, in order to outline the relative influence of policy groups.

Cross-case Analysis. Previous researchers suggest we need to refine methodological approaches to the study of state policy research. David Wiles noted that "our existing methodology is a hodgepodge of conflicting assumptions about collection, analysis and interpretation. We teeter on the brink of conceptual and methodological problems which 'consumed' the study of "community power structure." We recognize the potential of fundamental changes in the 1980s and wonder about the adaptive capacity of our present 'tools of

policy research" (1979: ). Coombs, in describing a problem in comparative analysis says, "Each state has, to some extent, its own history and its own culture coloring the meanings which respondents attach to the concepts we are attempting to measure and the terms we use to elicit their responses. Positivists are disinclined to worry excessively about such problems, on the assumptions that if concepts such as urbanization or local control of schools are severely vitiated by a lack of common meaning they will not turn out to be strongly associated with much of anything anyway" (1980:20)

Qualitative research and cross-case analysis holds promise for building a theory of social explanation that offers translations of meaning and events, preserving uniqueness and yet facilitating explanation (Noblit and Hare, 1983). Theory building requires more than mere description -- the wonderful context-filled deep thick description of ethnography. Theory building research has to do more than present common patterns appearing in all the cases, once they are stripped of their unique idiosyncratic patterns. Cross-case analysis, aimed at eliciting translation of each site's values and aimed at building social explanation, may allow theory building research on state policy cultures.

Turner speaks of the ideal of providing translations of every site's values. "Explanation through translation may be best achieved through lucid narratives that reveal the audience assumptions and perspectives of the analyst relative to the specific components of the explanation" (Noblit and Hare, 1983:8-9). "A meta-ethnography uses a quite different theory of social explanation than does meta-analysis. It seeks to preserve the essentials of the ethnographic approach while allowing for synthesis. Replication need not be methodologically

consistent, but only interpretable as translations of one into another (p.9).

Cross-case analysis of policy research, retaining the ideal and the possibility of exploration for meaning, holds promise for developing methods that capture the intricacies of informal structures in the policy world, of retaining the unique language and assumptions of different settings, while, at the same time, discovering grounded theory. (See also Marshall, 1985.)

Research on the Legislative Career. Walke, et al., (1962) used open-ended interviews with legislators and coded them according to, for example, "Rules of the Game" including: (1). Rules regarding predicatability of behavior; (2). Rules regarding restraint and canalization of conflict; (3). Rules which expedite legislative business; (4). Rules which promote group cohesion or solidarity; (5). Tactical rules primarily for benefit of individuals; (6). Rules which are primarily desirable personal qualities. They asked legislators to talk about unofficial rules, things legislators must do and not do if they want the respect and cooperation of their fellow members.

In this paper, building on the ASPM data, I am looking at a wider range of policy actors, including lobbyists and bureaucrats, data collected in 1984-85; I am focusing on education, and I am using data that reveals their inadvertent subjective meaning-making, without directing them to talk about rules of the game. Thus, the rules, assumptions, and policy culture emerge naturally, without reactive effects from focused questioning.

This paper presents an analysis that combines analysis of rules of the game, a la Walke et al., and the ethnographic stance, in order

to explore policymakers' assumptive worlds.

Qualitative Research for Exploration of the "Squeak Points" and the Stories. Policy culture research can discover boundaries among areas of power and responsibility, areas of conflict, and informal rules governing the exercise of power. Grodzins saw government as perennial search for balance among competing centers of power, a constant problem of dealing with "squeak points in the system." Participant observation and analysis of interview data provide stories, scenarios, and examples that reveal such boundaries and rules. Stories are exhibitions of values and assumptions. "Those interested in politics seek to identify the characteristic patterns of individuals, how these patterns are influenced by membership in particular social groups, e.g. their particular nation and culture, and most importantly, how compromises are struck between differing individuals or groups ...Stories... tell us who our friends or enemies are...who supports or opposes our interests, and how power is distributed in our society".

The story both creates and displays a universe of 'facts' and 'values.' We are able to ground our construction of life because the story tells us what 'is' and what 'ought' to be...." (Burlingame, 1983:2) Communities have stories, sometimes myriad stories.

Research on politics should ask how deeply individuals understand the story, and how committed are individuals to act on the story.

"Different stories are different models of mankind "(p.6)

In order to understand policy cultures, we need to tap into the policy actors' stories, examining how their group behavior accepts different stories, and how the dominant story maintains control of the

assumptive worlds of policy actors. Their words and their interactions display their stories.

The Focus on Words. The ethnographic stance will provide a way of getting behind the scenes of policymaking through the interviews of elites, supplemented by observations, policy documents, and public speech acts. It will facilitate the discovery of informal rules, interactions and meanings. Anthropologists speak of the necessity of uncovering the emic, the subjective understandings that guide people in choosing words and actions. Researchers like Sproull (1977) and Murphy (1980) have used field study to uncover the thought processes and constraints on decisionmaking according to educational administrators and chief state school officers.

The ASPM research data include interviews with (and observations of) chief state school officers (CSSOs), legislators and legislative staff who are particularly involved in education policy, SEA staff, directors of education interest groups, lobbyists, state board of education members, key actors in state government agencies who are particularly involved in education policy, and key informants and observers of the education policy arena (e.g., education reporters, consultants, key actors who are retired). The data were collected by open-ended and semi-structured interviews, all focusing on education policymaking processes, key actors' perceptions of what is important and what factors are involved in education decisionmaking, and policymakers talking in relaxed manner about the bargaining, the strategizing, and the pressures on policymakers. Such data provide insight into the motives, the ways of thinking, the assumptions, the personalities, of the people who affect education policy.



This paper, building on the tradition of focusing on language to understand culture, is using interview data to understand the culture of power and policy systems at the state level. "Power is enacted through language. Although language serves descriptive purposes, it does more than designate objects, concepts, events, or behaviors; it also shapes the meaning and interpretations attached to those events and behaviors (Pfeffer, 1981a, 1981b). Edelman describes this process as follows: "The terms in which we name or speak of anything do more than designate it; they place it in a class of objects, thereby suggest with what it is to be judged and compared, and define the perspective from which it will be viewed and evaluated" (1967:131). (see also Rossman, Firestone, and Corbett, 1984). Those who have power can determine how actual events are perceived and how participants feel about events. In the policy culture, where values and assumptions are contested, power will determine which group's definition of the emergent order prevails.(Rossman, et al., 1984.)

As Rossman said, "how people talk about themselves, others, and their work provides cues to themselves and others about appropriate roles, socially acceptable behaviors, and acceptable reasons for those behaviors (see, especially, Gronn, 1983). In addition, language forces attention to certain information by making that information salient (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978 in Rossman, et al. 1984:14). In the policy arena, where alliances, power, and boundaries are unclear, and shifting, the information context may be heightened. "Reality is created through face-to-face interaction and linguistic moves as people are engaging in a high level of symbolic activity" (Rossman, et.al, 1984:24).

