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ABSTRACT

Findings of a case study that examined how nonincremental policy changes occurred in Ohio education are presented in this paper. Specifically, the paper applies Mazzone's two arena models of policy innovation to understand the 1989 passage of S.B. 140, or the Omnibus Education Reform Act. In the first model, policy innovations occur when the policy process shifts from the subsystem arena (legislature, agencies, and interest groups) to the macro-arena. The revised model includes the commission and leadership arenas. Methodology involved document analysis and interviews with 17 participants--interest group and elected leaders, governmental staff members, and commission members. Findings indicate that although the process shifted from the subsystem arena, it moved not into the macro-arena, but rather to several appointed commissions that functioned as a subsystem of the leadership arena. The revised model, however, showed that unified top elected officials played the most important role, influenced by national school reform leaders and the Ohio business community. Implications are that appointed commissions do not constitute an independent policy arena and that there are several categories of political actors in the leadership arena that need to be identified. The appendix includes a historical outline of the passage of S.B. 140. (Contains 35 references.) (LMI)

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AN APPLICATION OF MAZZONI'S ARENA MODELS  
TO THE PASSAGE OF OHIO'S S. B. 140:  
A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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During the 1980s many American states passed legislation designed to reform the K-12 educational system. Some of these reforms were incremental ones which made relatively minor changes in existing educational policy. Examples of incremental reforms include increased graduation requirements and modified teacher certification standards. However, some of the reforms were not incremental; rather, they represented genuine policy innovations. Examples of nonincremental or innovative reforms included various types of school choice.

Nonincremental education reforms are of considerable theoretical interest because in the American policy process it is not easy to innovate. For instance, in describing the educational policy process at the state level, Iannaccone (1967) noted the tendency of the process to become closed. He found that there was usually no opposition or self-criticism, that the process rewarded those who maintained the status quo, and that there was a strong tendency toward the development of an "internal educational power elite" (p. 11). Similarly, in his study of Chicago school politics, Peterson (1976) observed an uninnovative "pluralist bargaining" process. This process was a conservative one. As Peterson (1976) expressed it:

The pluralist bargaining model. . .implies responsiveness to all the significant interests in the society so as to insure both majority rule and minority rights. The institutionalized bargaining structure, as it works in practice, requires deference to already vested

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interests; indeed, the very protection of those interests demands resistance to the 'vesting' of interests whose political strength is only emerging. (p. 51)

How, then, do educational policy innovations come about?

The purpose of this study is to provide some insight into how nonincremental policy changes have recently been brought about in education. In doing so, two theoretical models of policy innovation developed by Mazzoni (1991a, 1991b) will be applied to an Ohio case study. The Ohio case study relates to the passage of S. B. 140, or the Omnibus Education Reform Act, by the Ohio General Assembly in June 1989.

### MAZZONI'S ARENA MODELS

#### The Initial Model

Mazzoni (1991a, 1991b) developed his initial arena model of educational policy innovation by studying the relevant political science literature. He derived the concept of the arena from several political and social analysts, including Allison (1971), Bardach (1972), Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), Lowi (1971), and Schattschneider (1960). Drawing on their work, he defined arena as:

a middle-range term, referring to the political interactions characterizing particular decision sites through which power is exercised to initiate, formulate, and enact public policy. (Mazzoni, 1991a, 116)

The literature suggested that two arenas were important in policy innovation: the subsystem arena and the macro arena. The subsystem arena consists of the legislature and the agencies and established interest groups which have a vested interest in the outcomes of the legislative process. In subsystem politics a

stable and predictable group of individuals and groups develops around particular policy domains. As a result policy is developed through a pluralist bargaining process which seeks to accommodate all major stake holders. Sometimes the relationships between key legislators and representatives of government agencies and interest groups become so fixed that their interactions are described as an "iron triangle." Needless to say, the policies developed in this arena are unlikely to be innovative.

The macro arena is, as its name suggests, much broader than the subsystem arena. It includes high ranking elected leaders, the media, and groups and individuals who are not included in subsystem politics. Public opinion is important in the macro arena, and there are numerous grassroots constituencies which may be mobilized.

Mazzone theorized that policy innovations occur when the policy process shifts from the subsystem to the macro arena. He believed that such a shift was normally brought about by pressure from a wide variety of political actors in the macro arena: leaders of social movements, the media, public opinion, challenging groups, and policy entrepreneurs. This pressure encouraged leaders in the legislature and other branches of government to break away from subsystem politics and advocate innovative policy initiatives. Pressure from the macro arena made it easier not only to argue for change but to actually bring it about.

Another impetus for an arena shift and subsequent policy initiation was the availability of substantial new revenues.

Mazzoni hypothesized that the combination of external pressure for change and revenue surpluses was most likely to encourage policy innovation. In contrast, a political environment characterized by weak levels of external pressure and revenue shortages would almost certainly not yield policy innovations.

#### The Revised Arena Model

After applying his theoretical model to a case study of the passage of Minnesota's school choice policies, Mazzoni (1991a, 1991b) revised his initial arena model. His data suggested that two additional arenas had been important in the Minnesota policy process: the commission arena and the leadership arena. Moreover, in the new model top officials emerged as playing a central role in the process. Mazzoni depicted them as responding to broad social pressures to change which were mediated through organizational elites and policy entrepreneurs. The top officials in turn pressured the political actors in the macro, commission, and leadership arenas to develop and adopt the innovative school choice policies. Mazzoni concluded, too, that these two additional arenas had different levels of influence over the process, with the leadership arena the most powerful and the commission arena the least. According to Mazzoni's revised model,

. . .the leadership arena is where key participants have the power, connections, and institutions to seize upon this potential to "slip by" a major policy change. (p. 133)

#### THE DATA BASE FOR THE OHIO STUDY

This paper is based on a case study of the development and

passage of Ohio's S.B. 140 in 1988-89. The Ohio law is appropriate for testing Mazzone's theory because it includes three open enrollment options almost identical to those earlier adopted in Minnesota.

