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A FIELD STUDY OF THE MEANS BY WHICH THE
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
REDUCES UNCERTAINTY IN ITS
ENVIRONMENT

By

Robert Neil Nelson

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

A FIELD STUDY OF THE MEANS BY WHICH THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REDUCES UNCERTAINTY IN ITS ENVIRONMENT

By

Robert Neil Nelson

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research was to describe and explain the means by which the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) reduces uncertainty about the continued supply of resources from its environment.

Procedures

Field study methodology was employed. The author spent approximately nine months on site at the central office of the MDE in Lansing, Michigan. Specific methods used included observation of meetings, interviews at various levels of formality, and examination of documents produced by the agency. All personnel from the top four levels of the organization were interviewed.

The major environmental elements were the state Legislature and Governor, the federal U.S. Office of Education, the federal Congress and the interest groups in Michigan. Representatives from each of these were observed

or interviewed. The 1963 Constitution of Michigan was conceived to be an additional non-organizational element in the environment.

After an initial period of exploratory research, seven major case studies were done. These were selected to represent the broad range of concerns of the agency.

Results

It was found that the MDE used four types of strategies to reduce uncertainty about resources. First were preactive strategies in which the agency would gather data and enhance its own capacity to respond in anticipation of future need. Second, the agency would (rarely!) adopt a passive strategy thus ignoring or absorbing impact of change on its environment. Third, the agency would engage in reactive strategies, changing its own structure or behavior after the fact. Fourth, MDE used proactive strategies such as conflict, exchange, co-optation, coalition and annexation to assure future resources. Preactive and proactive strategies were most common.

Discussion

Organizations using proactive strategies were thought to be typically powerful. In the case of MDE the agency was successful in reducing uncertainty over a diverse environment. It did not, however do so in an integrated fashion as a result. MDE is not powerful relative to its

environment even though there is little uncertainty about its supply of resources.

There is more to control than elimination of uncertainty. MDE lacks political power relative to other elements in its environment. Serving these diverse elements has led to diffuse control of resources in MDE, further weakening the agency. Concurrently MDE is rewarded, especially by the federal government, for quantitative reporting and regulation as a result of increased governmental aid to education. Consequently, MDE is becoming increasingly concerned with quantification and with rationality as a method of operation. The MDE Accountability Model exemplifies this.

This trend toward rational management is in turn limited by the political subsystem. That is, if the rational behavior of MDE interferes with the wishes of politically powerful elements in the environment of MDE, the latter will be prohibited from further encroachment via the political subsystem.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the ideal that learning can be a joyous and growing experience, and to those few who helped me to maintain belief in that ideal. Among those Connie is the first.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many persons who contribute to a large piece of research, more than can individually mentioned here.

The senior staff of the Michigan Department of Education always had time to help, and did so with great perception.

The Middle Cities consortium provided a challenging assistantship which also helped increase my sources of data.

Dr. Philip Cusick conceived the study and helped throughout. The other three committee members, Charles Blackman, Bill Faunce, and Sam Moore, were busy and insightful critics and supporters.

Connie, David and Karen maintained their support in the face of my neglect.

Thanks to all.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The author's purpose in the study was to describe and explain how the Michigan Department of Education attempts to reduce uncertainty in its environment. In order to do this, the major elements in the environment of the agency have been identified. The resources used by the agency are also identified. Finally, a list of strategies available to the agency for use in reducing uncertainty about the supply of these resources is presented. The way in which the agency uses these strategies to acquire a certainty of supply of resources from the major elements in its environment is illustrated in a series of seven case studies.

In this chapter, the theoretical basis is presented and the model developed. Careful attention is given to the development of the strategies which an organization may use to reduce uncertainty in its environment.

The Nature of the Study

A field study of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) was undertaken. While a thorough discussion of methodology is available in the third chapter of this report, a brief overview will be helpful at this early stage.

Initially, a relatively open question was addressed: "How does the Michigan Department of Education behave?" Research was begun on site in October of 1974. During the autumn of 1974, about 30 interviews were conducted with personnel from the top four levels of MDE. In addition to these semi-structured interviews, MDE personnel were observed at work, usually in meetings. These included meetings where only staff were present, public State Board of Education meetings and meetings involving other agencies. Some meetings of organizations in the environment of the MDE were also attended. Written documents by and about the agency were collected and examined.

After the first two or three weeks of observing and interviewing, it became clear that the general question concerning the behavior of the organization could be refined. The most common recurring theme in the observations was a search for predictability. A concern for eliminating unpredicted threats, for planning and for control permeated the agency. Thus the general question was amended to read "How does the Michigan Department of Education reduce uncertainty in its environment?" This abstraction was judged to be descriptive of the range of phenomena observed.¹ A

¹As will be evident in later sections of this chapter, the concept of reducing uncertainty was taken from the work of James D. Thompson, for the most part. In the present study, the concept of environmental uncertainty parallels Thompson's in Organizations in Action (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967). Development of that part of the conceptual model in this study which describes how organizations reduce

large body of theoretical material dealing with this question was available. A conceptual framework emanating from open systems theory was developed. This was accomplished during the winter of 1975. Observations were continued during that time.

Once the conceptual framework was developed and a large collection of descriptive data from the autumn research had been amassed, more specific questions were generated. These were asked in formal interviews of selected personnel from the top five levels of the agency, plus members of the State Board of Education and representatives of other agencies from the environment of MDE. These interviews dealt with seven case studies selected to broadly represent the activities of the agency. Responses from these interviews form the core of the data in this report; other data are used to supplement and clarify as needed.

The Conceptual Framework: Overview

Organizations are conceived of as dynamic open systems. This means that organizations may do more than just survive in a static balance: they grow, produce, and adapt. In order to do any of these things, energy is required by the organization. As will be explained in detail later in

uncertainty by acting on their environments also owes a debt to Thompson's work. It should be made clear though that observations of such behaviors by the MDE were made prior to the selections of the uncertainty concept and that field data led to the conceptual model, not the reverse.

this chapter, energy sources for open systems are necessarily uncertain. This is because the sources of energy are outside of an open system, in its environment--and thus cannot be perfectly controlled. If organizations are open systems, they must import energy from their environments. Energy is needed for basic survival and for production or adaptation. Thus an organization, if it is an open system, will have an uncertain supply of energy and will have to seek to make that supply more certain. This effort will be ongoing.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is conceived of as an open system. This means that the MDE must import energy from its environment. In order to describe that process, the sources of energy which exist in the environment of the MDE are identified. The specific forms that energy takes--money, policy, information, personnel--are also described. Several strategies used by the MDE to seek a certain supply of energy are enumerated. It is this list of strategies that forms the core of the conceptual framework used in this study.

For any attempt to reduce uncertainty concerning an energy supply, the following elements of the transaction can be identified:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| the system: | -always MDE or some subset. |
| the energy source | -usually an organization from the environment of MDE. |
| the resource | -the form the energy takes, money, policy, information... |

the strategy

-the method used by MDE to reduce uncertainty about energy supply.

Figure 1 is a graphic illustration of this process. It illustrates the special case of an exchange-type strategy used by the MDE to trade for resources.

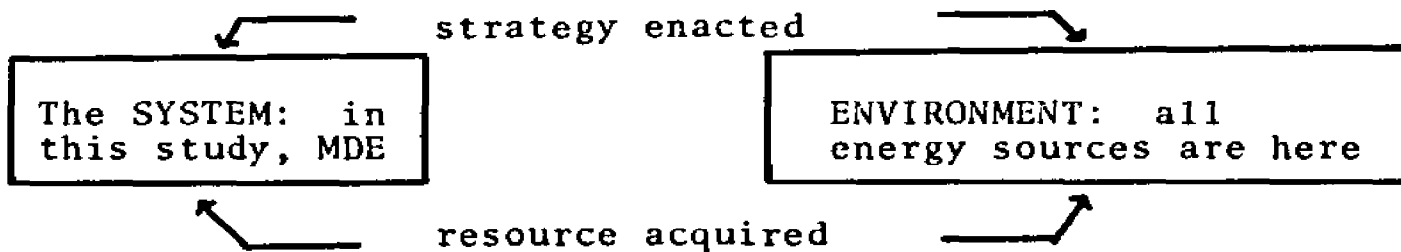


FIGURE 1.--Reducing uncertainty about energy supply.

Further description of the Michigan Department of Education is included in the second chapter of this dissertation. Identification of the organizations present in the environment of the MDE is also available there.

In the balance of this first chapter, a complete discussion of the conceptual framework for the study is presented. First, the development and substance of General Systems Theory is presented. Second, the special case of Open Systems is discussed. Third, efforts to explain the behavior of organizations by using the Open Systems model are reviewed. Fourth, and last, the list of strategies available to organizations to cope with environmental uncertainty is developed.

General Systems Theory

For over a quarter of a century a new theoretical model known as General Systems Theory (GST) has been impacting on diverse fields of science. Ludwig von Bertalanffy is generally credited as the first to conceptualize the General Systems model in the 1920's¹ although little exploration occurred until after World War II.

In a later exploration, von Bertalanffy recalls that he saw a need to account for phenomena occurring across a wide range of scientific studies, phenomena such as "order, maintenance. . . regulation and apparent teleology."² It was observed that growth curves, for example, were similar whether one observed chemical reactions, yeast cultures, rabbit populations, information growth, or a mob on the White House lawn.³ The changing slope of the curves--gradual, accelerated, asymptotic growth, dramatic decline--can be shown to be quite similar in these various instances.

There was need to account for these and similar observations, mostly of biological and social systems. Available knowledge and theory were not able to cope with the task. Classical physics dealt best with two-variable

¹J.E. Haas and T.E. Drabek, Complex Organizations (New York: MacMillan, 1973), p. 84.

²Ludwig von Bertalanffy, "General Systems Theory-- A Critical Review," General Systems, VII, (1962), p. 12.

³James G. Miller, "Toward a General Theory for the Behavioral Sciences," American Psychologist, X, Number 9, (September, 1955), p. 525.

linear problems. Stochastic models were successfully applied to problems of "unorganized complexity,"¹ instances in which a very large number of uncontrollable variables are operable. In von Bertalanffy's view, however, "problems of organized complexity, that is, interaction of a large but not infinite number of variables, are popping up everywhere and demand new conceptual tools."² General Systems Theory was advocated by von Bertalanffy as a method of conceptualizing such multi-variate problems.

There was a second limitation to the conceptual ability of theoretical physics. The growth, obvious adaptation, learning and wholistic behavior of biological and social systems could not be explained in that context. Mechanistic linear models were too simple, a problem that was often overcome by attributing the property "vitalism" to complex systems.³ It was in reaction to this apparent dead end that von Bertalanffy began his development of the model which has come to be known as General Systems Theory.

Kenneth Boulding was one of the many scientists from other fields whose work paralleled that of von Bertalanffy. From the point of view of an economist, he had developed a "general empirical theory,"⁴ which has contributed to the

¹von Bertalanffy, "General Systems Theory," 1962, p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 12.

³Ibid., p. 13.

⁴Haas, Complex Organizations, p. 84.

present version of General Systems Theory. He shared another concern of von Bertalanffy and felt that "the crisis of science today arises because of the increasing difficulty of such profitable talk among scientists as a whole."¹ A way to assist in the dissemination and recognition of relevant data is to adapt G.S.T. as a theoretical framework. This would, he argues, allow members in any branch of science to benefit from the results of work in other disciplines.

The above promises, improved conceptual ability and better communication, are large and thus introduce the investigation of the specific nature of this model, General Systems Theory.

What is a system? Several definitions do converge. In an early definition, von Bertalanffy defines systems as "sets of elements standing in interaction."² Later he refers to a system as a "complex of interacting components."³ Boulding⁴ avoids any explicit definition, but it is evident that his is a very similar conception. Hall and Fagan define it as follows: "A system is a set of objects together with relationships between the objects and between their

¹Kenneth Boulding, "General System Theory--The Skeleton of Science," Management Science, 2 (1956), p. 4.

²Ludwig von Bertalanffy, "General System Theory," General Systems I, 1956, p. 3.

³Ludwig von Bertalanffy, "General Systems Theory," 1962, p. 13.

⁴Boulding, "General Systems Theory."

attributes."¹ According to Laszlo and others "a system is a set of interacting functional relationships between various components which transform a set of inputs into a set of outputs."² Even more specifically, Miller says: "Systems are bounded regions in space-time, involving energy interchange among their parts which are associated in functional relationships and with their environments."³

While there can, as shown, be variations in emphasis and level of specificity, there is an underlying consensus that a system is composed of two or more elements and that some relationship between the elements is implied. Even this requires clarification.

Any collection of items can, in the above definition, constitute a system. There is a relationship between me and a designated pine tree in Siberia. The distance between us is measurable; our common dependence on a carbon-oxygen cycle is indisputable. But neither observation is particularly interesting. Consequently, though systems are literally "in the eye of the beholder," it is unlikely that one would subject to investigation a system that did not contain some

¹A.D. Hall and R.E. Fagen, "Definition of System," General Systems I, 1956, p. 81.

²C.A. Laszlo, et. al., "A General Systems Framework for Social Systems," Behavioral Science, Volume 19, 2, (March, 1974), p. 79.

³Miller, "General Theory," p. 514.

interesting interdependent relationship.¹ It is "these relationships that make the notion of 'system' useful."² The importance of this notion will become more clear in the subsequent discussion of subsystems and supersystems.

Characteristics of a System

A system may be static or dynamic. A system is static if it does not change with time. Few static systems are naturally available.

All systems, except the universe itself, exist within a larger environment.³ These may be open or closed to that environment. The special case of open systems will receive considerable attention later in this paper.

It is quite correct to define the environment of a system as being composed of all elements and relations outside of the boundaries of the system. However, that definition would include many elements and relationships of no interest to members of the system or to observers of it. There would seem to be no point in requiring ourselves to attend to the whole universe when investigating some single system within it. Consequently, in this study, the Hall and Fagen definition of environment will be used: "for a

¹David Easton, "A Systems Analysis of Political Life," W. Buckley, editor, Modern Systems Research for the Behavioral Scientist (Chicago: Aldine, 1968), pp. 428-436.

²Hall and Fagen, "Definition," p. 82.

³Miller, "General Theory," p. 514.

given system, the environment is the set of all objects a change in whose attributes affect the system and also those objects whose attributes are changed by the behavior of the system."¹

Systems are potentially hierarchical. All definable systems ("except the smallest")² are made up of subsystems, other smaller systems. Any system can be conceived to be a part of a larger supersystem. For example, if we view the College of Agriculture at Michigan State University as a system, we will note that it is composed of several subsystems, the departments, and that it can also be conceived of as one element of a larger supersystem, the University. The supersystem is simply part (or all) of the environment of the system under study.

Again, the specification is a matter of the intent of the observer, or, as Hall and Fagan put it, "the dichotomy of sets of related objects into system and environment depends essentially on the point of view at hand."³

All systems must reckon with entropy. In physics the analog of the entropy concept is the second law of thermodynamics. This simply states that physical systems tend to run down. Energy tends to dissipate. To survive at any

¹Hall and Fagan, "Definition," p. 83.

²Miller, "General Theory," p. 514.

³Hall and Fagan, "Definition," p. 86.

level of complexity, a system must import energy from its environment. This can include information, heat or material.¹

A college as in the earlier example, needs a supply of resources: money, students, faculty, in order to survive. There are only two sources of energy: the system itself and the environment of the system. By definition, any given system except the universe itself can maintain only a finite supply of energy within its boundaries. Thus all systems which survive must be open at some point.

"A system is closed if there is no import or export of energy in any of its forms . . . an example being a chemical reaction taking place in a sealed, insulated container."² In other words, a closed system cannot maintain a state of negative entropy and so must eventually run down. The chemical reaction will cease; the yeast will die; the college will cease to offer courses.

The concept of a closed system has some theoretical utility; one example is the "frictionless system" postulated in physics. Any system can be conceived of as closed, simply "by adjoining to the system that part of the environment with which the exchange takes place."^{3,4}

¹Ibid., p. 86.

²Ibid., p. 86.

³Ibid., p. 87.

⁴D. Katz and R. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: Wiley, 1966), p. 58, also deal with this.

Summary

Some general observations concerning systems have been made. A system may be static or dynamic. All systems have an environment with which they may interact. Systems are composed of subsystems and may be viewed as sub or supersystems. All systems must maintain negative entropy to survive. This is only possible in the long run for open systems, since closed systems do not import energy.

Open Systems Theory

Open systems are characterized by von Bertalanffy as representing a special case of General Systems Theory.¹ Consequently, attention at this point will be directed to some of the attributes peculiar to open systems theory, or at least more interesting in that context.

An open system imports energy from its environment. This implies that an open system may be successful in reversing entropy and can thus survive over time while a closed system will have a finite life span.

There are several possible results of a system's maintaining negative entropy. First, the system is able to survive. Second, it may use the imported energy to grow.² If this growth leads to higher complexity, the process is called anabolism.³ Third, the energy may be processed and

¹von Bertalanffy, 1962, p. 19.

²Laszlo, et. al., "Framework," p. 82.

³von Bertalanffy, 1962, p. 18.

output created and exported into the environment.¹ In this instance, the energetic input is said to have been catabolized.² At this point, our system looks like this:

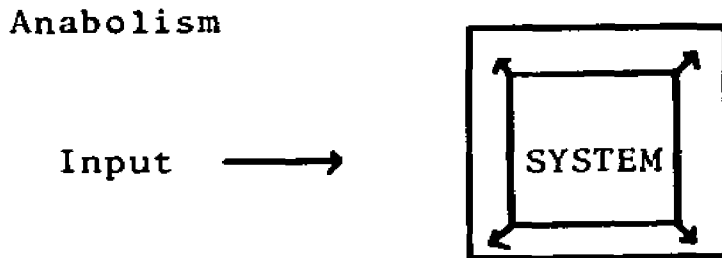


FIGURE 2.--Using input to grow

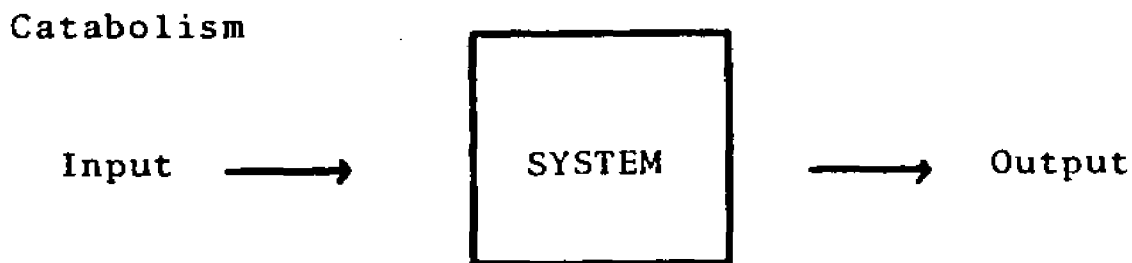


FIGURE 3.--Throughputs; converting input into output.

Open systems typically make use of feedback. This means that, having impacted on its environment (that is, by creating an output), a system will receive some reaction as a result of its action. This may take the form of energy, as in auto sales, ideally. When the market (environment) is appropriate, customers in the environment will buy cars (output) and the money will return to the auto makers to provide energy to make more cars. In other instances,

¹Katz and Kahn, Social Psychology, p. 19.

²von Bertalanffy, 1962, p. 18.

the feedback will be only information (that is, no cars were sold) which will tell the auto maker not to produce further output until something improves. This implies that a system can "learn," can modify its behavior. Thus, feedback can be in the form of energy or of information. The two are not mutually exclusive.

Addition of a feedback loop would create a system like the following.

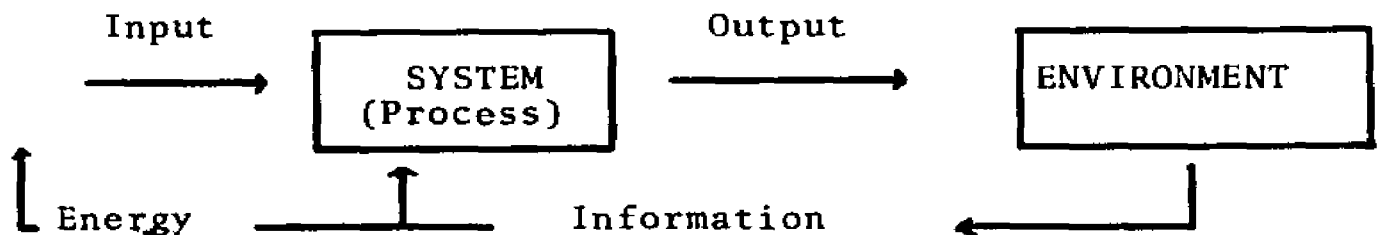


FIGURE 4.--Basic Model of an Open System Operating in an Exchange with its Environment.

It is important to note the exchange relationship. Ultimately, the only available source of energy for the open system is its environment. In the example shown, the system has exported some output into the environment and has received both energy (in some form) and information in return. This model is the one most typically used to illustrate basic system concepts.

Another characteristic of open systems is called equifinality.¹ This refers to the ability of a system to

¹Katz and Kahn, *Social Psychology*, p. 27.

reach a specific end point or state from various beginnings. The tendency of plant communities to achieve a similar climax state from different beginnings has been cited as one example of this phenomenon.¹ In Michigan, for example, forests usually reach a climax state as a mature beech-maple forest, whether the process of succession began on burned, ploughed, logged over or cultivated land.

Open systems seek steady states. Feedback mechanisms facilitate this. The most common example of this is the ability of warm-blooded animals to compensate automatically for temperature change. Such abilities are generally called homeostatic.² According to Hall and Fagen, a system "maintains stability for all those variables which must, for favorable operation, remain within limits."³

An open system can maintain a steady state of interaction with the environment.⁴ For example, the hypothetical college could intake an equal number of students, dollars and faculty hours, producing a similar number of student credit hours and degrees, over a long period of time, assuming no change in the environment. For systems of any complexity, such a constant environment is rarely available.

¹ von Bertalanffy, 1962, p. 23.

² Ibid., p. 17.

³ Hall and Fagen, "Definition," p. 87.

⁴ Katz and Kahn, Social Psychology, p. 24.

Thus a steady state relationship is unlikely for a complex social system. Adaptation--a far more complex and dynamic process--is more likely than a steady state relationship in such cases.

Adaptive behavior is a higher order behavior of open systems postulated by Buckley.¹ In brief, not only can open systems maintain vital processes within critical limits; they also possess the ability to modify those limits if change in the environment warrants such action:

True feedback control loops make possible not only self-regulation, but self-direction or at least adaptation to a changing environment, such that the system may change or elaborate its structure as a condition of survival or viability.²

Buckley suggests that both living and social systems are capable of such adaptive behavior. Easton also notes that a political system, for example, may seek a new point of equilibrium if necessary.³ The college described earlier, for example, could respond to a changed environment by adding a new major in environmental education if such a move was required by some change in society.

Summary

Open systems may be viewed as a special case of General Systems Theory. Open systems are characterized by

¹Walter Buckley, ed., "Society as a Complex Adaptive System," Modern Systems Research.

²Ibid., p. 490.

³Easton, "Systems Analysis," p. 430.

intake of energy which may be used to create growth or output. Open systems generally receive feedback as a result of their action. Such feedback can take the form of true energy or of information. Open systems seek steady states and are capable of adaptation to maintain such states.

Organizations as Open Systems

To this point, a description of General Systems Theory, an interdisciplinary model, has been presented. Special attention has been given to the development of open system theory as a special case of G.S.T. In this study, a specific organization--the Michigan Department of Education--is examined using open system concepts. Several assumptions about the utility of open system theory for this task shall now be presented and examined.

First, it has been noted that open systems, by definition, import energy from their environments. Second, it is clear that the environment is necessarily an uncertain supply of energy. Third, the central assumption to this section is that organizations can be viewed as open systems. Fourth, it is necessary to assume that the critical elements of an organization's environment can be identified. Fifth, if organizations are open systems, they will seek to reduce uncertainty concerning the supply of energy from their environments. Sixth and last is the assertion that the strategies by which organizations seek to reduce uncertainty concerning energy supply can be identified. Each of these will now be examined in turn.

First, open systems import energy from their environments. This is in fact the central part of the definition of open systems. This energy is needed so that the system may attain negative entropy. Energy input may be used for growth, added complexity, or output. If an organization were viewed as an open system, the above would imply that an organization can do more than merely survive, it can also produce, grow, or store energy for future use.

Second, the environment is an uncertain source of energy. An assured supply of energy, even for a finite time period, would imply a closed system. By definition, open systems are faced with uncertainty regarding their continued supply of energy.

Third, organizations can be viewed as open systems. This can be defended both deductively and empirically. It was the stated intention of the originators of General System Theory that examination of social systems be undertaken. For example, von Bertalanffy stated that:

It therefore appears that an expansion of science is required to deal with those aspects which are left out in physics and happen to concern just the specific characteristics of biological, behavioral and social phenomena. This amounts to new conceptual models to be introduced.¹

Boulding referred to organizations as one specific level of application of G.S.T.² Hall and Fagen recognize

¹von Bertalanffy, 1962, p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 8.

a similar breadth of application.¹ Rapoport and Horvath devoted a review article to the development of systems models in organization theory as early as 1959.² Buckley³ contributed to this trend with a general theory of adaptive behavior and Laszlo and others recently presented a G.S.T. framework for the analysis of social systems.⁴

The above demonstrates the intent of the theorists who contributed to the development of both G.S.T. and open system theory. It does not, by itself, document successful application of those models to the study of organizations. Such documentation is, however, richly available. While there have been articles of (at least) equal impact, a survey of book-length reports only will suffice to make the point here.

Crozier used systems concepts in his analysis of French governmental bureaucracies.⁵ Katz and Kahn applied open system theory to a study of the social relations within organizations.⁶ Easton devoted two major works to

¹Hall and Fagen, "Definition," p. 91.

²A. Rapoport and W.J. Horvath, "Thoughts on Organization Theory," W. Buckley, editor, Modern Systems Research.

³Buckley, "Society as a Complex Adaptive System."

⁴Laszlo, et. al., "Framework."

⁵Michel Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

⁶Katz and Kahn, Social Psychology.

developing a theory of political behavior in open system terms.^{1,2} Buckley attempted to create a general theory of sociological behavior based on open system theory³ and also edited a book of related readings as a companion volume.⁴ Thompson applied open system theory to organizational behavior and structure⁵ and co-authored a later work examining human interaction and decision making, also within a systems framework.⁶ More recently, Haas used open system theory as a basis for the development of his model of complex organizations.⁷

Many of the above works will be referred to throughout the study. It is worth noting that all of these are serious theoretical examinations of organizations, using an open systems model. This, as opposed to the applied work such as systems analysis and systems management techniques which are usually applications of closed system theory.

¹David Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965).

²David Easton, Systems Analysis of Political Life (New York: Wiley, 1965).

³Walter Buckley, Sociology and Modern Systems Theory (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

⁴Walter Buckley, Modern Systems Research for the Behavioral Scientist (Chicago: Aldine, 1968).

⁵James D. Thomspon, Organizations in Action.

⁶James D. Thomspon and Donald R. Van Houten, The Behavioral Sciences: An Interpretation (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1970).

⁷Haas and Drabeck., Complex Organizations.

Fourth, there is a further assumption that the environment of an organization can be determined. An environment in the real world can rarely be totally specified, but the most critical resources and members can usually be identified.¹ Recall that in the definition of the term environment, it was suggested that even though an environment can be viewed as infinite, it is more useful to attempt to isolate that finite set of elements which have significant impact on the system under study.

Fifth, organizations will, if they are open systems, seek energy from their environments and will seek to reduce uncertainty about the continued flow of energy. According to Katz and Kahn, "it is characteristic of any organization to try to place itself in an advantageous position with respect to environmental resources and competing groups."² Perrow states the case for the ability of organizations to reduce uncertainty even more strongly:

Society is adaptive to organizations, to the large, powerful organizations . . . to see these organizations as 'adaptive to a turbulent, dynamic, everchanging environment' is to indulge in fantasy. The environment of most organizations is quite well controlled by them, quite stable, and made up of other organizations with similar interests.³

¹Hall and Fagen, "Definition," p. 84.

²Katz and Kahn, Social Psychology, p. 67.

³Charles Perrow, Complex Organizations (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1972), p. 199.

With regard to political systems, Easton contends that . . . our analysis will rest on the idea of a system imbedded in an environment and subject to possible influences from it that threaten to drive the essential variables of the system beyond their critical range. To persist, the system must be capable of responding with measures that are successful in alleviating the stress so created. To respond, the authorities must be in a position to obtain information about what is happening so that they may react insofar as they desire or are compelled to do so.¹

This consensus that organizations are, in fact, capable of reducing uncertainty about their continued supply of energy/resources from the environment is shared by other writers.² Perrow's is an aggressive view of organizations, but Easton is concerned with ability to react. Not all responses in the continuing struggle to reduce uncertainty and assure energy are as dramatic as these, though, as shall be evident in the discussion of strategies immediately following.

The sixth and last assumption is that a continuum of the methods, the strategies, by which organizations seek to assure their continued survival can be created. Thompson and McEwen conceive of ". . . a continuum of organizational power in environmental relations, ranging from the

¹Easton, "Systems Analysis" in Buckley, p. 436.

²Anthony Downs, Inside Bureaucracy (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1967), p. 18; F.E. Emery and E.L. Trist, "The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments," Human Relations, Volume 18, (1965), pp. 21-32; and John Child, "Organizational Structure," Sociology, Volume 6, Number 1 (January, 1972), pp. 1-21.

organization that completely dominates its environmental relations to one that is completely dominated by its environment."¹

In this study, a framework of possible strategies matching that diversity is proposed. A complete discussion of those strategies follows this section.

There is, perhaps, a seventh unspoken assumption: that all of the preceding elements can be integrated into a dynamic descriptive model of organizational behavior. It is that model which is used to describe and explain the behavior of the Michigan Department of Education in its environment. The components of the model are illustrated earlier in this report and include the MDE, the strategies it uses, the resources which are sought and the environment which must ultimately provide those resources. Following a brief review of other components, the focus of this report will now be directed to those strategies which may be used to reduce uncertainty.

The Range of Responses to Uncertainty

Open systems exist in an environment and are in a constant state of uncertainty about the continued availability of energy--of resources--from their environments.

¹James D. Thompson and William J. McEwen, "Organizational Goals and Environment: Goal-Setting as an Interaction Process," American Sociological Review, Volume 23, Number 1, (February, 1958), p. 25.

The auto company is never certain that the price of steel will remain stable. The social agency which depends on the government for its budget is to some extent uncertain about its future. The mining operation is dependent on finding new veins of ore and is rarely secure in the long term. Thus organizations, as open systems, are involved in on-going attempts to reduce uncertainty about resources.

What, operationally, are the energy sources or resources available to an organization? In a physical system, the term 'energy' can be more easily understood. Energy includes nuclear or binding energy, electromagnetic energy, magnetic attraction, and gravity. In a biological system, the energy is either physical (sunlight, heat) or similar energy in a stored form, such as plant or animal protein. One rarely speaks of a rabbit as a form of energy, but it is exactly that to a fox! In social systems, especially complex organizations, energy is rarely in a single form. Further, the concepts energy and resources are used interchangeably in this study. Of course it is most common to speak of organizational inputs as resources, using the operationalized level of description. As mentioned earlier, such resources include money, staff, information and other elements. These are analogous to the energetic input or negative entropy discussed in reference to General Systems Theory and later to the special case of open systems. Resources are simply those inputs which an organization can use, either for survival, growth or output.

The environment of an organization can contain both resources and other organizations. The latter may be potential suppliers of resources or competitors for those resources. Other organizations could also be totally neutral with respect to the search by a given organization for resources and would thus cease to be of interest to us.¹ The environment is, in turn, uncertain. A changing environment implies an uncertain supply of the resources needed for the survival of the organization. It is within this context that our discussion of organizational responses to uncertainty must take place.

The ability of an organization to control its energy sources has been conceived of as ranging from zero to almost total control of environmental uncertainty. What are the specific strategies an open system may employ within this range? What organizational behaviors are analogous to these different strategies? Table I outlines a series of strategies which an organization may use to control its environment. These are the means by which an organization may reduce uncertainty about its supply of resources from its environment.

The list of strategies for reducing uncertainty (Table I) is the product of a search of several sources concerned with similar issues. These will be acknowledged

¹Thompson, for example, would follow Dill in excluding such neutralists from the "task environment."

TABLE 1.--Organizational Strategies for Coping with Uncertainty.

Strategy	Description
1. Ignore:	The organization neither recognizes nor reacts to environmental change.
2. Absorb:	The organizations recognizes a change and passively absorbs the impact.
3. Post Facto Response:	The system reacts and adjusts internally as a result of the perceived change.
4. Measure:	The incoming stress or environmental change is consciously monitored.
5. Predict:	Attempts are made to predict future change in the environment.
6. Avoid:	Given accurate information, an organization may select a desirable environment or future in which to operate, avoiding threat and stress.
7. Maintain Options:	The decision to act is avoided as long as possible.
8. Increase Options:	Attempts are made to assure the organization can respond to a wide range of possible futures.
9. Conflict:	The organization enters into conflict with others for control of uncertain resources.
10. Bargain/Contract:	Resources are "bought" in exchange for other resources.
11. Co-opt:	Members of organizations controlling needed resources are invited into the organization, assuring their interest in its survival.
12. Coalesce:	Two or more organizations agree on a joint venture to assure mutual availability of resources.
13. Annex:	The source of uncertainty is annexed, making that part of the environment a part of the organization.

as specific reference is made. The strategies discussed are arranged in a roughly ascending order, but no pretence is made that they form a true "scale" in the scientific sense of that term. Certainly they are not mutually exclusive, nor are they truly cumulative. There is, however, an attempt to order the strategies in rough order of required commitment and potential control.

The strategies are clustered into three major categories. The first are Passive Strategies, since no action by the organization actually occurs. The second group are called Reactive Strategies in that they are geared to help an organization know how to react after an environmental change has occurred. Even prediction is thus essentially a reactive strategy when it requires a change in the system as the anticipatory action. This introduces the Proactive Strategies whereby the organization attempts to reduce uncertainty by actual intervention out into its environment rather than by mere internal reaction or adaptation.