The Use of Language Analysis to Choose Valid Interpretations.

Donmoyer uses language domain analysis to discover meaning, noting that it is important to develop explicit methodology for discovering how people construct their world of experience from the way they talk about it (Donmoyer 1984). Donmoyer (1984b) also speaks to issues of choosing valid interpretations of research, noting that methodological and analytic choices are dependent upon strategy, i.e., which will accomplish researchers' purpose. He continues "notions such as grounded theory and holism" need to be defined and defended in "strategic rather than epistemological or ontological terms" (p.28). Donmoyer (1984b) advocates and demonstrates the utility of ethnographic semantics to examine thought as it is mirrored in language. Linguistic structures are seen as keys to subjects' cognitive structures, a way to "discover a set of categories subjects themselves use -- to characterize significant findings, as well as a means to explicate the specialized meanings participants attributed to the terms they used" (25-26). With this guidance, with the promise language analysis, this paper uses the ASPM qualitative data, with its stories, expressions of rules and interactions to interpret and expand from the quantitative data on relative influence of policy actors.

Symbolic and Ritual Behavior Among Elites. Merritt reviewed

case studies of politics in tribal societies, cross-cultural studies. He foresaw the future of comparative studies, interdisciplinary studies, as facilitated by research institutes, and computers. He noted that "there is no completely developed discipline of political anthropology, to perceive regularities and similarities and differences in behavior, institutions and systems of behavior, and to

develop therefrom correlations and principles of behavior" (Merritt, 1970:200)-- has been done in tribal societies," nevermind in our own state cultures.

How elites actually behave symbolizes underlying perspectives that are politically relevant (Merritt, 1970). Ceremonial and ritual behavior may facilitate building the confidence of a constituency -- dress, diet, (eating local specialites) associations, picture taking, are a kind of dramaturgy that can be seen in Samoan elites and presidential elections. Forms of communication -- who is within the community of information -- reflect assumptions of the rights of elites.

Anthropologists must make major commitments to live in the societies, and few know political science literature. Therefore, anthropologists give simplistic accounts, stressing formalistic aspects of power leaving insufficient explanation of the informal aspects of social coercion (Merritt, 1970).

This paper, using the qualitative data from the ASPM study, seeks to identify the rituals, communication patterns, assumptions about appropriate behavior, and sanctioning systems in the state policy culture. As such, it builds a strand of political anthropology, particularly by seeking cultural analysis, not merely policy outcome analysis.

#### Summary of Methodological and Theoretical Strands

This section has presented previous research, researchers recommendations for improving policy research, and promising methodological developments for studying policy cultures. The

analytic questions derived from this review are:

What are the rules, norms, and resources of the policy world, and how are they played out, e.g., how do rules evolve (like "stick to your own power base, constituency and role"; "rely on the lead of the education experts because they know best the issues and needs") and how do these rules affect policy choices, how strong are they; do their expressions tell consistent stories about the policy culture?

The ASPM data, qualitative and quantitative, because it was collected with comparable methods, with a research design aimed at discovering interactions among policy structures, informal and formal, political culture, recent history and traditions, and values as they are a part of education policymaking, provides rich opportunity for exploration for meaning in policy cultures and for cross-case analysis and theory building. In the data collection, we were getting policy actors' interpretations of events, their memories of what were the kinds of concerns, maneuvering, and jockeying for power that went on behind the official acts. We were careful to assure confidentiality and to demonstrate our ability to keep confidences. Their words reveal nuances of their assumptive worlds.

The next section presents data and tentative, developing analyses. It follows the tradition of using previous theory, cross-case analysis, and method of grounded theory to discover patterns in the policy culture. Finally, this paper shows the benefits of combining qualitative and quantitative data.

#### RELATIVE RANKINGS OF POLICY GROUPS' INFLUENCE

Round One of data collection in the ASPM project consisted of

open-ended interviewing of policy actors who, according to previous research, were likely to be involved in policymaking in education. Round One aimed, in part, at identifying who the relevant and knowledgeable policy actors were in each of the six states.<sup>2</sup> Round Two of data collection was more focused, followed a protocol, and eliciting responses from the key policy actors identified as important and knowledgeable in the first round. As part of Round Two of data collection, we asked these respondents to tell the relative influence of policy groups. Figure One shows this part of the data collection instrument. Figures Two through Seven display the findings for each state. Data from Round Two, eliciting respondents' perceptions of the level of influence of policy groups, were compiled to show relative rankings in each state, mean rankings (among the states) of each policy group, and to spot significantly different (higher or lower) rankings of particular policy groups in particular states.

#### Relative Ranking Data: Commonalities, Differences, and Intriguing Puzzles

This section identifies the interesting commonalities and significant differences displayed in the relative rankings of influence of policy groups. It also uses the qualitative data from interviewing and participant observation in West Virginia and Pennsylvania to expand meaning and glean insight regarding the rankings. (Qualitative data from the other four states is not yet readily accessible, but will enable further expansion in the future.)

Individuality of States. The relative influence of policy groups in the different states varies enough to show that the informal structures (of power, influence, interaction) are quite unique. Any policy thrust, whether it is initiated from the federal government, from policy issue networks, from education interest groups, must encounter a unique set of informal structures in each state.

New Federalism at Work . Ranking of the Courts and the Federal Government should be of particular interest to observers of "the new federalism." Their mean ranking across the six states was lower than all of the following state policy groups:

The Governor and Executive Staff

School Boards' Association

Administrators' Association

Teachers' Associations

All Education Interest Groups Combined

The CSSO

Legislative Staff

Individual Members of the Legislature

The Legislature

Thus, from the perception of the key participants in education policymaking, the state policy groups are in control. (West Virginia's ranking of the Courts is an exception, to be discussed below.)

In Pennsylvania, subjects frequently commented that the courts had been a major influence in the past, but were no longer. One explained:

We haven't had a court decision affecting us in a while.

(PA,2,7)

This staffer reveals an assumption that court influence must be immediate, in order to be construed as influence. This same staffer, in speaking of federal influence, said:

Federal is ranked pretty low now. I give it a six when talking about special education, but generally it's a lower rating.

(PA,2,7)

In fact, as subjects responded to the questions about influence of courts and federal government, and when they responded to questions about their states response to the "Nation at Risk" recommendations, they exhibited a bit of pride mixed with resentment at the implication that they needed such outside influence. Many asserted that they were formulating or implementing the policies well before the Nation at Risk report.

This anti-court, "we take care of ourselves" attitude was most graphically illustrated at the February State of the State address by Governor Arch Moore of West Virginia. His words on education dramatically stated that West Virginians know how to manage their schools without the unwelcome interference of the court. These words were met with the strongest applause of the evening. Part of the negative feelings toward the court decision by State Supreme Court Judge Recht was explained by one policy actor:

Recht excited anger because it required okay counties to pay for non-okay counties. (W Va,3,3).