A standard case study methodology as described by Yin (1984) was used. The multiple sources of evidence included the legislation, commission reports, all the articles about the bill published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Columbus Dispatch in January 1988 and from December 1988 to July 1989, articles from the publications of major interest groups, reports from briefing sessions about the law, and 17 semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The interviewees were people who had participated in the passage of the law or had been in a position to observe events closely. They included leaders of interest groups, elected leaders, governmental staff members, and people who had sat on the commissions.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used qualitative methods described by Miles and Huberman (1984). The four arenas identified by Mazzone--subsystem, macro, commission, and leadership--were handled as four sites. Events, political processes, actors, settings, visibility, and outcomes were identified for each arena.

By means of this analysis, the researcher sought to answer the following questions about the passage of the Ohio law:

1. To what extent did the Ohio events conform to Mazzone's initial arena model?

2. To what extent did the Ohio events conform to Mazzone's revised arena model?

### FINDINGS

In order to facilitate the understanding of readers who are unfamiliar with Ohio politics, the first section of the findings will summarize some of the major characteristics of the political environment at the time when S. B. 140 was developed and passed. The second will briefly summarize the legislation. The subsequent sections will apply Mazzone's models to the Ohio context.

#### Ohio's Political Context in the late 1980s

At the time of the passage of S. B. 140, a Democratic governor, Richard Celeste, was nearing the end of his second term. Celeste had first been elected in 1982, when he inherited a state which was in severe financial crisis. Early in his first term he fought for and obtained a significant tax increase. The tax increase made him unpopular in some quarters. In 1984 the Ohio Republican Party exploited this anti-tax attitude in an election campaign which focused on the theme "no new taxes." The Republicans were successful in re-capturing control of the Senate in that election, and they have maintained it ever since. One key to their success is their steady use of the "no new tax" idea. In 1989 the Republicans controlled the Senate of the 118th Ohio General Assembly with a 19-14 majority (Brown, 1990; Yost, 1989a, p. 4D; Ohio, 1989).

Meanwhile, the Ohio House was firmly in the hands of Demo-



crats. In 1989 the Democrats had a 59-40 majority (Ohio, 1989). A central reality in Ohio politics was--and is--the fact that Vernal Riffe, the Speaker, had been in the House and in the Speaker's position for an unusually long time. In 1989 he was elected to an eighth term as Speaker. The man's power is legendary, and it was a major theme in both the documentary sources and the interviews (Suddes, 1988, p. 3B; Suddes, 1989a, p. 4B; Yost, 1989a, p. 4D). Said one lobbyist for an educational organization in a January 1991 interview:

Vern Riffe is the most powerful man in the State House. He's from Southern Ohio and would probably feel right at home in Tennessee politics. This power permeates a lot of what we do in lobbying. The Speaker is far more powerful than the Committees in the General Assembly. We can have the whole Education Committee supporting a bill, but if the Speaker is against it, it won't fly. This fact dominates the legislative process in Ohio right now.

The State Board of Education (SBE) is popularly elected, with one member coming from each of the state's congressional districts. It appoints the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who is the only member of the governor's cabinet whom the governor does not appoint. The Superintendent in turn appoints or hires the employees of the State Department of Education (SDE). (Brown, 1990; Ohio, 1989). This form of governance confers upon the State Board, the Superintendent, and the SDE considerable independence from the governor and the legislature. When S. B. 140 was developed and passed, the Superintendent of Public Instruction was Franklin B. Walter, who had held the position for approximately ten years. Some elected leaders considered him

resistant to proposed educational reforms (St. Clair, 1989, p. 10D).

The most powerful interest groups in Ohio are not educational groups, but business groups, especially banks, insurance companies, and the Farm Bureau (Gray, Jacob, and Vines, 1983). Among educational groups, several interviewees identified the Ohio Education Association (OEA) as the most powerful. It has approximately 100,000 members (Ohio Education Association, n. d.). The Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT) is about one-fifth that size and is concentrated in a few large cities (Ohio Federation of Teachers, n.d.). Other important educational interest groups include the administrator and school board groups (Ohio State Department of Education, 1990). Ten of these groups belong to an umbrella organization called the Coalition of Educational Organizations. Interviewees suggested that the Coalition is torn by internal conflicts and finds it difficult to reach consensus on most policy issues. A member of the legislative staff and a former member of Celeste's staff--both with academic backgrounds in political science--stated in their interviews that before S. B. 140 passed, the SDE, the SBE, and the major education interest groups had formed an "iron triangle."

During the middle and late 1980s several factors combined to create something of a financial crisis in Ohio's public schools. Tax revenues grew slowly, and the funding system permits great inequities between the state's 615 districts. Moreover, Ohio's local school districts must frequently go to the voters in

special referenda called "levies" to obtain approval for raising property taxes. In the 1980s it became increasingly difficult to win such levies. These factors, in combination with the "no new tax" mentality of the Ohio Senate, meant that many districts were experiencing severe financial constraints even though Ohio's economy has been healthier than the economy of many other Mid-western states. Reform of the financing system was a top priority for most educational groups.

#### The Content of S. B. 140

S. B. 140, also called the Omnibus Education Reform Act of 1989, is a massive piece of legislation as its alternative name suggests. It contains a total of 30 different provisions, and the typed version of the bill as it evolved in the legislature consists of 127 single-spaced pages. An analysis of the law reveals that 17 of its 30 provisions primarily promote the value of educational excellence or quality. These include such diverse components as requiring school districts to give phonics instruction and permitting districts to "guarantee" their graduates. Three provisions encourage more educational choice for students and parents. The rest seem primarily to promote various forms of efficiency. These include the requirement that most districts establish business advisory councils and the establishment of educational performance indicators (Commission on Education Improvement, n.d.; Ohio General Assembly, 1989a; Ohio General Assembly, 1989b). No money was appropriated in the 1989 budget to fund the implementation of the law's provisions (LBO, 1989).