Passive Strategies

To recapitulate: these are strategies in which the organization neither adapts nor intervenes.

Ignore.--It is conceivable that an organization might neither react nor attend to changes in its environment. In such a case, the uncertain supply of resources would eventually cause the "death" of the organization.

An open system which cannot import energy will cease to exist. An organization which does not have a continuous supply of resources must fail. This fate, for this reason, was narrowly avoided by the food canning company studied by Emery and Trist.¹ In that instance, the technology of competitors and preferences of customers changed drastically in a few short years, but the company either did not receive the information, or did not choose to act. In the end, a painful reorientation of the company finally saved it from collapse.

Absorb.--In some cases, an organization that has large resources can absorb the impact of a comparatively small threat. Universities in the 60's were accused of "studying to death" some issues raised by students and the public. It was clear in a study of Oldsmobile that only hard, specific legislation would force a change in pollution control; the auto industry could simple absorb criticism from the relatively impotent environmentalists.²

Reactive Strategies

Strategies in this group are characterized by the fact that the organization responds by modifying itself--

¹F.E. Emery and E.L. Trist, "The Causal Texture of Organizational Environments," Human Relations 18:1, (1965), pp. 21-32.

²Center for Environmental Quality, Michigan State University, "Pollution Abatement Manpower Requirements in the Automotive Industry (PAMRAI)," East Lansing, 1971, 397 pages, multilithed.

not its environment. The organization may alter either its behavior or its structure.

Post Facto Response.--When a change occurs--not before--an organization using this tactic will modify a structure or a behavior. This model approximates "control by error" as discussed by Vickers¹ in the behavior of a servomechanism such as the automatic ships pilot often used as an example of a system using negative feedback. In order that such after the fact adaptation be sufficient, the environmental change must not be immediately lethal. It takes a finite amount of time to adapt; the Brontosaurus and the League of Nations were both too slow. This is a primitive strategy, but is the most basic and possibly the most common.

Measure.--An organization must have information about the magnitude of a change in the environment if it is to adapt itself or modify its environment. Child suggests that "the greater the degree of complexity, the more a profusion of relevant environmental information is likely to be experienced by organizational decision makers."² Emery and Trist, in their discussion of the "placid,

¹Geoffrey Vickers, "Is Adaptability Enough?" in Buckley, editor, Modern Systems Research.

²John Child, "Organizational Structure, Environment and Performance: The Role of Strategic Choice," Sociology, VI, (January, 1972), pp. 1-21.

randomized environment" conclude that such simply reactive patterns are appropriate only for small independent entities, whether they be protozoa or organizations.¹ Simple reactive adaptation, with or without measurement, will not assure that complex systems acquire resources needed to maintain negative entropy.

Predict.--More complex systems must be able to predict the behavior of elements within their environments. Declining school enrollments, for example, have provided educators with information about future resources that can be used to predict their future environments. Emery and Trist also see this as a necessary skill for survival at a complex level.² Weinwurm presents a convincing argument for the use of statistical techniques to help businesses measure, predict and insure against environmental changes.³

Avoid.--If an organization can measure its environment and predict it with reasonable accuracy, another strategy becomes possible. On perceiving an undesirable future, the organization can avoid it. Child, for example, notes that arguments for environmental determinism are weakened

¹Emery and Trist, "Environments," pp. 24-25.

²Ibid., p. 25.

³Ernest H. Weinwurm, "Tools for Dealing with Uncertainty," F.J. Lynden, et. al., editors, Policies, Decisions and Organization (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), pp. 331-342.

by the fact that organizations may select the environment (or future) in which they will operate.

Thus businessmen may have a choice between new markets to enter, educators may exclude certain subjects from their institutions courses, trade union officers may decide on the bounds of their recruitment policy.¹

This tactic is similar to the ability to seek a new level of equilibrium as discussed by Easton.²

Maintain Options.--An organization facing an uncertain environment should not make inflexible commitments too soon. A sudden change may render a given policy ineffective and the organization may waste energy, or miss a chance to obtain resources. The Oldsmobile division did not, for example, commit itself to developing pollution control devices until it was clear that no other options were open.³ Thompson makes a similar point: "Under norms of rationality, organizations seek to minimize the power of task-environment elements over them by maintaining alternatives."⁴

Increase Options.--It is equally desirable that an organization have as many options as possible to meet unpredictable changes in the environment from which resources

¹Child, "Strategic Choice," p. 4.

²See Easton, "Systems Analysis" in Buckley, p. 430.

³See PAMRAI report, noted above.

⁴Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 32.

come. Cyert and March use the term "organizational slack" to define both real resources and goodwill or debts that may be built up as a hedge against hard times.¹ Weinwurm advocates the use of probability and statistics to help balance risk, a means of increasing the range of environmental change which can be accommodated. This is similar to insurance, he says, in that it reduces a true uncertainty to a predictable risk.² This would have the effect of increasing the number of environmental changes able to be met by the organization. In simpler terms, this is similar to an argument against overspecialization.

Proactive Strategies

The critical notion here is that the organization seeks to exert some external control, control over its environment. True intervention occurs. All of these strategies assume relatively sophisticated information resources. The existence of some organizational resources beyond the minimum needed for short-term survival is also prerequisite to engaging in proactive strategies.

Competition.--Haas³ provides a concise review of conflict literature. The point is made that conflict in

¹Richard M. Cyert and James G. March, "A Behavioral Theory of the Firm, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

²Weinwurm, "Tools for Uncertainty."

³Haas, Complex Organizations, pp. 53-60.

organizations is ubiquitous and not necessarily maladaptive. Katz and Kahn emphasize a conflict model of interorganizational behavior:

Within the national state, organizations compete through such mechanisms. Outside national boundaries, there is also resort to threat, intimidation and organized force. As we have noted, acquisitive self-interest is not limited to profit-making institutions.¹

Thompson notes that conflict is an adequate method of securing resources in the case of perfect competition.² Both he and Emery and Trist recognize that imperfect competition is a more common situation for complex organizations.³ Thompson notes that this leads to the following: "When support capacity is concentrated in one or a few elements of the task environment, organizations under norms of rationality seek power relative to those on whom they are dependent."⁴

It is clear from all of the above that conflict is a common means of securing resources and energy.

Bargaining/Contracting.--Emery and Trist sum up the limits of conflict: "One has to know when not to fight to the death."⁵ Thompson quotes Cyert and March as having a

¹Katz and Kahn, Social Psychology, p. 68.

²Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 33.

³Emery and Trist, "Environments."

⁴Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 34.

⁵Emery and Trist, "Environment," p. 26.

similar view, ". . . organizations avoid having to anticipate environmental action by arranging negotiated environments."¹ This introduces the concept of cooperative strategies, of which bargaining is the first.

Easton contends that political systems interact with their environments on a quid pro quo basis, in part; a true exchange.² Haas reviewed the literature of the field and found that most analyses of exchange deal with persons and groups rather than organizations.³ In a study of health-related organizations, Levine and White found that cooperative bargains were used to assure an adequate supply of clients, labor, and other resources.⁴

Thompson considers "contracting" to be the most basic cooperative strategy. In that term he includes any formal or informal agreement between two or more parties to provide resources in the future.⁵ That definition will be adopted for the present treatment of bargaining and contracting.

¹Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 34.

²Easton, Framework.

³Haas, Complex Organizations, pp. 60-72.

⁴Sol Levine and Paul White, "Exchange as a Conceptual Framework for the Study of Interorganizational Relationships," Administrative Science Quarterly (March, 1961), pp. 583-601.

⁵Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 35.

Co-optation.--"Co-optation is the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence."¹ Selznick developed this concept to explain his observations of inter-organizational exchanges in TVA and the Grass Roots.² Thompson considers co-optation to be a more constraining form of exchange than contracting. As an example, he suggests that

The acceptance on the corporation's board of directors of representatives of financial institutions, for example, increases the likelihood of access to financial resources for the duration of the co-optive arrangement. But . . . it places an element of the environment in a position to raise questions and perhaps exert influence on other aspects of the organization.³

An example of this is given by Allen's study which demonstrated that "the frequency of interlocking with financial corporations has increased rather than decreased through time."⁴ It is thus suggested that co-optation will be a strategy commonly used by organizations to reduce environmental uncertainty.

¹Philip Selznick, "Co-optation" in Brinkerhoff, et. al., editors, Complex Organizations and Their Environments (Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown, 1972), p. 141.

²Philip Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949).

³Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 35.

⁴Michael Allen, "The Structure of Interlocking Elite Co-optation: Interlocking Corporate Directorates," American Sociological Review, Volume 39, (June, 1974), p. 393.

Coalesce--Coalition is a highly constraining strategy in that it requires an organization to make commitments to joint decision making.¹ The payoff is, however, often seen as worthwhile. It is Cyert and March that have focused attention of theorists on this strategy.² Aiken and Hage also note that "the joint program is often a relatively enduring relationship, thus indicating a high degree of organizational interdependence."³ Taylor has even developed a study of "minimal winning coalitions" in governments.⁴ With regard to educational organizations, Clark concluded that "leadership is moving into the interagency compact, the limited alliance, the consortium, the grants committee, the federation."⁵ Levine and White found the same strategies to be operative in health agencies.⁶ Emery and Trist suggest that the existence of a coalition at least with respect to agreed on values and rules of interaction is almost pre-requisite to survival in the more complex

¹See Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 36.

²Cyert and March, Behavioral Theory, Chapter 3.

³Michael Aiken and Gerald Hage, "Organizational Interdependence and Intraorganizational Structure," in Brinkerhoff, editor, Complex Organizations, p. 370.

⁴Michael Taylor, "On the Theory of Government Coalition Formation," British Journal of Political Science, II, (July, 1972), pp. 361-373.

⁵Burton R. Clark, "Interorganizational Patterns in Education," in Brinkerhoff, editor, Complex Organizations, p. 365.

⁶Levine and White, "Exchange."

environments.¹ Less theoretical but more dramatic is the impact on North America in 1975 of the cartel of oil exporting nations. That coalition, at least to date, has been a successful strategy for its members.

Annex.--The ultimate strategy for an open system is to annex the source of uncertainty. In Thompson's terms, this would be similar to including the source of resources in the technical core of the organization.² This would have the effect of allowing the organization's decision makers to make closed-system assumptions about that source of resources, since it would no longer be part of the environment, but part of the system. Katz and Kahn describe the same phenomenon: "Social systems will move, however, toward incorporating within their boundaries the external resources essential to survival. Again the result is an expansion of the original system."³

Downs also deals with the tendency to growth, as does Thompson, though only the latter deals in detail with the concept. Vertical integration is the name applied by Thompson to the tendency of organizations to expand and incorporate potential sources of uncertainty. "Under norms of rationality, organizations seek to place their boundaries

¹Emery and Trist, "Environments."

²Thompson, Organizations in Action, Chapter 2.

³Katz and Kahn, Social Psychology, p. 24.

around those activities which if left to the task environment would be crucial contingencies."¹

Annexation is not restricted to sources of input. The organization which can acquire a guaranteed market will have reduced uncertainty about a crucial contingency. The monopoly held by the United States Postal Service on first class mail exemplifies this. A firm producing supertankers would probably be pleased to merge with Exxon, since a market for its output services would be virtually assured. This type of annexation is also recognized by Thompson in his vertical integration model and by Katz and Kahn in their discussion of mechanisms for acquisition.

Thus proactive strategies are open to organizations which already have the capacity to engage in reactive strategies. Given the choice, some organizations at some times choose to attempt to use proactive strategies; to intervene and control the environment as opposed to simply adapting to it. It is suggested that in complex environments, only such proactive strategies will lead to survival in the long run. Further, it is suggested that pure conflict is not an effective strategy by itself in the long run; some cooperative strategies need to be used.

¹Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 50.

Assumptions

Most of the assumptions that are operative here result from the adoption of open system theory as a basic stance and are alluded to in the development of the conceptual framework. They will, however, be made explicit here.

First, any application of systems theory assumes that the system is definable. This simply means that the major components or elements of the system can be identified and that their number is not only finite, but small enough to be conceptually meaningful. The Michigan Department of Education is regarded as meeting those assumptions.

Second, it is assumed that the major elements in the environment of the system--the MDE--can be identified and described. This implies a finite number of useable energy sources.

Third, it is assumed that the major relationships between the agency and its environment can be identified and described.

In summary, these are the basic assumptions necessary to any application of open system theory. There is not an assumption of perfect knowledge, or of any ability to control any of the variables described--those are closed-system assumptions and are antagonistic to the view taken here.

Overview of the Dissertation

In this first chapter, the conceptual framework has been outlined, drawing heavily on open system theory. A model of organizational behavior has been suggested which would describe the strategies organizations use to reduce uncertainty about supply of resources from their environments. A list of strategies available to organizations has been presented.

In the second chapter, the three other elements in the model are described. First, the MDE is described. Second, the elements in the environment of the MDE are identified and described. Third, the resources which are sought by organizations--including MDE--are described.

In the third chapter a second, focused review of literature is presented. Some major works dealing with reduction of uncertainty by organizations are reviewed. Other descriptive studies dealing with education-related organizations are also reviewed. An attempt is made to show how these can be explained by the model presented in this study.

In the fourth chapter, the methodology is fully described. A discussion of field methodology and its appropriateness in this context is also presented.

In the fifth chapter, the data resulting from the seven case studies are presented in the context of the model.

In the sixth and last chapter, two sets of conclusions are presented. Initially, conclusions concerning the behavior of the agency are presented. Finally, conclusions concerning the adequacy of the conceptual tools employed to describe the MDE and its attempts to reduce uncertainty in its environment are included. Some discussion of hypotheses and potential studies suggested by the present research is also presented.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MODEL FOR REDUCING UNCERTAINTY

This study is a description of the means by which the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) attempts to reduce uncertainty in its environment. This study focuses on the 1974-75 academic year, but will include some reference to earlier events. Operationally, this study of uncertainty involves a description of how the MDE assures a continued supply of energy, of resources, from elements in its environment. The proposed strategies which an organization may use to reduce uncertainty, to seek resources, have been described. This chapter will contain a complete description of the remaining three components of the model: the organization itself, the environment of the agency and the resources that are used.

Defining the System to be Studied

This is a study of an organization. It is concerned with identifying the means by which a given organization--the Michigan Department of Education--seeks to reduce uncertainty in its environment. It is concerned with actions that are emitted by the organization, those formal actions which involve the agency as a system. (The problem of

observing an organization by observing its members is addressed in chapter four.) Thus the level at which the study occurs is the level at which the Michigan Department of Education exists and acts as an organization.

There are three distinct parts of the MDE. First, the State Board of Education (SBE) has legal responsibility under the 1964 Constitution for many matters related to education in the state of Michigan. Second, the Board appoints a Superintendent of Education. Third, the staff--over 2,500 of them--are responsible to the Superintendent and through him to the State Board of Education.

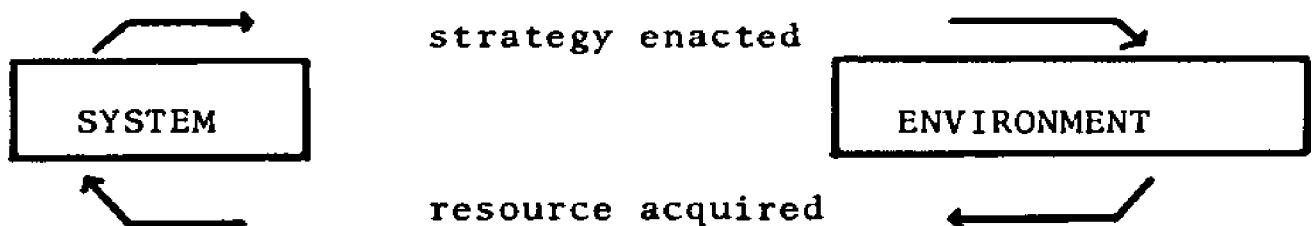
While the interaction between these three components--board, superintendent and staff--is unquestionably interesting, it is not a necessary concern of this study. Consequently, the three shall be treated as members of a single, central state agency. Thus, references to the Michigan Department of Education do recognize the existence of a staff, a Superintendent and an ultimately responsible elected State Board of Education; although these components will rarely receive separate attention. This does not negate the importance of the interaction, it simply excludes that interaction from the domain of this study. The fact that neglect of this internal interaction is a major limitation of this study is recognized.

Recall that any system is generally composed of subsystems and in turn forms an element of a larger

supersystem. The choice of a level of entry is essentially dependent on the interest of the observer.¹ It is the intent of this observer that the MDE be identified as the system under study and that interaction among its subsystems be excluded from study where possible. The focus of attention is on the means by which the MDE as a system reduces uncertainty in its environment.

The Nature of Energy Sources

To this point, it has been argued that organizations can be treated as open systems and thus must seek energetic input from their environments. Recall the basic model as presented earlier.



Since the development of the list of strategies was judged to be the most basic and complex element, that problem was dealt with in the first chapter of this dissertation. There are other elements in the model: the system itself, the environment and the resources. Resources will be dealt with first.

Thompson quotes Dill as saying that organizations need material, labor, capital, equipment, work space and

¹See particularly Hall and Fagen, "Definition."

customers.¹ In a recent review of health agencies, White suggests that the following "scarce resources" are needed: skills, knowledge, money, materials, equipment, customers, patients and clients.² Levine and White, in an earlier article, view organizations as needing "three elements: (1) clients, (2) labor services, and (3) resources other than labor services."³ Aiken and Hage recognize that organizations need "not only money, but staff, space and time."⁴

Easton focuses on the role of information inputs in the workings of a political system, particularly in the form of demands and support.⁵ It is Cyert and March, however, who make explicit the fact that favorable policy decisions are also an acceptable medium of exchange. "The distinction between demands for monetary side payments and demands for policy commitments seems to underlie management-oriented treatments of organizations."⁶

Francis Rourke describes another valuable resource: "A first and fundamental source of power for administrative

¹Thompson, Organizations in Action, p. 27.

²White, "Resources as Determinates of Organizational Behavior."

³Levine and White, "Exchange."

⁴Aiken and Hage, "Interdependence and Structure."

⁵Easton, "Systems Analysis," in Buckley, 1968, p. 430.

⁶Cyert and March, Behavioral Theory, p. 30.

agencies is their ability to attract outside support."¹ This refers particularly to public bureaucracies and is thus especially relevant to this examination of a State agency. Such support may exist relative to the public at large or to specific interest groups. In either case, this good will or outside support can be mobilized, traded and even transferred as can other resources.

Evidently, potential energetic inputs or resources take many forms. What is input for one organization may be the output of another. An uncommitted resource may become a commodity to be sought by others by either competitive or cooperative strategies. The following list of resources incorporates the suggestions of several authors.

1. money
2. labor
3. raw materials
4. expertise, skills (to know "how to")
5. information (to know "about")
6. equipment
7. physical space
8. policy commitments
9. customers, clients
10. time
11. public support, good will, votes

None of these has to be used positively or cooperatively. An organization possessing expertise, for example, can share or "sell" it. But that organization can also withhold the expertise from a needy competitor and can even use it against an uncooperative organization. Thus, conflict

¹Francis Rourke, Bureaucracy, Politics, and Public Policy, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 30.

is at least a potential option. It will become clear, however, that unlimited conflict is judged by other researchers as being maladaptive.

Summary

To treat organizations as open systems assumes that they import energy from their environments. Energy that is useful to an organization may take several forms. A list of resources which are useable by organizations as energy sources has been presented. Any of these resources can also be produced by an organization as output; suggesting the possibility, at least, of using proactive strategies which have some sort of quid pro quo basis. A description of proactive strategies has already been presented.

Having determined the range of resources that an agency might seek in its attempts to attain negative entropy, attention shall now be given to the agency which is the focus of this study and is therefore the recipient of resources and the initiator of strategies to reduce uncertainty.

Selection of the Michigan Department of Education

Why, initially, was the MDE considered important? Basically, the apparent power and the unquestionable magnitude of the agency were impressive. In 1975, more than 2.3 million elementary and secondary students in Michigan are affected by the Department. Approximately 119,000 professionals serve these students. Of the total school

expenditures of 2.7 billion dollars in 1974-75, 1.3 billion was state aid, which was distributed through the MDE. There are, additionally, over 450,000 students receiving higher education in the state this year. The level of control exerted by the Department over this billion dollar effort varies. Certification of teachers is another traditional function of MDE. The Department's staff of over 2,500 persons consumes or redistributes the internal budget of approximately 57 million dollars;¹ only about 30 million of that is actually used by MDE to administer the agency. Thus it could be argued that the sheer magnitude of the agency and its responsibilities constitutes sufficient reason for a study. These responsibilities are broad and apparently growing.

The MDE has experienced growth in recent years. First, the present Michigan constitution, effective since 1964, combined several functions under the MDE, creating a new education agency much larger than its predecessor. Second, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, while not the first, is the largest program of federal assistance to states and school districts. The MDE has administered many millions of dollars as a result and has gained resources in the process. The third major cause of recent growth in the MDE is the state government which

¹From Michigan Education Facts 1974-75, a brochure published by MDE.

has created many new programs in recent years, some of which have enhanced the role of the Michigan Department of Education. Examples of these influences will be presented in the analysis of the environment of the MDE which follows immediately.

The Environment of the Michigan Department of Education

In order to provide some context to the description of the MDE itself, the environmental influences which have contributed to its present state will now be examined. It is hoped that this section will serve to illuminate the agency while focusing primarily on the elements which form its environment.

Four major environmental influences impact on the MDE. First is the state constitution of 1963. Second is the present state government. The third influence is the federal government, especially the US Office of Education. Fourth is the collection of interest groups with which MDE interacts. These are shown in more detail in Table 2.

The Constitution

On April 1, 1963, the voters of Michigan approved a new constitution. The new document took effect on January 1, 1964.¹ Under the new constitution, the number of

¹Carolyn Stieber, The Politics of Change in Michigan (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1970) p. 26.

TABLE 2.--The Environment of the Michigan Department of Education.

-
1. Constitution of the State of Michigan
 2. Government, State Level
 - A. Executive Branch
 - B. Legislative Branch
 - C. Judicial Branch
 - D. Other Agencies: Bureau of the Budget, Civil Service, Social Services . . .
 3. State Interest Groups
 - A. Michigan Education Association
 - B. Michigan Federation of Teachers
 - C. Michigan Association of School Administrators
 - D. Public Groups: School Boards, PTA, Urban Districts
 - E. Commercial Groups: Westinghouse, IBM, Educational Testing Service . . .
 4. General Public (e.g. as electorate)
 5. Government, Federal Level
 - A. Executive Branch
 - B. Legislative Branch and Committees
 - C. Judicial Branch
 - D. Agencies: USOE, USDA, NIE . . .
-

major departments in the state is limited to 20. This provision required that several agencies dealing with education be joined. Thus the pre-1964 Office of Public Instruction became the much larger Michigan Department of Education. This Department is accountable to the new State Board of Education who in turn appoints the superintendent. The State Board of Education (SBE) is responsible for leadership and general supervision over all public education, including adult education and instructional programs in state institutions, except as to institutions of higher education granting baccalaureate degrees.¹ Other provisions include:

1. The state board members are now elected for eight year terms by partisan vote.

2. The governor may fill vacancies if members of the SBE do not complete their term.

3. Control over degree-granting colleges and universities is limited.

4. The state library system is assigned to the State Board.

5. The State Board maintains control of the operations of the deaf and blind schools and the rehabilitation institute; regulation of school bus transportation; inspection of educational corporations; appointment of the members of the State Board of Public Community and Junior Colleges. The Legislature also required of the State Board of Education an annual financial statement and advice as to the financial needs of all of public education in the years ahead.²

¹Quoted in MDE Fact Sheet, February, 1975, an irregular single page publication of MDE.

²Fact Sheet, p. 2.

These are the broad powers and responsibilities of the Michigan Department of Education.

State Government

The governments of the states are given the constitutional responsibility for education. Whatever power is not specifically assigned to other agencies (such as the State Board of Education) remains with that state government. The most dramatic power of the state government is in the control of the budget. In Michigan, the Governor, initially, and the Legislature ultimately, have control over the financing of education and of the MDE. The Legislature may also require the Department to administer programs it (the Legislature) supports. Some examples will illustrate the range of possible effects.

1. The Legislature recently required and funded a state compensatory education program known as Chapter Three. Although the MDE administers and regulates this program, the Legislature has refused to allow MDE to withhold funds from low-performance districts.

2. The Legislature has passed legislation permitting MDE to create a Professional Development Center for in-service teacher education. Limited funds for planning were authorized, but were never made available. The potential funds have caused competition among interest groups.

3. The Legislature has passed an Act requiring all districts to engage in Career Education. A Career

Education Commission was created and reports to the SBE. The MDE provides staff assistance and a chairman to the Commission. It is uncertain whether the funds necessary to implement the concept will be allocated.

4. The Mandatory Special Education Act of Michigan was passed and is reasonably well funded. The MDE is responsible for disbursing funds and regulating programs. This Act has had much impact on professionals and clients in the state.

It is clear that the Legislature has broad power to impact upon education in Michigan. When the Legislature creates programs, the MDE usually administers and regulates them. Often, such programs remain unfunded and little real change results.

State Interest Groups

In addition to the environmental influences already described, the MDE interacts with a wide variety of interest groups. These can be subdivided into those representing educational practitioners and those representing clients or consumers. The recent study by the Educational Governance Project identifies four "major" interest groups.¹ Three of these represented practitioners: the Michigan Education Association (MEA), the Michigan Federation of

¹Edward R. Hines, et. al., State Policy Making for the Public Schools of Michigan (Columbus, Ohio: The Educational Governance Project, 1974), p. 146.

Teachers (MFT), and the Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA). Only one client group, the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) was listed as major in that report.

Many other groups do have influence on educational decision making. The various universities, for example and the large urban school districts also influence the MDE, usually through the Legislature. Some parent groups, such as the Michigan Association for Retarded Children (MARC) also have very effective lobbies. It is evident that more than four interest groups have influence on the Department of Education.

These groups must have adequate resources in order to exert influence. Indeed, they do control votes, public opinion, much labor, money and expertise. Thus the possibility of successful influence by these groups on MDE is explainable within the context of the model used throughout this study.

In Table 2, the electorate, the 'public as voter,' is shown as an element in the environment of the Michigan Department of Education. While not so regular or so ubiquitous some of the other environmental influences, the electorate does have influence. The case study of special education legislation will examine one clear example in which the potential influence of public opinion was mobilized and focused by a single group in a single emotional

issue. Otherwise, legislators and interest groups carry the responsibility of interpreting and acting out the wishes of their constituents.

Federal Involvement

On April 9, 1965, President Johnson signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). He emphasized this unique achievement by stating: "Since 1870, almost a hundred years ago, we have been trying to do what we have just done--pass an elementary school bill for all the children of America."¹

His emphasis was justified. Other bills had been passed, but none was as comprehensive as ESEA. Other earlier acts included:

1. The Land Ordinance of 1785, requiring townships to set aside land for public schools.
2. The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, giving land to states for colleges of agriculture and technology.
3. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, the first in a series giving aid to vocational education.
4. The "G.I. Bill" of 1944, providing subsistence for veterans in school.
5. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA), post-Sputnik, primarily to improve higher education in science and languages.²

¹Quoted in Philip Meranto, The Politics of Federal Aid to Education in 1965 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967), p. 1.

²Adapted from James D. Koerner, Who Controls American Education? (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 4-5.

Similar federal programs followed, but ESEA was the first truly comprehensive aid to elementary and secondary schools. Earlier attempts had been thwarted by segregationists or by proponents of federal aid to parochial schools. By 1965, it was clear that segregated schools could not be defended and that limited aid to Catholic schools could. Other interest groups such as the National Education Association assisted or acquiesced, and ESEA became a reality.¹

The gross effect of federal aid in Michigan is the yearly infusion of over two hundred million dollars of federal money into education in Michigan. Roughly half of this is supplied by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Table 3 summarizes federal allocations for fiscal 1976.²

For most of these sources, the state education agency acts as the disbursing agent and regulator. The state education agencies are apportioned a small fraction of the total by the federal government for these administrative and regulatory functions. For example, in ESEA Title I (Compensatory Programs), the MDE receives four million dollars compared to the 80 million that is distributed to school districts (much of this four million is

¹Eugene Eidenberg and Roy D. Morey, An Act of Congress (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), Chapters 1 and 2.

²Adapted from Michigan Department of Education Fact Sheet, February, 1975.

TABLE 3--Federal Education Programs to be Administered by
MDE in Fiscal 1976^a

ESEA TITLE I (Grants to local districts) . . .	\$ 80,000,000
ESEA TITLE I (Grants to State agencies). . .	4,000,000
ESEA TITLE II.	5,100,000
ESEA TITLE III	6,454,000
ESEA TITLE V	1,175,000
ESEA TITLE VI.	2,340,000
ESEA TITLE V-C	<u>150,000</u>
TOTAL ESEA	\$ 99,000,000
School Nutritional Programs.	39,000,000
Vocational Education and Training.	21,000,000
Social Security Disability Determination . .	11,000,000
Vocational Rehabilitation (four programs). .	26,000,000
Concentrated Employment Training Act (CETA). .	2,800,000
All other federal programs	<u>8,308,500</u>
TOTAL non-ESEA	\$108,108,500
 Total for all federal programs	 \$207,327,500

^aSource: MDE Fact Sheet, February, 1975.

redistributed in the form of grants). The MDE also receives a considerable amount of Title III money (Innovative and Exemplary Projects) which is redistributed within state guidelines. Also within ESEA, the federal government provides direct money to state education agencies. Most of this Title V money is given as general aid to the state agencies, to assist with evaluation, research, dissemination and planning. Table 4 provides a summary of the Act as passed in 1965.

This tendency within ESEA to strengthen and support the state agencies is not an unintended effect. The 1964 Presidential Task Force on Education, the force behind ESEA, made its position very clear:

The role of the state is strategic. It supplies about 40 cents out of every dollar spent by the average local district. It has legal powers that affect every local district, e.g., its control over the size and shape of school districts. It plays a key role in information gathering for the state as a whole. Because of its fiscal contributions, its regulatory powers and its statewide perspective it enjoys a certain leadership potential--not always achieved but always there. . . The Task Force is deeply convinced that state education agencies must be given new strength and vitality . . .¹

In summary, federal aid to education almost doubled in 1965. Like other state agencies, the Michigan Department of Education received both direct and indirect revenue from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Staff

¹The Task Force, as reported in Jerome T. Murphy, State Education Agencies and Discretionary Funds (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath, 1974), p. 1.

TABLE 4.--A Summary of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965^a

TITLE I
Financial Assistance to Local Educational
Agencies for the Education of Children
of Low-Income Families

Policy: To provide financial assistance to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means (including pre-school programs) which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children.

TITLE II
School Library Resources, Textbooks, and
Other Instructional Material

Policy: To establish a program for making grants for the acquisition of school library resources, textbooks and other printed and published instructional materials for the use of children and teachers in public and private elementary and secondary schools.

TITLE III
Supplementary Educational Centers
and Services

Policy: To establish a program for making grants to supplementary educational centers and services, to stimulate and assist in the provision of vitally needed educational services not available in sufficient quantity or quality and to stimulate and assist in the development and establishment of exemplary elementary and secondary school educational programs to serve as models for regular school programs.

TITLE IV
Educational Research and Training

Policy and Funds: The title amends the Cooperative Research Act to authorize \$100,000,000 over the next five years for the construction of national and regional research facilities. In addition to the construction funds, there is provision for expansion of the current research programs administered by the Office of Education.

^aAdopted from Meranto, The Politics of Federal Aid to Education in 1965.

TABLE 4.--Continued.

TITLE V
Grants to Strengthen State Departments
of Education

Policy: To establish a program for making grants to stimulate and assist States in strengthening the leadership resources of their State educational agencies and to assist those agencies in the establishment and improvement of programs to identify and meet the educational needs of the state.

increased at that time also. Murphy observed, that nationally, "SEA staffs and budgets roughly doubled between 1965 and 1970."¹ The manner in which these changes affected the MDE will be observed in this study.

The Michigan Department of Education

The history of state involvement in education in Michigan can be traced to the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 which states that "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."² This language has been retained in the Michigan Constitution of 1963, a reminder of the broad powers of the state in education.

There are some functions of a central state education agency which seem to be common through time and across states. Teacher certification is one of these. State agencies generally disburse the state financial aid to schools, and act for the Legislature in regulating expenditure of those funds. State agencies have become increasingly involved in regulating--on behalf of their Legislatures--school management activities such as transportation,

¹Jerome T. Murphy, "Title V. of ESEA: The Impact of Discretionary Funds on State Education Bureaucracies," Harvard Educational Review, Volume 43, (1973), p. 365.

²_____, "A Statement on the Organization and Operation of the Michigan Department of Education," (Lansing, Michigan: 1972), Michigan Department of Education, p. 4.

physical plant, safety concerns, food services, and sometimes collective bargaining. Degree of control of curriculum varies. New York, for example, invests its Board of Regents with considerable control over curricular matters. In Michigan, however, these matters are constitutionally conceived to be the concern of the local districts. This is the domain in which the philosophy of local control takes precedence.

The domain of MDE has, however, been extended far beyond these general boundaries. Historically, 1965 was a turning point for MDE. It was in 1965 that the "new" constitution of 1965 actually took effect, creating the enlarged MDE.¹ It was also in 1965 that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) began to pour millions of dollars both into and through the new agency. Thus two environmental influences combined to impact on MDE concurrently.

Before the implementation of the 1963 constitution, there was an elected three-person State Board of Education. The Superintendent of Public Instruction was likewise elected by partisan vote. In 1962 the responsibilities of the central state agency were roughly those enumerated above-- and were restricted to the K-12 realm. A professional staff

¹Generally, the 1963 constitution is said to have taken effect as of January 1, 1964, but in the case of MDE the change was postponed another year to allow more time to prepare for the consolidation.

of 65 people¹ was available that year to implement the educational policies of the state. The Michigan Acts of 1935 determined the range of powers of that pre-1965 state education agency as "to prescribe courses of study, issue licenses and certificates, and grant diplomas and degrees in connection with several educational institutions of the state."² This definition matches the range of tasks which were listed above as being typical of a state education agency. The MDE has outgrown that role.