A senator recalled:

When Recht came down with his decision, all the politicians screamed 'all of this will cost millions of dollars and we just can't afford it and its a terrible thing that the judge could

be so impractical. It's not common sense as to what can be done in education. He's coming up with all these hyper ideas for bilingual studies and paying teachers all the same!' (WVA,1,18)

In fact, the Recht decision is driving major school finance equalization as well as policy initiative for program definition, personnel certification and staff development, building and facilities improvement, student testing, and a governance policy which requires state certification of local districts. But Governor Moore, and other key policymakers, were creating a story, restoring to West Virginians their sense of control over education policymaking.

Producers of Educational Materials . The ranking of Educational Materials Producers was the lowest mean ranking among the six states, ranked at 2.1100. This may be related to the fact that some of our states eschew involvement in curriculum materials selection. Pennsylvania respondents consistently said that the state policy arena does not and should not decide on the textbooks that local districts should use.

Educational Researchers . Although this finding is difficult for the typical AERA member to face, the mean ranking of "Educational Researchers" across the six states was 2.6500, near the bottom ranking among all policy groups. However, one Pennsylvanian and one West Virginian recalled the impact of surveys and computer statistical analysis printouts as having tremendous impact on policy making. One recalled how, when he was in charge of school finance projections, "we did it by hand, with the number of variables and the 55 counties, by



working 7 A.M. to midnight to produce seven variations of the formula." He recalled the Feaster Report, the first study with education policy recommendations to have mathematical projections. Before that, reports had recommendations without supporting data. He said, "this marked our turning from being natural philosophers to scientists." (W VA,1,2).

In Pennsylvania, one policy actor said that computer printouts had wrought tremendous change in education policymaking. The facility to have immediate projections of school district/legislative district impact of every education policy proposal led to "policymaking by printout." (PA,2,26)

Respondents were clearly not including this sort of research, however, when they responded and ranked educational research very low.

Individual Members of the Legislature . In three states, Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Wisconsin, individual members of the legislature were ranked higher than the legislature as a whole. This is consistent with Wahlke et al.'s decades-old finding about specialists -- legislators who specialize in a policy area and guide the votes of other legislators. And, indeed, the interview data explicate this process. As WVA SEA Senior Staff person explained:

Some legislators do gather none information. For example, or the principals academy, Lyle Sattes. There is no way of that getting through without final negotiation. It was put aside twice out of the budget. Each time Lyle got it put back in.

(WVa,1,1)

Similarly key actors in Pennsylvania identified the Chairman of the House Education Committee as the person who was knowledgeable,

interested, expert, and had the power to make or break education policy.

In fact, among the six states, the mean ranking of Individual Members of the Legislature (5.8400) was higher than the mean ranking of the Legislature (5.7300).

Governor, Executive Staff, and CSSO

The mean ranking of the Legislature (5.7300), and of Individual Members of the Legislature (5.8400) was higher than the mean ranking of the Governor and Executive Staff (4.8400) and the mean ranking of the CSSO (5.2600). And Governors, CSSOs and their Senior Staff and Legislators are ranked higher than Interest Groups. These rankings, put into context, are more meaningful. From interview and observational data, one must wonder who is controlling whom. As I observed the January 1985 strategy meeting with key lobbyists and legislative staff in Pennsylvania, I heard one lobbyist say:

My association always goes for full funding. However, if categorical funding is the only way to get money, we'll take it ... There's a real need for some creative thinking on our part. We have to figure out a way so the Governor gets the credit for taking the policy directive on education and, at the same time, we get the money we need. (PA,3,9)

How much attributed influence is actually manipulated influence? Governors are newly involved in education policymaking, capitalizing on the national interest, attempting to take initiative now in an area where they previously were involved only where education and finance intersect. I wonder whether the legislature and the lobbyists are, in

an almost patronizing way, letting governors appear to take control and credit temporarily while the policy groups which have been continuously concerned with education are really manipulating the new kids on the block--governors. On the other hand, perhaps this high ranking of Governors is connected with the data showing that Finance is the State Policy Mechanism which is getting the most attention in most of the states, and governors' budgets control education finance.

Another bit of interview data demonstrates the unobtrusive power of the Senior Staff in the State Department of Education (SEA), as for example in West Virginia. one staffer described the elaborate process by which a policy thrust, over a three year period, emerges from an idea, to an SEA proposal, to an SBE priority, to a Board regulation or legislative action:

In your (SEA Program) budget-building, you throw in things that you and your staff thinks they need. Then you develop packages around that .... Feel out the internal processes and prioritize in relationship to what you think you can get....If you want to be an aggressive executive (rather than waiting for everyone else to define things and then you get on board with them) then you define the needs, capsule them into packages, and gain support for these programs. For example, I put the Principal's Academy on my list two years ago. It came at about a ten in the SBE's priority list. People saw it and talked about it. The next year, before the budget process came in, we called in all associations and laid out what we were going to do, told them what would be on our list, and if they wanted to support it we'd appreciate it. We also involved key members of the legislature in that discussion ... We had internal and

external people and had them put it into their legislative programs. Eventually it came out high on the SBE's list. (W VA,1,1)

He also said that Department of Education is an important source of information for legislators, then he described how, with a new Governor, he needs to find out who the key players are going to be so he can "work on the Department's agenda." He added, "We (SEA) don't officially lobby." (W VA,1,1)

This is a conscious, patient sort of control, a slow building up on the part of a CSSO and his staff to put initiatives into policy. It is important to remember that those who are in for the long term, the bureaucrats, may have a long-term power and influence which is less flashy and obvious than the legislators who must show results and get attention to keep their positions or the governors out for national attention, but are quite possibly much more subtly influential.

The West Virginia Constitution gives education special status. In fact, in 1982, when the Governor cut the education budget (but not the transportation budget), the CSSO brought suit against the Governor and won. The Constitutionally protected independence of the CSSO is demonstrated here, where a CSSO could bring suit against the Governor and still be in office.

Quantitative data show the CSSO surprisingly far down in the rankings across the states. More intensive analysis may explore (1) what makes a CSSO influential, and (2) why some policy actors perceive the CSSO and the SEA to be only mid-range in level of influence, even though they, more than any other policy group, have the full-time, legitimate, expert, and authoritative responsibility for managing

state education policymaking. In a following section on pages 46 to 47, policy actors' words about CSSOs are analyzed.

Education Interest Groups' and Legislative Staffs' Influence . Across the six states, the mean rating of "All Education Interest Groups Combined" was 5.150. This mean was higher than the mean rating of Legislative Staff, 4.650. This may be a case of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, but clearly it indicates that education interest groups are powerful and are working together a great deal. Again, it is useful to explore the qualitative data for further explication. As a participant observer in a strategy session with all education interest group representatives and two key legislative staff in Pennsylvania, I observed the close working relationship between legislative staff and lobbyists. There was a clear sense that they knew that, by working together, they could control the upcoming legislative agenda for education.