Although it contains numerous components, the most controversial and significant provisions are those which relate to school choice, the educational performance indicators, and the Excellent and Deficient Schools Program. These five components are the heart of the law and constitute the major mechanism by which the legislature sought to improve classroom learning and establish greater accountability in education--the avowed intent of the law. These five components also constitute the most innovative part of S. B. 140.

The three school choice provisions were patterned closely on the Minnesota school choice plans. Effective July 1, 1993, every school district in Ohio must have an intradistrict open enrollment policy. On the same date, every school district will also have to have a policy which either prohibits or permits the enrollment of students from adjacent districts. Regardless of a district's policy, it cannot prevent its students from enrolling in adjacent districts which will accept them. Under the post-secondary enrollment option, high school juniors and seniors can enroll in college courses for either high school or college credit (Ohio General Assembly, 1989b).

S. B. 140 also requires the State Board of Education to establish "measurable" educational performance indicators and collect data related to those indicators from both school districts and school buildings. In implementing this portion of the law, the State Board of Education has set up a computerized Educational Management Information System (EMIS). Districts and

buildings must provide the state with a great deal of data on attendance, drop-outs, and other aspects of their operations. Scores on the state's proficiency tests are also included in these data (Commission on Education Improvement, n.d.; Ohio General Assembly, 1989b).

Finally, the law requires the State Board of Education to use the data gathered through the EMIS to determine which districts and buildings are educationally excellent and which are educationally deficient. Excellent districts and schools can apply for exemption from certain state regulations. Deficient districts and schools must develop an acceptable "corrective action plan." If they fail to make satisfactory progress, the State Board of Education can appoint experts to work with them. Continued deficiency would lead to "an order placing the school board under monitoring by the [state] Superintendent" (Ohio General Assembly, 1989b, p. 17).

Together the choice programs, the EMIS, and the power to declare districts and buildings excellent and deficient are designed to improve education by encouraging competition. This goal was widely expressed during the period just prior to the introduction of S. B. 140 into the Ohio Senate. For example, in early March 1989 Newton Brokaw, a businessman and a member of the Gillmor-Schafrath Commission, told a Columbus Dispatch reporter:

In any other situation in the free-market system, you presume you're going to get something better the more you pay for it. But when you look at the record for education, it sure as heck raises questions. (Carmen, 1989, p. 1A)

The reporter continued in her article:

The answer, many agree, lies in accountability. . . To do this, reformers talk about running schools like businesses, with a bottom line, an emphasis on product quality and competition between schools by allowing students to choose where they'll go. (Carmen, 1989, p. 1A)

The three choice programs, the EMIS, and the Excellent and Deficient Schools Program seem to be the legislative incarnation of these views.

#### Testing Mazzoni's Arena Models

This section of the paper will be structured around a logical progression of questions. Since both of Mazzoni's arena models involve an arena shift away from the legislative subsystem, the first subsection will answer the question: To what extent does the evidence suggest that the policy process shifted from the legislative subsystem to another policy arena? In the second subsection Mazzoni's initial arena model will be tested as this question is answered: To what extent does the evidence suggest that pressure from the macro arena led to the passage of the innovative portions of S. B. 140? In the third and fourth subsections, the revised arena model will be tested as answers are sought to the following questions: To what extent does the evidence suggest that the policy process shifted from the legislative subsystem to the commission arena? And to what extent does the evidence suggest that the policy process shifted from the legislative subsystem to the leadership arena?

The Legislative Subsystem. Before the passage of S. B. 140, the development and passage of education legislation in Ohio was

characterized by a tightly coordinated interaction between the education committees in the General Assembly, the state education agencies, and major education interest groups. Two interviewees explicitly stated that an "iron triangle" had existed. A third interviewee, a representative of a teachers' union, described the earlier process in a 1992 interview:

Normally, the State Board of Education would have played more of a role. They would have gotten input from the broader education community.

This interviewee continued in words which seem to clearly describe an "arena shift":

But the legislature didn't pay much attention to the State Board of Education [in developing S. B. 140]. A number of legislators feel that they are the group legally responsible and that they should play a more active role. There was lots of criticism of the State Board of Education. Over time a change has occurred. The legislature has decided to take the lead itself.

In a 1991 briefing session for a group of Ohio educators, a representative of the State Department of Education seemed to be describing the same phenomenon:

A new set of policy actors has emerged. Politicians are speaking for parents. This new set of policy actors emerged from books and articles about choice. There is currently a call for greater consumer sovereignty. Policy actors from business have emerged. . . . They think that the educational product is getting worse. International comparisons show that American schools perform poorly. It's scary. So, they are getting involved because of enlightened self-interest.

The evidence suggests, then, that an arena shift did in fact occur. However, it contains two conflicting interpretations of the nature of that shift. One interpretation, offered by a leader of a regional administrators' group in a 1991 interview,

seems to be rather widely shared by educators at the grassroots level. He argued that S. B. 140 was rushed through the General Assembly with little or no input from the educational community.

In his own words:

In Ohio the legislature, the governor, and the State Department of Education put the reform package together. They did it very quickly. There was little say-so from educators. There were just three hearings in the Senate Committee and the House Committee. . . .The bill passed--there was little reaction. No one knew much about it. . . .They just railroaded it through.

People in leadership positions are aware of this interpretation, and in their interviews several took exception to it. A member of former Governor Celeste's staff stated, "The idea that people had no opportunity to be involved is horse shit." A member of the House Education Committee agreed: "Sometimes teachers may feel they weren't [involved], but. . .their representatives were present at every meeting. There were no secret meetings." And a high-ranking State Department of Education official said, "The components of S. B. 140 were not 'sprung' on school systems in Ohio. It's very unfair to say that."