The present State Board of Education (SBE) is composed of eight members, nominated by party convention and elected at-large for eight year terms. They function as the "board of directors" of the MDE; they are the legally responsible body in the realm of education. The SBE membership is supplemented by the Governor who is an ex officio member, and acts as chairman of the Board at all meetings.

There have been two board appointed superintendents since the new constitution took effect.³ Dr. Ira Polley served in that capacity from 1965 to 1969, and Dr. John Porter--the present superintendent--followed Polley. The two have presided over the growth of the agency and its

¹Hines, et al., State Policy Making for Michigan.

²Michigan, Acts (1935) as quoted in Hines, et al., State Policy Making for Michigan, p. 27.

³A third, Dr. Alexander Kloster, served as acting superintendent until the appointment of Dr. Ira Polley later in 1965.

shift toward regulation and quantification. Polley was quoted as telling a legislative audience that "The role of the Department of Education is the same as that of any other state agency--to regulate!" On the other hand, it was Porter who, in a similar session, changed the name of the Department's basic staff level from consultant to educational specialist. He made the change on the spot to demonstrate to a critical audience that the Department was not a service agency but a "leader," not reactive but proactive. The point is not to contrast leadership style; it is to illustrate the consistency of action between the two leaders and the external events of the time. As shown in this chapter, the MDE has been pushed by both federal and state governments toward a regulative and quantitative stance. As will be shown throughout the data, this role was a comfortable one at all levels of MDE.

One obvious outcome of the changing roles for MDE was the growth of the agency. From 65 persons listed as "head office staff" in 1962, MDE had 242 in that category in 1972. The total Department staff in 1975 approximated 2500 persons. A majority of these positions were federally funded. This 2500 figure is a result of two factors. The first is simply growth in previously existing categories such as curriculum, vocational education, school management and finance, among others. The second factor is the addition of whole new chapters of responsibility. For example,

since 1962, MDE has taken responsibility for higher education planning and financial aid, community colleges, the whole ESEA program, Chapter 3, mandatory Special Education, and a host of other totally new roles.

It was not only the size of MDE which was affected by changes occurring during the past decade. The range of new tasks post-1965 required the development of a very diversified structure. The 1975 version of that structure is shown in the MDE organizational chart in Table 5.

There are five levels of management shown on that chart. The State Board of Education is the ultimately responsible body. The Superintendent is appointed by that Board and reports to them. The Deputy Superintendent alone forms the next level. There are four associate superintendents who are in turn superior to the 13 service area directors. The service area is the basic unit of organization of the MDE, and the 13 areas reflect the broad range of interests which MDE must serve.

There are two other elements shown on the chart in Table 5 which are worthy of some attention here. A large group of secondary boards and commissions report to the State Board of Education. Pre-1965, these were independent, but the new constitution required that there be no more than 20 primary state agencies. To achieve this, some previously independent bodies were required to report

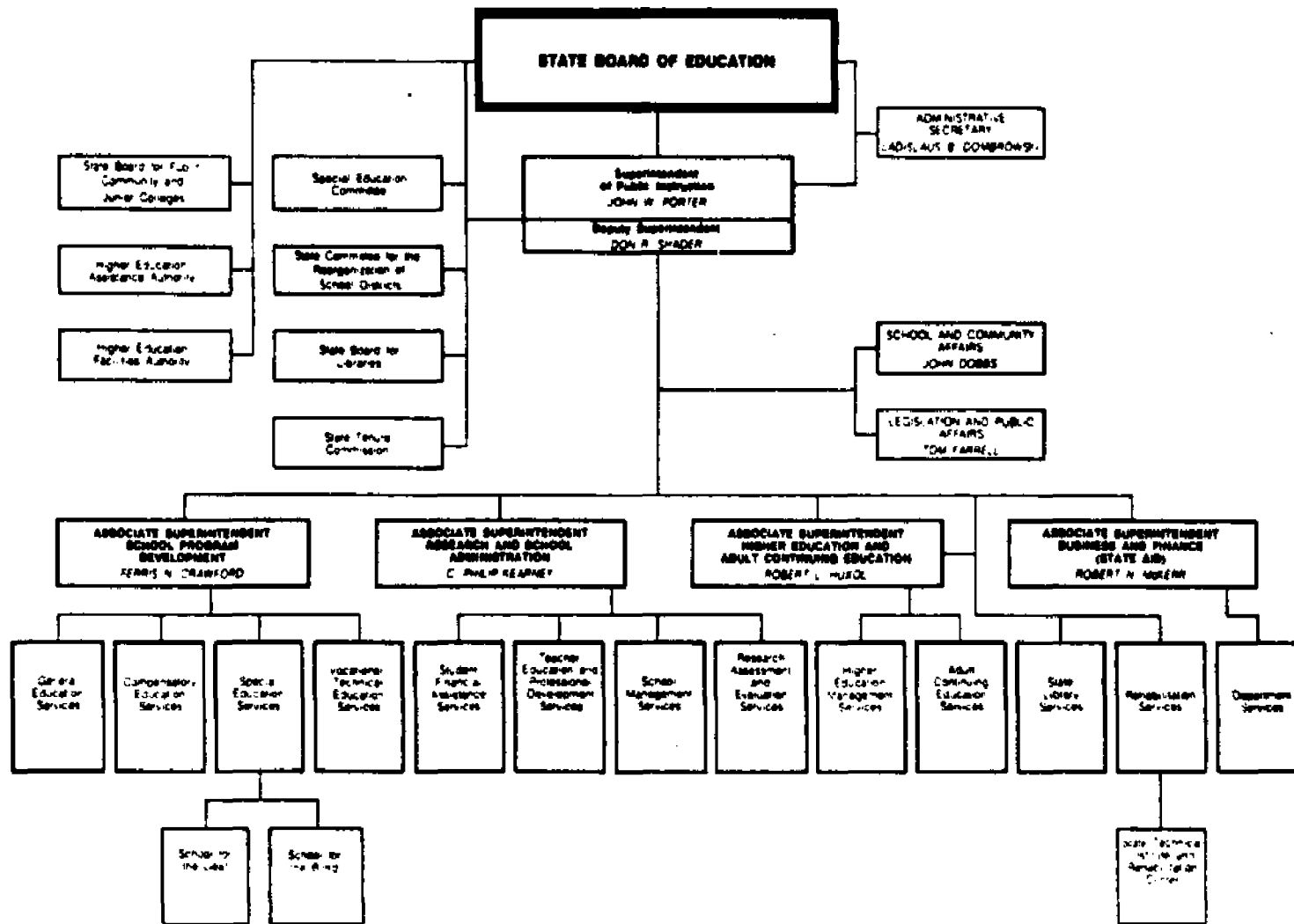


TABLE #5

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

to the State Board of Education, adding to the conglomerate nature of MDE.

The second subsection of the organization chart which should be emphasized here contains two staff positions: School and Community Affairs and Legislation and Public Affairs. These are essentially liaison units and together they interact with the state and federal governments, the general public, parent complaints and inquiries, and a broad range of minority interests. Some of these roles will emerge more fully later in this study.

The service areas have been described as very diverse, matching the broad range of environmental influences impinging on MDE. It is possible to rearrange those service areas according to clusters which have more meaning for our present purposes than the actual (Table 5) MDE organization. This is shown in Figure 5.

First, there is that central cluster of activities in which state education agencies typically engage. Four MDE service areas deal with these: General Education (curriculum), Teacher Education (includes certification), School Management, and Department Services (budget and finance). These are the core, the basic maintenance functions common to state education agencies.

There are two other state level activities in which MDE engages which are beyond these core activities. These are the State Library and Special Education; the latter

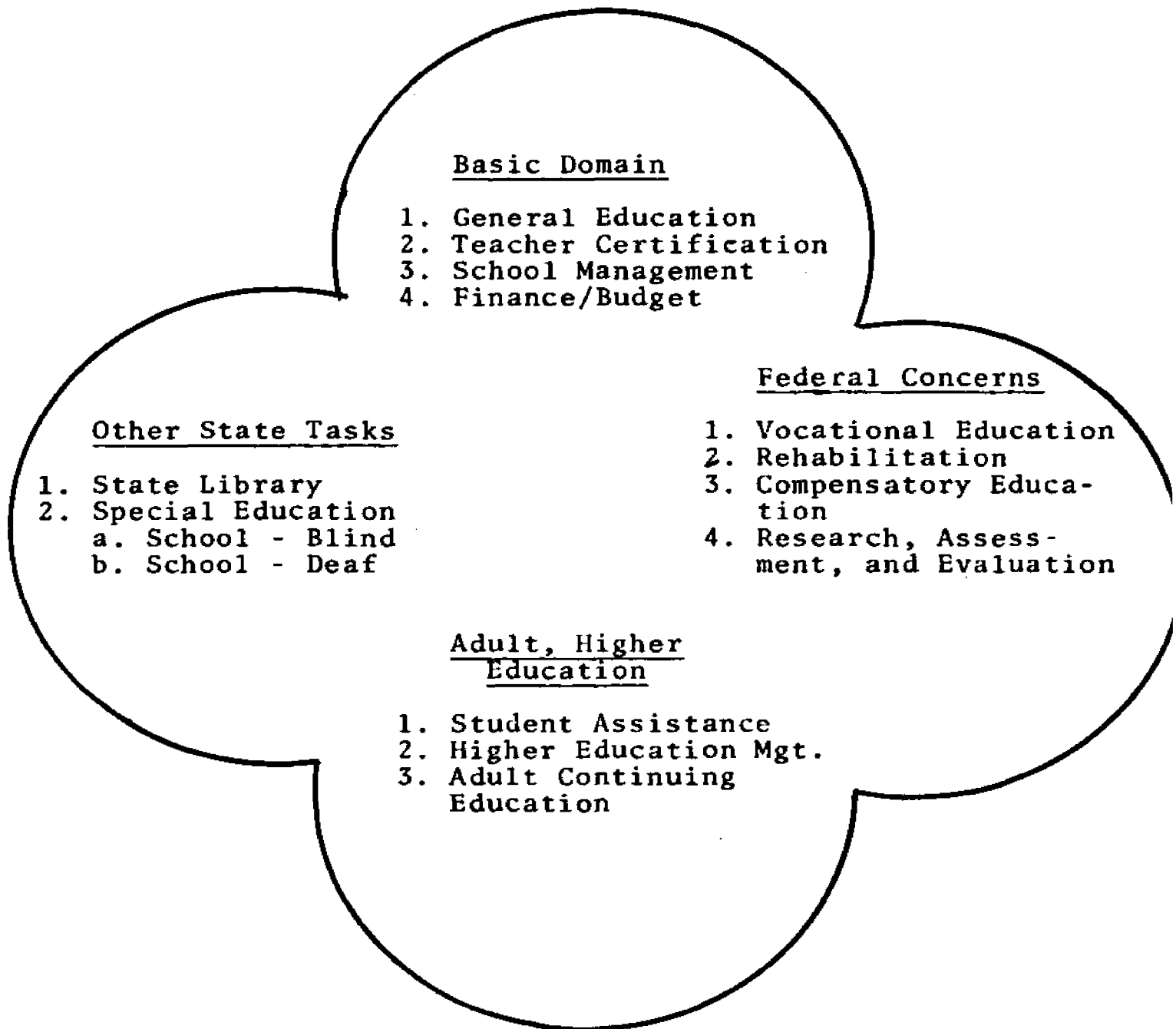


FIGURE 5.--The Range of Concerns of the Thirteen MDE Service Areas.

includes the two state-run schools for the deaf and the blind. While Michigan is not likely unique in assigning these activities to its state education agency, it is clear that they are an extension of the core tasks.

There are other programs which are primarily the result of federal influence, either via funding or regulation. Four service areas fall into this cluster: vocational education, rehabilitation services, compensatory education, and research, assessment and evaluation services. None of these operations is independent of either state dollars or control, but federal influence is large enough to be of interest here. The theme of federal impact will recur throughout this study.

The domain of MDE extends even beyond this, however, into the realm of higher education. MDE distributes and regulates dollars via Student Financial Assistance Services. MDE also attempts to regulate post secondary institutions through its Higher Education Management service area. A third service area, Adult Continuing Education Services, is responsible for an additional collection of non K-12 concerns.

This description and the illustrations in Figure 5 and Table 5 suggest that MDE is a large organization with a broad range of concerns and clientele. The increases, since 1965, in both size and diversity are thus documented. These have been associated with concurrent changes in functioning.

The MDE has been described earlier as increasingly concerned with regulation. The influences of the constitution, the state Legislature, and the federal government were introduced and will be considered in the fifth chapter of this study. One more view point may be helpful. One Associate Superintendent, Dr. Ferris Crawford, has been with MDE since 1946. While 29 years of service does not guarantee valid perceptions, it certainly suggests a rich source of data. Dr. Crawford has explicitly dealt with the changing functions of the Department over a period of 40 years. He agrees that 1965 is the turning point, and notes the following changes in the behavior of MDE now as compared to the 1935-1965 era.

First, according to Dr. Crawford, there is an increase in information-producing activities which he classifies as cooperative in a broad sense. There is now more reporting to the Legislature, governor, and citizens. An independent corroboration of this was provided by a document prepared by Superintendent Porter in which he listed 33 recurring yearly reports required from MDE. This list was supplemented on occasion by unpredictable requests, usually from the Legislature and Governor.

Second, Dr. Crawford perceived an increase in the advocacy activity of MDE as evidenced by proposed legislation, ongoing liaison, and position papers. MDE has (via the State Board) formally adopted position papers on a

variety of topics from desegregation through organization to compensatory education and telecommunications. There were roughly 30 of these at the time of the study. Each could thus be conceived of as a position which MDE advocated.

Third, Dr. Crawford viewed MDE as more regulative with regard to schools, being more concerned with rules, approvals, and state plans.

Fourth, he saw MDE as more advocative toward schools and colleges of education, trying to disseminate MDE notions concerning assessment, rational planning (Accountability) and other types of behavior focused by MDE.

Fifth--and not independent--he perceived that MDE was much less involved in cooperative shared-task behaviors with schools and colleges of education. Advocacy of the MDE positions on issues seems to have replaced an earlier tradition of cooperative undertakings. Dr. Crawford reported that "The cooperative efforts are pretty much down to committees and commissions."

While this study did not attempt to validate the perceptions of Dr. Crawford, it is a fact that a trend toward regulation and rationality observed in this research do agree at least in a general and descriptive way with the assertions reported above.

There is one additional characteristic of MDE which is of interest here. While large and diversified in

structure and clientele, MDE has no extensive regional operations. Still, its diversity is continued in its architecture. Of the 13 service areas, only one is housed in the same building as the central office. The other 12 service areas are scattered around the center of Lansing in ten different buildings. While it is dangerous to infer too much from such a small data set, it is interesting to note the consistent diversity in clientele, organizational structure, and physical location.

Thus MDE emerges as a large and complex organization functioning in an equally complex environment. Since that complex environment is the source of resources--and thus uncertainty--for MDE, it is appropriate to focus more specifically on that concept now.

On the Concept of Uncertainty

What does environmental uncertainty mean to the Michigan Department of Education? Generally, the agency must import energy--useable resources--in order to survive, produce output and grow. Such resources include money, personnel, information, favorable policy, and so on. These resources must be acquired from the environment of the MDE. The agency engages in a finite number of strategies to assure that it gets these resources from its environment, thus reducing uncertainty about that environment.

For example, money from the state forms the basic operating revenue of the MDE. This is an exchange relationship in simplest form; the agency gets funds to regulate those programs approved by the government. If the governor or the Legislature disapprove of some MDE endeavor, that endeavor is likely to remain unfunded. One would expect the agency to intercede at several levels to argue in favor of its own priorities.

Opposition from the Michigan Education Association (MEA) while not fatal to MDE, can certainly be a stumbling block. Thus, the position of the MEA on any issue is, at least conceptually, a potential source of uncertainty. As is shown later in this report, the MDE invests much energy in communicating with the MEA and in seeking coalitions where feasible. To remove a source of opposition and to possibly turn it into a fellow coalition-member, is to be very successful in reducing environmental uncertainty.

The federal Congress often passes legislation which remains unfunded or under-funded. Each year, the MDE faces uncertainty from Washington and may respond by hoping, trading, or lobbying to turn that uncertainty into dollars. Examples of situations like these are also included later.

In general, the MDE--like any organization--needs a supply of resources to operate. This study addresses the question of how the MDE reduces uncertainty about its continued supply of those resources from its environment.

Summary

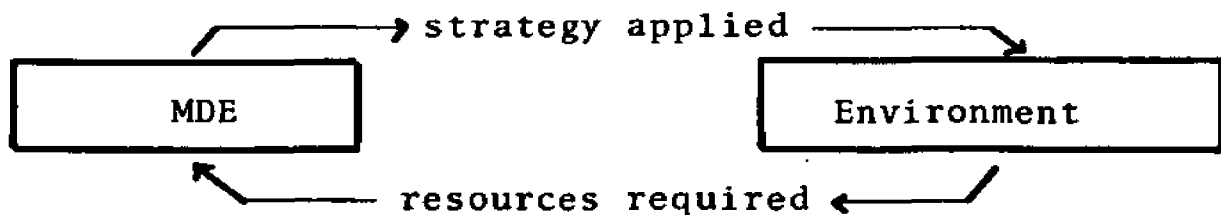
There is a finite set of resources that are useable by the Michigan Department of Education. These are listed and briefly described. A description of the agency and of the elements which compose its environment is provided. More detailed and specific descriptions of the agency (MDE) and of its environment will be included in the discussion of the seven case studies in chapter five of this dissertation.

The immediate task, however, is to expand the context of this study by reviewing the available literature which deals with educational agencies and/or with attempts by organizations to reduce environmental uncertainty. This will be accomplished in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To this point, a model has been developed in which the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is conceived of as seeking to reduce uncertainty in its environment. Specifically, the model suggests that MDE--or any other open system will engage in a variety of strategies to assure a continuing supply of resources from an uncertain environment. Thus the model has four parts: the organization, its environment, the resources sought, and the strategies used.



For this study of the Michigan Department of Education, the four parts of the model have been described at an operational level in chapters one and two.

There are two conceptually different subsections within this chapter. The body of literature which deals with the problem of reducing uncertainty is thoroughly investigated in the first chapter of this study where the

list of strategies is developed. Some of the works cited there will be recalled first to set the stage for this review chapter. None of those authors deal directly with the field of education, but all do consider organizations at some level. The second and largest section of this chapter is a review of studies of educational agencies. These typically do not have a theoretical stance which is directly compatible with the present study. They are, however, briefly described, and elements which contribute to the present task are identified.

Studies of Non-Educational Organizations

As mentioned earlier, the present study relies heavily on the work of James D. Thompson, particularly his definitive text Organizations in Action.¹ In that theoretical work, Thompson suggested that organizations seek to reduce uncertainty about their "task environment" in four ways, all of which have been included in this study. These are conflict, contracting, co-optation and coalition.² Each of these is fully described earlier in this study. Since Thompson's study is not based on field data, the concepts are not operationalized in his work.

¹Thompson, James D. Organizations in Action, 1967.

²These are discussed, and Thompson credited, in the first chapter of this dissertation.

Another theoretical work by Cyert and March, A Behavioral Theory of the Firm,¹ discussed the uses of coalition, usually in the business world. While that work is also referenced earlier in this study, it is especially worth retrieving now for two reasons. First, The Cyert and March study discusses coalitions which include some members of an agency with some outsiders. For example, the Quality Control division of an auto manufacturer could have such a good relationship with a state's Consumer Protection Agency that the two would constitute a coalition, trying to control the goals of the auto plant. It will be shown later in this study that some elements of the MDE often behave in this manner. The second reason that the Cyert and March emphasis on coalitions is immediately relevant relates to this chapter. Two studies of political influences on federal-level educational spending explore how coalitions formed to pass the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a major legislative action.

Philip Selznick,² contributed another study which has relevance here. He observed the Tennessee Valley Authority in its early years, and concluded that its major strategy for survival was one of co-optation. By including powerful local, regional, and even national elements in its decision making

¹Ibid.

²Selznick, TVA and the Grass Roots.

process, the agency avoided conflict and assured support for some of its policies. The land grant universities which shared sphere of influence of the TVA were the most critical instance of this co-optive strategy. In addition to the extension workers and country agents from the land grant institutions and state agencies, TVA shared its decision making with local business and political leaders, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Farm Bureau. This cost the TVA control and even success of some programs but others were able to continue: flood control, power generation and other agricultural innovations. This was still a powerful strategy for the TVA did not become reactive, it "gave away" its own independence--within limits--to improve the receptivity of its environment relative to other policies.

Even though Selznick focused on only one of the several strategies considered in this study of the Michigan Department of Education, his work makes two points of direct relevance here. First, co-optation is a reliable means to assure survival--to reduce uncertainty about resources. Second, strategies must often be directed to elements in the environment having only indirect control of monetary resources. Those organizations which were co-opted by TVA were typically providers of more abstract resources such as policy commitment and public support. Similar cases will be described in this MDE study.

In his Bureaucratic Phenomenon,¹ Michel Crozier uses an open systems perspective in a study of the French Civil Service. He argues that the Civil Service had, at the time of his study, lost its ability to act proactively, to shape its own environment.² Change in the rest of the world--both public and private--plus an increasing number of low-ability, low-investment staff reduce the ability of the agency to intervene out into its environment. Crozier postulated that the French bureaucracy was becoming so atrophied that it was losing even its reactive abilities.

While there are few similarities between the agencies, the Crozier work does have much relevance to the present effort. First, it demonstrates the descriptive and explanatory utility of open systems theory in organizational research. Second, it focuses attention on the desirability of the capacity to act proactively in attempts to reduce uncertainty. Last, it suggests that the desirability of reducing uncertainty is operative not only at the organizational level but at the level of the individual workers as well. The first two conclusions have the most direct application to the present study since the focus is at the level "organization."

The discussion of any organization which provides the most direct support for the stance of the present MDE

¹Ibid, 1964.

²Ibid, p. 308.

study is provided by Charles Perrow.¹ Perrow reviews a series of studies of organizations and credits those who do case studies of organizations² with three successes. He first applauds those researchers for doing wholistic studies, because "the emphasis upon the organization as a whole forces upon us a conception of the variety of organizations."³ Second, Perrow notes that case studies demonstrate the fact that "at least some organizations do take on a life of their own and irrespective of the desires of those presumably in control."⁴ This is not so anthropomorphic as it may sound when one takes a systems view; if an organization is an open system it has needs and capacities which are different from the simple sum of its parts. The fact that there are usually unintended consequences to human actions within organizations affirms, according to Perrow, the wisdom of recognizing that another level of entity is operative. The third area of contribution, according to Perrow,

of the institutional school must surely be the emphasis on the environment. No other model of organizations

¹Charles Perrow, Complex Organizations. Glencoe, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973, Chapter 5, pp. 177-204.

²Perrow calls these researchers members of the "Institutional School."

³Ibid, p. 187.

⁴Ibid, p. 188.

has taken the environment into account as much as the institutional model.¹

For the purpose of the present study a closer examination of that assertion is required.

Concerning organizations and their environments, Perrow raises two questions of direct relevance for this study of the Michigan Department of Education. Perrow first complains that, in most available studies,

parts of the 'environment' are seen as affecting organizations, but the organization is not seen as defining, creating and shaping its environment.²

His second notion concerns the elements of the environments of organizations.

The environment of most powerful organizations is . . . made up of other organizations with similar interests or ones they control.³

Perrow asserts that organizations exist in an environment which is composed of other organizations. He is not convinced that organizations are always simply reactive to the larger society, to their environment. Organizations behave in a proactive manner, having great influence on the behavior of the members of their environment.

Society is adaptive to organizations, to the large, powerful organizations controlled by a few, often

¹Ibid, p. 189, emphasis added. Perrow realizes that others have recognized and studied environments but credits the institutional school with providing real-life case studies.

²Ibid, p. 199.

³Ibid, p. 199.

overlapping, leaders. To see these organizations as adaptive to a 'turbulent,' dynamic ever-changing environment is to indulge in fantasy.¹

This is certainly the view advanced in the first chapter of this dissertation. In fact, regarding the MDE, not only have the members of the environment been identified, but the resources and strategies which are the connecting parts of the model have also been described. Perrow's work is very supportive of the present study which has, in turn, extended his model to some degree.

The realm of proactive strategies has had some other smaller studies. Emery and Trist² discuss means of reducing uncertainty and conclude that in complex environments, conflict is judged to be almost always counter-productive in the long run in such environments. They describe examples or organizations which have successfully used cooperative strategies such as exchange, co-optation, or coalition. In a review of research on health care agencies, Levine and White³ found that an exchange pattern was followed by clusters of health-care organizations. Each assured that the other received referrals, and each respected the specialized domain of the others. This was considered to be a stable, long-term exchange relationship, and was judged by the

¹Ibid, p. 199.

²Emery and Trist, Environments.

³Levine and White, "Health Organizations."

authors as being successful at assuring a certain supply of resources. Both Thompson and Anthony Downs¹ discuss the tendency of organizations to grow and expand influence. Thompson discusses the values of vertical integration, of annexing a source of supply (of resources) or a market.

The above studies suggest a preference for proactive strategies. This study conceives of five proactive strategies, strategies in which an organization acts on its environment, it intervenes rather than reacts, changes the environment rather than itself. These five strategies are competition, bargaining, co-optation, coalition, and annexation. But these are not the only strategies available to an organization. Organizations may also employ passive strategies (ignore, absorb) and reactive strategies (post facto response, measure, predict, avoid, maintain options, and increase options). These have not been popular topics for study. A review of the development of the list of strategies in chapter one of this study will make clear that fewer authors have attempted to operationalize these concepts at the level of organizational behavior. Emery and Trist do consider strategies of this type, but only on the way to concluding that modern organizations exist in an environment which is so complex that only proactive, cooperative strategies (bargain, co-opt, coalition) are viable.

¹Downs, Inside Bureacracy.

In summary, there are some theoretical works and some studies in the field which deal with the problem of reducing uncertainty at the organizational level. All of those included here save one¹ are concerned with events at the level "organization," not directly with the actions of the people who make up the system. There is emphasis on the use of proactive strategies. Those authors who have considered other strategies conclude that those strategies which are labelled proactive here are the most likely to be successful for an organization. With that summary in mind, the focus will now shift to studies of educational agencies.

Studies of Educational Agencies

Studies of educational agencies have typically had a less thorough theoretical grounding than those reviewed immediately above. Consequently, more care will be needed to first describe the content of each study and second to make explicit how each contributes to the present argument. Recall that the model is concerned with means by which organizations (acting as open systems) use the strategies already discussed to reduce uncertainty about the continued supply of resources from their environments. The organization under study is the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), a state education agency.

¹Crozier, Bureaucratic Phenomenon.

The first work to be reviewed compares the education agencies of the 50 states.

This description of state agencies by Sam P. Harris focuses on federal impact, but also provides an excellent introduction to the examination of state-level influences. Harris reports:

The United States Constitution does not specifically mention education; the 10th amendment provides that "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Education is regarded as a State function in our constitutional arrangement.¹

But the problem of interaction between the various actors at the state level is not as simple as the above might suggest.

Such problems associated with State Boards of Education have prevented their taking a more active role in the State policy system: (1) many board members have almost no comprehension of the State's resources; (2) while policy determination is explicit, many board members have no legitimate powers--the State legislature is likely to retain the prerogative for most education policies; and (3) typical State board members have insufficient standing with the Governor and/or legislature as a source of information, advice or policy.²

This sets the stage for the present study. The situation Harris describes is typical, he says, and true in Michigan in part. The agency in Michigan is limited in its legal ability to influence education and it is indeed the

¹Sam P. Harris, State Departments of Education, State Boards of Education, and Chief State School Officers, Washington: D.H.E.W., 1973, p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 110.

Legislature, as will be shown later in this study, which holds power here. If the MDE is to influence policy making in Michigan, it will have to deal with the two environmental elements referred to by Harris: the Legislature and the Governor. This introduces--or reintroduces--the central question of the present study in context. How will the MDE act to acquire resources (to reduce uncertainty about supply of resources) from these two elements in its environment? What strategies will be used? These questions are, of course, dealt with in chapter five of this study.

A work by James Koerner carries a 1968 date, but describes conditions in the states that were not typically true at that time.¹ Koerner complains about problems of rurally dominated legislatures, restrictive constitutions, and part-time legislators. He describes the chief state school officers and state agencies as "characteristically weak and ineffective."² The work is interesting in that it describes how things are not in 1975, industrial, Michigan. Our well-paid, representative, full-time Legislature has problems, but not those described by Koerner. Still, the Koerner book helps to make clear some important points which will emerge within this study of MDE. First, the Legislature in 1975 Michigan is not subject to rural domination, and is

¹James D. Koerner, Who Controls American Education? (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

²Ibid., p. 91.

a full-time body. As will be shown later it has been very active in passing education-related legislation. Thus it is, at least potentially, a major force in the environment of MDE, perhaps more so than if the situation Koerner described were true.

The almost-classical description of state-level policy making in education by Laurence Iannacone is much more helpful.¹

Iannacone uses, albeit briefly, a systems perspective. His definitions of the main points of open systems theory do not differ substantively from those presented earlier in this study. The core of his general argument is that systems in education--classrooms, schools, or districts--manage to function as closed systems because of political impediments to change. It is for this reason he opposes non-partisan involvement and staggered elections; he would prefer that education entered the partisan political world openly.

Iannacone is primarily concerned with the nature and behavior of the professional educators in each state. This generally includes members of all interest groups: teachers, administrators, board members, and state leaders. He created a typology based on the extent to which such interest groups are (1) individually strong on a state-wide basis, and (2)

¹Laurence Iannacone, Politics in Education, (New York: Center for Applied Research, 1968).

united across groups. Michigan is the only member of a category called 'state-side fragmented.' In this pattern, the varying interests, all individually strong, come to the legislature, governor, or courts, disunited but individually intense. Since the present study does not intend to be comparative across states, no further investigation of Iannacone's categories will be undertaken. The key point is the potentially competitive pattern of interest group action in Michigan.

If the interest groups in Michigan are, as Iannacone says, both strong and disunited, then the MDE faces a very complex environment. According to Emery and Trist, cooperative strategies would be called for (bargain, co-opt, coalesce) as opposed to competition. How is this handled? Iannacone conceives of the interest groups as possessing considerable potential resources such as information, lobbying support, policy commitments, and votes. The present study asks whether MDE acts to acquire a certain supply of these and whether cooperative strategies do dominate.

The largest recent examination of state-level, policy making in education was released in August of 1974 by the Educational Governance Project (EGP).¹ The Ohio State University prepared the research which culminated in a

¹Raold F. Campbell and Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr., editors, State Policy Making for the Public Schools, (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University, 1974).

14 volume report, using U.S.O.E. Title V funds. This report included 12 volumes of case studies from the 12 states sampled, and two summary volumes. The summary volumes and the Michigan report are considered in the present review.

The writers purport to use a systems framework for examining policy decisions. For each of 12 states, the following actors were described: governor, state board, chief state school officer, state agency staff and interest groups. The authors express the intent to treat the legislature and the courts (especially the former) as non-central, as "givens." In fact, the legislature is treated as the central system and the others emerge as merely potential influences. The present study of MDE would suggest that the fact of the EGP report describes reality better than the intent.

In essence, the authors postulate a simple exchange model of policy making, with conflict and exchange as the primary strategies. From this rather simple conceptual model the authors exhibit much creativity in forming conclusions. The rich case study data, which was almost totally neglected in the summary volumes, may have contributed to their insight.

The EGP report is very critical of the Iannacone typology. The EGP writers objected to Iannacone's emphasis on interest groups and neglect of the state education agencies, particularly of the state boards of education.

It was also observed that more states tended in 1973-74 to look like Michigan; with a number of strong, state-wide groups in open conflict. This was predictable from Iannaccone's model. The EGP report did not in any state find a single "monolith" of all education groups in formal and on-going coalition, even though "in most states, the 'education lobby' was perceived as being among the most influential in the state."¹ The EGP did find both CSSOs and governors to be active members of the policy making group in almost every instance.

None of the case studies selected by the EGP within their study of Michigan is duplicated in this study. Some general observations will, however, lead to comparable data. It is a measure of the thoroughness of the EGP report (or perhaps an artifact of their methodology) that it concludes "Given Porter's strength with other state educational policy making system components, however, the groups have been able to do little more than 'gripe' about their relationship."² This should be remembered in the discussions of Chapter 3, Special Education, and Higher Education which follow in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

The specific Michigan data presented in the EGP report support the general conclusion of their study and

¹Ibid., p. 37.

²See E. Hines et. al., State Policy Making for the Public Schools of Michigan (one of the EGP volumes), p. 139.

reaffirm the earlier observations of Iannacone. All members of the policy making arena perceive the interest groups in Michigan to be divided. The study did not, however, pick up the distinction between administrators in general, as represented by the Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) and the highly specific, visible, and powerful interests of the urban school districts. This phenomenon will be examined in the present study.

The EGP study contributes in several ways to this study of MDE. The EGP study did reaffirm Iannacone's assertion that interest groups in Michigan were very strong and apparently disunited. The emphasis in the EGP study of the role of the Governor agrees with the expanded definition of the environment of MDE employed in the present study. There are more influences operating than interest groups. There was little investigation in the EGP study of instances in which non-formal arrangements contribute to the development of policy; arrangements such as bargains or coalitions, for example. The EGP study considered three major issues: finance, desegregation and the Assessment Program. Of these, only the last was an instance in which a state education agency could hope to have any significant legal authority. Legislatures tend to retain power over finance and desegregation efforts have inevitably ended in the courts. Consequently the present study of seven cases might reasonably expect to acquire more information about the active roles of the MDE in education.

A thoughtful examination of a single issue, the implementation of the Chapter Three compensatory education program, is supplied by Murphy and Cohen.¹ The coverage is both concise and thorough, and is worthy of considerable space here.

There was pressure in 1970 to change previous allocation methods for the state compensatory education program. The 1971 legislation authorized distribution of money to the lowest performers on the state assessment tests. Refunding each successive year was to be pro-rated according to the number of children in the program who achieved at a predetermined level the previous year. When the possibility of penalizing some districts in the 1972-73 allocations arose, a waiver was written, supposedly to cover only that year. The most visible argument was that districts had been given too little time to have impact in 1971-72, since the initial legislation was not passed until October of 1972.