In addition, in interviewing legislators, I observed that they often brought along their staff and not only relied on them for factual information but even conferred with staffers on values and opinion questions. In many cases, one could observe staffers diplomatically allowing legislators to take the lead and the credit while they, the staffers, formulated the answers and provided the information. I wonder if the low ranking of legislative staffer, therefore, is actually a tribute to their skill at the staffer job, which is formulating the issues and providing the information and groundwork while making sure that legislators get full credit. The section on page 45, entitled "Legislators and Lobbyists," explores these norms.

Also, it is important to explore the qualitative data to understand why "All Education Interest Groups Combined" rates higher than other specific interest groups in Wisconsin, California, and Pennsylvania. The quantitative data show this to be so, but the qualitative data can provide the means for exploring what makes some groups powerful alone and what sorts of coalitional acts enable the groups to multiply their power. Worthy of further exploration using analysis of qualitative data are the quantitative data showing that (1) in West Virginia, the Teachers' Associations rank higher than "All Education Interest Groups Combined," (2) in Arizona, Non-Educator Groups and the State School Boards Association rank higher than "Education Interest Groups Combined," and (3) in Illinois, the Teachers Associations rank higher than any policy group.

Intriguing Differences and Puzzles . The data showing large differences in rankings can be put into context with qualitative data. For example, why is the School Boards Association ranked so low in West Virginia (as compared, for example with Arizona's high ranking)? Why do the Teachers Associations in Pennsylvania have the lowest relative ranking of any of the states' Teachers Associations? Why do the CSSO/State Board of Education policy groups rank higher in West Virginia than in any other state? Some insights may come from searching the qualitative data to understand the informal structures, the norms, boundaries, ritual behavior, and interaction patterns in these policy cultures.

THE INFORMAL STRUCTURES AND THE ASSUMPTIVE WORLDS IN STATE POLICY

CULTURES

The qualitative data, from interviews and participant observation can be used to seek explanation to the puzzles, intriguing differences and to validate the quantitative data on the relative ranking of the different policy groups. More importantly, the qualitative data can be used to discover more subtle delineations of the norms, the informal rules of interaction among the policy groups, the coalitional acts, the maneuvering strategies, the boundaries, delineations of power, the sanctioning systems, the cultural meanings, the traditions, and the sense of what is possible and what is not. This examination has the added advantages of ethnographic methodology in that it explores the policy arena through the words and actions of policy actors themselves, without prior impositions of researchers' assumptions of the mapping and meanings of that world. Qualitative data can be analyzed to identify policy actors' views of each other, of the rules, the boundaries that cannot be crossed, the repertoire of available options for action, and their perceptions of appropriate ways to react to the environment that impinges upon them.

Stories: What is Possible and What is Not

The stories of policy actors reveal their perception of what policy strategies will work. A CSSO explained the necessary strategy for consensus, given his perception of competition among interest groups:

When we were formulating the new curriculum regulations ... The

process was interesting because no one got everything he wanted, but they (all of the interest group representatives) were able to see that no one else got everything they wanted either... I think some of the groups care as much about what other people are getting as what they themselves want .... Consequently, there was very little resistance to its passage. (PA,1,18)

He described policy implementation structures:

Very few superintendents are going to sign that they are meeting the requirements if in fact they're not. You send somebody out to negotiate what requirements the district does and does not meet and you have a lot more latitude .... It is negotiation; everything's subject to interpretation. I believe that self-assessment is the toughest process you can put someone through. (PA,1,18)

A legislator, in discussing policy formulation problems, talked about options for assuring implementation by saying "we wondered what carrots or sticks we could use." (PA,2,2) Such words regarding state policy actors' sense of limits on options may be found in further data analysis.

For example, a legislative staffer revealed a story of limits on creativity in policymaking, saying:

I'd like to see us try a program whereby the gifted kids tutored the special ed and remedial kids, like cross-age tutoring. I think that holds tremendous potential. You not only learn a great deal by teaching others but also you learn to value helping others. It's better than having the gifted pulled out as special and the kids with difficulty pulled out



as special in a different way! But it won't happen real fast because if you propose it, the first thing they'll have to know is what other states are doing it and how did it work and how much did it cost and what are the results. They won't consider it without that kind of information. (W VA, 2, 21)

Further analysis of policy actors' stories on limits on policy strategies, derived from content analysis of their words, may lead to deeper understanding of their choices among alternative policy mechanisms.

#### POLICY ISSUE NETWORKS

Kirst (1981) identified the existence of policy issue networks, whereby values-assumptions, ways of framing policy issues, research reports, and consultants spread ideas for education policy formulation among states. The most evidence of this phenomenon was with legislative staffers who have contacts with universities, Education Commission of the States, National Conference of State Legislators, and the like. They use these contacts to get information on the standing of their state on different educational measures and initiatives, and to get ideas. Legislators' participation in Education Commission of the States and the Southern Regional Education Conference enhanced the spread of ideas for education policy formulation too.

However, staffers ability to maximally use this information depends upon the legislators' perception of the importance of research and interstate communication. For example, West Virginia's Principals

Academy Policy was an initiative spawned with the combined forces of Department of Education and House Education Committee Chair and staff, a grant from the National Council of State Legislators (for applying the "effective schools research" to policy), contacts with National Association of Secondary School Principals, and Southern Regional Education Council.

As another example: the expert testimony in the House Appropriations Committee hearings in 1983 on equalizing education funding throughout the country came out of legislators' questions and concern to ascertain whether Pennsylvania's school subsidy formula complies with equity as defined by courts' definitions, with top staff pulling together the experts from universities.

A Senator's words provide insight into resistance to use of research and experts:

I don't think education in this state has had spectacular leadership. I think aggressive leadership has its hazards, and the legislature is one of those hazards. The legislature doesn't like bright, hard-working people --- educators --- and they have a tendency to be threatened by them. It brings out the worst in the legislative process. (PA,1,11)

Policy issue networks function within the national education interest group structures. These may function within regions, so a Pennsylvania teachers association lobbyist gleans information about salary and pension policies from his counterparts in others states at their regional meetings. Sex equity policy issue network appears to function according to a female network nationally: Women lobbyists in teachers associations compare strategies for sex equity among the states in their communications with each other.

West Virginia's association with the Southern Regional Education Council has shaped their ideas and policy formulation, to the exclusion of other associations -- they seldom attend ECS or other conferences, feeling they get all they needs from Southern.

While the data do show some evidence of sharing information for policy formulation, the observations of West Virginia and Pennsylvania offer more intriguing surprises. There is a surprising lack of communication/knowledge/interest between Pennsylvania and West Virginia, who share a border. West Virginia gets angry at Pennsylvania students who come to West Virginia state schools whose tuition for out-of staters is lower than Pennsylvania in-state tuition. And in Pennsylvania, some policy actors are upset about unanticipated consequences of the legislation that provides transportation for students to non-public schools. To the chagrin of those who supported the legislation in order to support Catholic schools, in part, wealthy parents use this transportation to send their children to exclusive private schools in Delaware and New Jersey. At the strategy session, when the possibility of changing this was discussed, a legislative staffer said:

As long as I've got those legislators from those districts there, no proposal will see the light of day. (PA,3,11)

The Use of Interstate Comparisons to Justify Policy . A common activity in policy formulation, related to policy issue networks, is making comparisons with other states. This ranges from an opportunistic use of crude comparisons to justify policy proposals to a general and continuing concern for the state's standing in comparison to other states.