It does seem true that the leaders of the education community knew that S. B. 140 was under consideration in the legislature. Some of them, at least, even had some input into it. For example, in their interviews representatives of both the OFT and the OEA mentioned that they had fought for changes when the bill was in committee. Moreover, they indicated a certain amount of success. Their major concerns had been with protecting the collective bargaining process and negotiated contracts between



boards and local associations. They felt that they had managed to bring about substantial change in those areas. This position is supported by the publications of the OEA (Cross, 1989, p. 3; Ohio's new school reform law will affect every OEA member, 1989, p. 5). Moreover, in a 1992 interview the leader of a statewide administrators' organization also indicated that leaders of the education community knew that the bill was moving through the General Assembly toward passage. He himself tried to mobilize a group of local superintendents without much success. While conceding that "S. B. 140 just kind of happened to most of us," he also felt that the leaders of the education community had a resigned, defeatist attitude in 1989. "Maybe they were resigned because of what had happened elsewhere; that was a widespread perception."

It is, however, easy to understand why many Ohio educators feel that the law "just kind of happened" to them and that it may have been "railroaded" through the General Assembly. During the spring of 1989, when the bill was moving through the Ohio House and Senate, there was virtually no mention of S. B. 140 in the publications of the major state education interest groups. Only after the fact did these publications contain detailed articles about the law. In addition, the state's newspapers did not provide much coverage about S. B. 140. After a flurry of articles about education reform and tax increases in January and February 1989, the interest of the press seems to have shifted elsewhere. Few articles appeared detailing the movement of the

bill through the legislature. And it is difficult to locate the article about S. B. 140's eventual passage even in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, one of the state's major newspapers. Virtually none of the articles which did appear reported opposition from the education community. The Ohio School Boards Association provides an exception. A June 9, 1989, article in the Columbus Dispatch reported a statement of opposition to open enrollment from one of its lobbyists (Yost, 1989b, p. 10C). On the whole, though, it can be said that the passage of S. B. 140 and any opposition to it by educators' groups was probably largely invisible to people outside the top leadership of the educational community.

How is this to be explained? On the basis of the available evidence, it is not possible to explain the inattention of the media. The evidence does, however, contain some hints of reasons for the silence of the education community. A lobbyist for one of the teachers' organizations stated in 1991:

We got several changes in the Senate at the time that the law was passed. We never supported 140--but we got such concessions that we were effectively neutralized.

A leader of an administrators' group provided another hint:

The Education Community didn't want to spend its energy fighting the Governor. Also, the national mood made us feel it wasn't worth fighting.

A member of Celeste's staff suggested that the education community had not wanted to take on the President of the Senate, either:

All of the education groups and the State Department of Education [opposed S. B. 140]. But they didn't officially oppose it. It was the Senate President's bill. They didn't want to oppose him.

It seems, then, that the teachers' groups were neutralized after they had obtained major concessions which protected the state's collective bargaining law. Leaders of other, smaller education groups chose not to take on the Governor and the President of the Senate, both of whom were strong supporters of reform.

A third reason seems to be that government officials had become distrustful of educators and made this distrust apparent during the process which led to the passage of S. B. 140. A lobbyist for a big city school district said in a 1991 interview:

The mood of the legislature in 1989 was that if an educator spoke against S. B. 140, his or her arguments were motivated by a desire to escape accountability.

In his 1992 interview the leader of an administrators' group spoke of "open warfare" between the government and leaders of the educational community. He said that Celeste "kicked us one day and let us sit next to the throne another day. It was an incredible situation." Some of the governor's "kicking" made the newspapers. In May 1989, Celeste attacked both the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education. He called the State Board "ill-equipped" to lead Ohio's education system and joked publicly about abolishing it. As for the State Department of Education, he called it "resistant to change" and asserted that this attitude was "unacceptable" (Grace, 1989, p. 5B; St. Clair, 1989, p. 10D). In such a climate it is possible that the leaders of such groups as the administrators' associations, the school boards' organization, and the PTA chose not to fight back. It is also understandable that they may not have wanted to

explain their loss of credibility with government leaders to their members.

In conclusion, then, it can be said that the Ohio evidence supports an arena shift from the legislative subsystem to another policy arena. The legislative subsystem was not completely ignored. However, it seems to have been reduced from a leading role in shaping policy to a reactive position from which, at best, it managed to accomplish some damage control.

The Macro Arena. According to Mazzone's initial model, policy innovations occur when major phases of the political process shift from the legislative subsystem to the macro arena. The macro arena includes the media as well as various groups and individuals which are rarely involved in subsystem politics. Public opinion is important in the macro arena, and grassroots constituencies may become mobilized in it. According to the initial arena model, an arena shift occurs because of the pressures brought to bear upon elected leaders by political actors in the macro arena.

The Ohio data contain no evidence to support the thesis that the macro arena pressured state leaders either to seek education reform in general or to seek S. B. 140's set of five interlocking reforms designed to increase learning and accountability in particular. The macro arena's lack of interest in reforming schools is evident from the beginning of the time period covered by this study. For example, before Governor Celeste delivered his January 1988 State of the State address, several articles ap-

peared in the Columbus Dispatch and the Cleveland Plain Dealer which speculated about the content of his speech. The reporters did not suggest that education reform might be on Celeste's agenda; his emphasis on the need for reform seems to have been somewhat unanticipated by the press. In three revealing sentences, the Columbus Dispatch interpreted the speech as follows:

Many state legislators believe Gov. Richard F. Celeste's State of the State address yesterday was the beginning of a yearlong campaign to sell Ohioans on the need for better-financed schools and higher taxes. . . .The governor said he will name an 18-member commission to study changes in Ohio's education system and how to finance them. But its creation is only the latest in a series of strong signals that Statehouse leaders plan to lobby Ohioans for better schools. (Curtin, 1988a, p. 6D; emphasis added)

Elected leaders who are perceived as selling a policy proposal to citizens and lobbying them to support it seem unlikely to be under pressure from the macro arena to adopt that proposal.