When the issue arose again in the summer of 1973, the legislature was faced with reducing payment by five million dollars, the bulk of which would be taken from Detroit. A new clause, 39a, was created, agreeing to fund districts at the same level as before if they would only adopt a different delivery system. Allocation for 1973-74 was handled

¹Jerome T. Murphy and David K. Cohen, "Accountability in Education; the Michigan Experience," Public Interest, Vol. 36, Summer 1974, pp. 53-81.

in that manner. Murphy and Cohen report that resulting changes observed in five schools were trivial.

The other requirements of Chapter Three are previous specifications of objectives coupled with pre- and post-testing of those objectives. This provision, according to the authors, did not raise serious controversy. Murphy and Cohen did, however, regard the reporting of huge successes via Chapter Three (particularly by state Superintendent of Education John Porter) as questionable, asserting that too little hard data had been amassed to warrant such conclusions.

The Chapter Three program is one of the seven cases chosen for thorough study in this dissertation. Thus much of what was reported by Murphy and Cohen will be reiterated later in this report. For the moment, the Murphy and Cohen article is of value in helping establish the focus of the present study. It is clear that the Chapter Three program is ultimately under the control of the legislature. It was also made very clear by Murphy and Cohen (and this study also) that MDE was and is very interested the Chapter Three program. When the MDE versus Legislature conflict arose, MDE immediately lost--why? What motivated the legislature to remove the power of MDE to withhold funds? That there were other elements of the environment involved is the assertion of this study, and a careful description of that activity will follow in a later chapter. Thus it is possible to accommodate the

Murphy and Cohen results within the model developed in the first chapter of this dissertation. Further, the model is so complete that it suggests additional questions about the Chapter Three issue, questions beyond the Murphy and Cohen article--these questions, e.g., "What other actors?", "were proactive strategies used?"--are dealt with later in this study.

The large impact of federal programs--particularly of ESEA--has been discussed. Summaries of their programs and of their impact on MDE are available in Tables 3, 4 and 5. We will now turn to a review of research about the development and consequences of some recent federal involvement in education.

A statement by Iannacone sets the theme of most of the available literature, in that he feels not only will the states' role not be usurped by federal involvement, but federal dollars "are likely to increase the power of the states over education."¹ With that introduction it is appropriate to turn to a pair of major examinations of the newest major federal program, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965.

Philip Meranto uses a systems approach in his study of the passage of ESEA.² Meranto used a modification of

¹Ibid., p. 37.

²Philip Meranto, The Politics of Federal Aid to Education in 1965, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967).

the political systems approach developed by David Easton and mentioned earlier. Meranto conceives of the legislation as output of Congress--the system--and asks what inputs led to that particular output. He is particularly concerned with changes between 1961, when a similar bill was rejected, and 1965, when ESEA was passed.

Two levels of change are considered, environmental changes, and changes within the legislative system. Meranto argues that the ten variables he subsumes under those two levels were all crucial to passage of the Act; a negative condition for any one would have prevented passage. The data that he presents in a discussion of those ten relevant input variables is convincing; the case for complexity is well made. This notion of interdependence is the essence of a systems view.

The Meranto study has several implications for the present examination of the Michigan Department of Education. First, he views environmental changes as inputs, and also considers changes within the Congress as input factors (he follows Easton in referring to these as withinputs). In this study of the MDE, it has been asserted that interactions and changes within the system will not be considered. Such a stance is supportable in the present context since change over time is not a major focus. If, however, the MDE were to be viewed over a long term in the same way that Meranto viewed the U.S. Congress, it would be necessary to take

account of internal changes over time. The same would be true for any attempt to compare two or more states.

Meranto recognizes that the interest groups who lobby the U.S. Congress must be viewed as sources of inputs, or in Easton's terms, as 'demand articulators.' He devotes less attention than the present study to the complexity of the exchanges that occur, and tends to restrict himself to a "pressure group" sort of view of the interest groups. This study will take more of an exchange view, arguing that the interest groups do bring valuable resources to the "bargaining table."

Certainly the recognition by Meranto that a complex coalition was necessary to pass ESEA is helpful to the present MDE study. Meranto, however, is not the only author to deal with that phenomenon.

While Meranto's work is an insightful summary, the definitive study of ESEA was prepared by Bailey and Mosher.¹ Some elements of that report will help to give context to this observation of MDE-federal relations. The U.S. Office of Education (USOE) used--or was affected by--many of the strategies outlined in the first chapter of this dissertation.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) was one of the oldest allies of the Office of Education.

¹Steven K. Bailey and Edith K. Mosher, ESEA: The Office of Education Administers a Law, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968).

In recent years, the Council has become a powerful lobbying force. It was the National Defence Education Act (NDEA) that finally began to make the Office of Education a force in its own right.

It is clear that ESEA was passed as a result of an unlikely coalition of government and interest-group elements. Instead of creating a true general aid bill, the Congress made ESEA a collage of categoricalals which had the same result but which was more politically saleable. There was something for everyone, but the unwritten prohibition against overt general aid was not violated.

When initial USOE guidelines for Title I were perceived as too restrictive, the states--especially the CCSSO--lobbied vigorously and successfully. As a result, much more discretion within the allocation formula was given to states.

The U.S. Office used an openly co-optive strategy when implementing Title V. A meeting was held with state agency staffs and chiefs. In June, all CSSOs attended a briefing session with U.S. Office personnel regarding the whole ESEA bill. Concurrently, the U.S. Office had created a large questionnaire concerning Title V and had mailed it to a dozen states for feedback. Finally, OE personnel hand-carried the revised questionnaire to all states and helped them to complete it.

The Bailey and Mosher study has two lessons for the present MDE study. First, it provides some context for the

federal programs discussed here. Second, it demonstrates that at least some of the strategies discussed in the conceptual framework of this study do indeed operate in the world of education and politics. Coalition was necessary to pass the initial ESEA legislation. Conflict, especially that voiced by the Chief State School Officers, was also a successful strategy from the point of view of the state agencies. The use of co-optation by the U.S. Office of Education indicates a recognition there of at least one proactive strategy. This precedent at the federal level is at least indirectly supportive of the present attempt to investigate how a state agency applies similar strategies to reduce uncertainty in its environment.

The report by Sam P. Harris, mentioned earlier, deals with many elements of interest in the context of federal programs. For example, throughout his report there is a theme of increasing service replacing older regulatory behaviors. It will be evident later that there is some disagreement with this view in Michigan.

Harris perceives that state agencies have become more proactive, having ". . . evolved from a position of merely reacting to and reflecting their environment to that of actively taking the lead in shaping it."¹ Harris suggests that federal money has contributed to this overall strengthening of the state agencies, and that the outcome was

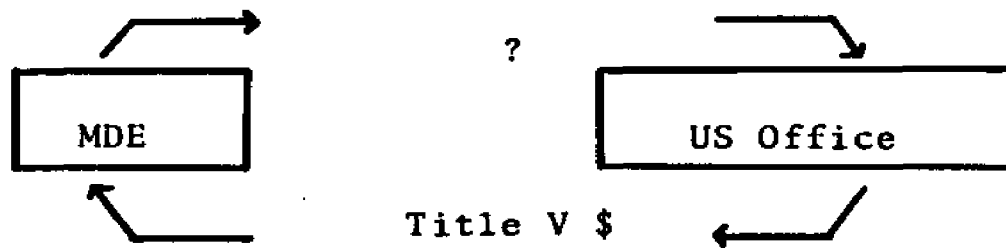
¹Ibid., p. 22.

intended. Harris believes that Title V particularly occurred because ". . . Congress had evidence that where federal funds were limited to categorical program administration, serious imbalances in the staffing of state agencies occurred and gaps in needed services existed."¹ According to Harris, the highly discretionary nature of Title V was an attempt to allow agencies to fill these gaps, to build new optional responses, to achieve more complexity and proactive ability.

Harris believes that the largest agency problem before ESEA was staffing. Staffs were, he says, too small, underqualified, rurally-oriented, and agency-centered. While he believes that ESEA, especially Title V, has helped, such positions are still typically bureaucratic. Staff are restricted by 8 to 5 rules, travel restrictions, and a general orientation away from their professional counterparts.

This section of the Harris report has two contributions to the present study. First, it serves as a useful introduction to Title V of ESEA in which state agencies including MDE were given federal money to strengthen themselves. This money had very few restrictions according to Harris. In the model developed for the present study, the interaction could be described like this:

¹Ibid., p. 24.



The value of the model is exemplified in that it raises the question about what strategy was employed, what did MDE do in return? The discussion of Title V later in this study will address that question. Second, the general picture of a growing, more proactive agency provided by Harris provides an interesting point of departure, and his description of the remaining restrictions affecting state agencies suggests further questions to ask about MDE.

Two very useful discussions of separate ESEA programs are provided by Jerome T. Murphy. Let us first review his report of Title I.

The article analyses the status of Title I as of 1970. Primary emphasis is on the author's home state, Massachusetts. As a former USOE staff member (1964-1969), Murphy's analysis is especially interesting, although it is often impressionistic rather than systematic.

Murphy describes Title I as an act which responded to a variety of demands. One was the vision of staffers in the Kennedy (and later Johnson) administrations for real educational reform. Other purposes include "breaking the federal aid barrier, raising achievement, pacifying the

ghettos, building bridges to private schools, and providing fiscal relief to school districts."¹

Murphy asserts that the U.S. Office of Education has had little success in imposing its will on the states or on the school districts. The formula grant system of allocating funds "past" states to districts was the main cause, "while it by-passes state and local governments, it establishes a virtual entitlement for each state and locality once the amount of federal appropriation is known."² Thus the U.S. Office is hardly in a position to exert real authority either over the state agencies or through them. The service-orientation of USOE combined with a reluctance to publicly label any part of this massive program a failure contributed to that impotence. When USOE tried to cut off funds to Chicago for civil rights violations in 1965, the attempt was vetoed by President Johnson.³ Murphy suggests that USOE generally lets the locals go their way, and trusts the states for information. USOE efforts to enforce separate regulations calling for parent involvement and minimum expenditure per pupil were frustrated by Congressional pressure from state agencies and district administrators.⁴ However,

¹Jerome T. Murphy, "Title I of ESEA: The Politics of Implementing Educational Reform," Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 41, Number 1, February, 1971, p. 43.

²Ibid., p. 39.

³Ibid., p. 45.

⁴See also Bailey and Mosher on this problem.

when those same lobbies received USOE support to disallow use of Title I money for clothing, parent lobbies persuaded the Secretary of HEW to intervene, softening the decision.

Massachusetts is examined as an example of state efforts to selectively enforce Title I regulations, or to subvert them.¹ Murphy describes that state agency's Title I office as underfunded and understaffed. Staff there also saw their orientation as one of serving rather than monitoring. Evaluation efforts were minimal but increasing. Since the money cannot be withheld by the state agency, effort to comply with guidelines tended to be perfunctory. Attempts at enforcement of federal guidelines by the states were most zealous "when state priorities are consistent with federal priorities, (when) the states can use the federal priorities to back up their efforts to influence local policy."² Likewise, the local district administrators align themselves with the state on federal views when such views converge-- but only then.

What is the relevance for this study of the Michigan Department of Education? First, the Murphy analysis describes a highly limited role for the state agency in relation to Title I. Second, the state agency is pictured as opportunistic, aligning with "the feds" when purposes

¹Ibid., p. 54.

²Ibid., p. 59.

matched, and at other times joining with local educators as opposing USOE. Third, the USOE is viewed as equally impotent in ability to seriously impact upon local or state agencies. Fourth and last, the cause of all of the above is at least alluded to: the pipeline from the U.S. Congress usually carries money directly to the school district on a formula basis. Opportunity for bureaucrats to skim off power or influence is limited--but it does exist.

How then does Title I contribute to the ability of a state agency to reduce uncertainty? Murphy does allude to selective enforcement of guidelines. A state agency can be more or less aggressive in enforcing guidelines as it chooses. This creates the possibility of interactions with two elements of the agencies environment, the local districts and the US Office of Education. The suggestion of increased power of the parent groups opens up a new realm of potential alliances or conflicts. There is still another option, according to the Murphy study and the model presented here. A state agency can literally assume a passive stance and simply collect its administrative allocation (about one percent). Title I is "flow-through" money, and state agencies including MDE are allocated a small proportion to cover their costs in monitoring the funds. Barring the total collapse of ESEA, there is little uncertainty associated with Title I. Thus a less aggressive state agency would not be likely to agitate for any major change except perhaps for more dollars.

This is not the case in Michigan, where the MDE is seeking a total change in the funding mechanism and criteria for Title I. Passive strategies are not the norm in MDE!

More power for state agencies is available from the one federal title that is exclusively concerned with them, Title V. In two lengthy examinations of Title V, J. Murphy applies several theoretical concepts.^{1,2} After observing Title V outcomes in nine states, Murphy's general conclusion was that Title V led to "more of the same," that existing programs used Title V to expand what they were already doing. There was little innovation or experimentation.

Two of his interpretations are of interest here. The first is the determination that state agencies typically behave reactively, applying even new resources to nearby, visible problems, because these are more known, more certain problems. Long range planning involves dealing with uncertainty; Murphy concludes that state agencies avoid even that much association with uncertainty. For that reason Murphy summarizes: "It is not surprising that organizations tend to behave like fire companies, moving from crisis to crisis extinguishing brush fires, rather than developing long range plans."³ Which is true in Michigan?

¹Jerome T. Murphy, State Agencies and Discretionary Funds, (Lexington, Massachusetts: Heath, 1974).

²Jerome T. Murphy, "Title V of ESEA: The Impact Of Discretionary Funds on State Education Bureaucracies," Harvard Educational Review, Volume 43, Number 3, August, 1973.

³Murphy, "Title V of ESEA," p. 374.

Second, Murphy concluded that new Title V resources were allocated informally, according to the needs and wishes of internal coalitions. "The needs of the SEA are defined not by any formal assessment, but by the desires of those with access to the bargaining game. If a need does not have an advocate, it is usually not considered."¹ Such coalitions could, however, include members beyond the agency, thus strengthening their case. Murphy did not, though, discuss the use of such boundary-spanning coalitions as useful means to reduce uncertainty about future demands from external coalition members.

Murphy focused exclusively on the basic section of Title V, section 503. This section accounts, after 1968, for 95% of the total allocation. The present study will follow that lead, ignoring the other subsections except where their use is helpful in making a point. This does occur in one instance in chapter five.

In addition to constraints already mentioned, Murphy argues that Title V money generally had little impact because rational planning was simply not an acceptable method for allocating funds in most cases. Agencies followed a pattern of least possible change, least possible risk. The status quo was likely to be the unwritten guideline. But in 1965, the Michigan Department had just barely recovered from

¹Ibid., p. 372.

the huge reorganization which resulted from the 1964 Constitution. There may have been less ability to define "the status quo," and thus to pledge allegiance to it.

Murphy's is the first study of an educational agency to deal explicitly with the concept of uncertainty. It also suggests a preference for reactive behaviors rather than for long-range (proactive) planning. This contrasts with the work of Emery and Trist who advocate proactive, cooperative strategies for organizations operating in complex environments. Such disagreement among theories is likely to be productive. The conflict will be addressed in the discussion of Title V which is included in this study of MDE.

Murphy also follows the lead of Cyert and March in recognizing the influence of boundary-spanning coalitions. This is the only use in the articles and books reviewed of that concept; a concept which emerges in many instances in this study of MDE. Murphy suggests that state education agencies were constrained by outsiders (in part) in decisions to spend the "discretionary" Title V money. Whether such constraints existed in the MDE situation will be addressed. The general question about the ability of organizations in the environment of MDE to affect the behavior of the agency by controlling its supply of resources pervades this research.

Conclusion

The literature from outside of the field of education which introduced this chapter tended to be more sophisticated in use of open systems theory. Studies of educational organizations were usually descriptive in nature. These were, however, easily integrated into the framework developed earlier in this study. Education agencies do exist in environments, and must engage in some type of strategies to assure a continuing supply of resources. Of the studies which dealt with education-related agencies, some focused on state-level policy decisions, some were concerned with federal involvement through ESEA. In both types, varying interpretations of systems theory occur. There is consensus that state education agencies have grown, but less agreement about whether they have become more influential or proactive. There appears to be a lot of variability on these and other dimensions among the states. Specific references to Michigan were contained in three major works, helping to make their more general themes applicable here.

In the only direct reference to uncertainty in the education studies, it was argued that state agencies generally choose reactive behaviors because these involve less uncertainty in the short term. While the authors reviewed contributed to a general descriptive-level understanding on the elements in the environment surrounding MDE, there was limited direct discussion of the means by which agencies

interact with these elements to reduce uncertainty. It was in these cases that the model developed in this study was imposed to explain, after the fact, how these agencies acted to reduce uncertainty. Examples of the means by which MDE accomplishes this reduction of uncertainty will be provided in the fifth chapter of this dissertation. In the immediately following (fourth) chapter, a discussion of the means by which those data were gathered will be presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

The chapter contains two major components. The first is a review of some of the literature about field studies and including examples of some studies which have relevance for the present undertaking. This component concludes with a summary, taken from the literature, of the major requirements of a field study.

The second component describes the methodology used in this study of the Michigan Department of Education. First, the specific methods are described. Second, the application of the methods is discussed. Third, a discussion of the ways in which this study conforms to the requirements defined earlier is presented.

The overall goal of the chapter, of course, is to show the reader how the advice of the authors reviewed in the first half of the chapter has been fruitfully applied in the study methodology which is described in the second half.

Concerning the Adequacy of Field
Methodology

In this section a two part review of a sample of the literature related to field studies is presented. First, several authors who discuss how and when one ought to do a field study are reviewed. Second, several reports of the methods used in completed field studies are also reviewed. While the findings of the field studies themselves are not of primary concern here, there is advantage in accessing these discussions of methodology "in context." From this survey of two types of literature, a list of basic requirements and admonitions concerning field research is extracted. It is this summary list which is the basis of the following argument for the adequacy of the present field study of the Michigan Department of Education.

The first of the articles concerned with field methodology is also, appropriately, the most general. This comprehensive discussion of field methodology is that provided by Richard Scott in the Handbook of Organizations.¹ Scott states flatly that "Most of what we know today about organizations and the behavior of their members is known on the basis of field studies."² He prefers the simplest possible version of the Hughes definition of field studies:

¹W. Richard Scott, "Field Methods in the Study of Organizations," in James G. March, ed., Handbook of Organizations, (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), pp. 261-304.

²Ibid., p. 261.

. . . field work refers to observation of people in situ . . . Thus the term 'field methods' is meant to include all the kinds of techniques which have been employed to¹ examine behavior in naturally occurring groups. . .

According to Scott, these methods include, "such diverse methods as interviewing, observation and the analysis of documentary materials and other group products. . ." He states that the selection of a specific method or combination depends on the requirements of the task.

Scott recognizes three types of study designs which may be used in field research: exploratory, descriptive and hypothesis testing. He states that more complete, unsystematic, sustained data-gathering from a broader range of subjects would more likely occur in the exploratory or descriptive types. Hypothesis-testing studies can, says Scott, usually reduce the load of data collecting because of improved ability to focus. Scott recognizes that the three types of study design are not mutually exclusive and that they may even form respective phases of a single study.

Scott considers the various roles that a field researcher may take; discussion for the purpose of this study will be postponed until the review of the Gold article later in this chapter. Whatever the role, Scott concludes that "Many writers emphasize that the researcher should direct his initial energies to building relationships with subjects

¹Ibid., p. 262.

rather than to gathering data."¹ Such relationships will be helpful later in the research--but they carry their own problems with them. Researchers will often devote more attention to the informants who are most helpful and personally gratifying. This introduces a bias in studies which do not have some more systematic mode of sampling. Further, Scott says that friendship with subjects may lead to "over-rapport" and subsequent loss of objectivity. Scott notes that these problems which are related to personal involvement are lessened if the researcher is involved in a more transitory--less sustained--relationship with the subjects. However, Scott notes that,

also, the transitory investigator who has only brief contacts with members. . . is more likely to misinterpret or fail to understand their comments and responses, and is more likely to himself be misunderstood by them.²

Scott expresses a concern regarding the unsystematic mode of observation employed in many field studies. He expresses a preference for pre-planned, systematic methods of data collection and quotes Zelditch concerning the problems of the former unsystematic type:

Events and persons represented in field logs will generally be sampled according to convenience rather than the rules of probability sampling. The sample is unplanned, contains unknown biases. It is not so much random as haphazard, a distinction which is critical.³

¹Ibid., p. 277.

²Ibid., p. 283.

³Ibid., p. 289.

While Scott's preference is not unreasonable, his negativism regarding the modes of data collection which he calls un-systematic is subject to dispute. A very helpful discussion of that same conflict is provided in an article by Glaser and Strauss.

Glaser and Strauss have presented a widely referenced argument for alternative methods of sampling.¹ As a counter to probability sampling, they suggest that data be sought from sources that can best contribute to the developing theory. As each category is sampled as fully as needed, the theory--to which the category contributed--is seen as the best guide to the next source. One seeks data, therefore, according to the needs of the developing theory,

Theoretical sampling is done in order to discover categories and their properties, and to suggest the interrelationships into a theory. Statistical sampling is done to obtain accurate evidence on distributions of people among categories to be used. . . in each type of research, the 'adequate sample' that we should look for. . . is very different.²

The intent of the researcher, in such cases, is the generation rather than the testing, of a hypothesis or model. This would therefore be a more appropriate method for exploratory studies than for hypothesis-testing studies.

Glaser and Strauss suggest that "the adequate theoretical sample is judged on the basis of how widely

¹Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, "Theoretical Sampling," in Norman K. Denzin, ed., Sociological Methods, (Chicago: Aldine, 1970), pp. 105-114.

²Ibid., p. 106.

and diversely the analyst chose his groups for saturating categories. . ."¹ Further in the argument for purposeful diversity they state that "in theoretical sampling, no one kind of data on a category nor technique for data collection is necessarily appropriate. Different kinds of data give the analyst different views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties. . ."²

This should not be interpreted as a license to abdicate purpose. The intent is to gather all necessary data and the authors criticize a pair of studies which do not, in their opinion, manage to obtain the proper variety of data:

For example, in one noted study of adolescents in high school, only the adolescents were surveyed; and in a study of workers in a factory, only workers were interviewed.³

This underlies a danger in field studies; one may study an organization or community in a wholistic manner while ignoring the environment within which it acts. No such large category should be omitted. In further defense of varied data "slices," the authors continue:

The theory based on diverse data has taken into consideration more aspects of the substantial or formal area, and therefore can cope with more diversity in conditions and exceptions to hypotheses.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 106.

²Ibid., p. 108.

³Ibid., p. 111

⁴Ibid., p. 111.

It is recognized, however, that there are limits to both types of sampling, theoretical and probability. Theoretical sampling is adequate to discover and describe a phenomenon, but probability sampling is necessary if attempts are to be made to quantify it. Statistics do not discover truth. They document it; they answer the question some theoretician knew enough to ask. The two procedures are differentially appropriate according to the stage of development of the theory. The answer to "Which?" is situational, not given.

Assuming that one has reconciled the issues raised above and has chosen a field methodology, many questions still have to be answered about the adequacy of the methods as applied in the specific case. Bruyn discusses the use of participant observer methods to learn about a community or a culture. He expands upon the six criteria for reliability and validity which were earlier discussed by George Homans. Any field study must deal with these basic contributions to reliability and validity to some point.

Our criteria for adequacy revolve around the question of the extent to which the observer has had an opportunity to personally experience the culture which he seeks to know.¹

Bruyn then reiterates and describes the six criteria.

Time: The more time an individual spends with a group, the more likely it is that he will obtain an

¹Severyn T. Bruyn, The Human Perspective in Sociology, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1969), p. 181, emphasis added.

accurate interpretation of the social meanings its members live by.

Place: The closer the observer works geographically to the people he studies, the more accurate should be his interpretations.

Social Circumstance: The more varied the status opportunities within which the observer can relate to his subjects, and the more varied the activities he witnesses, the more likely his interpretations will be true.

Language: The more familiar the observer is with the language of his subjects, the more accurate should be his interpretations.

Intimacy: The greater degree of intimacy the observer achieves with his subjects, the more accurate his interpretations.

Consensus: The more the observer confirms the expressive meaning of the community, either directly or indirectly, the more accurate will be his interpretations of them.¹

While Bruyn is clear that his own concern is with determining subjective meaning, with interpreting a culture or a community, the six indices are nevertheless useable

¹Ibid., pp. 181-184.

measures of adequacy for any situation in which information is obtained from people by interactive means. Thus what constitutes adequacy for a study of a community should be no less adequate for a study of an organization to the extent that methods and goals are similar.

The importance of the above notwithstanding, Bruyn suggests some further concerns regarding validity. He states that reliability and validity of a method are not to be judged in the short term, that

Finally, the reliability of the procedures and conclusions of particular researchers must be tested over the years. If a piece of research cannot be repeated there is no basis for considering a study valid or reliable or, consequently, scientific.

The proof is in the future, it seems.

Having determined to do a field study, and being aware of the indices of adequacy, a researcher is still faced with many decisions. For example, meeting the requirements of the six indices is not always a one dimensional issue; there may be trade-offs involved. That this is true is illustrated by the apparently simple issue of intimacy.

While the Bruyn-Homans indices suggest that intimacy is a desirable state, there are limits to the value of this state. Georg Simmel considered this problem in his discussion of intimate content and intimate form.¹ In the

¹Kurt H. Wolff, editor, The Sociology of Georg Simmel, (Glencoe, Illinois: the Free Press, 1950), pp. 126-128. Simmel's discussion is in fact about dyads, particularly in marriage, but the distinction still applies.

intimate content, the information or object that is shared is important, secret, close to the actors. In intimate form, it is the relationship itself and all accompanying affect which is shared. According to Simmel:

Inversely, certain external situations or moods may move us to make very personal statements and confessions usually reserved for our close friends only to relatively strange people. But in such cases we nevertheless feel that this 'intimate' content does not yet make the relation an intimate one.¹

To obtain intimate content is surely a desirable goal for a researcher, but intimate form may lead to bias; the relationship may become more important than the information. That the question of intimacy and resulting bias is tied to role is demonstrated in the discussion of roles by Raymond L. Gold.

Gold identifies four possible roles for field researchers who are conducting observational studies.² His concern in the article reviewed was the impact of each role of the research, and possible biases which could result. A review of the four suggested methods will serve to illustrate his argument.

Complete Participant: The researcher pretends to be a member of the group he seeks to study. "He must bind the mask of pretense to himself or stand the risk of

¹Ibid., p. 127., emphasis in the original.

²Raymond L. Gold., "Roles in Sociological Field Observations," in Norman K. Denzen Sociological Methods, (Chicago: Aldine, 1970), pp. 370-380.

exposure and research failure."¹ On the other hand, the researcher must avoid adopting the beliefs of the respondents at risk of losing objectivity.

Participant-as-Observer: The researcher and the informants are both aware of the researchers role. The researcher nevertheless acts as if he were in fact a member of the group under study. The danger of "going native,"² of adopting the perspective of the subjects, increases with time.

Observer-as-Participant: The researcher interacts with the subject for a short period of time, such as a single interview. The risk of "going native" is lessened, but the depth of understanding gained by repeated encounters is sacrificed.

Complete Observer: The researcher is a detached observer, possible on a recurring and/or systematic basis. The intent is to be unobtrusive. This role has the least danger of "going native," but is farthest removed from the subjects and the meanings which exist only in their roles.

The Gold typology is easy to understand and adequately defines the range of possible roles. The twin dangers are clear: at one end is overidentification, at the other is ethnocentrism. For whatever role is chosen,

¹Ibid., p. 374.

²Ibid., p. 476.

a trade-off must be made. Gold implies that the researcher is responsible for determining which problem is operative in a given case, and for controlling that source of invalidity so far as is possible.

Lutz and Iannacone in turn discuss the application of field study approaches to the study of educational organizations. In that work three specific roles are discussed:

1. the participant as an observer
2. the observer as a participant
3. the observer as a non-participant¹

These approximate the range of roles described above by Gold. Lutz and Iannacone also list a series of methods useful in data collection and consider which are most appropriate to the three roles they defined earlier. Their listing includes the following:

1. Observation and recording of descriptive data
2. Recording direct quotes or sentiment
3. Unstructured interview
4. Structured interview guides
5. Detailed interaction tally guides
6. Interaction frequency tallies
7. Paper and pencil tests

¹Frank W. Lutz and Laurence Iannacone, Understanding Educational Organizations, (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill, 1969), p. 112.

8. Written reports

9. Radio and T.V. reports¹

The authors conclude that a wider range of methods is possible as a researcher's role approaches that of a non-participant. On the other hand, they recognize that a true non-participant role is not possible in the type of methods appropriate to the study of organization. There is no situation in which an open observer can fail to have some impact on his subjects; Heisenberg will not be denied.

The final point made by the authors is that data collected have meaning only in the context of a useable theoretical model. While in the Lutz and Iannacone work this argument constitutes an advertisement for their own model of political power in education, the point is valid. In the present study, a model of MDE behavior has been developed in advance. Data will be reported in the context of that model and will in turn have impact on the final nature of the model developed earlier in this study.

Becker makes two points that are germane to the present study. First, he emphasizes the "people watching" nature of many field studies.

The participant observer gathers data by participating in the daily life of the group or organization he studies. He watches the people he is studying to see what situations they ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. He enters into conversations with some or all

¹Ibid., p. 113.

of the participants in these situations and discovers their interpretations of the events he has observed.¹

The point is made several times in this chapter that the present study of the MDE is not interested in the "interpretations of the events" of the members of the organization. It is the events themselves, the validated verified public actions of the organization that form the data base here. Granted, much of the information about events was obtained from interactions with people, just as Becker described. Granted also, the presentation of data in the next (fifth) chapter of this dissertation most often uses the verbatim descriptions of the members of the organizations or others who are informed about it. Still, the point is not to publish the attitudes or names of the members. The point is to describe actual occurrences, events, behaviors, emitted by the organization. It is these events which form the base of data which will lead to later conclusions about the behavior of the organization.

Becker deals with a second point which is of interest here. Of the general collection of methods called participant observation, he says that:

Sociologists use this (p.o.) method when they are especially interested in understanding a particular organization or substantive problem rather than demonstrating relations between abstractly defined variables...

¹Howard S. Becker, "Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation," in Norman K. Denzin, ed., Sociological Methods, (Chicago: Aldine, 1970), p. 398.

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¹Howard S. Becker, "Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation," in Norman K. Denzin, ed., Sociological Methods, (Chicago: Aldine, 1970), p. 398.

they assume they do not know enough about the organization a priori to identify relevant problems and hypotheses and that they must discover these in the course of the research.¹

This description is similar to that of the exploratory or descriptive studies discussed by Scott above. While Becker agrees with Scott that these methods can be used in a systematic fashion to test hypotheses, the Becker stance is generally closer to that of Glaser and Strauss. That is, Becker emphasizes the "alpha study" nature of participant observer methods, and the utility of such methods in discovering--rather than verifying--truth.

With the Becker article we complete the first part of this review. The authors reviewed so far in this chapter have discussed the problems and advantages which accompany a decision to use field methodology. The next series of reviews are based on the discussion of methodology provided by the authors of several major field studies. Emphasis is therefore on what was done rather than on the results. The authors recount the issues which were viewed by them as most crucial in the context of their studies. As one would expect, there is a great deal of reiteration of the issues already presented. On the other hand, some "new" issues which have meaning only in context are presented and discussed.

¹Ibid., p. 399.

Cusick's study of adolescent group behavior in a high school asked the question, "what are the perspectives they use to deal with what they perceive to be the social reality of the school environment?"¹ Cusick acted as a participant observer in that study. In that work, the same six criteria for adequacy as discussed by Bruyn are reiterated. Cusick finds these not totally adequate by themselves, however. It is the right of the reader to participate in the judgement of the validity of a study.

The real proof, however, is in the presentation of the data. For that reason, one reporting such a study must present his findings in extensive narrative form. It is especially important to avoid over-inferring in the data chapter. The writer must allow the reader to draw his own conclusions from the data as he presents that data in as realistic and complete a manner as possible. In fact, this is a major test of validity.²

Cusick reports the use of six "major approaches" during his field work. These included the following:

1. attendance at classes
2. attendance at meetings
3. informal interviewing
4. formal interviewing
5. use of records
6. observation³

The problem of entry into the agency was solved when a group of athletes responded to a request from a teacher to help him with the study. After attending some classes with them, Cusick reports that:

¹Philip A. Cusick, Inside High School, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 229.

²Ibid., p. 233.

³Ibid., p. 239.

In this way, keeping a few basic contacts and constantly enlarging my circle of acquaintances, I quickly became known well enough in the class to go where I pleased, and carry on the study as I wished.

Cusick also mentions that the students paid little attention to his role as a researcher. Students, especially those most intimate with him, preferred to attend to the personal relationship and not to the formal role.

Cusick notes that his approaches are similar to those used by Herbert Gans in the latter's study of The Urban Villagers.¹ Gans studied a slum community of Italian-Americans in a major U.S. city. During the study of the community Gans and his wife lived in the area. He reports the use of the following "six major approaches:"

1. Use of the West End's facilities
2. Attendance at meetings, gatherings, and public places
3. Informal visiting with neighbors and friends
4. Formal and informal interviewing of community functionaries
5. Use of informants
6. Observation

Gans also discusses the possible range of roles in such a study. His list describes the same range as that of Raymond L. Gold, presented earlier. While Gans used all of the possible roles at different stages of research or at different locations in the community, he was most often openly a researcher, but one who was also known and accepted on a personal level. Gans notes some major problems that he faced which have relevance for the present discussion.

¹Herbert Gans, The Urban Villagers, (New York: The Free Press, 1962).

Regarding the problem of entry, Gans reports that once he had decided to be open about his role, initial entry was gained through neighbors who wanted to help. This pleasant solution would not have been as likely to occur for an outsider--but Gans paid a price for his membership in lost objectivity. He did, however, report that this identification, "going native," is easily solved if the researcher will just leave both the scene and the data for a reasonable time. Thus he felt that he was able to take advantage of his personal relationships with the subjects during the study yet retrieve his objectivity once some time had elapsed.