For example, West Virginia's policy actors are constantly aware that they rank near the bottom on teacher salary, dropouts, etc. and much policymaking is justified by reference to the statistical comparisons with other states. The walls of the House Education Committee meeting room have a huge chart, with West Virginia highlighted, showing the United States Department of Education statistics on inputs and outputs in the education systems of all the states. Many West Virginia policy actors cited these statistics as they explained education policy issues.

If we widen the definition of policy issue network to include misuse of research and researchers, we may see far more evidence of their existence. Consider, for example, the way in which the current policy proposal for statewide minimum salary is promoted by a coalition among teachers associations and the House Education Committee chair. They are gaining credibility by citing how many other states are using or proposing minimum salary scales. (They do not mention that the other states may have different state structures, such as West Virginia's lack of collective bargaining and 70% state funding of education, quite different from PA. where state funds less than 50% of education costs and minimum salary statewide is a new idea for Pennsylvania, where salaries are negotiated at local level, with collective bargaining law in place and with persistent problems with teacher strikes closing down schools.)

So, in the examination of policy issue networks, what we see is (1) regional networking, (2) antagonisms between states where one state's policy undermines the neighboring state's, and (3) an intriguing insight that puts the low ranking of researchers into context, showing a type of opportunistic researcher/policy issue

network utilization. States use expert consultant, statistical data, data gathered from research studies and from conferences where they can make this fill an immediate policy agenda . They show no embarrassment at the contortions laid upon research findings as the findings are put into use for policy formulation. Additionally, the low ranking of educational researchers may be questioned. I wonder whether these rankers are excluding the statistical comparisons among states -- the opportunistic use. Are these rankers thinking only of "proper" use of research?

WHAT ARE THE INTERESTING COMMON PATTERNS AMONG THE STATE'S INFORMAL STRUCTURES?

This section identifies patterns which are part of the context in which policy groups attain their relative influence in the state policy culture. Policy actors' abilities to either create or to work within the common values systems and rules must affect their ability to wield influence in policymaking for education. The rituals, the stories, and the social values are part of policy actors' assumptive worlds.

Ritual Debates and Common Stories

"The present push to raise the standards, with the State Board and the legislators all trying to get their stamp on new regulations, is kind of a rush to toughness --- they all want to be perceived as standing for higher quality" (PA,1,18) This quote reflects the acknowledgement of the ritual of competition for credit. In this case

the current crisis was declining educational standards and policy groups were trying to ensure that their proposal (very similar to competing proposals) prevailed. The credit was more important than the issue.

It is interesting to note (in conjunction with Mitchell's paper) the assumption that raising standards is the prevailing solutions to the problem. There is avoidance of the issues of choice in curriculum, variety, appropriateness for students other than the college-bound, avoidance of issues of the role of the school in dealing with social issues --- drugs, intolerance, the arts --- in preference for the basics. Policy actors have accepted the dominant theme of raising standards. Countervailing themes are not part of the assumptive worlds of those who are creating the story, and making sense of the current policymaking in education in Pennsylvania.

Observance of required ceremonies, underlying structures that constitute boundaries may become as important as the substance of policy. If the boundaries of protocol or areas of responsibility are violated, there must be restitution. If one group gets out of line, the others will punish and restore the boundaries: For example, a legislative education committee chair recalled: "The Governor called a press conference when I was in New Orleans...to announce his major initiative for education. He should have known better than to do that when I was out of town." (PA,1,8) The chairman made it clear that legislative action would not proceed as long as such violations continued.

Further analysis of data may reveal the expected rituals and the common assumptive worlds within which policy must be framed in state policy cultures.

Education Culture, Traditions, and Common Understandings

The quiet understandings of what to expect in policy cultures reflect tradition, societal realities, and may provide insight for translating unique features of states to more universal statements about the relationship between informal structures, cultural meanings, and the choices made for education policy.

In Pennsylvania it is said, "no matter what it is, if its not going to help Philadelphia, then it won't fly." The Philadelphia legislative delegation consists of 29 members. A legislative committee chairman gave an historical account:

In the past, we would allocate block grants. In the early '70s Philadelphia sometimes received as much as \$50 million in a block grant strictly for Philadelphia. Fortunately that day is gone. A few years ago we had a block grant of an additional \$100 million in school subsidy that would have been spread out among 501 districts depending on their aid ratio. The thrust of that was that the state government who was responsible for paying 50% of the cost of education wasn't paying 39% and we were really falling behind so we threw in an additional \$100 million into the pot .... That was the last time we ... came up with a specific allocation for a specific purpose such as that.... We kept falling back from that 50%. We were down to about 39%. I understand this year we'll run 42 or 43. We're coming back, not close to 50, but we're coming back. (PA,1,11).

This description reveals the historical acceptance of Philadelphia's special needs, but an aversion to continuing this priority. It also

provides the story of the common understanding that the law requiring 50% state support is violated, by tradition. Everyone knows that. There have been ritual debates, where legislators or lobbyists provide figures showing the state falling far below 50% and the Governor's representatives giving quite different figures. It has become part of the informal policy culture of Pennsylvania that this will be a continuing discrepancy.

In both West Virginia and Pennsylvania there is an agreed upon tradition of allowing the Department of Education to overestimate the cost of bus transportation in their budget so that they can "enjoy that flexibility" (W VA, 3, 15). This understanding is among Department of Educations, key lobbyists, and legislative staff.

In West Virginia, state budgeting processes have built in the expectation that there will be a coal miners' strike every four years. History, the sense of coal miners' solidarity, and the Constitutional mandate to balance the budget require that the budgeting process build in this expectation of lower revenues during a strike. Everyone knows that in the West Virginia state policy culture.

Perhaps the most intriguing data reflecting the sense of how cultural expectations and the economic and social realities affect state education policymaking come from West Virginia. A legislative staffer told the classic joke about West Virginia's attitude toward improvement through education:

There's an old saying about the West Virginian who said, "I went to first grade, then I went to second grade, and by golly, by then I decided that going on to higher education was not for me!" (W VA,3)

Although West Virginia is currently making major strides toward



statewide improvement in its education system, this story provide apocryphical, but nevertheless explanatory, historical context. The sense that higher education means West Virginia's children leaving the state undermines their valuing of education. Another informant told the story-of-out of state corporations owning land and mineral rights having vested interest in avoiding property tax reassessment and keeping education costs low. His sense was tat West Virginians have a passive attitude, a feeling that if you don't strive for an excellent education system you can't be called a failure.