Having announced the need for education reform and set up the Education 2000 Commission, Celeste did indeed launch a campaign to build support for his plan. In 1988 he held meetings across the state, and in January 1989 he stepped up the pace with television and radio talk shows about the issue. His efforts apparently met with little success. In January 1989, Senate President Stanley Aronoff publicly commented on the fact that the public had not responded to Celeste's "lobbying." "The silence is deafening," the Cleveland Plain Dealer quoted him as saying (Suddes, 1989b, p. 3B). According to the senator, he was hearing more about pesticides and asbestos from his constituents than about Celeste's proposals for education reform. This indiffer-

ence on the part of the macro arena continued throughout the months during which S. B. 140 was being debated, amended, and passed. In May Senate Minority Leader Harry Meshel, one of two senators who voted against S. B. 140, commented that his file on the bill contained just one letter--a letter of opposition from a teacher (Senate's education reform proposal forwarded to the House, 1989).

In short, the existing evidence suggests that the macro arena was uninterested in education reform. So does the fact that certain types of evidence are missing from the case study data. Nowhere were public opinion polls in support of education reform accountability, or school choice cited. Nor was there any mention of grassroots parent, student, or citizen groups which were calling for a reform of Ohio's schools. No Ohio-based policy entrepreneurs seem to have advocated the choice and accountability proposals. In relationship to the question of reforming education, the Ohio macro arena can be described as inert.

It was not, however, inert in relationship to the question of raising taxes to fund education reforms. On December 12, 1988, a column in the Cleveland Plain Dealer struck the theme:

Hold on to your hats, and guard your wallets: The tax-hike express is roaring down the track, coming soon to a talk-show station near you. (Suddes, 1988, p. 3D).

On the same day, the Columbus Dispatch also ran a column on the subject. It was entitled "State eyes new route to money," and was accompanied by a political cartoon which depicted a large

stone labeled "Taxes" with an Excalibur-like sword projecting from it (Curtin, 1988b, p. 4C). In the following months both newspapers continued their attack against tax increases and published numerous letters to the editor expressing anger about the possibility that taxes might be raised to support education. This opposition from the macro arena may have been one factor which caused those legislators who had originally been willing to consider a referendum on a tax increase to change their position. Pressure from the macro arena thus seems to have set a constraint upon the education reform proposals--they could not cost more state money. However, there was apparently little or no pressure from the macro arena to reform Ohio's schools. Thus, the Ohio evidence does not support Mazzoni's original arena model.

The Commission Arena. In his revised arena model, Mazzoni hypothesized that policy innovations can be encouraged by pressure from arenas such as the commission arena. He identified the political process within the commission arena as one of pluralist bargaining with an emphasis on persuasion as the group sought to reach consensus. He believed that structural changes might be discussed within a commission but were unlikely to be recommended. He believed that a commission might "help legitimate, consolidate, and extend policy innovations previously enacted by the legislature" (Mazzoni, 1991a, p. 129).

During the period prior to the passage of Ohio's S. E. 140, two bona fide commissions and two quasi-commissions functioned in Ohio. One of the quasi-commissions, the House Select Committee

to review public education, was appointed by Speaker Vern Riffe in the spring of 1987. The first true commission to be established was the Gillmor Commission, set up by then Senate President Gillmor in August 1987 to study school finance. Governor Celeste appointed his Education 2000 Commission in the winter of 1988. Eventually, a special panel of the Gillmor Commission functioned as a quasi-commission and issued a report on school finance and education reform.

Some of the interviewees stressed the importance of the commissions and quasi-commissions in the development of S. B. 140. For example, a member of the House Education Committee elaborated at considerable length on the role of these groups in a 1992 interview:

Let me say, the governor's commission was a good study and a good report came out of it. There was also a commission in the House. Look at the interim report of the Shoemaker Commission [the House Select Committee]. The Speaker appointed Mike Shoemaker's committee; their interim report was very good. Shoemaker's Commission went over the state and had hearings on these different points of view. Shoemaker was not happy with 140. Not much of his study was in it, but I think some of his things got in it. Also, Schafrath had his committee; he may have had a different approach again. Its report wasn't as strong as the other reports. We had three reports--there were some substantial recommendations. I thought we should do something with them.

A representative of the Senate Republican Caucus attributed similar importance to the commission process in a 1992 interview when he said, "We looked at the commission reports and recommended that we accept the portions that cost very little." A representative of one of the teachers' union also considered that the



commissions had played an important role, for he believed that it was through testifying at the commission meetings that the education community had had input into the legislative process which led to the passage of S. B. 140.

Turning to the two major reports, it does seem that they both recommended some version of the innovative components of S. B. 140. The report of the Education 2000 Commission (1988), A Game Plan for National Championship for Ohio's Schools, made numerous recommendations. Among them, it stressed the importance of accountability, urged some deregulation of education, and encouraged "competition among schools by giving parents and students a choice of more than one public school" (p. 3). Citing experiences in Minnesota, it advocated some form of post-secondary enrollment option and the establishment of a magnet school in every district. It also expressed "conceptual" support for total open enrollment among public schools, though it urged gradual implementation of such a policy because of its complexities.

The second major report was put out by one of the quasi-commissions. In February 1989, the Gillmor-Schafrath Panel on School Expenditures, a panel of the Gillmor Commission on School Funding and Expenditures, produced a 68 page report entitled Recommendations to the Ohio General Assembly. (The full commission seems never to have prepared a report.) In its report the panel recommended intra-district open enrollment and pilot programs to test both inter-district open enrollment and a post-secondary choice option for eleventh and twelfth graders. It

also recommended a pilot program to test deregulation of school districts. In addition, it suggested that the State Board of Education "adopt a national yardstick. . .to use in representative grades in every school district to measure Ohio's academic achievement" and that it "provide each school district with aggregated nationally standardized test data to use for comparing itself to other school districts" (p. 8).

It seems true, then, that the innovative core of S. B. 140-- the three-part school choice program, the Educational Management Information System, and the Excellent and Deficient Schools program--was in part directly recommended and in part indirectly foreshadowed in the two commission reports. This fact does not, however, prove that the commission arena played a powerful role in setting the legislative agenda and selecting policy alternatives. It is important to look closely at the two groups whose reports were used by the legislature to determine both their make-up and the internal processes which led to their recommendations. Unfortunately, as Mazzoni (1991a; 1991b) has pointed out, the activities of commissions are not particularly visible to the general public. Thus, the following discussion is of necessity tentative. It is based upon interviews of three members of the Education 2000 Commission, conducted in 1991 and 1992, and on the two commission reports.