In Men Who Manage, Dalton reported on a study of five different organizations.¹ Most of his time was spent at large manufacturing plants. While his role was hidden and not known to his informants, the general methodology appears very similar to other studies of organizations. Dalton reports the use of the following "techniques and sources of data:"

1. formal interviews, usually in an "under cover" manner since informants did not usually know Dalton's true role.
2. work diaries, records of events at the two major plants during Dalton's tenure there
3. participant-observation, in a "complete participant" role in some cases. Dalton worked at two

¹Melville Dalton, Men Who Manage, (New York: Wiley, 1959).

of the organizations he studied, and gained data during that time

4. socializing, with managers and workers, since he lived in the same community.¹

Dalton also comments specifically on the difficulty of overidentification with informants. This was a particularly large problem since his membership in the groups was real and his researcher role hidden. This observation is consistent with Gold's suggestion that the problems of "going native" were largest in the hidden "complete participant" role.

Dalton did not really have an entry problem since he was already employed in one of the organizations he wished to study. For the others, he relied on data from many informal interviews with a variety of informants. He told these informants that he was interested in a wide range of problems related to personnel, and through this introduction eventually elicited reports about the informants' own roles and situations. Thus while he was dependent on personal relationships to some extent--especially with long-term informants--the degree of subterfuge he used makes comparisons with other field studies difficult.

Dalton's study differs from the bulk of those reviewed here in his role as a complete participant. Peter Blau reports concerning two studies, and is anomalous in

¹Ibid., p. 276.

two respects. Blau attempted a quantitative study, and used a more systematic scheme of sampling than the others.

Blau reports the use of what he calls "quantitative case studies" in two studies of bureaucracies.¹ Blau focuses on the need to be flexible as a researcher, but not totally reactive.

The researcher who compulsively insists on following his predesigned plan will miss these rare opportunities. Conversely, the one who is seduced by every new lead will find that he has failed to collect information on the theoretical problems that prompted his research.²

Blau was granted formal entry to the agencies he was studying by top management. Since he was studying lower levels in the civil service hierarchy, this initial identification with management aroused some suspicion of him. His initial habit of taking obvious notes added to the suspicion. It was only time and the development of trust on a personal level that finally removed those feelings. It is interesting to note that except for the initial rejection reported above, Blau's emphasis on quantitative data caused no problems that were very different from those encountered by others.

William F. Whyte makes two points similar to Blau in Street Corner Society:

. . . one has to learn when to question and when not to question, as well as what questions to ask.

¹Peter M. Blau, The Dynamics of Bureaucracy, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

²Ibid., p. 22.

As I sat and listened, I learned the answers to questions I would not even have had the sense to ask had I been getting my information solely on an interview basis.¹

This is a very lucid statement of a major benefit of field research: one does not need to assume in advance that he knows what all of the questions are. This is why field studies may have a large exploratory phase before more systematic methods of collecting data are employed. Scott, Glaser and Strauss, and Becker have argued in support of this view.

Whyte's entry to the Italian-American community he wished to study was accomplished in a single stroke. A social worker in a settlement house in the community introduced Whyte to Doc, a member of the community who became Whyte's guide, informant, and, in Whyte's terms, "Doc became, in a very real sense, a collaborator in the research."² While field researchers rarely find (or need) such an enterprising guide as Doc, the relationship between Doc and Whyte emphasized a fact that does seem to recur in field studies. It is the ability of the researcher to establish open and trusting personal relationships--not the sophistication of his explanation--that is crucial to real access. The importance of that personal level of interchange has been

¹William F. Whyte, Street Corner Society, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 303.

²Ibid., p. 301.

discussed earlier, and the dangers noted. An interesting example of the importance of such personal rapport is provided in the next study reviewed, that of Alvin W. Gouldner.

Gouldner's Patterns of Industrial Bureacracy was one of the earliest organizational studies. He describes that study as follows:

. . . it is primarily exploratory and comprises an effort to develop new concepts and hypotheses which will lend themselves to validation by experimental methods.¹

Gouldner obtained data by using three methods. First, he used interviews as a basic tool, and reports that these were often non-directive. He obtained, however, a total of 92 standardized interviews as the basis of his data. Second, Gouldner (and his associates) also interacted informally throughout the gypsum plant, thus obtaining many observations. Third, "many thousands of pages of documentary material were obtained and read."²

Gouldner reports that entry was gained at two levels. They met several members of management through the labor relations director, and introduced themselves to the workers via a union meeting. "Thus we had made a 'double-entry' into the plant, coming in almost simultaneously by way of the Company and the Union."³

¹Alvin W. Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy, (New York: The Free Press, 1954).

²Ibid., p. 251.

³Ibid., p. 255.

Gouldner's research team was especially well received in part because all of them were veterans. This helped the men in the plant feel some empathy since many of them were also veterans, some from the recently completed WW II. Gouldner dwells on the advantages of the close personal rapport which resulted:

We tentatively conclude from this experience that the dangers of interviewer 'overidentification' or 'over-rapport' can be much exaggerated, and that it is sometimes indispensable to develop friendly ties with certain kinds of respondents in order to obtain their cooperation.¹

A unique aspect of the Gouldner study was the ongoing use of a research team. He maintains that the regular, weekly meetings of the group contributed to both the morale of the researchers and to the development of the theory. The diverse points of view were felt to add valuable new perceptions.

The last study in this chapter was not an organizational study at all. In fact, it comes from beyond the realm of sociology, from problems of medical education. Its forte is that it demonstrates a key methodological point. That is, the advantages of multiple data sources are appreciated beyond the realm of organizational studies.

In a study of how experienced physicians reach a diagnosis of a patient, Shulman employed multiple methods. Using videotape and audiotape, three types of data were recorded. First was the description of what the physician actually did and said. Second was his immediate

¹Ibid, p. 259.

introspections while doing it, and (third) his stimulated retrospective recall."¹ The advantage of the multiple sources was, according to Shulman, that "the multi-level quality of the data enables us to 'triangulate' on our observations and interpretations from the perspectives of each of the three data sources."² In the present study of the Michigan Department of Education, the three basic methods--observing meetings, interviewing, and reading--constitute a similarly strong argument for both validity and reliability.

Conclusions

Articles and books dealing with the use of field methodology have been reviewed. From these, a series of recurring conclusions can be drawn.

1. Field studies can be exploratory, descriptive, or hypothesis-testing. The first two are situations which are particularly amenable to the strengths of field methodology.

2. There are several roles which a field researcher may take on. These carry differential problems of over-identification and ethnocentrism.

¹Lee S. Shulman, "The Psychology of School Subjects: A Premature Obituary?" Journal of Research in Science Teaching, Vol. 11, Number 4, 1974, p. 321.

²Ibid., p. 322.

3. Field studies usually use multiple methods; observing, interviewing and reading are most common. Systematic measures of interaction were also mentioned. This multiple perspective contributes to reliability and validity.

4. "Interview" types described varied from random interaction through very formal standardized schedules.

5. Field studies typically use multiple data sources. These also serve as a means of increasing reliability and validity.

6. There are advantages to both reactive and systematic means of sampling, of choosing categories or respondents.

7. The most commonly used argument for reliability and validity is the six-step index developed by Homans. Generally, adequacy increases as the level of each of the following increases: amount of time, proximity regarding place, variety of social circumstance, common language, intimacy, and consensus.

8. Intimacy (see Homan indices, above) is a special problem in that intimacy of content is desirable, but intimacy of form is often a source of bias.

9. Where two or more researchers worked together, the added perspective provided an opportunity to test inter-observer reliability.

10. Field researchers reported that gaining entry was a major issue and a potential limiting factor.

11. Researchers generally found that personal acceptance was more important than the completeness of their explanation of the research task.

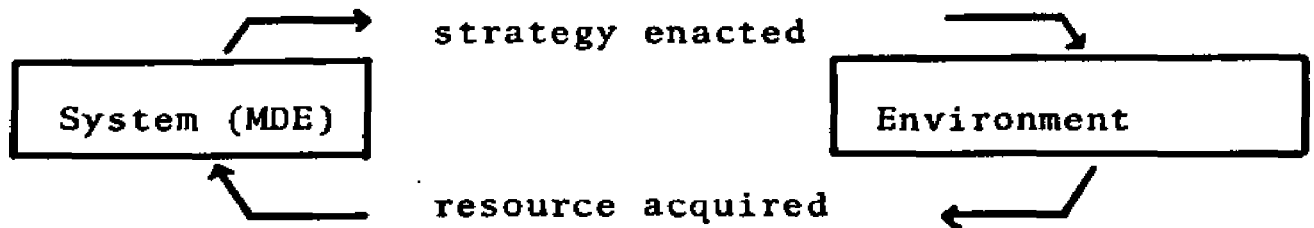
12. The public presentation of data was judged to be a contributor to judgements of validity.

13. The desirability of statistical, systematic hypothesis-testing follow-up to descriptive field studies was acknowledged, as was the fact that such replications would constitute retroactive contributions to validity.

These are, in a very condensed form, the salient points from a sample of articles and books related to field research. This concludes the first major task of this chapter. Next, the methodology used in the study of the Michigan Department of Education will be described and supported.

The Methodology Used to Study the Michigan Department of Education

The over-riding question of this study is "How does the Michigan Department of Education reduce uncertainty about the supply of resources from its environment?" In the first chapter, a series of thirteen strategies used by MDE to accomplish this reduction of uncertainty was presented. In the second chapter, the other elements of the proposed model were described: the MDE itself, the members of its environment, and the resources sought by the MDE. The basic model follows.



Operationally, the question involves identifying for any given interaction, the resource sought, the strategy used and the member(s) of the environment which participated. For example, the MDE might attempt to co-opt the members of a parent lobby to gain public support.

How does one gain evidence about such interactions? The most obvious answer is that one should be "on site," should engage in a field study. The MDE will not act out its strategies in the office of the laboratory of even a very convincing researcher. Often these interactions are brief and informal and not recorded, so post facto analysis of documents (while helpful!) would be insufficient. One must be on site.

It has been repeatedly emphasized in this study that the unit of analysis is the whole agency, the Michigan Department of Education. The goal is to identify those behaviors which are emitted by the agency in a formal sense. The concern is with how the agency behaves, not how its members behave. It is not the same thing.

"But after all, an organization is made up of people." True, and a human is also made up of cells, a forest of trees. One can learn a great deal by studying cells and

trees--but sometimes it is useful to define the system at a higher level. Organizations are more than people, they include rules and goals and buildings and information and telephones. There is almost no limit. It is possible, then, to conceive of an organization as a system composed of human elements and non-human elements and all of the relations between these elements. Thus, to ask questions at an organizational level is justifiable.

Organizations do emit behaviors as organizations. They commit resources, pay bills, enact regulations and enter into contracts. They own things and employ people and receive requests for money, action, legislation, and sympathy. This is not anthropomorphic; it is fact. How does one obtain data about how such an organization behaves?

Most of the time that an organization emits a behavior which causes it to interact with some member of its environment, some record is kept. Most actions between organizations involving exchanges of resources (i.e., the actions of interest in this study) are important enough to require formal approval. Such interactions are almost invariably recorded. Thus, a field researcher on site can examine the written output of the MDE and the agencies with which it interacts. That is a start, but would surely not be judged sufficient by the authors reviewed in the first part of this chapter. It is at this level that access to people becomes critical.

Why is it logical to seek information about the behavior of an organization from its members? Recall that the organization is defined as containing more than people: rules, information, buildings, all these and all of the relations between them. Thus things other than people have influence on the final action of the organization. But only people can "act for" the organization. It is not the computer (hopefully!) that commits MDE to a coalition with another state agency, it is the State Board, in all likelihood. It is not the combined information banks of 13 service areas which decide to redirect federal money to save a testing program, it is the director of Research and Evaluation who must act. Thus the behaviors, the actions of an organization can be identified by observing or interviewing the members who have the power to act for the agency.

The model describes how MDE acquires resources from other organizations in its environment. This has several implications concerning which people may serve as sources of data. First, persons should have enough power to be able to commit or acquire resources in behalf of MDE. Second, senior members of other agencies will likely be equally informative. Third, situations in which persons from MDE interact with persons from organizations in the environment of MDE are likely to be informative. Thus it is the task of the researcher to seek data from persons with power--near the top

of the organization--from both MDE and members of its environment, especially in cases of interorganizational interface. To put it another way, it would seem to be profitable to observe those with power to act for the agency in terms of acquiring resources in situations where this is most likely to occur.

While this required that people be observed and studied, the study was spared many of the problems that plague other field studies. What was needed in the MDE study was verified information about events. There was no overt attempt to seek feelings or attitudes or opinions or perceptions from the subjects. The purpose was to find facts. Either MDE staff met with the US Office or they did not. Either John Porter wrote a response to the legislator or he did not. Either the State Board approved the report or they did not. This was not an attempt to uncover values and other abstractions, it was a study of events.

There is no attempt to pretend that this point of departure immediately solves all problems of reliability and validity. Still, it is easier to verify the occurrence of an official action of the MDE than to obtain agreement on the meaning of a norm among an adolescent group. It becomes apparent in the next chapter, however, that not all MDE behavior is formal and obvious and easy to document. A series of nods in a meeting may signal a commitment to enter a coalition whose existence will never be formally

acknowledged. So even this study of events is not free from the need for human interpretation.

In order to obtain information about the strategies used by MDE to reduce uncertainty, three methods were used. First, as stated above, many formal and semi-formal documents were read. Second, many high-level meetings were attended. Third, interviews were conducted with a variety of people from MDE and other organizations. These will be described more thoroughly later in this chapter. At this time, the means of entry to the organization will be discussed.

Two researchers shared the data collection task even though they had different questions to ask. The second researcher, Dr. Philip A. Cusick, was and is a member of the faculty of the College of Education at Michigan State University. At the request of Dr. Cusick, the Dean of the College of Education interceded for us. The Dean contacted the Associate Superintendent for Research and School Administration at MDE, Dr. Philip Kearney, and explained our request.

Dr. Kearney was familiar with Dr. Cusick's book, Inside High School, and with field methods in general. A graduate of the University of Chicago, he was well instructed in the earlier work of Lloyd Warner.¹ Informally, Dr. Kearney

¹See, for example, Lloyd Warner and Associates, Democracy in Jonesville, (Evanston, Illinois: Harper and Row, 1949).

agreed and promised to act on our behalf within the MDE to assure formal approval. The two of us met with Dr. Kearney in early October of 1974.

Dr. Kearney made us welcome and seemed to have gained a good understanding of our goals from his earlier telephone conversations with Dr. Cusick. He summarized his understanding of the project as follows:

1. We would spend nearly a year on site.
2. We would be concerned with decision making at the top level of the agency.

He suggested that we might like to "follow people around" to learn how they function and on three occasions later this technique was used. Dr. Kearney had already arranged for us to attend two meetings the next week to get acquainted.

The next Monday at nine, the Executive Council of MDE met. This group included the top nine or ten members of the agency. Dr. Kearney introduced us and only one member of the group questioned our presence, asking what we hoped to get out of it. Dr. Cusick explained that he taught organizational theory at the University, and that I was doing dissertation research. That sufficed. For the rest of the meeting we sat, present but uninvolved, taking down a word occasionally and looking as interested as we were. I was careful not to take so many notes as to be a threat. Even five months later after meeting with the same group two or three times a month, I still got teased if I took notes.

It was only a cheerful, "How come every time I talk you start to write?" but it served as a reminder to remain unobtrusive.

A second meeting followed the same morning. This was the Administrative Council and included the top 25 (roughly) members of the organization. We were introduced again and Dr. Cusick explained our purpose in about a minute. The Deputy Superintendent presided and asked jokingly if any of the people there were threatened. Half raised their hands and all laughed, then they got on with their business. By chance, the members of the Administrative Council were almost all of the people we wanted to interview in the first round.

That was enough. We had been legitimized and when we called on the members for interview appointments, treatment was almost unanimously courteous, interested and helpful. The personal influence of Dr. Kearney and his position as Associate Superintendent for Research and School Administration, were helpful.

For the next nine months I was involved in research. I attended at least half of the Executive Council sessions faithfully throughout the fall and winter. This consistent but unobtrusive presence combined with the contacts made through interviews paid off. As trust increased, so did invitations--to lunch, to Washington and to meetings with other agencies. While these will be enumerated in another

section, they are mentioned here to make a point. As in many other studies, it was the trust on a personal basis which assured continued access to the non-trivial actions of people at the decision making level. But contrary to other's reports, this was accomplished with a minimum of personal investment of the "intimacy of form" type--it was enough to be perceived as personally trustable.

With that introduction to the methodology and the agency, a complete description of the methods used will be presented.

Describing the Methods

Three methods of collecting data were used. First, meetings were attended. Second, interviews were conducted. Third, documents were collected and read. These methods were applied to persons and documents both internal and external to MDE. In this section, these three methods are described; they are not in context. The way in which these three methods were applied is discussed in the following section.

Observing Meetings

The first method was to observe a variety of meetings. Access to all public meetings, especially State Board of Education meetings, did not require permission. Access to internal meetings of ongoing or ad hoc committees at all levels was also granted. Access to meetings involving other

agencies was dealt with on a situational basis. In only one instance was attendance at an interagency meeting refused, and that was due to a fear that members of the other agency would be inhibited by the presence of an outsider. In another instance, an invitation was extended by the Deputy Superintendent to accompany the Michigan delegation of executive-level staff to a private session with the Commissioner of the US Office of Education and his senior staff. Last, several public and private meetings of organizations in the environment of MDE were attended; meetings to which MDE personnel were not invited, usually by intent.

In most of these meetings the researcher was an observer only, not a participant. Rare occasions of other roles are explained as they arise. In public meetings, the researcher would sit apart from the participants in the meeting and would take notes during the meeting. Often, others did the same. For example, at State Board meetings, staff, lobbyists, reporters and the general public were present. Many of these took notes, so one more person doing so was not conspicuous. In more private meetings--for example the Executive Council, the eight senior staff--the researcher sat (silently) with the participants and took notes only rarely. That was the least obvious and interfering role, to sit apart would have accentuated the researcher's non-participant role. A physically present, attentive and obviously interested observer was not labelled as an outsider.

That fact is partly due to method as described and partly to the open attitude of the subjects. But the fact that the researcher was regularly present in a wide variety of circumstances also created an atmosphere of acceptance. Such acceptance simply would not have been granted to another researcher--no matter how competent--who had not invested the time to be regarded as familiar, as an outsider. Thus the ability to use the observation method successfully depends on many factors, not all of which are objective.

Interviews

Observations of the above types accounted for about one third of the total notes acquired. An even larger share resulted from the various types of interviews. Types of interviews can be described according to a pair of variables. The first is focus: is there a specific piece or set of information which is the goal of the interview? The second is structure: is there a predetermined plan or schedule for seeking the information?

It is possible to conceive of three types of interviews.

Informal.--There is no goal, no schedule or structure. This is simply a chance interaction, a conversation.

Open-ended.--Here there is a goal, at least in general terms. There is no interview guide or agenda. Questions are spontaneous but goal-directed.

Formal.--The researcher has a goal and a formal schedule for the interview which must be adhered to, within reason.

All three types of interviews were conducted. The informal "interviews" were probably the most numerous and were often productive, in spite of their undirected nature. For example, the friendly chatter with staff at break time at Board meetings is certainly without goal or structure. Still, such interactions were often the source of serendipitous information about attitudes, events or sources. Notes would only be made later in private. To even call such interactions interviews is perhaps to glorify them needlessly. To describe them as sources of often valuable data is simply to state a fact.

The second type includes those open-ended interviews which were focused in that they sought answers to predetermined questions. Yet there was no particular order or structure for seeking the information. Such interviews were the norm early in this study. One or both researchers would, for example, talk to a service area director to learn what his responsibilities and activities were. There was such diversity among respondents that to increase focus would have caused a loss of range and the latter was of more initial interest. Therefore, that series of interviews was goal-directed, but very open-ended, semi-formal and conversational. Researchers took notes during and after such interviews.

The last type is the formal structured, focused interview. The last series of interviews, conducted during the spring of 1975, approximated this model. MDE staff and others were interviewed in a structured manner and these interviews were taped for later transcription. This added some formality and, as a result, some inhibition, but the cost was judged to be worth the gain in quantity of verbatim data.

By spring, when taped interviews were conducted, the researcher had established sufficient personal rapport that in many cases the added factor of the tape recorder did not seem to matter. Cross-checks with other subjects and with data from less formal exchanges did not indicate that any inaccuracy or bias was introduced by taping. It should be noted that while a formal "interview map" (which approximates the exploratory questions following in this chapter) was used, not all persons were asked all questions. Repetition of program descriptions, for example, was avoided so that the unique information of each subject could be acquired.

Reading Documentary Material

The last method of gathering data was simply reading. This does not refer to the general review of the literature, but to specific examination of material related to issues of concern in the study. For example, each State Board meeting was the occasion for production of over a hundred pages of type. Some of this output was collected and read.

Other sources included formal reports, Department publications, minutes of meetings, correspondence, position papers and occasional articles by MDE staff. Only limited amounts of this material have been quoted and referenced. Generally, the over four thousand pages of print collected have been used most often as a reality test. For example, the accuracy of an event described in an interview was often checked by referring to written reports describing the same event. The discrepancies were usually identified and explained. Obviously, much of the material collected has not been carefully explored, but its availability as a check on validity and reliability is sufficient justification for maintaining an extensive file.

In summary, three methods were used in the study: observing meetings, interviewing, and reading. Each has now been described out of context. What follows is a description of how these methods were actually applied to the task of studying MDE and how it reduces uncertainty.

Applying the Methods

There were several stages to the research. First, research efforts concentrated on developing a bank of data describing the agency. Second, data-gathering time was reduced and more time was devoted to developing a theoretical framework. Third, a focused or data-gathering phase followed in which the explanatory ability of the framework was tested against data gathered for that purpose. In the fourth and

METHOD	TIME			
	Fall 1974	Winter 1975	Spring 1975	Spring Summer 1975
Observing	X	X	X	
Informal Interviews	X	X	X	
Interviewing: Open-Ended	X			
Developing Theory		X		
Interviewing: Structured, Focused			X	
Analysis and Reporting				X
Reading	X	X	X	X

FIGURE 6.--Times at which different methods played a major role in research.

last stage, analysis and reporting occurred. Each of these four parts of the research effort took from two to three months. Each stage will now be described in more detail. Figure 6 summarizes the use of different methods at each stage.

In the autumn of 1974, the problem of entry into the organization was solved as described earlier. Access to the MDE was tentatively granted by the Associate Superintendent for Research and School Administration, and later confirmed by the Superintendent and other executive-level personnel.

At that time, in the early fall of 1974, very little was known to the researcher about the workings of the organization. It was thus determined that completion of an exploratory-descriptive study was the first task.

During the fall of 1974, meetings were observed and interviews were conducted. Reports and memoranda arising out of the activities of MDE during that time were collected and read. All of these activities were actually quite goal-oriented, in that there was a body of knowledge that was being sought. At this stage, as stated, the study was both exploratory and descriptive in character, although it is true that theoretical issues did emerge early. In pursuit of thorough description, a series of exploratory questions was used. In truth, these questions varied and evolved, but the following listing does retroactive justice to the intent of the exploratory phase; it describes the type of questions asked during the open-ended interviews.

1. What are the formal purposes of the Michigan Department of Education? Who does it serve? To whom is it accountable? What are its expressed goals?
2. What is the structure of the agency? What components are included? What sort of hierarchy is operative? How centralized is the control of power? Of information?
3. What are the tasks which staff perform? What services do they provide for clients? What sort of relationship do MDE staff have with clients?
4. What agencies does MDE interact with? At what levels does this occur? Are channels formal or informal? What resources are involved? What other organizations are consistent allies or opponents? Who initiates interactions?
5. What sources of power does MDE have? Do informed sources complement the legal authority of the agency? Is power really tied to money or to legal authority? Have these sources changed over time?
6. How has the agency changed since 1963 (or earlier)? Is the agency more regulative, more service-oriented? Is it more or less innovative? What trends are obvious and will they continue?
7. What major projects are operative? What is the origin and disposition of each? Have these changed the way the agency operates? Is such activity consistent with expressed goals? What next?

These guided the first phase of the research during the fall of 1974. Whatever the method--observing, interviewing

or reading--the general goal was to obtain the kind of descriptive information suggested by the exploratory questions.

The data gathered in this phase were never assembled in a way that provided a direct response to the exploratory questions. This list of questions were generated after the fact to communicate the range of information sought in the fall of 1974. The questions evolved and changed very quickly. The model of MDE behavior, as explained in chapter one, demanded a refinement of the questions. This occurred later, and will be discussed in this chapter. For the moment attention will return to the task at hand: describing how the different methods were used during the first phase of the research in the autumn of 1974.

This first series of interviews was focused but unstructured. The goal in each one was simply to find the answers to the exploratory questions, to generally learn what the agency did, and what the people in the agency did to contribute to that general agency behavior. Consequently it was decided that all persons in the top four levels of the MDE would be interviewed. These included the Superintendent of Education, the Deputy Superintendent, four (4) Associate Superintendents and thirteen (13) Service Area Directors. The Service Area is the basic unit of organization of the Department as shown in Table 5. Other staff reporting to top-level MDE personnel were also interviewed. These included the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, the

Assistant Superintendent for Legislation and Public Affairs, the Assistant (to the Superintendent) for School and Community Affairs, the two staff responsible for liaison with the state and federal governments, and the Director of Personnel Management.

In two cases, Service Area Directors were unavailable and supervisory staff reporting directly to them were substituted. In one case, a Service Area--Vocational Rehabilitational Services--was not investigated at all. In this instance, the Service Area functioned in fact as an autonomous agency, has little impact on the policy of MDE and was expected to be removed from the Department in the near future by legislative act.

No open-ended interviews with persons outside of the MDE were conducted at that stage, but the researcher did have much contact with outsiders at meetings, as will be explained later in this chapter. It should also be emphasized that the sampling procedure for this series of interviews was systematic and preplanned, not the result of the whims of a reactive observer. On the other hand, the researcher often followed hunches or "leads" to data sources but these were usually meetings, not interviews. Thus both systematic and reactive modes were employed.

The first open-ended interview in this series was conducted on October 9, 1974; the last on December 10, 1974. During and beyond that time, meetings were attended, documents

were collected and informal interactions occurred. The outcome of this first stage of research was the generation of about 250 pages of typed notes, many of which were gathered by a second researcher.

During the period, and through the rest of the study, observations were also occurring. In most cases, these were of meetings. The meetings which were attended most often were internal, involving only Department of Education personnel. In addition to these internal meetings, observations were conducted on three other types of meetings; public, interagency and extra-agency. Discussion of each of the four types, including examples of each, follow.

Several regular and irregular internal meetings were observed. Almost every week, the Superintendent met with his top nine or ten staff at 7:30 a.m. Monday morning. About half of these Executive Council sessions were attended over a period of eight months.

The Deputy Superintendent presides over meetings of the Administrative Council. This group meets every three weeks and includes the top four levels of MDE personnel except for the Superintendent. About 25 people attend these meetings. Only a few of these were observed.

Other ongoing and ad hoc meetings were observed on occasion. One quarterly meeting of the whole professional staff was attended. Meetings of internal planning groups were observed on two occasions. Other observations of

this type were made not only in the first stage, but throughout the whole study.

Many public meetings were attended. The meetings of the State Board of Education were the most common examples of this type. The Board met in regular and committee-of-the-whole sessions twice monthly. On one occasion, a public meeting was observed in which MDE staff explained and defended their accountability program to professionals from the southwestern part of the state.

Another common type of meeting was the interagency type. In these, one or more representatives of one or more external agencies met with MDE personnel. In this study, many of the meetings of this type--but not all--were arranged by the Department. Others were more mutual, meetings among equals. Other agencies observed in this type of meeting included the interest groups mentioned in the second chapter, the US Office of Education senior staff, urban administrators, state senators, legislators, aides, the Governor's educational staff and other interest groups. Most of these were closed meetings and focused on very specific topics of mutual interest.

The last type of meeting observed is labelled "extra-agency." In these meetings, MDE representatives were intentionally or unwittingly excluded, but items relevant to MDE activities were discussed. Most of these were meetings of coalitions of professionals or agencies with major (or exclusive) interest in educational policy making.

The observation of meetings continued from September of 1974 through June of 1975. These observations helped, early in the study, to provide a description of the Michigan Department of Education. In a later stage, during the winter of 1975, such observations added to the data bank and served as a reality test for the model which was being developed. Later in the spring of 1975, observations of meetings provided data with which to test the model, the theoretical framework describing MDE behavior, which had been developed earlier.

As the second stage of the research began, a new task emerged. A large collection of data describing the activities of the agency existed. By analysis of these data it was evident (even early in the fall) that the MDE constantly tried to behave in an anticipatory fashion. Staff complained of "always having to put out fires" and "never getting caught up enough to plan." It seemed that at that stage that control over an unpredictable environment was the issue.

It was at this stage that the theories of James D. Thompson (initially a systems theorist) were applied and later integrated. At a theoretical level, the "control" question was viewed to mean the same to a system as "reduction of uncertainty." The theory discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation arose from that assumption. A list of strategies by which a system could reduce

uncertainty was developed. In this way, a model of organizational behavior was created.

The MDE was conceived of as an open system which sought to reduce uncertainty of resources (energy) from an environment composed mostly of other organizations. The strategies were suggested as the means by which MDE accomplished that reduction of uncertainty. The strategies existed from the beginning at an operational level. Description of other components of the explanatory model is accomplished in the three preceding chapters of this dissertation. The development of this model took about three months.

It was decided to test the model by doing seven intensive case studies. These were chosen to reflect the wide range of activity in the agency, but avoided activities that were not really integrated at all such as the State Library or the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The following cases were selected for intensive study.

Higher Education. MDE attempts to influence decisions in the legislature by providing information. They are seeking to increase their control of higher education, to formally take on a planning and coordination role. A decision from the Supreme Court about the right of MDE to control state colleges and universities is pending.

Special Education. The 1964 Constitution assigned the responsibility for education of all handicapped persons from five to twenty-five to the state. Public Act

198 reaffirmed this and has been the basis for growth of the role of the state in this area. A federal court may order MDE to provide educational programs to persons in mental institutions. Implementation efforts have begun to forestall further court action.

Chapter Three. Chapter Three is the State compensatory education program. A penalty clause tied to the funding formula promised to give MDE increased control, but there has been little real impact.

Professional Development. The legislature has tentatively authorized the creation of organizations to provide in-service teacher education. Once achieved, a proposed pilot version could become a model for a state-wide network of professional development centers.

Title I. This is the core of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It provides millions of dollars annually for compensatory programs in Michigan. MDE administers the program in Michigan.

Title III. The federal government provides money to school districts for "innovative and exemplary programs." MDE has managed to use this to develop its "accountability" planning model.

Title V. This federal program has, since 1965, provided several million dollars of direct aid to MDE to strengthen the state agency.

These seven programs reflect the range of elements in the environment of MDE. Major sources, in order, are the Constitution, the Legislature and the Federal Congress and US Office of Education. In most of the cases above, especially those at the state level, interest group activity is substantial. The research will reveal what resources are available in each case and what strategies are used by MDE to reduce uncertainty.

Cases were chosen from that set of things over which MDE could, conceivably, exercise some reasonable control. Thus school finance, for example, was excluded. Legislators typically retain control over those decisions in all states. Also, since the MDE does not have direct authority to legislate curriculum, that whole realm of educational activity was not an appropriate area for this study. By the time the selection of cases was finalized--late winter of 1974--enough research had occurred to enable the researchers to make wise choices.

It was decided that formal, structured interviews should be conducted during the spring of 1975 to learn more about the seven cases. Observations continued during that time. Data gathered from earlier interviews and observations constitutes a secondary source, but these final interviews are used as the core of this research report.

A purposive sample of persons to be interviewed was chosen. Because six months of research had already occurred,

it was possible to identify those who would be most informative about each case. For each case, at least one interview with a person in each of these categories was sought: MDE executive level, MDE staff level, State Board of Education and State Government. This was achieved in five of the seven cases. Title I and Title III were often combined with Title V in discussions and so fewer interviews were needed. No structured interviews were conducted with federal-level personnel and only one with an interest-group representative. It is in these categories, however, that other supplementary methods take the limelight.

For example, Figure 7 shows the sources of data in the last, formal series of interviews.

	Was Source Used?
MDE executive-level	Yes
MDE staff	Yes
State Board	Yes
State Government	Yes
Federal Government	No
Interest Groups, Other Professionals	Yes(Once)

FIGURE 7.--Sources for Final, Formal Interviews.

Clearly, the federal and interest group categories are under-represented. However, enlarging the chart to compare all

data sources to all research methods provides a much more balanced picture. This is shown in Figure 8. It is evident that the variety of methods used in this study leads to a reasonably broad coverage of each topic.

The final series of formal interviews was, however, the largest single source of descriptive data. A total of 188 pages of data were collected and transcribed. Some further description of that series of interviews is in order.

By the time planning for the final series of interviews occurred, two very useful inputs were available. One was the collection of notes that observations and open-ended interviews had generated over a six-month span. The other was the theoretical framework; the elements of which constituted a model for describing the behavior of the Michigan Department of Education. These two items helped to determine both the sample and the questions.

The range of possible responses was judged to be too broad to allow the use of a very closed instrument. Consequently, a list of general questions was generated, all of which allowed a broad range of interpretation and response. These questions are in fact simply a refinement of the general exploratory questions which had guided the study since its inception. At this stage they finally became relatively standardized. Even at this stage, however, the qualitative nature of the study permitted the researcher to be loyal to the intent--if not the instrument--of the research. For

Data Source	Method				
	Observing	Informal Interview	Open-Ended Interview	Formal Interview	Reading "by" or "about"
MDE Executive-level	X	X	X	X	X
MDE Staff	X	X	X	X	X
State Board	X	X		X	X
State Government	X	X		X	X
Federal Government, US Office	X		X		X
Interest Groups, Others	X	X		X	X

FIGURE 8.--Methods used with various data sources.

example, this list of questions served as a checklist, a "map" during every interview (see Figure 9). In many cases a subject would not know about one set of items. When this happened, the instrument was unrestrictive enough that the interview was simple redirected to a topic with more potential. Thus, ideally, every respondent would be able to answer every question about every case. But when reality interfered with ideals, it was easily accommodated.