These stories explaining West Virginia's educaton policymaking present possibilities for further exploration for meaning, particularly through cross- case comparison with other states and for exploration into the economic, cultural, and social meaning of educational improvement. Our biases in educatonal reserach build in assumptions that educationsystem improvment is, by definition, good. That improvement might have negative salience in a particular cultural context presents a challenge to our biases.

### RULES, ROLES, AND BOUNDARIES

The interview data show the cognitive context underlying the ranking data of the states. There is an internal mapping, understood, part of the assumptive worlds and emerging from th wordse and stories of policy actors.

### Legislative Staff Status

In West Virginia, there are few legislative staffers; those who

are in permanent positions do have a national perspective, as noted above in the section on policy issue networks. Few of these are women, in fact, there are few professional women in the state policy arena. One staffer commented that professional women live with the realization that they must be different, must make a distinction between themselves and those who, in the past, were secretaries of legislators who were very probably their mistresses too, who got the best parking places. The staffer called this "whore-hiring" and commented (as did others) that some legislators still see belonging to the legislature as a way to have a lark in the capitol. In Pennsylvania, several key legislators, even the "education specialist" legislators, openly stated that their staff were the ones who really knew education policy. Staffers' status may be quite dependent upon what is conferred by legislators, combined with the perceptions and expectations of staffers historically. Thus, legislative staff, no matter how expert, must carefully cultivate the good will of legislators. To do so, they must ensure that their information and assistance is keyed into the values systems, and into the framework of the dominant story.

#### Boundaries Between Legislators and the State Board

In Pennsylvania, the boundaries between areas of responsibility, credit, and control of education have been areas of contention between the House Education Committees, the Senate Education Committees, and the State Board. Jim Gallagher, House Education Committee Chair, said, in early 1984, "I tell the State Board 'we created you and we could dissolve you'". (The state Constitution does not provide for a

state board; it was created through legislative act.) Between 1984 and the time when the ranking data were collected, new legislation expanded the state board to include as members the legislators who head the Education Committees, including Gallagher. Through this maneuver, legislators both took more control over the board and headed off the competition between board and legislature.

The Chairs of the Senate Education Committees are less activist and interventionist than the House Education Committee Chair. One of the Senate chairs explained:

I have a tendency to wait until the wrath of battle passes and then make my decision based upon the result.... One of the organizations conspicuous in the absence in this dialogue here is the State Board of Education, whom I have a tendency to discount. I think most people in the legislature do too. They look upon them as meddling fools. (PA,1,11)

Another Chairman gave a specific example:

They were trying to go for legislative approval of Chapter 5 (the new program definition mandate) ... I agreed I thought curriculum changes should be handled by the State Board instead of by the legislature. I can't see the legislature standing up and deciding how much time you spend on each course, what courses to teach; I'm not sure that's our function." (PA,1,8)

There was common agreement in both West Virginia and Pennsylvania that legislators should not get involved in curriculum or program definition. The sense was that the State Board and the SEA should concern themselves with such issues. A West Virginia legislator explained:

The Department of Education makes the program definition and

curriculum decision .... I think we only react as a legislatures. I'm a one to extend into their (SEA and SBE) aera but most legislators are not. (WVA,1,18)

However, in Pennsylvania, the House Education Committee has, in part of its effort to push or out-do the State Board, the Governor, and the SEA, pushed legislation mandating higher, less flexible minimum curriculum requirements and statewide curriculum-based testing. This legislation, for a long period, was competing with milder State Board/CSSO/Governor's proposals. The Senate Education Committees persisted in maintaining that program definition/testing issues were not properly legisltive decisions , opting for "Sense of the Senate Resolutions on these issues until ,after negotiations, the House, CSSO, and Governor came together with a compromise unified front which the Senate voted for. It appears that this distinction between activist House and passive Senate holds true for Program Definition, Testing, and to Professional Training and Certification issues as well. In Pennsylvania, there were, in 1984, two separate and competing groups studying and creating proposals for new policy regarding teacher training, certification, and staff development.

#### Interest Group Coalition Structures

In both Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the school boards association is not seen as a positive member of education interest group coalitions. A key lobbyist explained that the West Virginia School Boards Association prefers to act on its own. He then explained that (1) local school boards are highly political, (2)

whenever there's a local election, aspiring or incumbent school board members watch the positions taken by the local superintendent, and, (3) after the election, those school board members who win may retain or fire the local superintendent, depending on his activities during the election. This sort of interaction makes it unlikely that school board people and administrators can maintain state level coalitions.

In West Virginia educational interest groups are separated by a chasm marking the pro-collective bargaining groups and the anti-collective bargaining groups. This leads to an interesting coalition of the very powerful School Service Personnel Association, the West Virginia Association of School Administrators, the Elementary and the Secondary School Principals Association and the Vocational Administrators Association, who are all anti-collective bargaining.

In Pennsylvania, the School Boards Association low power is put in context with several quotes:

I don't look at the school directors association as that important ... their political clout in this state is nil .... School directors are usually elected because of people like myself and the rest of the political people. So they're not the one that whip the political clout on you .... Their lobbyist will go to our meetings and they'll start espousing positions and issues against everything that we do and they think that we're locked in with the teachers and the administrators associations....A lot of this animosity came up in the recodification effort. They were always against recodification. They always would fight us tooth and nail .... They would try to say that it cost too much money, we're mandating too many things. They'd just like to wipe out the

whole code and just do it themselves, just at the local level.

(PA,1,13)

Other informants echoed this perception of the School Boards Association's inflexible stand in which it continuously insisted that any state mandate come with full special funding. During participant observation, I observed the Association's lobbyist articulating this stand, and another key lobbyist impatiently asking, in a ridiculing voice, "where do you draw the line; what is a special mandate; how do you separate special from the ongoing program, for example the state specification that you provide English"? (PA,3,5)

Another intriguing discovery in West Virginia is the high influence of the School Service Personnel Association. Walking through the Capitol with its Director, one could observe legislators' respect for this individual, whose organization's membership included 11,337 people, and who allied with the coalition that included all other education interest groups except the Teachers Associations and the School Boards Association. This man's philosophy and mode of interaction fit with an aspect of West Virginia culture. A former superintendent and a former lobbyist for the teachers' association, he saw that school service personnel were underrepresented but were people who kept schools going. He organized the association, building a large but very folksy office, combining the hominess of an office cat who lived there with the clout of full-time lawyers ready to fight for members' rights in court. He spoke of how he carried his Bible and quoted a pertinent passage when he spoke to his members about their organizational agendas. One legislator illustrated the power of this organization:

In West Virginia you can see how powerful the School Service

Personnel are in that there's a week's vacation built into the fall school schedule for hunting season so these bus drivers and maintenance guys can go hunting. The lady teachers would rather have that week in spring, to do their spring cleaning or just to get away from the kids, but hunting season wins out. (WVA,2,20)

School boards associations, by their mission and membership, are not (in Pennsylvania and West Virginia) viewed as part of the "in group" of education interest groups. The West Virginia School Service Personnel appears to have found the appropriate fit with the needs of constituents, the favored modes of interaction, and the "story" of West Virginian policy actors. Analysis of contrasting styles of interaction between low influence and high influence interest groups, across the six states, may yield common patterns that facilitate or impede influence-building among interest groups. In addition, in-depth description of the high influence interest groups should provide important insight into the values, preferred styles of interaction, the common stories, and the assumptive worlds of policy actors. Their success/influence must be, at least in part, because they, like the School Service Personnel, mirror a predominant values system in their state.