The Education 2000 Commission had 27 members and was chaired by Owen Butler, a recently retired CEO of the Cincinnati-based Procter and Gamble, Inc. In addition, it had an 11-person staff.

The members of the commission were appointed by Governor Celeste, or more accurately perhaps, by his office. Interview data also suggested that Chairman Butler had some input into the selection of the commission. The group seems to have provided representation to five broad constituencies: 22% of the members were businessmen, 22% represented K-12 education, 9% represented higher education, 18% were appointed state officials, and 22% were members of the General Assembly. It is interesting to note that although all of the General Assembly and business representatives were male, all of the representatives of K-12 education were female, as were two thirds of the appointed state officials (Education 2000 Commission, 1988).

Of the three commission members who were interviewed, two represented K-12 education and one was an appointed state official. All were female. All three raised major questions about the way that the commission operated. For example, one of the appointed state officials (who largely supported S. B. 140) described the chairman's behavior as follows:

[The representatives of the education community] didn't like Butler; he didn't like them. . . He had no interest in what they said. He could have written the report before the first commission meeting was held. He was a good chairperson in many ways. But he had other ideas--threatening ideas. For example, he supported choice. He also advocated the tiered diploma and teacher testing. He knows what's going on everywhere. But he didn't spend any time building consensus on the commission. In the first few meetings, he wouldn't even call on the women.

Another member of the commission felt that the commission members had had some input into the agenda for discussion. She

said, "We had the opportunity as a group to decide what we wanted to focus on, what were some of the issues." However, she too believed that some members had had an advantage in making their positions known in commission meetings:

The people who played leading roles right away were those who were very comfortable with that type of forum. Different ones come to mind. Of course, legislators were comfortable in that forum. They were privy to special knowledge, too. . . .The other members didn't have much to say until we discussed their area of expertise. . . .I didn't have a lot to say. I used to beat myself up because there were times when people needed to be checked, but I didn't feel I had the clout to check them.

The third interviewee largely corroborated the views of the other two. When asked who had been most influential on the commission, she immediately identified Butler, saying: "Butler had his own agenda. Primarily, it was pre-school. He was very focused on it." She described the role of the others as: "We were just listening. We spent little time on debate or discussion." Moreover, she felt that some members of the commission took its work very lightly:

The business people missed a lot of meetings. They would send representatives to the meetings. The legislators sent staff people. The feeling was that that wasn't where decisions would be made. They would be made later.

It is also interesting that, although the commission recommended school choice in its published report, this interviewee was of the opinion that only a minority of the commission supported it. She attributed the commission's final position on open enrollment to the influence of a member of the State Board of Education and a powerful legislator. "I don't think choice is

as popular as people make it out to be," she said.

Unfortunately, no members of the Gillmor-Schafrath Panel were interviewed. However, the published report of this group suggests that it experienced considerable difficulty in reaching consensus. The reason for this difficulty may have lain in the composition of the group: 46% represented K-12 education, 25% represented business, 17% represented the Senate, and 13% represented organized labor. In the formal portion of its report, the Panel often listed arguments for and against various proposals. It used this approach in the section on school choice. These lists are then followed by two or three rather cautious recommendations. For example, although it recommended intra-district open enrollment, "subject to federal guidelines on desegregation and on the placement of handicapped students" (Gillmor-Schafrath Panel on School Expenditures, 1989, p. 11), it just proposed pilot programs to study inter-district and post-secondary open enrollment.

This cautious approach seems to have been frustrating to some members of the group. An appendix includes a statement entitled "Barriers to Improving Productivity." It was authored by Patricia Smith, a member of the State Board of Education, and also signed by the two Senators who served as chair and vice chair of the panel as well as by five of the six business representatives, the representative of the Teamsters Union, and the representative of the PTA. The statement advocated improved productivity, more accountability, and a change in the reward

structure of public education. Its next to last paragraph read:

Finally, given that public education in Ohio is a 7 billion dollar-a-year enterprise--perhaps the largest within the state's boundary--we can no longer pretend that it is not big business nor can friends of public education continue to "cling to the idea that the enterprise is essentially an altruistic crusade championed by disinterested public servants." (Boyd, 1988)

The panel's report concludes with two statements written by representatives of the K-12 education community. The first, entitled "Productivity form [sic] an Educator's Perspective," was written by a teacher and a school superintendent. It criticizes recommendations for standardized curricula and tests and concludes with a direct response to some of the points included in the "Barriers to Improving Productivity" statement. The second has no title and was written by two school board representatives. It expresses the concern that school choice may increase the segregation of children by race and social class. It concludes with an attack on the "Barriers to Improving Productivity" statement. The authors assert that:

The full panel did not vote on the recommendations [in the statement] and, in most cases, did not discuss them. It is deliberately misleading to include those recommendations in the body of this report in order to give the impression that they were fully considered.

These data must, of course, be interpreted with caution. They do suggest, however, that students of the political process should not uncritically assume that commissions function independently of the leadership arena. Nor should they assume that commission reports are the result of a "pluralist bargaining" process which seeks to reach consensus. In reference to Mazzone's theory, it seems fair to say that the Ohio evidence suggests

that a shift away from the legislative subsystem occurred and that that shift did involve the appointment of several commissions. These commissions may not, however, have functioned as bona fide arenas in which policy decisions were made. They may rather have functioned as a subsystem of the leadership arena.

The Leadership Arena. In his revised arena model, Mazzoni (1991a; 1991b) included the leadership arena. He defined it as follows:

The leadership arena consists of the policy-oriented interactions that occur among top-level government officials and between these officials and the private groups or individuals--if any--who control them. (Mazzoni, 1991a, p. 125)

In his discussion of the leadership arena, Mazzoni suggested that policy innovation could occur in this arena if four conditions were met: (1) top ranking officials had to be unified as they sought the innovation; (2) leaders had to be willing to commit their influence resources to the innovation; (3) the issue had to be relatively invisible to the general public; and (4) counter-vailing pressures had to be weak.