All but one of these formal case study interviews was taped for later transcription. Some were transcribed verbatim, but in most interviews some editing was done to exclude irrelevant transition material, digressions and similar material. The last interview of this series was completed on May 16, 1975. The total file of data at the end of the research amounted to about 500 pages of typed notes and over 4000 pages of collected documents.

In the following (fifth) chapter of this dissertation, the data are presented. For each case study the presentation of data follows roughly the list of questions used for the final interviews and shown in Figure 9. Recall that data included came from meetings, three types of interviews and a variety of documents. While the data, as promised, are typically descriptive of events, they are nevertheless in the words of the people who acted for the agency in those events. This returns our focus to the problems of the adequacy of field methods. An evaluation of this study

MDE Study: Final Interview Checklist

1. Describe the program involved.
 - origin
 - how communicated to you
 - when you first heard of it
 - essential components
2. What anticipatory action did MDE take?
3. Describe the exchange relationship.
 - other organizations
 - gain for MDE
 - what MDE provides for others
 - allies
 - opponents
 - conspicuous neutralists
4. Describe the outcome of the issue/program.
 - what aspects/problems remain unsolved
 - action still ongoing
 - future action by MDE
 - future action by other participants
5. Define the impact of the issue.
 - how was MDE changed
 - who else was changed/how?
 - unintended consequences
6. How will the future be different because of this action?

FIGURE 9.--Interview checklist, used as a map for the final series of formal interviews.

will now be undertaken using the summary extracted from the earlier review of literature as a basis for judgement.

Evaluating the Methodology

The general question of "Why field methodology?" has been introduced and pervades the dissertation, particularly this chapter. It is, as mentioned earlier, a choice which is related to the goal of the study. To describe and explain the behavior of a major organization in relation to its environment, one must be on site. One must be there watching when an interaction occurs, in some instances, because results are often not recorded. Even in the more common instances where major interactions are formally recorded--and it is a major assertion of this study that this is typically so--the issue that finally is approved by the State Board of Education had a long and meaningful history that is not available to one who only reads the minutes. There is immense value in being on site.

Having made that choice, other issues arise. The review of literature relating to field studies illustrated several concerns. These were extracted to form a series of conclusions. Now these conclusions will be repeated and the present study evaluated: does it meet the criteria required by the practitioners and advocates whose work formed the basis of the review earlier in this chapter?

Type of Study

March categorizes field studies as exploratory, descriptive, or hypothesis-testing. The first phase of this study--during the fall of 1974--was exploratory in a sense. The main objective at that stage though was to describe the organization thoroughly. Then a model which is intended to describe and explain the actions of the agency was developed. Consequently, the last phase of the study could be labelled "model-testing." This is perhaps a less rigorous task than testing hypotheses, but probably belongs in the same realm. Thus the MDE study contains aspects of all three types of field studies.

Role

According to Gold, there are four roles a field researcher may use. In the MDE study, the researchers role varied according to method. Three methods were used: observing meetings, interviewing and reading. The concerns that Gold expresses are operative in the first two instances.

When observing meetings, the observer sought to take on a complete observer role and to be as unobtrusive as possible. The success of the attempt is attested to by the fact that in eight months of meeting with MDE staff, the researcher spoke to the assembled group only once--and that was in response to a direct and unpredicted request from an associate superintendent. In the complete observer role, a

researcher should be "functionally invisible" and this was so to a large degree.

In the observations, the complete observer role was subject to the criticism of being removed from the meanings which are available only to true participants. Gold labels this problem ethnocentrism. However, a later discussion of intimacy and other factors following in this paper will argue that the researcher was not seriously excluded from shared meanings of the subjects.

A second method was interviewing and two other roles were used. Interviewing occurred at three levels: informal or conversational, open-ended, and formal. These carried varying dangers of "going-native" versus ethnocentrism, conceived by Gold as being opposite ends of a continuum of problems. Informal interviews were quite open and friendly and the researcher's role was the participant-as-observer role which Gold says is subject to "going-native," but combats ethnocentrism. In addition, a full series of open-ended interviews and another series of formal interviews were conducted. In both open-ended and formal interviews, the researcher interacted with subjects for short periods of time. These approximate the conditions of Gold's observer as participant role. More objectivity was assured--if Gold's logic holds--in the more formal settings. On the other hand, the constant informal meetings which intervened helped to assure shared meaning with the subjects. Thus

using a variety of roles helped to overcome the weaknesses associated with any single role.

Methods

In the MDE study the data sources are accessed by three methods: interviewing, observing and reading. In this study, any report of an incident was subject to verification by other methods. Consistency across three methods suggests a reliable methodology and approximates an argument for construct validity.

Interviews

The range of interview types used in the MDE study matches the range discussed by the authors reviewed earlier. To reiterate, it is argued here that consistent data from such a wide range of roles constitutes an argument for both reliability and validity.

Sources

As mentioned earlier, a variety of human sources was used. Data were collected from MDE executive-level staff (the top eight or ten), from other staff at the "middle-management" level and from members of the State Board of Education. Thus the agency itself was viewed at three levels. In addition to these, external sources provided a second test of consistency, since other contributors included state government persons (legislators and staff) and members of many professional interest groups. Agreement

on the nature of an event from such a range of respondents constitutes a very credible argument for both reliability and validity.

Sampling

In the early part of the study all of the persons in the top four levels of MDE were interviewed. Concurrently, almost all Executive Council meetings were attended. This was a very exhaustive sample and can be categorized as systematic for present purposes.

Concurrently and for all of the rest of the study, any other available meeting which seemed like it would contribute largely to the study was accessed. Thus some of the research was quite reactive.

In the final series of interviews, a purposive sample representing four types of internal and external people was defined. It is apparent that several methods were used with the systematic and purposive methods providing a solid base for data collection, supplemented by the reactive, serendipitous data gathered by following leads and intuitions.

The Bruyn-Homans Indices

Amount of Time.--It is argued that the amount of time spent on site in a field study is a critical contribution to validity and reliability. In this study, more than nine months elapsed from the beginning to the end of the

data collection phase. One spin-off benefit of such a lengthy study is the ability to check the internal consistency of data from early and late observations.

Proximity.--It is also argued that field data are more likely to be valid if they are collected on site, close to the "subject" and so on. This is a study of a state-wide agency: Where does that agency "occur?" Data were collected at the central building and in five other agency offices. Respondents were also observed interacting with colleagues and clients at other locations beyond MDE offices. These included schools, the State University, conference rooms, airports, bars, restaurants and other agencies' offices in Washington and Lansing. The agency was conceived to exist or occur where it interfaced with members of its environment. That is why the list of places is so diverse. Wherever the business of the agency is, is where the researcher may profitably be.

Variety of Social Circumstances.--This increases the range of input, and allows verification according to the same principle of consistency as above. In the MDE study, respondents were seen in formal interviews, closed meetings, public meetings, shared tasks, at lunch and informally in neutral situations. The differential levels of formality in interviews described earlier is relevant here. While the variety of methods and sources mentioned above

was generally the result of systematic prior choice, the variety of social circumstances in which respondents were encountered was much less controlled.¹ If anything, this fact increases the strength of the argument. If respondents provide consistent data across a wide variety of social circumstances which occur in a near-random mode, those data are likely to be reliable and valid.

Common Language.--An important contribution to reliability and validity is common language. The author has spent twelve years as a professional educator, four of them in Michigan. This fact, combined with the large amount of on site time suggests that the language criterion has been met.

Intimacy.--Because of the danger of "going native" discussed earlier, intimacy may cause more problems than it solves. The author was generally accepted and was tentatively regarded as a supporter of the agency. The fact that access was granted to the executive-level sessions certainly assured intimacy with the inner workings of the agency. There were no instances, however, in which very close personal relations were established. This helps to assure that the bias in selection and interpretation of data that an "advocate" might evidence did not occur.

¹See the section later in this chapter on "Serendipity" for a more complete description of the range of activities.

Intimacy of access, of content is certainly desirable and has been obtained in the present study. The danger of bias which accompanies personal intimacy, intimacy of form, has been avoided.

Consensus.--This term usually refers to a consensus regarding the social meaning of words or actions or events. In the MDE study an attempt was made to focus on data which were unambiguous, to collect data about events which were public and verifiable. Still, most of the data came through people and consensus is an issue. It is argued that the variety of methods, the variety of sources and the attention already devoted to the rest of the six-part index constitute sufficient testing for consensus.

Intimacy

This problem has been discussed above. In the MDE study, the verbatim data presented in the next chapter will constitute an argument that the researcher has managed to elicit intimate content. The short duration of the individual interactions (although they recurred over a period of about nine months) prevented the development of relations that could be said to have intimate form.

Research Teams

The fact that the two researchers were present for many observations and interviews provided a valuable

opportunity to share ideas from a common base of experience and to test for inter-observer reliability.

Entry

The means of entry has been described. The process was simplified by the previous experience of the second researcher, Dr. Philip Cusick.

Personal Acceptance

While the researcher was accepted, in the way that most authors describe as necessary, it was as a trusted acquaintance, never as a true colleague or, except in one case, as a friend. In terms of access to information the researcher was almost an "insider," but this was not so on a social level.

Validity: Public Presentation of Data

The researcher must share his data with the audience, presenting large sections of verbatim interview, for example. This enables the reader in turn to judge for himself the validity of the conclusion. If the author's description matches the perception of the knowledgeable reader, it is likely that the author has correctly described the phenomenon under study. In this MDE study, the judges of validity are, potentially, the members of the educational community in Michigan, in other states, and possibly even in other countries. To that end, the next chapter does contain large amounts of raw data.

Validity: Future Efforts

The ultimate validity test is in the hands of others. Other studies in similar settings will confirm or deny the accuracy of this one. Ideally, some of these future studies will be rigorous, statistically sophisticated efforts. Statistics do not discover truth, but they do document it. A field study often provides more hypotheses than conclusions; it requires confirmation and replication. It is argued that the present study is a reliable and valid description of one agency. The external validity of the conclusions in this study is dependent on future research. Replication studies using field methods in other settings would be useful. Rigorous statistical treatments of components of this study would also be useful. Both would serve to expand knowledge of the ways in which organizations seek to reduce uncertainty in their environments.

On Serendipity and Validity

Like most doctoral research, the present effort was dramatically underfunded. The means chosen by the author to assure an income for the duration of the study proved, by luck, to contribute to the study itself. They did so by providing other interactions with the Michigan Department of Education.

The Middle Cities Education Association (MCEA) is a consortium formed by 13 large urban districts in Michigan. These districts have a total pupil population of over

250,000, about 15% of all Michigan students. The consortium is involved in lobbying, professional development and research. The author was employed half-time by the Middle Cities consortium for the duration of the MDE study. This had two benefits.

First, the employment required interaction with top-level administrators from these 13 school districts. Much of their conversation was about matters involving MDE. Many meetings included MDE personnel. This added to the bank of data from professionals in the environment of the agency.

A second part of the employment involved the author in a research contract with the Michigan Department of Education. This provided a "client's-eye" view of the agency; an intensive interaction with a small but influential subset of MDE staff.

Beyond these, the author also performed a small evaluation project for a Title III project in an urban school in southern Michigan. The evaluation report was required by the Michigan Department of Education. Two technical-level MDE staff acted as liaison with the project. This provided a chance to observe the agency interacting with the schools on a day-to-day basis and to observe MDE staff from that level, two and three steps below the Service Area directors mentioned earlier.

All of these interactions with MDE and with persons and organizations from its environment added to the range

of inputs. Some appear in the notes, others served as leads. Still others served only as tests of consistency and, when they served only to confirm previous information, rarely appear in the study. Thus the claim to internal consistency over a wide range of data has even another basis for support.

Summary of the Chapter

A review of some of the literature concerned with the theory and practice of field methodology was undertaken. A summary of basic requirements for field studies was extracted. The methods used in the MDE study were described and their application was explained in context. The methodology is then evaluated in terms of the summary of requirements from the first section of this chapter.

In the next chapter, the data collected by this application of field methodology is presented; consistent with the view in this chapter that public presentation of data allows evaluation of external validity.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE CASE STUDIES

The purpose of the study is to determine how the Michigan Department of Education reduces uncertainty about resources in its environment. In this chapter the data which were gathered in order to answer that question are presented in the form of seven case studies, studies of major issues which have affected the Department in the recent past.

The dominant assumption affecting the plan of this chapter is that public presentation of data contributes to the evaluation of external validity. Consequently much of the text in this chapter will be in the words of the people who were subjects in the study. Some will be from records of interviews and some will be from spontaneous verbalizations. Some will be taken from meetings and public presentations. Other data will be taken from the internal and public written documents. This is not to say that the interpretive role of the writer will be neglected; it merely says that the data will be given priority in those instances in which they make the point best.

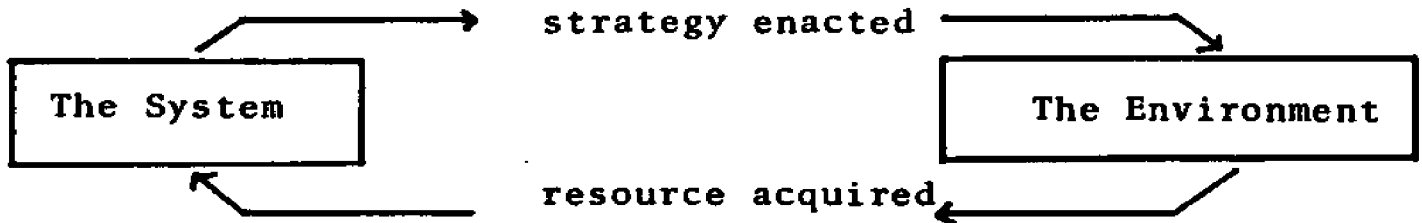
Overview of the Chapter

Seven case studies are presented, as introduced in the preceding (fourth) chapter of this dissertation. These deal with Higher Education, Special Education, Chapter 3, Professional Development Centers and with ESEA Title I, Title III and Title V. Each case is discussed in a narrative form. Consideration is given to each of the major points which formed the final interview checklist shown earlier in Figure 9. These include the following:

1. origin of the case and initial impact on MDE
2. anticipatory action, if any, by MDE
3. major interactions with other organizations
4. outcome, impact of the case on MDE and others
5. continuing trends, intended future action

This will provide for the reader a relatively complete description of each case which was studied. After these data have been presented, for each case there is a closing section entitled "Interpretation." There the data already presented are analysed in terms of the model which was developed in chapter one and expanded in chapter two.

A review of that model will be helpful here. The system employs one or more strategies to assure a continued supply of resources from its environment. The system under study here is the Michigan Department of Education.



The environment in this case is composed primarily of other organizations who may control resources useful to MDE: state legislature, governor, federal government and interest groups. The Michigan Constitution is an additional non-organization element which is a part of the environment of MDE.¹ Potential strategies to assure resource inputs are listed in chapter one. The resources which are typically sought are described in chapter two. For every case study, each of these four elements of the model shall be described, system, environment, resource and strategy.

Re-Introducing the Agency

An introduction to the Michigan Department of Education was provided in chapter two. The bulk of this chapter (five) will be devoted to a description of that agency and its behavior in several circumstances. A fairly brief re-introduction is presented here.

The MDE is a reasonably typical state education agency. It is typical in that it has some control over K-12 programs in the state's schools. It controls teacher certification, transportation, building codes and collects

¹See also Table 2 in chapter two for a more complete description of the environment of MDE.

data on a myriad of school functions. It disburses the state aid to school districts. It is the final appeal in cases of property boundary disputes for purposes of educational taxation. The MDE does not have control over curriculum as does New York's Board of Regents, for example.

In addition to the K-12 area in general, there are some special services provided to schools. The MDE distributes federal and state money for vocational, special, higher and compensatory education. It also conducts or contracts for a variety of research efforts in the K-12 area, as will be shown here.

Michigan is one of a few states in which the K-12 agency also has responsibility for higher education. To a varying (and contested) extent, MDE regulates student aid and program planning in higher education, adult education, community colleges and universities. MDE also has administrative responsibility for the State Library for vocational rehabilitation and for the two state schools for the blind and deaf. Clearly, the range of responsibilities is broad.

The physical configuration of the agency is equally diversified. Excluding the School for the Blind, about 2,400 staff are spread among nine locations in Lansing. Even where some subsystems of MDE share a building, they are often on different floors. The agency functions as a conglomerate and geographically looks like one.

About half of the research time in the present study was spent at one location. This was the de facto head office. In the Michigan National Tower in downtown Lansing, the office of the Superintendent is the core of the agency. The deputy and three of the four associates also have offices on the same floor. Further, the staff of the State Board of Education and the Board Room itself are there. Several other units which report to these executive-level staff are also housed in the Tower. These include Planning, Personnel, Community Affairs, Community Colleges, Legislation and Public Affairs, and one service area, Research Evaluation and Assessment Services. The rest of the agency is literally spread all over (and beyond!) the city of Lansing.

For example, the Special Education staff are housed two blocks from the central office and share part of an old office building with Higher Education Management staff. The Compensatory Education and General Education service areas share a different decentralized location. Another location is the home of the Vocational Education, Adult and Continuing Education, and Student Financial Aids service areas. The State Library is a few blocks east of the Tower, but its "back-up" collection of duplicates is several miles south and the law library it administers is a few blocks west. The Vocational Rehabilitation service area supervises its own state-wide regionalized operation from

still another Lansing location. The examples go on but the point is made: the subunits of the agency are as physically diverse as are their client groups.

For several years, the Superintendent and the State Board have tried to gain approval of the Governor and Legislature to build a new single office complex. Permission has been withheld because of a fear that the city of Lansing would suffer. The attempt continues and the Superintendent speaks at least half seriously of the time when

we get all these people in a twelve story building, we can begin to run our homogenizing machine and begin that building to start rattling . . . Right now its like sending Special Ed to Siberia, well, hell, you're out in Siberia, it's kinda cold up there and they're now in Moscow . . . when I grab 'em and bring 'em back to Moscow, they're going to start playing and talking a little more like Moscoovites!¹

Until then, the Bank Tower which houses the Office of the Superintendent and the State Board offices is nevertheless the nerve center of the diffuse agency.

Because such a large proportion of the leadership of the agency is centralized in this one building, much of the research was conducted there. Where the location of

¹In most cases, the anonymity of the respondents is preserved. There are some exceptions. There is no attempt to hide the identity of the state, for example, or of the agency. Public figures such as the Superintendent of Education and elected officials are identified only if their identity contributes to the meaning of the passage involved. Where disguise is both transparent and clumsy, it is avoided. Generally, though, respondents are identified only by level, such as "an executive-level MDE staff member" or by occasion, such as "at the Grand Rapids Accountability workshop."

an event is relevant to its meaning, that relationship will be made clear. There is, for example, one aspect of the location of the Bank Tower--the "head office" of MDE--that is necessary to understand. The Tower is directly across the street from the Capitol, which houses all the legislative and lobbying activity that plays such a large part in this chapter. The Capitol is thus referred to simply as "across the street," and any action by the Governor or Legislature is said to have come from "across the street." This term is regularly used in quotes. Otherwise, beyond the already established fact that MDE is physically dispersed, almost disassociated, the physical context of events will not be a major concern.

The Accountability Model as Context

The Michigan Department of Education is committed to advocacy of its six-step accountability model. This is a six-step rational planning model, suitable for instances where closed-system assumptions are operating. Whether such is the case in education is an argument that has been raised by opponents of the model. MDE has also been criticized for attempting to inflict the model on schools without soliciting input. This is less true than it was, according to the present study. The arguments concerning implementation of the accountability model have been well documented elsewhere and need not be reiterated here.¹

¹Philip Kearney, "Developing a New Role for the State Education Agency: the Michigan Experience, (a paper

What is important here is that commitment to the model pervades MDE and all other events--at least in the K-12 level--are subject to being affected by the accountability model.

The six steps of the model are as follows:

1. The Identification of Common Goals
2. The Development of Performance Objectives
3. The Assessment of Needs
4. The Analysis of Delivery Systems
5. Evaluation
6. Recommendations for Improvement

A complete recent statement of the meaning of each step has been presented in an MDE report and is included here as Table 6. In summary, the model asks that school districts pre-specify their operationalized goals and report tested level of attainment. Districts should identify which components of their delivery system--all elements having impact upon student learning--are effective and ineffective.

delivered at the Institute for Chief State School Officers, San Diego, August 5, 1971; E. House, W. Rivers and D. Stufflebeam, "Assessment of Michigan's Accountability System," Teachers Voice, April 22, 1974, supplement; Jerome T. Murphy and David Cohen, "Accountability in Education - the Michigan Experience," The Public Interest (Summer 1974); "Survey on Educational Accountability for the Michigan Department of Education," Detroit: The Market Opinion Research Corp., May, 1974; "A Staff Response to the Report: An Assessment of the Michigan Accountability System," (Lansing: MDE, May 1974); Herman W. Coleman, "Statement on Assessment/Accountability in Michigan," paper distributed to the U.S. Office of Education, Washington, October 22, 1974; John W. Porter, "The Accountability Story in Michigan," Phi Delta Kappan, 54, September 1972; "A Position Statement on Educational Accountability," Lansing, Michigan: MDE, March, 1972.

TABLE 6.--A Description of the Six Steps of the MDE Rational Planning "Accountability" Model.¹

The first step is the identification of educational goals. Local districts and educators are encouraged to adopt or modify these goals or to identify completely new sets of their own.

The second step in the process is the development of objectives, which add detail to the general statements called goals. Objectives can be adopted or modified, or new objectives may be developed by local districts.

Step three of the accountability process is an assessment of educational needs through assessment testing. Tests determine if students are meeting statewide or local minimal objectives. Data assist educators and citizens to identify program areas which may need more attention.

Step four, an analysis of delivery systems, examines teaching methods, use of materials, facilities, staffing and professional training with focus on how they serve to meet the objectives.

Evaluation, the fifth step in the accountability process, helps determine if the existing, new or revised methods aided children in learning better. Evaluations conducted at the state level, at the local district level and at the classroom level, seek to determine whether these programs are effective.

The final step in the accountability process, recommendations for improvement, completes the cycle. Districts share their successes with others or modify their programs.

¹This table is taken from The Public's Understanding and Attitudes Toward Educational Accountability, the report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, (Lansing, Michigan: MDE, August, 1974), p. 90.

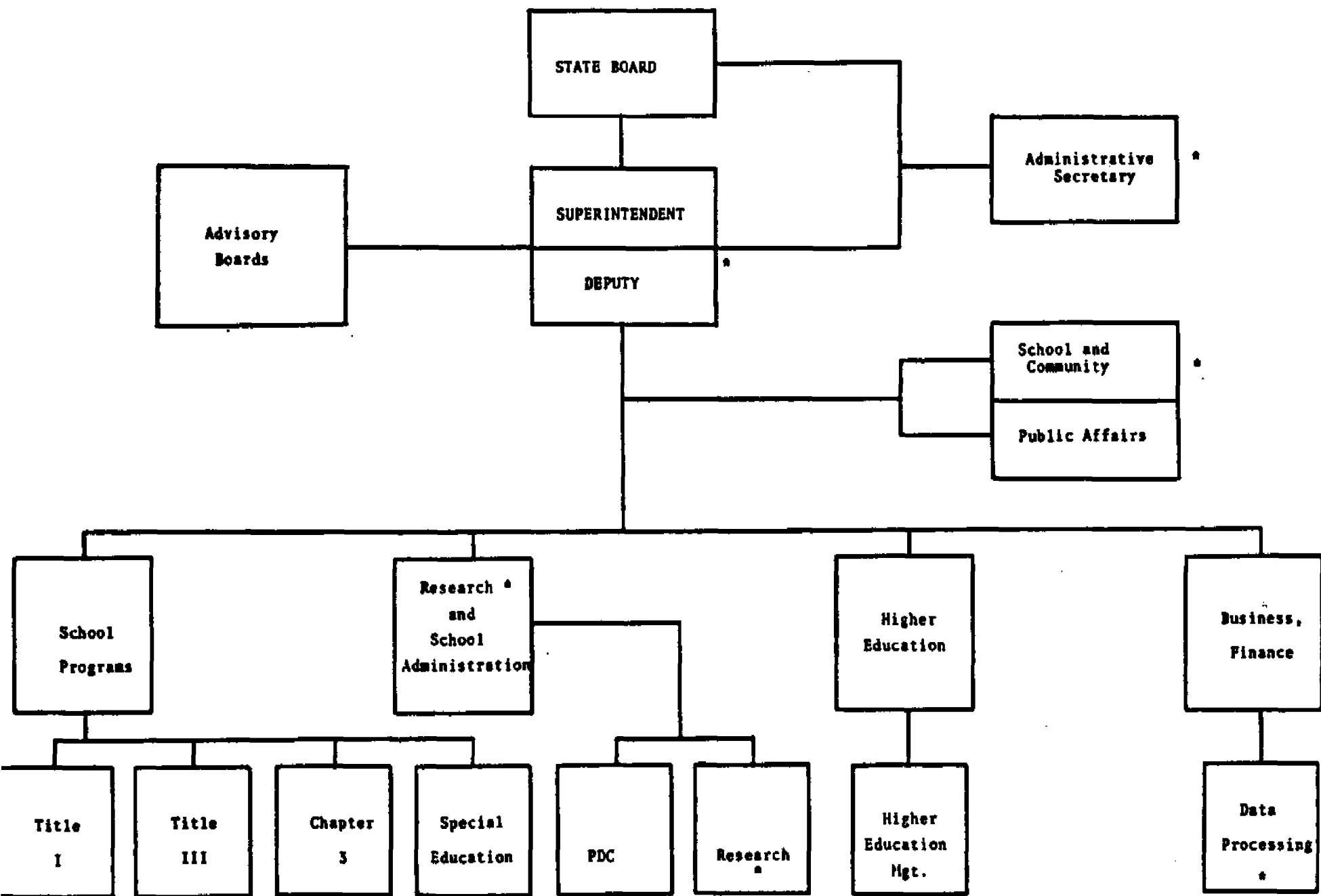
Revision should follow. The models virtues are not at issue here. What is of interest here is that MDE has used many methods to encourage, force or coax teachers and schools and districts to adopt the model. Some of these instances will be discussed in this chapter as the seven case studies are presented. However varied is the behavior of MDE, advocacy of their rational planning model, the "Accountability" model, is consistent, at least in the K-12 arena.

The Issues and the Organization

As stated earlier, it is the purpose of this study to determine how MDE reduces uncertainty in its environment. To do so, case studies of major occurrences in the agency were undertaken. The range of cases reflects the range of environmental elements to which MDE must attend in order to reduce uncertainty.

Seven issues were chosen for the intensive case studies. These were purposely chosen to demonstrate the range of major environmental influences on MDE, the Constitution, the Legislature, the federal government, interest groups and parents. The seven cases or issues also reflect the breadth of involvement of the agency. Figure 10 illustrates where the cases occur according to the organization of the agency.

Most curricular matters, all things related to K-12 instruction, are ultimately the responsibility of the Associate Superintendent for School Program Development. Four



*Title V Impact

FIGURE 10.--The Location of the Seven Case Studies According to the Organizational Chart of MDE.

of the case studies reported here are programs or services reporting in that manner. They are Special Education, Chapter 3, Title I and Title III. The professional development center is a responsibility of the Associate Superintendent for Research and School Administration. The Higher Education Management service area reports to a third associate, the Associate Superintendent for Higher Education. To this point, the cases do, as promised, match the range of agency concerns.

Title V of ESEA provides a large amount of discretionary money to be applied to whatever concerns are deemed to "strengthen" the agency. Thus, the ubiquitous nature of Title V in the chart is a true description of the nature of that source of funds, as will be shown later. Neglect of peripheral units such as the State Library and the Vocational Rehabilitation program is intentional. While these may be a part of the conglomerate that is MDE, they are not typically areas of major policy concern. They are not sources of uncertainty in any meaningful sense. At one point it appeared that the whole Vocational Rehabilitation area was to be taken away to another agency by legislative act, but nobody cared. In no Executive Council meeting was it a topic of concern. At no point was it evident that any strategies to reduce the uncertainty about the future of that subsystem were employed. Its actions simply did not have impact on the agency; it could be cut loose like ballast--without threatening the rest of the agency.

As Figure shows, only two of the cases affect the Associate Superintendent for Research and School Administration. This frankly underestimates his large personal influence at all levels of the agency. Beyond these limitations, the cases selected do reflect the range of major endeavors of the Michigan Department of Education as determined by this study.

Governing Education in Michigan

The first four of the seven case studies presented in this chapter deal with issues internal to the state. No major federal funds or regulations impinge in a direct manner. In each of these cases, the state government of Michigan is a major element in the relevant environment from the point of view of MDE. The fact that the Capitol is physically across the street from MDE coincidentally reflects the almost omnipresent influence on MDE from that source.

All of the events discussed here--in fact the very existence of the agency itself--occur in the context of the 1963 Michigan Constitution, the fourth constitution since 1835. It was that constitution that required a reduction of major departments to 20. The "conglomerate" nature of MDE resulted from that requirement.

While the predecessor to MDE had been primarily a K-12 agency, the new Michigan Department of Education as created by the 1963 constitution has very broad

responsibilities. New responsibilities beyond the general K-12 program arena included the State Library, Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Tenure Commission. In the area of post-secondary education, MDE now has responsibility for Community Colleges, Adult Continuing Education, Student Financial Assistance and Higher Education Management. Several statutory boards also report to the State Board of Education, including the State Board for Libraries and the State Board for Public Community and Junior Colleges. The MDE is also administratively responsible for the State School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf.

The MDE still retains the K-12 functions of its predecessors. The administration and leadership of the K-12 education arena is still the primary function of MDE as will be shown by the case studies which follow. In the K-12 arena, MDE is responsible for general education, compensatory education and both special and vocational education. MDE also provides the typical teacher certification, school management and financial services to schools. MDE disburses the state aid allocations and is responsible for related accounting and monitoring.

The 1963 constitution provides for the election by partisan ballot of a State Board of Education--the "Board of Directors" of MDE. Two are elected each year for a term of eight years. The governor may fill vacancies. The governor is also an ex-officio member of the State Board

and his representative attends Board meetings on his behalf. The Superintendent is also an ex-officio member of the State Board and also acts as its non-voting chairman. While this probably enhances the power of the Superintendent, it also provides for a firm communication link between the three levels, Board, Superintendent and the Department staff.

Three of the powers of the MDE--via the State Board--are of particular interest here. First, the MDE does not have legal authority to mandate curriculum. Thus, attempts to influence public schools must use other means, such as the MDE Accountability model. Second, MDE has only tenuous control over higher education, as will be shown in the first case study. Third, the MDE position with respect to school finance is one of advising the Legislature, it has no legal power to decide on allocations. All three of these--curriculum, higher education and finance--are areas where the Legislature holds the power.

Michigan has a bicameral Legislature including 110 members in the House of Representatives and 38 in the Senate. As of this writing, there is a Democratic majority in both the Senate and the House. In this study--reflecting the use by MDE staff--the term "legislator" refers to an elected member of either the Senate or the House. The Legislature controls the state aid to education bill and almost everything else. While local control is a philosophic utterance in all quarters, the behavior of the Legislature sometimes

seems to belie the notion. While the ability of the Department of Education to exert control over education is an open question, the ability of the state government to do so is a fact.

The Educational Governance Project study described the Michigan Legislature as well-informed and busy.¹ The Legislature is serviced by several staff support agencies and each party maintains its own research potential. The "busyness" was based on the fact that from 1500 to 3000 bills are introduced each year. Of these, from 250 to 400 become law. The Governance study points out that the complex committee system--33 in the House, 14 in the Senate--facilitates both the generation and the obstruction of bills.

Governor Milliken is a Republican, surrounded by Democrats in both houses of the Legislature. He has long been known as a liberal Republican, however, and while the relationship may be an adversary one, it is certainly not strained, or fraught with conflict.

The present constitution limits severely the authority of the governor in education. The existence of an elected State Board of Education is the major impediment to gubernatorial power. Governor Milliken would prefer to appoint the members of the State Board and/or the Superintendent. A recent report of a Governor's Commission complained about the present situation.

¹Hines, et. al. State Policy Making for Michigan.

It is difficult to conceive of a less workable structure, fraught with such possibilities for inaction and lack of focus for leadership than the one existing at the state level in education.¹

The Governor has been particularly interested in school finance reform and in aid to non-public schools. Inability to directly control education may be an impediment to him, but certainly the strength of the Legislature is another.

As it is, Governor Milliken is constantly in formal and informal touch with education in Michigan. His senior education staff member (and also delegate to the State Board), Dr. James Phelps, is ubiquitous. He was present and active in a wide variety of education-related meetings observed during the course of this study, usually as the formal delegate of the Governor. The Governor has another means of input and that is through the budget process. The Bureau of Management and Budget reports to Governor Milliken and it is possible for him to exercise some control via that process.

In the final analysis, though, it is the Legislature that controls education--as will be shown in this chapter! MDE recognition of that fact is shown by the amount of energy the agency invests in communicating with that body. To begin with, MDE employs a full time lobbyist to interact

¹William G. Milliken, et. al. "The Governor's Commission on Educational Reform," report of the Commission, (Lansing, Michigan: Office of the Governor, 1969).

with the Legislature. This is essentially an information-sharing role and is part of a larger effort. The executive secretary to the State Board reported that his office has a rule of thumb requiring that legislators never have to wait over 90 minutes for a response to a request for information. MDE gains additional input from the monthly meetings of its Legislative Advisory Committee, composed of representatives of major interest groups and clients. In addition to this input, MDE staff analyse every education-related bill which is introduced. These analyses, along with recommended positions, are finally presented to the State Board every month. Yearly, MDE publishes its own list of (Board approved) legislative priorities for the coming year. The Superintendent supplements these formal channels with semi-formal regular meetings with key legislators, e.g., the speaker, committee chairpersons, and so on.

If the question is concerned with control of education, there are many answers. In spite of a tradition--at least verbally--of local control in Michigan, the hand of the state is pervasive. A senior MDE staff member argued that in reality, schools have very little freedom beyond their traditional control of curriculum.