### Legislators and Lobbyists

West Virginia legislators, with few staff and only recent

facility for doing independent analysis, make much use of SEA and lobbyist information.

In Pennsylvania, legislative staff, some legislators, and lobbyists work together on legislative agendas. For example, the Teachers Association formulated the proposal for statewide minimum salaries for teachers. The strategy session, where 12 lobbyists and legislative staff met to discuss the issues on which to concentrate combined action, was clear evidence. By the end of the two hours, these people had corroborated information on budget rumors, given a sense of how key legislators and the Governor would act on certain issues, made calculations on best timing for taking public stands, and made commitments to each other on some united actions.

#### Legislators and the CSSO

In Pennsylvania, the Governor appoints the CSSO. However, legislators have strong views on preferred background, behavior, and orientation for CSSOs. Several legislators' words demonstrate this:

Scanlon wasn't wanted any longer because he tried to be too activist, to do too much. (PA,3,11)

One recalled the history of legislative conflict with that CSSO to explain how the SEA learned from lessons taught in recent SEA/legislative history:

We think they've recognized now, since the time a group of legislators got together on that special ed thing and they had to withdraw their directives. They came to recognize that there is a legislature. When Scanlon was here he just didn't think there was a legislature. We'd have to remind him: Mr.



Scanlon, there's a legislature! (PA,1,10)

Another key legislator described how he had issued a statement to all school districts to disregard Scanlon's directive on special education during that legislative/SEA conflict. However, in speaking of CSSOs with background in administration or politics, legislators were more willing to speak of them with respect. One legislator portrayed his close interaction with the most recent CSSO, Wilburn:

If we have to bat heads on things like House Bill 1181, that's life; he understands, that's life. He's been in the game as Secretary of the Budget. He's been over here in my office at four in the morning and we've been batting heads on the budget ... so far we're getting along very well. (PA,1,2)

These legislators prefer a CSSO who observes the rituals and boundaries of the state policy arena, a politico who knows to leave areas of discretion to them rather than a researcher/educator who has his own agenda for change. Legislators have strong awareness of their power and their need to keep a CSSO and a department of education observing the proper boundaries of power and discretion. They spoke with respect about a former CSSO who had once been a legislator. They have created the Regulatory Review Commission so that agencies cannot create or recreate law through their regulations.

In Pennsylvania, then, the acceptable CSSO stays attuned to politics and is in close communication with the legislature. He/she must, by the very fact that they are appointed by the Governor, have political alignments and fulfill the Governor's agenda for education. When I asked who is the Governor's advisor in Pennsylvania, people invariably replied, the CSSO. Thus, while the Governor and his staff rank very high, as does the CSSO, this high influence must be viewed

within the constraints and expectations of legislators who have strong views about the CSSO's proper role and who are very aware of the tools and weapons they can use to clip the wings of a CSSO. In addition, as shown above on page 45, legislative staff and lobbyists, while recognizing the power of the Governor, are creating strategies for meeting their goals by manipulating the Governor's agenda.

In West Virginia, the State Board of Education (appointed by the Governor) chooses the CSSO. The CSSO and Department of Education staff talk about "working for the Board." The legislators regard SBE regulations as, quite properly, the major education qua education policies. Legislators and the Governor concern themselves primarily with education finance. So, the structure of the state policy arena allows CSSO to avoid partisan politics to some extent. However, state education policy actors believed that the reason for the recent resignation of the CSSO Roy Truby, was the fact that he had supported the man who did not win the governorship, and had thus lost some of his ability to fulfill his education agenda. Even structures for separating education from politics do not maintain the separation. Top SEA officials work closely with some key legislators on policy development.

#### Legislators and the Department of Education

In Pennsylvania, legislative staff, lobbyists, and SEA staff used to meet together to plan strategy. Then, in recent history, legislative staffers suspected that the SEA was providing false, inadequate, and/or delayed release information and statistics. Sanctions were applied, primarily by legislators and staffers refusing

In West Virginia the SEA functions as subtle lobbyist. In some cases they coordinate pressure groups, as one staff person explained:

We developed pre-school and handicapped programs with the support of lobby groups. We developed a lobby for it. I should say the people developed a lobby. (W. VA,1,1)

to use SEA information and, at the same time, denying SEA access to policy formulation since the SEA could no longer use the tactic of framing the issues by providing the information. Legislators found a clandestine way to obtain SEA data and legislative staff developed their own information gathering expertise independent of the SEA's. Now, strategy sessions include lobbyists and legislative staffer, but SEA staff are seldom invited. Banter during these strategy sessions includes mild ridiculing of the SEA bureaucratic operations and an exhibited group sense that these people were controlling and manipulating the SEA, not vice versa.

#### SUMMARY

This paper presents an initial analysis which shows the rich potential of the ASPM data.

The differences in the configuration of policy groups' relative influence among the six states reemphasize the individuality of state cultures and structures. This paper shows the promise of (1) using cross-case comparison among states, (2) combining qualitative and quantitative data, (3) exploring for meaning and validity of interpretation by focusing on words, and, (4) discovering assumptive worlds of policy actors. Research on state education policymaking cannot explain policy choices unless their research identifies the prevailing stories that frame the issues in policy cultures.

The data base of the ASPM project provides a wonderful opportunity for exploration for meaning, theory building, and for combining political science with anthropology and focusing on words to discover and describe policy cultures.

## Footnote

<sup>1</sup>In order to protect anonymity, subjects are given labels; first their state is identified, then the type of data collection, then the number assigned to that particular informant. Thus PA,1,11 means this Pennsylvanian said this in round 1 of data collection, and his code number is 11. W VA,2,22 would mean this West Virginian said this in round 2 of data collection, and her code number is 22. Some data was collected from participant observation. Such data are designated as round 3. Thus W VA,3,14 would mean this West Virginia data was collected during informal participant observation 3 and the person providing the datum was code number 14.

<sup>2</sup>Informants were, for example, chairs of legislative committees on education, finance, and/or appropriations, executive directors, or key lobbyists of education interest groups, and top officials in the SEA.