The Ohio data suggest that top elected officials played the most important role in bringing about the development and passage of S. B. 140. One of the interview questions asked specifically which individuals or groups had been most influential. Almost without exception interviewees identified leaders in the General Assembly, especially the Senate. For example, a teacher union leader replied:

A key group of legislators was most influential. That group cut across party lines. There was greater ag-

gressiveness on the Republican side, especially in the Senate. . . .The major people involved were [Senate President] Aronoff, [Senator] Watts, and [Senator] Snyder.

A member of the House Education Committee agreed, saying simply: "I'd have to give credit to the Senate." A member of Celeste's staff also saw it that way: "The most influential were [Senate President] Stanley Aronoff and [Senate Executive Director] Jim Tilling." This was, in fact, the general view; it is well supported by the documentary evidence.

Since the policy innovation was developed in the leadership arena, it is important to determine to what extent Mazzoni's (1991a) four conditions were met in Ohio. The invisibility of the issue to the general public and grassroots educators has already been discussed. So has the weakness of the countervailing pressures. The data suggest that unity was the most difficult condition for the Ohio leaders to meet. There was, to be sure, a deep underlying unity all along: leaders in both houses and in the governor's suite agreed that Ohio's school system needed to be reformed. This unity was suggested by the comments of a representative of the Senate Republican Caucus in a 1992 interview:

In developing our campaign issues, we identified the important issues facing the state. We defined them as jobs and education, and they are linked to each other. Those issues have become priorities for the Republican Caucus. It took Celeste a while to catch on to the importance of these issues. When he finally did, he decided not to be so adversarial. By the time he was ready to take on the education bureaucracy, he realized it was a job of major proportions. He knew he needed the General Assembly behind him. So he asked Aronoff to become President of the Senate. Celeste met with



Snyder, Aronoff, and Tilling to discuss ways we could unite to bring about education reform.

There was, however, disagreement about the exact shape that reform should take and how much money should be spent on it. This disagreement is suggested by the fact that the House, the Senate, and the Governor all appointed their own groups to study education issues. It is also suggested by Celeste's long and unsuccessful struggle to gain support for a tax increase to fund education reform. Once it became evident that the public would not support a tax increase, the leaders rapidly united behind a no-cost education reform. A member of Celeste's staff put it this way:

The Republicans said, "Let's take the things that don't cost any money and put them in a bill." We pretty much said, "We support it."

Additional evidence for the fact that the leadership arena became extremely unified is provided by the legislative history of the bill. Introduced in mid-March, it was passed by the Senate in May. It progressed through the House with great speed; several interviewees commented that they had never seen a bill move through the House to passage as rapidly as S. B. 140. One said, "It was agreed upon; it was greased." The member of the House Education Committee explained in some detail how this had happened in his 1992 interview. While S. B. 140 was still in the Senate Education Committee, the Chairs of the two Education Committees worked together on a committee much like a conference committee to prepare the way for its rapid movement through the House. He commented, "We began to meet together. That doesn't

happen often. . .That's how it got passed."

In addition to being unified, the top elected leaders were willing to commit heavy influence resources to the passage of an education reform. This is suggested by Celeste's emphasis on the issue in two consecutive State of the State addresses and by his campaign across the state in 1988. It is also suggested by the fact that the Senate President himself sponsored the S. B. 140 and testified for it in the Senate Education Committee. In conclusion, the Ohio evidence suggests that all four of Mazzoni's conditions for successful policy innovation in the leadership arena were met.

In his definition of the leadership arena, Mazzoni referred to "the private groups or individuals--if any--who control [leaders]" (Mazzoni, 1991a, p. 125). He found no evidence of "behind-the-scenes controllers" (p. 125) in Minnesota. Although the word "control" seems exaggerated, the Ohio data did indicate the existence of two broad groups of people which influenced the top leaders in Ohio to develop and pass an education reform act. The first group was national leaders in the school reform movement. Owen Butler, for example, had ties with the Committee for Economic Development and its reform advocates. Governor Celeste also had ties with leaders in the national reform movement. A leader of an administrative group described the governor's connections as follows:

Prior to 1988 about 200 CEO's at the top national level got together. They reviewed their feelings about education and the global market and their need for workers, etc. They came up with several different

ideas to improve education. . . .After that the CEO's seem to have got together with the president. He met with the governors to see how these plans could be implemented. They had meetings in several states. They met in Virginia and other places.

A member of Celeste's staff confirmed in an interview that Celeste had been influenced by reformers elsewhere, saying:

[Celeste] was influenced by what was going on around the country. It was embarrassing to go to governors' meetings and hear what other states were doing to reform education, but Ohio was doing nothing. Also, the Governor read the New York Times and Wall Street Journal daily. He was very conscious of the reform movement. Also, he had thought of running for president.

Thus the development and passage of Ohio's S. B. 140 directly demonstrates the influence which the national reform movement and its leaders can have on the educational policymaking process at the state level.

Another influential group was the Ohio business community. In a 1991 interview, a lobbyist for a large urban school district described the pressure which business exerts in Ohio for greater educational accountability:

The pressure for accountability in education in Ohio will continue. There are four corporations. . . which are putting the pressure on and won't let up. The pressure is for accountability, and there is also financial pressure.

This observer did not believe that the four corporations had been "directly behind S. B. 140." A member of Celeste's staff, however, explicitly mentioned business leaders as individuals who had been influential in the passage of S. B. 140. She identified the CEOs who belonged to the National Alliance of Business and the Committee for Economic Development as especially important.

Moreover, she singled out the Cincinnati business community for discussion and elaborated on some of its linkages with S. B. 140:

Well, among [S. B. 140's] other supporters were the Cincinnati business community. The Cincinnati business community is very cohesive and well organized, much more so than the business community in any other big city in the state. [Senators] Aronoff and Finan and Snyder are all from the Cincinnati area. The Cincinnati business community sits down with legislators and says: "This is what we want you to do." At least one of those meetings included Butler. He was influential in Cincinnati. The Cincinnati power structure is important.