Outside of that (curriculum):

. . . and who they hire to teach, outside of that they're controlled by rules at every turn. They can't spend a penny, they can't hold election for millage

unless they follow the law, they can't bond, they can't do this . . . they have to file reports in a certain way . . . everything is controlled by statute.

The fenders of the buses, great big issue six-seven years ago, shall they be yellow shall they be black? A piece of legislation goes through: they have to be yellow. So all the black fenders get painted yellow. Local control?

A legislator described the process in this way:

"What the legislative process is is a process of compromise. The first thing you learn to do is to count to 56. And that's why the _____ bill isn't going anywhere, because he can't count 56 votes." (Fifty-six is the minimum for a majority in the House.)

The same legislator told an audience that the MDE position paper on school finance would never get read. An urban administrator asked "If the State Department of Education goes to the pain of preparing so comprehensive a document, why is it not reflected?" (in the legislation). The answer was blunt: "Because the chairperson of the House Education Committee brags that she doesn't want staff people working for her," and again, "If you can't count to 56 on these proposals, it doesn't go anywhere."

The legislator criticized MDE for being too compliant: "The bureaucrats are too scared to rock the boat, to criticize." Another was much less kind. When asked about MDE, he replied that they

. . . get in each other's way. They've been growing since January 1 of 1963 when Romney came in. We should revive the old Roman idea of attrition: take 10% of

them out on the first of the month and line them up and shoot them. If that doesn't help, do it again the next month, until things get more efficient . . . the appropriations committee has been loose as a goose since 1963 about the proliferation of new staff for the departments.

One executive-level MDE staff blamed the capricious behavior of the Legislature on the tendency of elected representatives to overreact in favor of constituents.

You see, the trouble is historically, if people come to the Board and they can't get what they want from the Board, they run to their individual legislator, see, and complain that we didn't do anything for them . . . that's not going to change, we just have a little more credibility now . . . with the Legislature.

The Legislature has imposed some general demands of MDE. The Legislature has passed many education-related bills in recent years and has required MDE to evaluate on their behalf in many cases. An associate superintendent reported that

The Legislature in so many respects has forced us to do that. They've started putting money into education, real money, in the last five years and they're saying "What are you going to do with it? What have you done with it? What kind of progress have you made?" So, when they start asking that, we've got to be able to say, "Hey, we've taken the money and we've taken these youngsters from here to here, at least . . . able to measure in some way, the progress they made.

The Legislature is increasingly concerned with thorough, quantitative evaluation of all programs they fund. This was agreed to by people on both sides of the street and documented by legislation. The adequacy of resources provided for this task is in question. The following is also typical of a myriad of complaints by MDE personnel at all levels.

I think one of the biggest mistakes I ever made was to assume that one of our roles was to take the Legislature from its decision making mode--which is essentially a give and take, seat of the pants, compromise, pull this chit in, that chit out, and make them strictly rational decision makers. That's never going to happen.

The Legislature is, by structure, a reactive instrument. It responds via elections and lobbies to the popular will of the moment. While state government has many ways to "cool" legislation, many checks and balances, it is in the last analysis a creature of its constituents. This makes it an unlikely ally for MDE, an agency whose attempts to change educational practice are often very unpopular, at least with some constituents. The interactions which result from this dynamic interface form a part of each of the four following case studies.

Since the Legislature is a consistent source of potential resources for MDE, it is also an important source of uncertainty. The several ways MDE shares information with the Governor and Legislature (included in this section) illustrate MDE attempts to reduce uncertainty concerning the behavior of these sources. As was shown, the Legislature receives most attention. It has the most power, the most resources. As will be evident in the following case studies, it takes more than analysis of bills to reduce uncertainty about the behavior of state government.

Higher Education

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine how the Michigan Department of Education acts to reduce uncertainty about the supply of resources from its environment. Since resources range from dollars to good will, almost any element with significant power to affect MDE can be a source of uncertainty worthy of examination.

In this section, the legal authority of MDE over programs in higher education is the central issue. This issue of program approval has been sensitive because it is ambiguous and the source of the ambiguity is the 1963 constitution. That document, which created MDE, brought MDE into the arena of higher education. While charging the Department of Education with the responsibility to "plan and coordinate" higher education, the same constitution also guaranteed total autonomy in governance to the same colleges MDE was to control. Thus, the constitution which could have been a source of legal authority for MDE has in fact simply been a source of uncertainty.

Since the constitution is unclear, MDE has sought to find resources elsewhere. A suit before the State Supreme Court will soon determine the legality of the Salmon decision. This decision supported the autonomy of the three largest universities against both the State Board of Education and the Legislature. The Legislature accepted a lower court decision, but MDE pursued the appeal.

Whether the appeal matters to anyone is still an open question. The Legislature has gained de facto control of university programs through its funding mechanisms. That is, the Legislature allocates funds only for programs it approves of. MDE has been quick to adopt the Legislature as a new source of resources. The MDE strategy is to provide quality information and recommendations on high visibility programs to the Legislature. In fact, MDE acts in these situations as an extra legislative research staff. To the extent that the Legislature finds the information useful, the theory goes, it will continue to fund that function of MDE. To date, MDE has found the Legislature to be a more certain supplier of resources than the 1963 constitution. The level of support, however, is not impressively high.

A thorough description of that sequence of events will now be presented.

Text

The 1963 constitution of the State of Michigan required that the number of major departments in the state government be reduced to not more than 20. Several functions relating to higher education were brought under the aegis of the newly established Michigan Department of Education. These include the Higher Education Assistance Authority, the Higher Education Facilities Authority and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges. On the

other hand, the 1963 constitution also provided for independent boards of governors for the state-supported degree-granting institutions. It is this apparent contradiction that had led to conflict about the role of the Michigan Department of Education in the higher education arena.

It is stated in section 3 of article 8 of the 1963 constitution that

Leadership and general supervision over all public education, including adult education and instructional programs in state institutions, except as to institutions of higher education granting baccalaureate degrees is vested in a state board of education.

That seems to exclude higher education from the realm of activities over which the state board--a part of the agency we are calling MDE--has authority. But the following sentence in section 3 reads:

It (the State Board) shall serve as the general planning and coordinating body for all public education, including higher education and shall advise the Legislature as to the financial requirements in connection herewith.

This section forms the basis of the argument made by MDE officials for an active role by that agency. Note that the Board "advises" and the Legislature is the decision maker regarding finance.

The concluding paragraph of that same section 3 of the constitution manage to further complicate the question:

The power of the boards of institutions of higher education provided in this constitution to supervise their respective institutions and control and direct the expenditure of the institutions' funds shall not be limited by this section.

Conflict was inevitable and has arisen regularly.

Michigan has 14 degree-granting colleges and universities. Three of these are schools of considerable size and reputation: Wayne State University, Michigan State University and the University of Michigan. Collectively these are known (and are hereafter referred to) as the "big three" universities. Recently, in 1971, the big three launched a suit against the Legislature. The Legislature had been attempting to regulate these universities by writing language into the appropriations bills which amounted to legislative control of the internal spending of the money which was appropriated. The suit quoted the constitution as the basis for autonomy and in district court the Salmon decision¹ upheld the "big three" universities. Prior to the decision, however, the State Board of Education had voluntarily entered the suit as a co-defendant. The hope was that MDE would gain clear authority. In the words of one MDE staff member

. . . well, the suit was brought by the big three against the Legislature which was writing some sections in the appropriations bill telling them how to spend money and the State Board wasn't the defendant, the State Board contended or entered that case as an intervening defendant, the State Board contended that the issue applied equally to the authority of the State Board . . . the Legislature dropped out during the appeal process . . . and the Board continued as an intervening defendant contending that the appeal should go to the supreme court. . .

¹University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University v. Allison Green, Glen Allen and the State Board of Education, Ingham County Circuit Court, November 1973.

The Court of Appeals, division 2, upheld the earlier decision in May, 1973. The case did eventually go to the Supreme Court of Michigan on appeal from the State Board of Education. No decision has been handed down at this time. This leaves the MDE in a position of uncertainty.

What are the arguments, beyond the constitutional one, for an active MDE role in higher education? A member of the State Board of Education advocated the political neutrality of that agency:

The point I'm trying to make is, its an agency that can stand apart in terms of the political arena, of the executive and the legislative branches and say to these people, "Look, you might not like what you're looking at, you might not like the recommendations, but here is an honest shot at what we see as the needs and what we perceive should be the future developments in education in any one of these sectors."

The more common argument, however, is that resources are finite and should be allocated on the basis of state-wide needs (as interpreted by MDE) rather than according to political savvy. This view implies that the Legislature pays more attention to political than to rational inputs. In the words of a State Board member:

There are political careers that have been built and maintained in the state of Michigan simply by the way universities are funded. I'm rather vague on this, but I think you could show a pattern, particularly in the outstate areas, where senators and state reps have convinced areas where a university, or a small university or college is, that that colleges' growth, that colleges' very existence . . . is solely dependent on their ability as a politician.

Now you could get a good backlash on a statement like that, but I think I've seen it; I think I've witnessed

it . . . it gets permeated in the university, and into the town area around, the lay people so to speak, that 'By God, if we didn't have senator so and so down there, bringing the goodies back from those big thieves down below, we wouldn't have nothing and we wouldn't survive.'

There would be some validity, but what I object to is that it goes on the assumption that there are no honest people.

That Board Member and MDE staff maintain that they can supply information which will lead to more rational decision making in the Legislature. For example, MDE supplied the Legislature with an evaluation of three recent requests to establish a law school. Three institutions-- Michigan State University, Western Michigan University and Grand Valley State College--all applied to the Legislature for funding. MDE asked whether--according to MDE criterion-- a new law school was needed at all.

The director of the MDE Higher Education Management service area is in charge of such tasks. Regarding the law school issue, he said

These institutions want law schools and this comes up again and again--Western and Grand Valley and MSU. So our study of two years ago indicates, looking at the need for lawyers, that we have a sufficient number of lawyers in Michigan. The demand side of it is that the ratio of people applying to admissions indicate a demand for legal education . . . whether the state wants to subsidize legal education . . . even though there is no demand for attorneys . . .

. . . what we want to try to do is bring the demand and supply into coordination . . . that's what we mean by coordination, whether there is indeed a need for additional law school . . . there is obviously no need for three law schools. And I think the State Board has a role to play in which of the three is best able to provide . . . we're going to review this . . . that's what I mean by coordination.

The attempt by Michigan State University to gain approval for a dental school provided another example. MSU has two medical schools and a school of veterinary medicine. It would appear that MSU is consciously trying to expand its capacities regarding all phases of medical education. The same MDE staff member reported his agency's response.

. . . dental ed is another issue . . . MSU has an application . . . they want to round out their med complex by adding a dental school. Now our study indicates that if we do nothing at all, the increased enrollments at the U. of M. and the U. of D., then the state will have all the dentists it needs for the next 20 years. We're looking at the cost of developing a dental school. That school is not justified and that's the position we're going to recommend to the State Board.

A similar report was done regarding a proposed optometry school at a small state college and a similar lack of true need was reported by MDE.

The point in all such analyses is to influence the Legislature through providing high-quality information. MDE staff concerned with higher education report that

. . . People over there (Legislature) have told us, 'It's not so much whether you guys have authority, it's the quality of your analysis and if you do a good job of analyzing requests, then you'll be listened to and if you do a crummy job of analyzing even with all the authority in the world, people won't listen to you-- that's all there is to it.'

This leads to a selectivity by MDE staff in the issues they tackle. They keep the risks low. An MDE staff member reports that

We concentrate on high impact issues, dental, medical, law, optometry, but not on Ph.D.'s in science. It's a matter of establishing credibility with the Legislature to demonstrate that we can do a good job on those reports

that we do and demonstrate quality and if they say this looks like a good approach so that they do fund us to do those kinds of reviews.

Let us stop to emphasize that last observation: "They fund us to do those kinds of reviews." It was not always so.

Another staff member reported that the MDE, via the State Board lost a costly battle long ago. The MDE/SBE took a position against branch campuses. The University of Michigan (U of M) had a branch campus in Flint, Michigan. The MDE attempted to force U of M to make the Flint campus an independent institution. An executive-level MDE staff member who was with MDE then recalled the conflict.

One of the very first major issues this board tried to take up was to convert the U of M Flint branch into an independent institution. They ran into Senator Garland Lane from Flint, who insisted that his people wanted the word 'U of M' on their diplomas, they didn't care whether it catered to their needs or not. Oakland was a branch at the same time (of MSU) but since then, Oakland has spun off and become independent and has developed an independent character of its own. It has about three or four times the enrollment of U of M Flint . . . It was a bad issue. They took on Gar Lane, who was at that time vice-chairman of the appropriations committee and Gar at that time had a powerful arm and consequently any time it came up to the Board they decimated our education unit. Very easily, by just appropriating one position less and one position less and pretty soon we're down to one or two people. Things are better now, were back up to four or five.

In fact, a 1972 report¹ shows three state supported staff in the Planning and Coordination unit. Two were secretaries. In June of 1975 there were five state-funded positions in

¹Michigan Department of Education, A Position Statement on Higher Education Planning and Coordination, (Lansing: Michigan, Department of Education, 1972), 35 pages, mimeographed.

the unit.¹ A revival seems to be occurring, but it is a revival within a fairly restricted role.

How do the universities react to the efforts by MDE to "plan and coordinate" them? The presidents of the junior colleges meet monthly. The MDE Associate Superintendent for Higher Education has never been invited to attend. Neither has the Director of the Higher Education Management service area. On the other hand, all but one of the universities provided information about their budgets to MDE in 1974. Certainly the entry of MDE into the suit could not have been greeted with enthusiasm by the universities.

Yet no one who was interviewed seemed to be concerned about the outcome of the court case. The autonomy of the universities with regard to program decisions is not a matter of concern to the Legislature. An MDE staff member from the Higher Education service area gave the following reasons

The Legislature has gotten around the autonomy issue by only funding programs it approves and supports, so you really can't separate the two, if you can't control degrees, then you can control the dollars . . . the Legislature funds by programs so 'You can offer any program you want but we're not going to pay for it, unless it happens to be one we're interested in supporting.' Our point is that coordination is occurring at the state level but it's occurring at the appropriations committee, where the guy that gets supported happens to be the guy who has the most votes, not necessarily on educational issues.

¹Verified by telephone to the Director of Higher Education Management Services, June 25, 1975.

As long as the Legislature is able to maintain that control, the MDE can have a role in influencing the decisions of the Legislature. But how do the legislators and others in government feel about the intrusion of MDE into the realm of higher education? One legislative staff member was very blunt:

In higher education, my opinion is they (MDE) ought to get out of the business over there--they don't have the personnel to do the job. They publish all these planning and coordination things, and want to provide for some systematic role for the higher education system. And I think that's worthwhile, but the Supreme Court, the Salmon decision, says the four year institutions are locally autonomous and have their own governing boards. The State Board can't set programs or approve budgets or anything and this is so damaging that I think we need a constitutional amendment to change that or the legislature needs to create a new coordinating body that goes through their funding apparatus to do this, I just don't think the Department can do it with their staff right now. I think they're spinning their wheels.

The dangers of a more active and risky role were reiterated by the same respondent

Well, John Porter used to be director of that and at that time they had a very successful division; they got too successful and the lobbies wiped them out. They had a group of about 20 people at one time and they alienated a few folks and they removed . . . they went down to three people or something like that. Chunk by chunk, they took it all away and moved it over to Management and Budget.

The people over here don't even think about the Department's role in higher education.

Another aide was more kind, but equally disinterested in MDE input.

I don't think they're capable--and it's not the individuals being competent, it's a matter of they have enough to handle with K through 12. All of post-secondary should be dealt with by another Board or by no Board at all

The consensus continues that MDE input is not welcomed by the Legislature. For another example a legislator was thoroughly frustrated by the "big three" universities.

They resist any language we sent them along with the money. And the Attorney General upholds them every time we try to put restrictions on the money. I guess it'll go on as long as the constitution is written in such a damn silly way!

Yet he had no interest in reports from MDE. He was more interested in creating a new, strong, State Board for Higher Education. Such amendments to the constitution have been introduced, but no estimate of support was available.¹

The concept was popular, however, with all representatives of the government with whom interviews were conducted.

One professional staff person from the Capitol side of the street summed up both the issues and the frustrations of MDE. According to him, MDE is simply unable to exert any influence.

Well, two comments. What is planning and coordination? Second, you should talk to former Senator Gar Lane from Flint, he said it all when he said that, 'The appropriations committee plans and coordinates.' You see, the appropriations committee, in writing the bill, do the planning and coordinating, and they are not ready to transfer that to some place in the Department of Education to make those kinds of decisions. And I think politically there's a lot of truth to that. And obviously the universities say 'We'll do our own. We don't want any outside interference.' So you have in essence competition from three sources, one is the universities who want autonomy, 'Leave us alone!'; the Legislature saying that 'We spend the bucks, therefore we're the ones who call the tune'; and the Department people saying 'Nobody listens to me!'

¹House Joint Resolution Y, May 15, 1975, Introduced by Representatives Mowat and Richard A. Young.

It appears that the Legislature is barely willing to accept "advice" from MDE and has little interest in an expanded role for the agency.

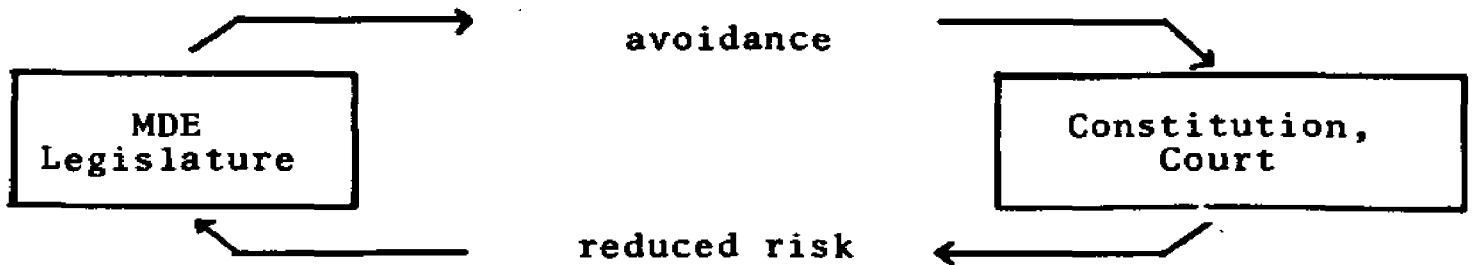
Interpretation

In this case, it is the State Board which is legally named as the responsible agent by the 1963 constitution. Most of the relevant staff are housed in the Higher Education Management service area. Thus the persons who act for the MDE in this instance are relatively few, but are for the most part highly placed. Since the entry into the suit and all transmittals to the Legislature must have had Board approval, the actions in this case can be conceived to be formal actions of the MDE at a system level.

The elements of the MDE environment which were involved are the Legislature, the Governor's Office, Bureau of Management and Budget, the Universities and two levels of court.

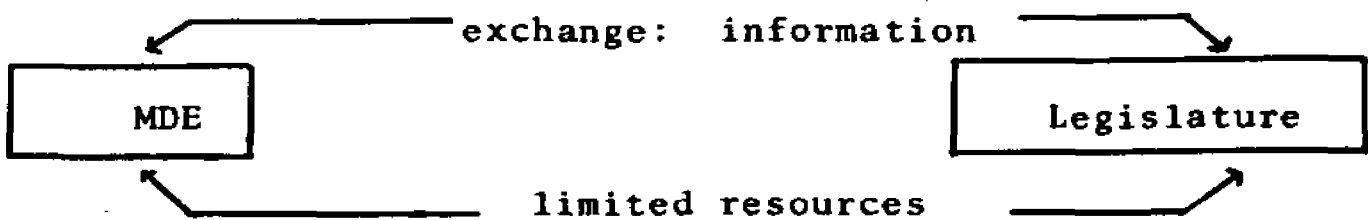
What resources were open to MDE? First, there was some questionable legal authority based on section 3, article 8, of the 1963 constitution. Second, MDE used its personnel in recent years to gather information to send to the Legislature. Both are uncertain relationships. The decision of the court is unknown and is now beyond the reach of any MDE action. It thus becomes a source of uncertainty which is not subject to any proactive strategy. But both the Legislature and the MDE have employed a reactive strategy in

the aftermath of the Salmon decision, both have avoided the source of uncertainty.



Both have "hedged their bets" and sought an alternate route to control.

The Legislature has acted to control universities indirectly through selective funding. MDE has chosen to attempt to obtain resources from the legislature by offering information in a bargaining strategy. In spite of the verbal denials of interest in MDE recommendations, MDE has been granted two new state-funded staff positions by the Legislature and Governor.



Thus the decision to bargain with expertise as their offering seems to have paid off for MDE, at least in the short term. The "newer" element in the environment, the Legislature, has at least for now proved to be a more certain supplier of resources than the constitution. Previous MDE experience in the Flint campus conflict, however, has shown that the

Legislature is not interested in a powerful MDE influence at the higher education level. Thus MDE has chosen to be very selective in the issues it investigates and reports on. With each, if the reception is good, they can say "We'll do more with more staff!" MDE staff have voiced this argument; there is a desire to grow, to increase the range of options available for exchange.

It is not clear whether the desire to "plan and coordinate" higher education is tantamount to an attempt to annex a source of uncertainty. The authority of the MDE in the K-12 area is more clear than in higher education. The goals of the agency at that level are also more clear. There is not, however, strong evidence that any MDE personnel have firm and developed plans about what they would do with a sudden increase in authority. "More of the same" seemed to be the goal.

In the interim, it is unlikely that MDE would make a strong move against the universities. The power of the pro-university forces--whether lobbyists or legislators--was once demonstrated. MDE is likely to avoid serious conflict with those forces; they do not want their recovering capacity to be decimated again. MDE thus tries to meet legislative needs well enough to get refunded (hopefully even higher), but seeks to avoid conflict with other environmental elements in the process.

The tenuous nature of the conglomerate that is MDE was evidenced by several interviews. In two separate service areas dealing with higher education, MDE staff praised their superintendent (John Porter) but admitted that, as one said, "John Porter's name is mud" in the universities. In both cases, MDE was viewed as "a convenient administrative umbrella--we could move next door and it wouldn't really matter." The same jobs would need to be done. Thus these subunits or subsystems of MDE seem to maintain and advocate modularity and are willing to move to a different configuration--e.g. a State Board for Higher Education--if need arose. They are specialists who are virtually irreplaceable, it is likely that their service areas would survive a transfer almost intact.

MDE staff in higher education are equally confident about their ability to influence the course of higher education. They argue that both dollars and enrollments are dwindling and that the universities must eventually compromise and share and set priorities. As a provider of "factual" information, MDE staff and State Board members argued that MDE would be listened to by the Legislature. The attitude was "We're inevitable," and within limits the argument is compelling and seems to be working.

Summary

MDE cannot exert any further proactive influence on the Supreme Court. Consequently it has ignored that

uncertain source of legal authority and has focused on the Legislature. MDE exchanges recommendations and data with the Legislature for limited financial support of their Higher Education Management staff. MDE staff hope for an increase in the intensity of that exchange relationship, since the resources it provides have proved to be relatively certain, however meager.

Special Education

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine how the MDE reduces uncertainty concerning the supply of resources from its environment.

In the previous case, the 1963 constitution proved to be too uncertain a source of resources, and MDE modified its behavior accordingly. Thus, MDE found the Legislature to be a more certain source of at least a minimal level of resources. There is some similarity in the case of special education. In this case study, the Legislature also proved to be a source of uncertainty which was focused on by MDE. In this case, however, MDE was not the sole actor.

One of the environmental elements having impact on special education in Michigan is the parent lobby. The parents of the children who are potential recipients of special education services were, in the late 60's, dissatisfied with the extent to which special education services

guaranteed by the 1963 constitution had been provided. These parents, particularly those comprising the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens (MARC), had been unsuccessful in convincing the Legislature to support the constitution by passing a Mandatory Special Education Act.

In 1970, the parent lobbies, especially MARC, threatened to launch an initiative petition drive to place the issue on a ballot. The Legislature passed a Mandatory Special Education Act, numbered 198, soon after. The exact role of the special education professionals in the field (teachers and directors) is unclear, but respondents agree that the professionals supported the parents, and both were supported by the MDE special education staff. Thus a subsystem of MDE joined external elements in an attempt to force the Legislature to pass #198--an act which would in turn determine goals of MDE. The MDE Special Education service area is accused of helping the others convince the Legislature to make mandatory what they already wanted to do, i.e., provide a higher level of service for handicapped persons. Thus the Legislature reduced uncertainty about both purpose and resources, since goals and minimal levels of service had to be enforced and since some funding to regulate #198 would be assured.

A later issue followed a similar cause. In 1974 the parent lobby, with unknown levels of encouragement from MDE staff, determined that persons residing in state-run

institutions were not being adequately served. In response, a suit was filed (but not activated) by MARC. The state agencies involved assumed that they would lose and immediately began to implement the desired services. The State Department of Mental Health is the agency in charge of most of the institutions in question. MDE will serve a regulatory function.

The environmental elements in this case changed-- from the constitution to the Legislature to the courts. A continuing reduction of uncertainty resulted.

Text

There are two major events related to Special Education which have relevance for the present study of the Michigan Department of Education. The first is the passage of Act 198, the Mandatory Special Education Act of 1971. The second event is the initiation of activities in 1974 to provide Special Education to handicapped persons in state-run institutions. The development of each of these events will be described here and the way in which each reduced uncertainty for MDE will be made explicit.

From the General School Laws of Michigan as revised in 1971, the following definition is taken:

'Special education programs and services' as used in this act means educational and training programs and services designed for handicapped persons--and ancillary professional services for handicapped persons rendered by agencies approved by the State Board of Education.¹

¹From Section 340-10 of the School Code as compiled by MDE in Michigan Statutes Governing Special Education Programs and Services, (Lansing, Michigan: MDE, March 30, 1972), p. 1.

'Handicapped' as defined in P.A. 198 and in the School Code includes almost every imaginable impairment--physical, mental, emotional or combination. The language is inclusive.

Public Act 198 made provision of mandatory the educational services for all handicapped persons age zero through 25. The intent and main points are summarized in the following memorandum from Superintendent John W. Porter.

The Mandatory Special Education Act (Act 198 of the Public Acts of 1971) became effective in September, 1973. According to the provisions of the act, local school districts, or intermediate school districts if local school districts default, are to provide, not later than September, 1973, all handicapped persons, ages 0-25, who have not graduated from high school, special education programs and services designed to develop their maximum potential, to the extent that an appropriate educational or training program can be provided.¹

This describes the act. The origin of that Mandatory act is one of the two main concerns of this section.

The 1963 constitution of Michigan was clear in Article VIII in its support of special education:

Section 8: Institutions, programs and services for the care, treatment, education or rehabilitation of these inhabitants who are physically, mentally or otherwise seriously impaired shall always be fostered and supported.

Prior to 1971 this had the support of legislation and MDE rules and regulations. Nevertheless, it was felt by some parents and professionals that the needs of many students were not being met. The proposed solution to that neglect

¹John W. Porter, Memorandum to the State Board of Education, Lansing, Michigan, November 5, 1974, page 1.

was made very clear in the 1971 state plan developed by the Michigan Department of Education with input from a representative advisory council.

1. The delivery of Special Education Programs and Services must be made mandatory under Michigan statutes.
2. The accountability for the delivery of special education programs and services must be explicitly stated and enforced.¹

The stage was thus set within the special education community. The goal was the passage of legislation making special education mandatory, thus putting the full legal power of the state behind efforts to assure service for the clients whose need MDE and its professional allies perceived.

Public Act 198 was passed by the Legislature rather grudgingly. According to one MDE staff, "Mandatory had been introduced into the Legislature for six years previous to that, (1971) and had never gotten out of committee." The thrust was provided by parent lobbies, of which the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens (MARC) was the strongest. The MARC was prepared to launch a petition drive by which the mandatory issue would appear as a proposal in the next election ballot. A member of the MDE Special Education staff described the confrontation with the Legislature.

First of all you have to remember that MARC was one of the major forces in getting the mandatory special education act passed. Our act was brought about by

¹Michigan Department of Education, State Plan for the Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services, (Lansing: MDE, February, 1971), p. 3.

the fact that they used the initiative petition, as a lever to get the legislature to pass it and they said, 'If you're not going to pass it, we're going to!' and they actually had the petitions drawn up and circulated and that's what got the thing moving. Mandatory has been introduced into the legislature for six years previous to that and had never gotten out of committee. (MDE staff)

Why was the threat of an initiative petition drive so strong?

One MDE staff member theorizes:

Well, my theory is--and I'm not a political scientist by any means--but the Legislature does respond to constituencies and in the case of an initiative petition drive, it's a slap in the face of the Legislature, it says that the Legislature has failed to enact something that has a significant value to the population and that value is so significant that the population is willing to go over the heads of the Legislature and pass it themselves. So it's saying to the Legislature, 'You have failed to live up to your function, of taking care of the needs of the people and the people have taken it into their own hands' and I think they're very sensitive about that. And that's how 198 got through.

Whether or not the hypotheses of the MDE staffer are accurate, is not of great consequence since the motivation of the Legislature is not the focus here. It is the action which is of immediate concern and two events emerge: first, there was a threatened petition drive; second, the Legislature passed P.A. 198.

Respondents have to this point been consistent in describing the central role of the parents. A professional staffer from "the other side of the street," the Capitol, observed that the parent lobby was not the only force involved.

I think the reason is fairly clear in a political sense of 'Who lobbies up here?' The special interests within the schools lobby. . . . so you have special ed

directors up here, sometimes without the consent of the superintendent or the board that they work for . . .

Is that how the special education bill, #198, got passed?

Pretty much. Matter of fact, there was a great deal of opposition to that from the school management, superintendents and boards; but they found it difficult to speak out in opposition to it, you know, it's education, and education is good, you can't question it, even though privately they were saying 'Oh this will be terrible, we'll lose our control' and it was the parents and special ed directors who pushed that bill through, because they silenced the opposition. . . . I think that's an example of an interest that cannot go through the local boards and say we've got handicapped kids; provide the service. They didn't get a response, the local school was incapable of responding to that at the local level, so they just ran around and came up to the state and got the decision made over the --not objections--but over the inertia of the local board.

One legislator, who also heads a powerful committee, complained about the passage of 198. He said that not too many bills actually get out of the house appropriations committee, and

two-thirds of those that do get out fail in the senate. It's too bad #198 didn't get strangled along the way like that. He feels that 'it gives to the handicapped at the expense of the normals.' He said that 'it will cost 113 million dollars next year and that's at no growth.'

Why, then, did it pass?

A California court decision in the midst of things helped to spur them on, because 'it held that education was a constitutional right and that a handicapped kid was being denied equal protection.' So their legislation may have been truly protective, 'We didn't want to wait until a court forced us.'

Thus at least one legislator who was present agrees with the previous description of a pressured Legislature passing an Act under some duress.

Thus it seems that the parent lobby, with the support of the special education professionals, was able to pressure the Legislature into passing #198. The respondents from both sides of the street agreed that had the petition drive been carried out, it would have been successful. The role of the MDE Special Education unit in that interchange (198) will be examined later.

An MDE staff member from an area not directly associated with Special Education gave a more picturesque version of the coalition.

There are very powerful interest groups. You don't find anyone more militant than a parent who has a special ed kid and feels that the kid's being shortchanged. These people have a number of organizations. The special ed professionals themselves are kind of an unbelievable group. They're militant as hell and they wrap themselves in these handicapped kids and march everywhere, that's where the push comes from. The special ed people are so militant, so successful that their own superintendents in that town will wash their hand of them--really, there's no control of, or very little, direction. If you talk to superintendents about special ed; 'Go see my special ed teacher.' That is where the initial push came from and the contention is that these kids are being shortchanged, and this might be true. 'What school districts are doing is putting their bucks into the regular program which is less expensive . . . and what we're going to do is advocate mandatory special ed whereby every kid is guaranteed an educational program that meets their needs.' And they went to the Legislature and said, 'Hey, we're going to initiate a petition drive! You don't want to pass a law, we'll pass our own law!'

A digression on methods is appropriate here. The coalition referred to was not a formal one, it is not possible to uncover documentary evidence. Still, there is agreement from a variety of sources in the verbatim data recorded here. Sources include three levels of MDE staff from several

sections and both professional and elected members from the Capitol. Such consistency does make a convincing case for the accuracy of the assertion: 'yes, there was a coalition in 1971!'

On the general issue of the impact of the passage of 198, on MDE, the results are less clear. The Associate Superintendent for Finance says that the MDE did not grow significantly as a result of Mandatory. And he should know. On the other hand, the Associate Superintendent for School Program Development has called special education "the most completely state controlled program I've ever seen." Clearly it is not only money that can be used as a resource.

Another MDE staff member from the Special Education area agrees with this perception of increased legitimate authority for MDE as a result of the act.

As far as special education services is concerned, we've become more regulatory, because of mandatory, we've been forced into a more aggressive attitude, because now we've got the mandate to do something.

Before, it was permissive and you could do it if you wanted to do it, but you didn't have to. And so we used a more persuasive kind of thing. We'd talk to districts and say, 'Gee, it would be nice if you started this program.' But now we're in a position of saying, 'Now look; under the law, you have this responsibility, you have to carry out your legal responsibility.' And that's a basic change in the operation.

The eight pages of laws comprising the Mandatory Special Education Act were translated by the MDE into 174 pages of rules and interpretations. This could amount to a lot of power, but MDE staff in fact exercises less than

might be expected. The Special Education service area has only 15 staff, and cannot regulate as thoroughly as the act allows. The same staff member continued.

With the advent of Mandatory Special Education, we're getting more into the monitoring and enforcement, planning and these types of things. And the horses that we've got, not only are the numbers inadequate, but the people that we've got, originally, were brought on board when the consulting function was the important thing and we're still bureaucratically organized around the consulting function. We need a major overhaul.

A different special education staff member complains that "I've heard many of the Intermediate School superintendents say that John (Porter, the Superintendent of Education) should make an overt commitment." Later, the same staffer says, "We spend so much time putting out fires--no time for real planning." And speaking to a subordinate about a task already a year overdue he says, "If we ever get on top of things, maybe you can help us with that."

Another member of the Special Education staff complains that he is a victim of the "canary syndrome."