Figure One

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION  
ON RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF POLICY GROUPS

PLEASE CIRCLE A NUMBER FROM 1 TO 7 TO INDICATE THE LEVEL OF INFLUENCE OVER  
EDUCATION POLICY EXERCISED DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS BY EACH OF THE FOLLOWING  
IN YOUR STATE:

	<u>Very Lo</u> >>>-----> <u>Very Hi</u>
a. The Governor and the Executive Staff.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
b. The Chief State School Officer and Senior Staff in the State Dept. of Education.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
c. The State Board of Education.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
d. The State Legislature.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
1. Leading Members of Legislative Committees....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
2. Key Legislative Staff Consultants.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
e. All the Education Interest Groups Combined.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
1. The Teacher Organization(s).....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
2. The State Administrator Organization(s).....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
3. The State Association of Local School Boards.	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
4. Lay Groups (PTA, advisory councils, etc.)....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
f. Non-Educator Interest Groups (business leaders, taxpayer groups, etc.).....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
g. Producers of Education Related Products (textbook mfrs., test producers, etc.).....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
h. Direct Referenda Initiated by Citizens.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
i. The Courts (State or Federal).....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
j. Federal Policy Mandates to the States.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
k. Education Research Organizations.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7
l. Any Others: _____.....	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7

Figure Two

Relative Influence of Policy Groups: West Virginia\*

	<u>Policy Group</u>	<u>Numerical ranking</u>
Most Influential ↑ ↓ Least Influential	Courts <sup>1</sup>	6.3846
	Chief State School Officer <sup>2</sup>	6.0769
	State Board of Education <sup>3</sup>	5.8750
	{ The Legislature	5.7692
	{ Individual Members of the Legislature	5.7692
	Teachers Associations	5.6154
	Education Interest Groups Combined	5.1539
	Federal Government	4.7692
	Governor and Executive Staff	4.6923
	Administrators Association	4.4615
	Legislative Staff	4.2308
	Non-Educator Groups	3.7692
	{ Researchers	3.2308
	{ School Boards Association	3.2308
	Lay Groups	3.0000
	Referenda	2.3077
Producers of Educational Materials	2.2308	

<sup>1</sup>West Virginia's high ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of all six states--3.9400.

<sup>2</sup>West Virginia's high ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean rankings of all six states--5.2600.

<sup>3</sup>West Virginia's high ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of the five states which have State School Boards--4.505. Wisconsin does not have a State School Board.

\*Under the catch-all phrase "Any Other Groups," many respondents put the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association; this group rated higher than any group in the "Other" category in all of the states.

Figure Three

Relative Influence of Policy Groups: Pennsylvania

	<u>Policy Group</u>	<u>Numerical ranking</u>	
Most Influential ↑ ↓ Least Influential	Governor and Executive Staff <sup>1</sup>	5.8889	
	Chief State School Officer	5.8333	
	Individual Members of the Legislature	5.7778	
	The Legislature	5.4444	
	Legislative Staff	5.3333	
	Education Interest Groups Combined	5.1667	
	Teachers Associations	4.7778	
	State Board of Education	4.6820	
	Administrators Association	4.6667	
	{	Courts	3.6667
		Federal Government	3.6667
		School Boards Association	3.6111
		Non-Educator Groups	3.1111
	{	Lay Groups	2.6111
		Researchers	2.6111

<sup>1</sup>Pennsylvania's high ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of all six states--4.8400.



Figure Four

Relative Influence of Policy Groups: Arizona

	<u>Policy Group</u>	<u>Numerical ranking</u>
Most Influential ↑ ↓ Least Influential	Individual Members of the Legislature	6.3044
	The Legislature	6.2609
	State Board of Education	5.2330
	Non-Educator Groups <sup>1</sup>	5.0870
	Chief State School Officer	5.0435
	School Boards Association <sup>2</sup>	4.9565
	Legislative Staff	4.7826
	Education Interest Groups Combined	4.5217
	Federal Government	4.5217
	Courts	4.0000
	Governor and Executive Staff <sup>3</sup>	3.8261
	Teachers Associations <sup>4</sup>	3.7391
	Lay Groups	3.7391
	Administrators Association	3.4348
	Researchers	2.8696
	Producers of Educational Materials	2.5652
Referenda	2.3044	

<sup>1</sup>Arizona's high ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of all six states--3.8700.

<sup>2</sup>Arizona's high ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of all six states--4.200.

<sup>3</sup>Arizona's low ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of all six states--4.8400.

<sup>4</sup>Arizona's low ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of all six states--5.100.

Figure Five

Relative Influence of Policy Groups: California

	<u>Policy Group</u>	<u>Numerical ranking</u>	
Most Influential ↑ ↓ Least Influential	The Legislature	6.2143	
	Individual Members of the Legislature	5.9286	
	Education Interest Groups Combined <sup>1</sup>	5.7857	
	{	Governor and Executive Staff	5.3571
		Teachers Associations	5.3571
	Legislative Staff	5.2875	
	Chief State School Officer	5.0714	
	Administrators Association	4.7857	
	Courts	4.2857	
	School Boards Association	4.2143	
	{	Non-Educator Groups	3.7857
		Federal Government	3.7857
	Lay Groups	3.6429	
	Referenda	3.4286	
	State Board of Education <sup>1</sup>	3.2000	
	Researchers	2.7857	
Producers of Educational Materials	2.4286		

<sup>1</sup>California's low rating is significantly different from the mean of the six states--4.505.

Figure Six

Relative Influence of Policy Groups: Illinois

	<u>Policy Groups</u>	<u>Numerical ranking</u>
Most Influential ↑ ↓ Least Influential	Teachers Associations <sup>1</sup>	6.1875
	Individual Members of the Legislature	6.0000
	The Legislature	5.9375
	Education Interest Groups Combined	5.3750
	Legislative Staff	4.3750
	Governor and Executive Staff	4.1250
	School Boards Association	4.1250
	Federal Government	3.8125
	Courts	3.5000
	Non-Educator Groups	3.4375
	Administrators Association	3.3750
	Chief State School Officer	3.3125
	State Board of Education	3.2270
	Lay Groups	2.9375
	Referenda	2.6250
	Researchers	2.3750
Producers of Educational Materials	1.6250	

<sup>1</sup> Illinois' high ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of all six states--5.1000.

Figure Seven

Relative Influence of Policy Groups: Wisconsin<sup>1</sup>

	<u>Policy Groups</u>	<u>Numerical ranking</u>
Most Influential ↑ ↓ Least Influential	Chief State School Officer <sup>2</sup>	6.3750
	Teachers Associations	5.6875
	Governor and Executive Staff	5.5000
	Education Interest Groups Combined	5.2500
	Individual Members of the Legislature	5.0625
	The Legislature	4.6250
	School Boards Association	4.6250
	Legislative Staff	3.7500
	Administrators Association	3.7500
	Non-Educator Groups	3.5625
	Lay Groups	2.6875
	Federal Government	2.6250
	Courts	2.3125
	Researchers	2.0625
	Producers of Educational Materials	1.8125
	Referenda	1.1250

<sup>1</sup>Wisconsin has no State Board of Education.

<sup>2</sup>Wisconsin's high ranking stands out as significantly different from the mean ranking of the six states--5.2600.

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