Several other interviewees mentioned the importance of business leaders in the shaping of S. B. 140. Moreover, as has been indicated, business representatives played a major role on the commissions. On occasion they even spoke to the press about the importance of education reform in Ohio (Carmen, 1989, p. 1A). It seems, then, that the elected officials in the leadership arena did not act unilaterally or in complete independence when they passed S. B. 140. They were responding, at least in part, to the influence of other leadership groups.

#### CONCLUSION

This case study of the passage of Ohio's S. B. 140 tested Mazzone's two arena models of education policy innovation at the state level. The data revealed that Mazzone's initial model was inadequate to explain what had happened in Ohio. Although the policy process shifted away from the subsystem arena, it did not shift to the macro arena. Mazzone's revised model fit the Ohio evidence relatively well. In Ohio, as in Minnesota, the state's elected leadership played an crucial role in bringing about

education reform.

This study suggests two possible modifications of Mazzone's revised model. It suggests that future researchers should not assume that appointed commissions constitute an independent policy arena. Although commissions may function independently, the Ohio data suggest that they may also be dominated. In addition, the findings of this study suggest that Mazzone's original definition of the leadership arena should be reconsidered. The Ohio evidence indicates that individuals other than elected leaders and appointed government officials can play major roles in that arena. Future case studies which apply Mazzone's arena models to state educational policymaking should probably seek to identify several categories of political actors in the leadership arena.

## APPENDIX A

### The Passage of S. B. 140 in Ohio (1987-1989)

Year	Events
1987	<p>In April Ohio House Speaker Riffe appointed an 18 member "select committee" to review public education in Ohio. In August, Senate President Gillmor set up a commission to study Ohio school finance.</p>
1988	<p>On January 13, Governor Celeste called for "excellence in education" in his State of the State address. He also appointed retired Procter and Gamble executive Owen Butler head of a citizens' commission to study the issue.</p> <p>In December the House Select Committee recommended that the General Assembly increase educational funding. The Education 2000 Commission, headed by Butler, recommended more money for education. The Chief State School Officer and the Coalition of Educational Organizations took the position that the General Assembly should raise taxes to provide more funding. Several elected leaders suggested a referendum to vote on the funding issue. The minority leaders in the Ohio House (Republicans) issued a press release suggesting that educators should be required to prove that more money would improve learning.</p>
1989	<p>In early January, leaders of the General Assembly began to indicate publicly that they were not sure more educational funding was needed. In his State of the State speech, the governor called for a \$800 million increase in funds for education which would be earmarked for K-12 and higher education</p>

In February, Celeste had trouble finding sponsors for his bill. The Gillmor-Schafrath Commission published its recommendations, which did not include increased funding. Senate President Aronoff asked the legislative staff to draft a bill including all the no-cost reforms recommended in the commission reports.

In March, business leaders began to publicly advocate competition and a Minnesota-like school choice plan. The Ohio Federation of Teachers and the Ohio Association of Public School Employees came out in support of Celeste's bill. On March 16, Aronoff introduced S. B. 140 into the Senate, stating that its purpose was to increase classroom performance and to bring about greater accountability.

In April, the governor testified before a house committee in support of his bill. The Board of Regents came out in support of S. B. 140. Legislative leaders publicly stated that Celeste's bill would fail.

In May, the Senate passed S. B. 140 with a 29-2 vote. The governor attacked the State Board of Education, accusing it of being resistant to change. Hearings on the bill were held in the House.

S. B. 140 passed the House on June 29, 1989.

## APPENDIX B

### Major Political Actors in the Passage of S. B. 140

- Aronoff, Stanley. Republican, Cincinnati. Appointed President of the Ohio Senate in 1988.
- Bara, John. Democrat, Elyria. Served as Chair of the House Education Committee, 1989-91.
- Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA). School superintendents' state association.
- Butler, Owen (Brad). Cincinnati area. Retired as CEO of Procter and Gamble in 1986. Had chaired Committee for Economic Development at national level. Appointed in 1988 by governor to chair Education 2000 Commission.
- Celeste, Richard. Democrat, Cleveland. Elected governor in 1982; re-elected in 1986.
- Coalition of Education Organizations. A coalition of ten education groups, including the teacher unions, the largest administrator groups, the school boards' group, and the PTA.
- Education 2000 Commission. A 27-member group appointed by the governor in 1988 to recommend education reforms. Of the members, 22% represented business, 22% represented the General Assembly, 22% represented K-12 education, 9% represented higher education, and 18% were appointed state officials. Its report, A Game Plan for National Championship for Ohio's Schools, was published in December 1988.
- Gillmor-Schafrath Panel. A 24-member group which was part of a larger commission appointed by the Senate in 1987 to study education finance issues. Of the members, 17% represented the Senate, 13% represented labor, 46% represented K-12 education, and 25% represented business. Its report, Recommendations to the Ohio General Assembly, was published in February 1989.
- Ohio Education Association (OEA). With approximately 100,000 members, the most powerful education organization in the state.
- Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA). This organization represents the more than 600 school boards in Ohio. It was one of the few members of the educational community which openly questioned S. B. 140 during the time before its passage.
- Riffe, Vernal. Democrat, Wheelersburg. Easily the most powerful figure in the Ohio General Assembly, Riffe was elected to an



unprecedented eighth consecutive term as Speaker of the House in 1989. During the time period under study, a skyscraper office building for state representatives named the Riffe Center was dedicated in Columbus and Ralph Nader attacked Riffe in the national press as a "political tyrant."

**Snyder, Cooper.** Republican Senator. Cooper chaired the Senate Education Committee during the period under study. The fact that the OEA had just tried unsuccessfully to defeat him in an election colored the relationship between the Senator and the teachers' organization.

**Walter, Franklin.** The Superintendent of Public Instruction, he had been in office since the late 1970s. His "resistance" to proposed school reforms caused considerable dissatisfaction among elected governmental leaders. He ultimately resigned his office in 1991.

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