The guy was always getting out and banging on the side of his truck and finally somebody asked him, 'What in the world are you doing that for' and he said, 'Well, I got a one ton truck and I've got two tons of canaries in the back and I have to keep half of them flying all the time!' It's a beautiful analogy.

He complained that the Massachusetts agency had more people to serve a smaller state and that in California, "They have a seven-man unit that does nothing but plan." To work at MDE was like driving that truck full of canaries.

The point is simply this: legal authority is not enough. MDE has large legal authority under 198 to monitor and enforce the provisions of the Mandatory Special Education Act. But while the Legislature did grant MDE much authority, there was not a correspondingly large increase in money for MDE. So, the agency cannot fully exercise the power it now has.

When a member of the Governor's staff was asked whether the act had enlarged the ability of MDE to control schools, he replied negatively.

Money control they really don't have, because the state aid formula is set by the Legislature. They don't have discretionary funds to say who gets special ed money and who doesn't. So control over the bucks is not in the hands of the Department. The controls, if there are any, on the rules of regulation, but the question is, 'Who enforces it?' They don't. A large amount of it has gone back; they've asked for the parents to enforce it. . . . says to the parents 'Well, you go enforce it by taking them to court or complaining.' The Department has not been a real regulatory agency in that effect, of enforcing the law.

MDE does not have the authority to withhold funds from schools. What legal authority MDE does have, it is agreed, is underemployed.

However great the potential for true control of programs, it does not appear that such power is being effectively exercised by MDE. The Legislature has clearly endowed MDE with legal authority to regulate special education programs. Yet the legislature has not increased the staff of MDE so that they can exploit their new power in more than a reactive

manner. Gross violations can be handled, but the ability of MDE to plan, exercise leadership or regulate thoroughly is restricted by the lack of accompanying staff. Whether or not such a situation is intentional on the part of the Legislature is not known.

This Act--198--brought much legal authority to MDE. It also provided money to schools for special education programs, an occurrence which advocates such as the MDE Special Education staff applauded. Both are events that MDE Special Education staff might have been expected to encourage, to help along. This raised the question of the role of that staff in the passage of 198.

There is agreement among respondents--most of whom were nervous about being quoted--that the Special Education Service Area was on the side of the "winning" coalition. From the MDE point of view, it is a boundary spanning coalition, involving MDE special education personnel with the parent group lobby and the special education teachers' and directors' lobby. The accusation that the special education staff of MDE have divided loyalties arose early in this study. At one of the first Executive Council sessions attended, MDE staff joked about the tendency of MDE special education staff to align with teachers and parents. "It's hard to tell which side they're on," one said. "They don't understand that they work for the state government."

In an interview early in the study, an Associate Superintendent complained that, "in special ed, the field people are an extension of the district Special Ed director and they join with the locals and beat up Lansing." During an Executive Council meeting, another associate referred to the passage of the Mandatory bill. He suggested that the Legislature was "aided and abetted by Marv Beekman" (the former director of Special Education for MDE).¹ Another voice corrected him, saying "led by." The first speaker replied, "I was gonna say that but I thought it was too strong."

On another occasion, another executive-level staff member complained that, with regard to Special Education, some of our own people quite frankly, in my opinion and in other peoples' opinion, instead of representing us and representing the state, hell, they're just right up there throwing the shoes at us. It's true that's their constituency . . . wondering who in the hell they work for! They know who the paycheck comes from but that's not the same people they work for!

A member of that special education staff had no trouble determining which side he was on!

My position is that the Department hired me as an advocate for handicapped kids, not as an advocate for the system. And I will continue to perform my system duties and my bureaucratic duties, but strictly with the understanding that if there is a choice to make, between the Department and the advocacy role, I'll take the advocacy role. As I say, that's costly sometimes.

¹This is an instance in which the subject is so well known that to disguise his identity would be both clumsy and ineffective.

There has to be an inside person that's pushing and knows what the system is and keeps after hounding people and keeps others informed . . .

In another discussion, a staff member from the Special Education service area was asked "Who are your clientele?"

Basically, I guess we have a hierarchy of clientele. Our hierarchy starts at the handicapped kid, the first person to whom we owe our allegiance, OK? The next group is the special ed professionals in the field. The next group is the general ed professional in the field, all of education. We don't exist in a vacuum; we don't want to become the tail that wags the dog, . . .

Yet, the special education staff make it very clear that none of them actively lobby, especially in the Legislature. Nor would it help, they maintain, because the legislators do not respond to bureaucrats (as the Higher Education area knows), they respond to voters. So, while MDE staff do honestly seem to avoid lobbying and are sensitive to the formal channels of communication with legislators, one staff from Special Education reported that

. . . on the other hand, there are ways of having input into the Legislature through the professional groups or through the parent groups and that kind of thing. The bureaucrat doesn't mean anything to the legislator, the bureaucrat is a means of getting some information. But in terms of persuasion, the bureaucrat is down on the totem pole. He doesn't have any votes. And I keep telling my friends, the professionals out in the field, when they ask, 'Why doesn't the state department go out and get that money for us?' I keep saying, 'Hell, if you want that money, you're the guys that are going to have to go out there, you got the votes. We'll make all the proposals in the world, but if somebody out there in these peoples constituencies doesn't support 'em, it's not gonna happen.'

This suggests that advocacy and information from MDE is not enough. The battles of special education will, according

to the above, be fought in the political arena--as was the passage of 198.

It is clear that the Special Education service area is truly a place of divided loyalties. Limited information about the impact of this truth on MDE behavior during the passage of 198 was made available to us. A secondary issue provided additional examples. This was the problem of providing special education services to institutionalized persons.

At the Executive Council meeting on October 14, the superintendent mentioned to his staff that some sort of action was going to be necessary regarding special education services for institutionalized persons. Dr. Porter had been meeting the week before with representatives of the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Management and Budget, Social Services and the lawyer for the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens. As of the 14th, Dr. Porter advised that the institutional issue would eventually cost 25 million dollars.

Dr. Porter gave the State Board of Education the same information at its October 16 meeting.

Last week it was called to my attention that the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens was in the process of suing the State Board of Education and the Department of Mental Health for failing to provide mandatory special education services to about 3,500 mentally ill persons residing in state hospitals.¹

¹John W. Porter, Superintendent of Education, memorandum to the State Board of Education, October 15, 1974, p. 1.

Later the estimate was revised upward.

This neglected group are those handicapped persons who reside in state hospitals and facilities operated by the Michigan Department of Mental Health. According to data supplied by the Michigan Department of Mental Health, 4,200 of the 5,450 handicapped persons in state institutions are currently receiving either inadequate¹ special education programs and services or none at all.

Whatever the number, it is clear that some persons, most of whom are retarded, living in state supported institutions run by the Department of Mental Health, were receiving less than adequate service. Apparently some persons in institutions run by the Department of Social Services were also involved. At no stage of the research did any person deny the accuracy of the fact. The MARC had simply filed a suit to force the state to provide services guaranteed under the Mandatory Special Education Act, P.A. 198.

In the same memo as above, Porter reported that

A suit against the state was being prepared by the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens and others. This suit purported to compel the state to take immediate steps to assure that the handicapped persons in state institutions receive educational programs by July 1, 1975.²

As a result of the pending suit, the MDE considered entering into a contract with the Department of Mental Health to assure services. The Office of the Attorney General discouraged the use of a contract. Consequently, the MDE

¹John W. Porter, memorandum to SBE, November 5, 1974, p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 2.

developed a plan on its own to assure that the institutionalized persons would be educated to the limits of their potential, or to the end of twelfth grade. This plan of action was adopted and implementation was begun. In Porter's words, the Attorney General's Office recommended that MDE

move forward, irrespective of the lawsuit, to promptly exercise their lawful powers under state law to the end that special education programs and services are afforded handicapped persons in state institutions by the 1975-76 school year.¹

This had the effect of showing intent to comply with the suit. It was hoped by MDE staff that the MARC would not press the suit--so long as MDE was moving along in its plan of action.

It seems simple enough. The MARC filed a suit. The MDE developed a plan and began to implement. The suit remains on file, not activated. But how did the lawsuit originate? One MDE staff was quite open about his enthusiasm for the suit.

But what happened to spur us along, is that we had what I consider to be a friendly suit, by the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens. It's basically a parent group. . . . They are the most active parent group in the state and the most sophisticated politically.

This above interpretation was provided by a staff member from the Special Education area.

An Associate Superintendent from another part of MDE described the same action with much different emotion.

¹Ibid., p. 3.

The "groups" refers to the lobbies, mostly to the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens (MARC).

. . . Now the latest chapter is, these same groups said last fall, 'Hey, state, you're doing a great job all over the state except in one place and you know where that is . . . the state hospitals. You got the mandatory special ed and you're enforcing it all over the state and you're doing a good job . . . and you bastards aren't even providing those services for your own kids.' So now we got 5400 kids in state institutions . . . and they got a court suit going. Same group . . . They got a suit in Grand Rapids (district court) right now on the 14th amendment and they kind of got it in limbo right now. . . . They say 'We're going to give you guys until July 1 and if the Legislature doesn't come through with the program then we're going to press the court suit. . . . And hell, in state government, we'll all fall over ourselves to accommodate them!'

Researcher: What are you going to do differently?

Staff Member: We're going to spend more money!

Researcher: Are you assuming you'd lose?

Staff Member: I guess we have to be the way everybody's running (laughing)--We ought to just call their bluff.

A staff member from a different MDE service area added another dimension to the action. The communication links which were operating were not all formal.

There are some personal kinds of things involved here too. It happens that the former state director of special ed, Marvin Beekman, has a son who's a lawyer. And he happens to be a lawyer for MARC, amongst other things. So he's very knowledgeable in this area. I've already had one phone call from him this morning, as a matter of fact. Cause now he's got two suits against us.

The second suit regards a local issue and does not require further explanation here.

There is another lesson available. It is not only the telephone which serves to link the interests which are involved in the institutional issue.

Word got out before they filed their suit that they were going to file it. And all of a sudden, Dr. Dempsy, from the Bureau of the Budget and Dr. Smith from the Department of Mental Health and Dr. Porter, and particularly Dr. Dempsy, became particularly disturbed that this suit might be filed before last fall's election. And so they began to have some meetings amongst those four department heads, including Houston from Social Services, with the lawyer from MARC.

The memoranda to the State Board described several meetings among these agency leaders. The continuing process of negotiation about how to respond to the suit may have prevented public conflict. Certainly the two or three state agencies involved could not be involved in a round of publicly passing on the blame. So the state determined its plan of action in advance, and apparently with constant input from the MARC lawyer.

Now the whole strategy from the point the suit was filed was to proceed with the original agreement and the state's strategy is to, every time we go to court--if we are eventually forced to go to court--we'll say, 'Look, we're doing this and we're doing it with all deliberate speed.' And that way we feel we can cut the grounds out from under the suit and so far we've managed to keep reasonably far enough ahead . . . we're showing reasonable enough progress--the threat is always there that we'll be going back to court. The suit was filed, but it's in kind of an indefinite suspension right now (MDE staff).

But even though the crisis atmosphere has passed, the program of inter-organization communication goes on. Now, though, the tasks are more routine and have been delegated by the agency chief's who handled the original impact of the suit.

We meet very amicably every two weeks with the representative from the Attorney General's Office for Mental Health and the representative from the Attorney General's Office for Education, a representative of the Department

of Mental Health, a representative from the Department of Education and the attorney for MARC. And we go over the time table. We meet, and hash out and say, 'O.K., what's been done and what hasn't been done?' (MDE staff)

However successful the coalition of parent lobbies and special educators, the Special Education service area of MDE is regarded with a suspicious eye by the professional staff of the Legislature and Governor's Office. The MDE Special Education staff are perceived as advocates of their field, committed to helping it grow. One professional was less kind.

The Department of Education Personnel are so enthusiastic about special ed--at least the special ed division--that they claim they're about 25 million dollars short and yet they come up with no facts or figures to show why they are that short, so they're going to have tough sledding. The Governor's Office downstairs and I will both be attacking that. There's a good example of the department having a vested interest. The folks in special ed want to promote special ed and this is all off of their forms, but they haven't bothered to go back and look at the costs and revenues of the programs, they just come back and say we need another 22.5 million dollars.

Another staff member from "across the street" was not convinced that MDE or the other agencies ever asked whether the suit was a real threat. He suggested that as advocates, they used the court suit as a straw man, to justify what they wanted to do anyway. To the suggestion that the court had been supportive, he replied

Oh, I think that's questionable. I think the threat of the court action is there, but show me a court decision that's required anybody to do anything. There's the threat of court action.

A legislator predicted that the only change would be in the size of the MDE bureaucracy. He said that the money involved was, "not really a new cost, since the institutions had been doing this before, it just shifts the responsibility over to education. Now they'll need 12 new people to go out and watch." While the MDE will not likely be able to add that many new people--especially if 198 is a guide--they may increase some. But the majority of the criticism of MDE was related to their estimates of costs of school programs.

A staff member from the Legislature was similarly suspicious. "There will be more costs for the institutional programs, but it won't be any 17 million dollars. There just aren't that many incarcerated special ed kids. There are somewhere around 4,000, well even at \$2,000 apiece, you get \$8 million; that's nowhere near \$22 or \$25 million." MDE staff from the Finance area complained just as loudly that they were unable to get consistent estimates from their colleagues in the Special Education area. This was an isolated problem, though. MDE was viewed by outsiders in the government as a very reliable agency in general with regard to financial, legal and technical information. A legislative staff member had praise for that portion of the MDE effort.

We get really good information of the technical things, what does the law mean related to this case--whatever it is--here, you know, there we get good service, good

information. But you're talking about special programs they want to support. There you need your own independent source of information. . . . That's not uncommon, but that's why you have the house fiscal agency and other sources of information, to counteract the biases of the Departments. You gotta expect the people in special education to support special ed, I mean you wouldn't expect them to do anything but that. (Legislative staff member).

At this writing, the implementation of the Mandatory Special Education Act--including the provision for services for institutionalized persons--proceeds, roughly on schedule. In spite of a lull in political activity, the staff of the MDE Special Education service area are undoubtedly as busy implementing as advocating. After all, "you wouldn't expect them to do anything but that."

Interpretation

There are two parts to the special education issue which are worthy of analysis. Both 198 and the institutionalized issue affected the supply of resources to MDE.

Concerning the passage of 198, it appears as though Special Education Services--a subsystem of MDE--was involved in a coalition with external groups. These external allies were the parent lobby and the professionals in the field. Such a coalition is referred to as a boundary-spanning coalition, from the point of view of the Special Education area within MDE. The coalition influenced the Legislature and MDE was given considerable legal authority as a result.

MDE was able to write regulations, to enforce them and to distribute money. However, there was not a proportional

increase in staff, so the increase in authority did not really change the de facto power of MDE significantly. But most districts would comply and MDE could handle the gross violations. The goal of the coalition members can be said to have been reasonably well achieved. In diagrammatic form, the transation looked like this.

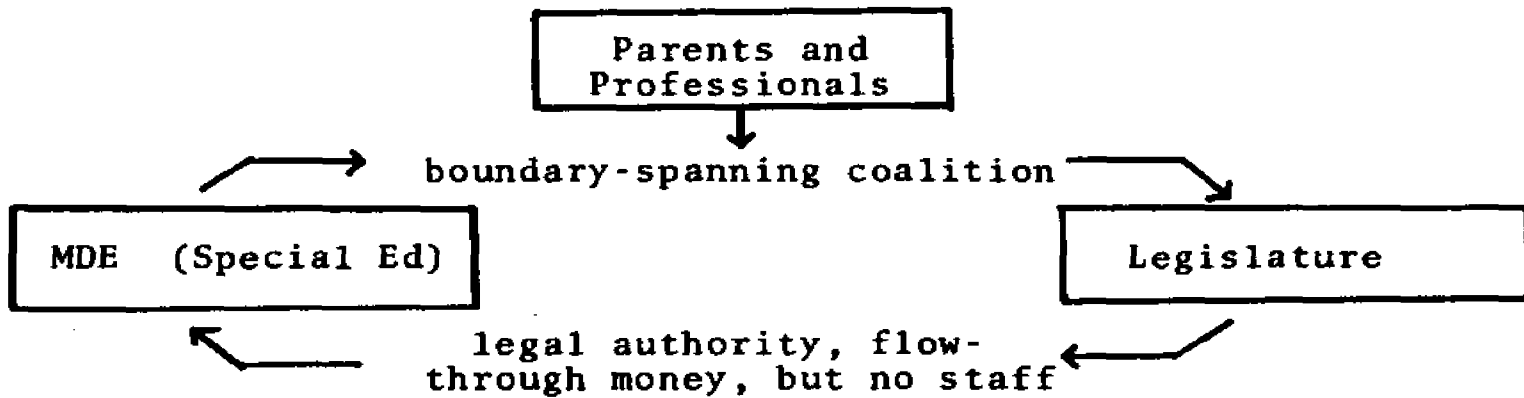


FIGURE 11.--Public Act 198.

The effect was to change the behavior of schools and of the MDE. From the point of view of the Special Education unit, the strategy is also an end run. That is, one subsystem wanted to change the goals of MDE. Rather than enter into the internal conflict regarding goals, this subsystem by-passed the MDE power structure. The Special Education area became part of a coalition which "ran around" this internal power structure to the Legislature. In turn, the Legislature provided MDE with new resources and responsibilities.

The institutional programs were handled in a similar manner. The MDE Special Education staff considered the

lawsuit by the Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens (MARC) to be a "friendly" one. This is not very active coalition behavior, but there is no doubt that the two groups had common goals. Thus the Special Education staff within MDE can be described as coalition members with the MARC. Again, the coalition is a boundary-spanning one.

The relevant environment in this case also contained the federal court and the other state agencies: Mental Health, Social Services and Management, and Budget. The threat of the court action was enough to cause the agencies to act. The MDE can also be conceived to be a member of the environment because it too had to act. Thus MDE was a supporter of the suit, at least as a passive coalition member and a member of the environment which was affected. A more complex diagram is needed to illustrate the chain of events.

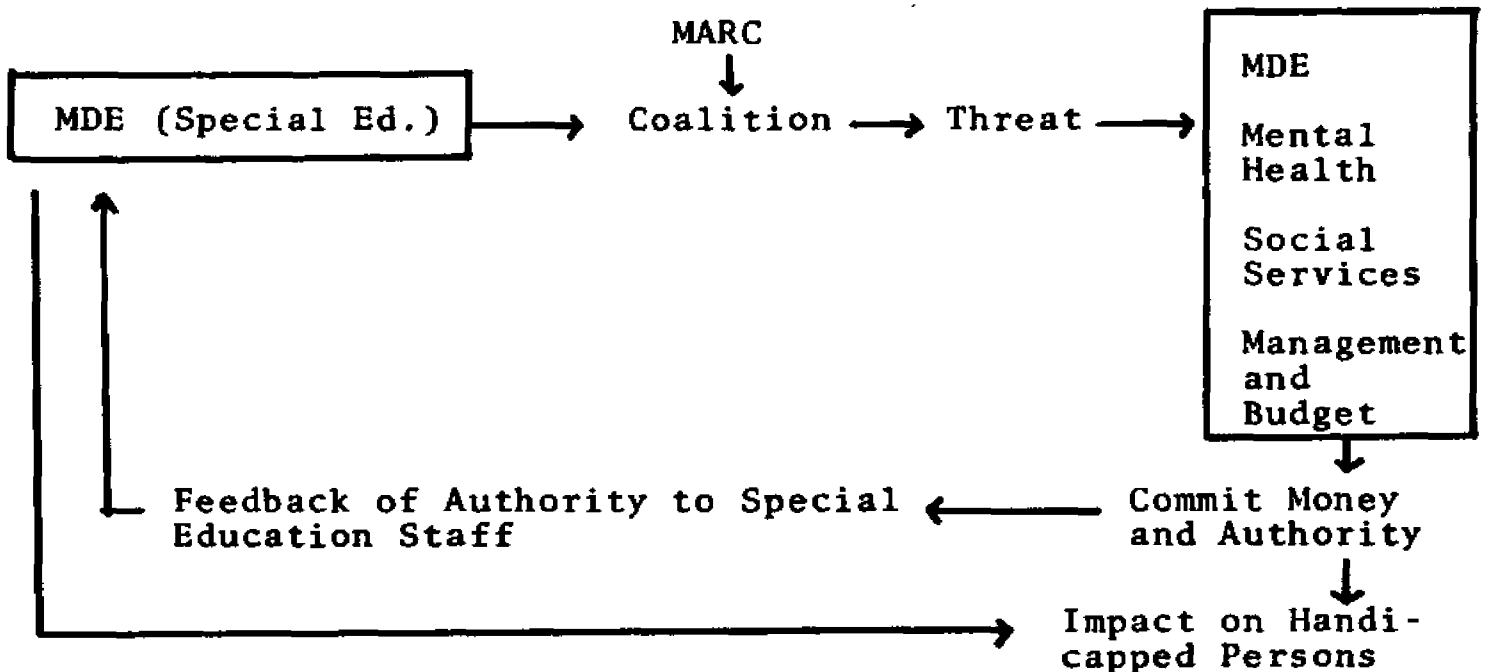
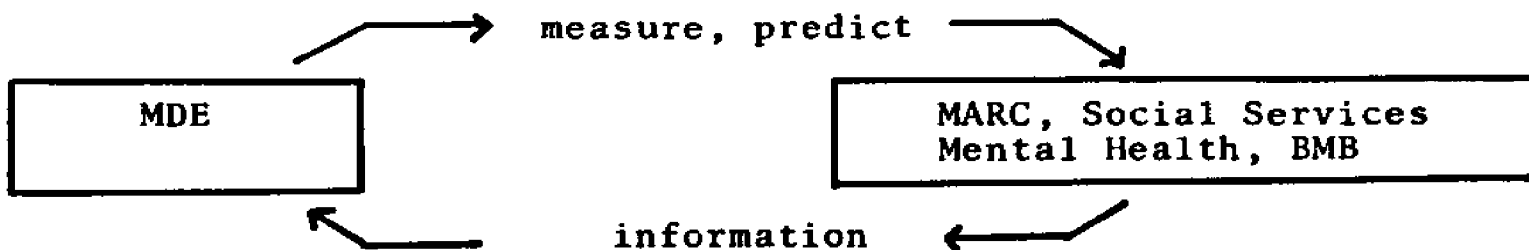


FIGURE 12.--Institutionalized Program for the Handicapped.

By entering a coalition with the parents--especially MARC--the Department of Education eventually acquired more authority to regulate educational programs in the institutions of other agencies. The authority was, in effect, already available through 198; the threat of a suit caused all of the agencies involved to "voluntarily" mobilize both authority and money.

It is important that, under threat of suit, the MDE and other agencies established and maintained an active top-level (not "high" but "top!") communication network for the duration of the uncertainty. They constantly measured each other's plans and included the MARC lawyer in their negotiations. This is a very clear example of the use of two strategies--measuring and predicting--to reduce uncertainty. The two together might be lumped into a "communicating" or "keeping in touch" category. The universe may abhor a vacuum, but the complex organization abhors surprise. Thus it is necessary to seek advance information about new action by key members of the environment.

The strategy is simple enough.



The results of a failure are also simple, in that MDE could be caught with no chance to help decide what form the action should take. If it is clear that one must act, it is preferable to be involved in deciding what the act will be. Note that even though the crisis is past, lower-level members of the involved agencies still keep meeting and measuring and probably negotiating.

So it is clear that one subsystem (at least) of MDE has on at least two occasions used a variant of a coalition strategy which has been labelled the "end run." The most common ally of the MDE Special Education staff is the parent lobby.

The lobby in special ed is the best organized in education and it's partly because they have defined their constituents so well. Poor Addison Hobbs in Voc. Ed. doesn't have nearly the help we do.

The other regular coalition member is that group known as the special education professionals, the teachers and directors from the school districts.

All of this seems to be more relevant for a discussion of the Special Education subsystem, but the conclusion is not so simple. All of these activities of the special education staff serve the purposes of the agency too. For one of the central purposes of the agency is to survive and to reduce uncertainty about resources on a Department-wide basis. The Superintendent made it clear that he was aware of all of the actions of the Special Education unit and

that from his view, there was no threat to the Michigan Department of Education.

Well, I don't see that as a major problem. We've got the same thing in voc. ed. We've got the same thing in comp. ed. And the same thing in the library. In all three of those services we have the same thing. I don't see that as a problem, from where I sit.

About 85% of the citizens are directly and indirectly affected by our services. Now, to the extent that special ed is doing what you're saying, is the extent to which all of those people out there stay off my back. That's very important. Now, to the extent that I clip their wings and eliminate them as the ombudsman for all of those people, is the extent that more and more complaints come directly into the central agency. Which means then that I've got to create some central agency mechanism to deal with it. So I'm no dummy. I kinda like what's going on.

You may look at the system and say, 'Boy, are they ever going around the superintendent's back, but even with the tape running, they perform a very valuable service.

So it begins to become integrated again. The end runs and boundary-spanning coalitions and constant meetings do drain some authority away from MDE. But all of these actions also keep the agency tied in an ongoing way to all of the actions of large environmental groups. If MDE is an ally, it is not uncertain about the future actions of those groups. So the riddle is answerable. Question: When is an ombudsman not a threat? Answer: When he reduces uncertainty!

Summary

In two instances, 198 and institutional programs, MDE has received more authority regarding special education.

While this reduced uncertainty about authority, the Legislature has not provided sufficient money to MDE to fully exploit their legal authority. In both cases the reduction of uncertainty/acquisition of resources was accomplished by "end runs" involving boundary-spanning coalitions.

Chapter 3: A Pyrrhic Victory

Introduction

This study is concerned with identifying the ways in which a major educational bureaucracy, the Michigan Department of Education, acts to reduce uncertainty in its environment. Two case studies have been presented. In both of these issues a constitutional issue was involved, but legislative action either avoided (higher education) or supplanted (special education) the uncertainty from that source. In this section, the examination of Chapter 3 will focus on the role of the Legislature again. Chapter 3 is a compensatory education program which MDE sought to use to reduce uncertainty about their own resources and about the behavior of the public schools.

Compensatory education programs have traditionally been used to compensate for perceived "environmental handicaps" and "cultural deprivations" in low-income school districts. Large urban districts have been the major recipients of compensatory education money in Michigan since the first program in 1965.

Since 1965 these programs in Michigan and nationally have increased emphasis on reading and mathematics and on measurement of cognitive progress in these areas. Emphasis in MDE since 1968-69 on the Accountability model complemented the above trends. Just before Chapter 3 became the new Michigan compensatory education program in 1970, a state-wide assessment program was implemented. This enables Chapter 3 to disburse its money according to academic need, districts whose scores were lowest were funded first. Again, the major urban districts received most of the money.

Crucial to Chapter 3 is its penalty clause. It required that districts whose students did not improve according to a set level be denied funds for future years. At this point the urban school district lobbies began to intervene. The first year the penalty clause was waived. The next year it was modified to provide for an optional "change in delivery system." Eventually the penalty option was dropped, but districts had to promise a change in delivery system.

For a brief time, it appeared that MDE was to have true fiscal control of a large program. But the Legislature--the originators of the authority and of the program--responded to other constituents and decimated the legal authority of MDE, year by year.

It is argued here that MDE eventually did gain, but not so much as they lost. Chapter 3 has provided national

visibility for MDE and especially for its superintendent. One reason for this is that MDE asserts Chapter 3 produces as much achievement as the federal Title I program for about half the cost. Thus many people beyond Michigan are justifiably interested in Chapter 3.

The overall result is that, while MDE was not assured of the legal authority they needed to reduce uncertainty in one part of their environment, they gained another resource. That resource is national visibility--potentially credibility--and it is a useful one to have. A detailed examination of how this situation arose will now be presented.

Text

The full name of the program referred to here as Chapter 3 is "Chapter 3 of the State School Aid Act." Chapter 3 is the largest of the state's compensatory education programs. Compensatory education programs typically serve students whose academic achievement is low, but who have no genetic or other handicap as in the Special Education programs. These students are usually poor, usually urban and are often said to be "culturally deprived," although that term has lost its earlier popularity. Thus such programs attempt to "compensate" for whatever the student lacked. This usually means money.

The Michigan Chapter 3 program has an academic funding base. That is, Michigan does not give money to school

districts having concentrations of low-income people. Michigan gives money to school districts having concentrations of low-achieving students. That this amounts to the same theory is a popular contention and will be discussed later in the section concerned with ESEA Title I.

There have been state-funded compensatory education programs in Michigan since 1965.¹ The first one, Section 4, provided \$4 million per year to meet the needs of "under-privileged," "culturally and economically deprived" students. The second program, Section 3, replaced Section 4 and added several constraints regarding eligibility. That these constraints favored larger districts is unsurprising since the act was in essence that proposed by the Middle Cities group mentioned earlier, a consortium of large urban school districts. More concerning their role will follow later in this chapter.

In September of 1971, the present Chapter 3 legislation was signed into law. It provided \$22.5 million per year to school districts meeting several criteria. First, all students in the state in fourth and seventh grades were tested by the Michigan Educational Assessment Program in the fall of 1970. All students in the state who fell below the 15th percentile in a combined reading and mathematics score were

¹Michigan Department of Education, "Compensatory Education-the Michigan Program," (Lansing, Michigan: MDE, May 13, 1971, multilith), p. 3.

identified. For every school district, the percent of students in this category was computed. For example, 37.5% of Detroit students were in this category, whereas some districts had virtually no students with scores that low. The \$22.5 million was then given out at a rate of \$200.00 per eligible pupil. Money could only be spent in grades K to 6. The most heavily impacted school district, Highland Park, had 43.9% of its students below the cut-off line, 15%. The school district was given \$200 per pupil in Chapter 3 money. The the next lowest district was funded and so on, until the \$22.5 million ran out. In this way, the 67 districts with the greatest need as defined above received some assistance for 112,000 students. But there were strings attached.

The 67 districts were to be funded at the level of \$200 per child for three years. But refunding was not automatic. In order to receive money for a given student in year two, a district had to demonstrate that the student had gained an average of .75 months for each month in the program. For students doing less well, the funding would be pro-rated.

Basically, the Chapter 3 program is a performance contract between the school district and the state. The school establishes the performance objectives for pupils to be served by the program. For each pupil achieving 75% of his objectives, a school district will receive a full per-pupil allocation the following year. For each pupil achieving less than 75% of his objectives,

the district will receive a lesser amount that is proportionate to the gains achieved.¹

There is an assumption that students can learn at the 75% level.

The idea . . . is a belief that nearly all children can be taught to read and to acquire basic skills in mathematics and that elementary school delivery systems can be changed or modified to achieve these ends.²

Thus if a student fails to achieve at the specified level, the logic goes, it must be the fault of the district, school or teacher. Thus they were to be penalized by losing money. This act was passed at a time when the Office of Economic Opportunity was in the performance contract business and the idea appeared to herald a breakthrough. The fact that the penalty clause would withdraw money from students whose academic need was known to be great by both pre-test and post-test was not addressed at first. Districts whose students did poorly in year one would get less money in year two.

For the costs of administering, allocating (and potentially reallocating) the money, the MDE was allowed to retain one half of one percent of the funds--equal to \$112,500 per year. MDE was also able to generate rules regarding the setting of objectives, all reporting forms,

¹MDE, "Operations Manual--Chapter 3," Lansing, Michigan: MDE, 1972), p. 5.

²MDE, "Compensatory Education: The Program in Michigan," (Lansing: MDE, January 1974), p. 2.

instruments for evaluation and similar items. Beyond that, there was almost no restriction on how funds were to be spent.

What happened when the State Department tried to cut off funds to the school districts who did poorly? In a word: nothing.

Year one was 1971-72. Some districts, according to scores, would not be refunded. So the Legislature enacted a forgiveness clause, saying the funding came too late (in late fall) for adequate preparation by districts. The MDE initiated that action.

Year two was 1972-73. Some districts were about to lose funds. The Legislature intervened and enacted 39A, a section which allowed the districts to retain their funding level for the third year if only they would change the delivery system they were using.

Year three was 1973-74. There were still some districts who were about to lose money. The Legislature removed the penalty clause completely, but kept the requirement (?) that, under 39A, districts below minimum should modify the delivery system they used.

All of this was done with the assent or at least the acquiescence of Dr. Porter, the Superintendent of Education. During the total 1971-75 time period examined, almost no funds were withheld from districts. The legislation allowed for the removal in most years of millions of dollars,

mostly from Detroit. This raises the question of why the penalty clause was not enacted. The answer is lobbying.

We'll kill it. We've killed it for two years, and we'll do it again, and I have two letters in my pocket to attest to that. (Lobbyist from a major urban district)

Porter will never succeed. Every time (he tries to recall the money) he runs up against the lobbyists, he loses. (Member of the Middle Cities Consortium)

A conversation with a senior staff member from the Governor's Office further illustrates the political nature of the issue.

Staff member: Oh, they've beat up a few school districts. Not many, but they've beaten up some. One hundred fifty thousand out of 22½ million actually through the threats, they said you have to do something different, and the school districts threw up their hands and said, 'We're not going to play your silly game, just don't give us the money.' Generally small school districts, but that is control. When you say, 'You don't get the money!', that is control.

Researcher: When they do that to Detroit, that's control.

Staff: Oh, well. When they don't do that to Detroit, that's politics!

In a conversation with the executive director of the Middle Cities Education Association--a very powerful lobby in itself--the history of the conflict was reiterated.

No penalty has ever been enacted . . . because through the legislative effort, the lobby of the districts that participate in the program, it was deferred because they didn't have information, it was deferred by direction and then last year the provision was taken right out of the act.

He suggested, however, that more than politics was involved. The urban lobbies were, perhaps, invincible on this issue--but their cause was just. No one could suggest that

withdrawing massive amounts of money from the neediest children would serve any positive goal.

When it came to the time when Detroit would have lost, oh, I don't know a dollar, say two million dollars, because they were unable to achieve with certain kids and those particular schools in the heart of the ghetto were going to get less money next year because they couldn't do as much for the lowest level of kids this year, reality and common sense prevailed.

A powerful member of the legislative staff reiterated that point. Reducing funds to children does not serve children. This does not address the question of why the children in Detroit did not achieve better or whether the administrators and teachers should be punished by the removal of funds. Only the short term question is asked: does removal of dollars increase achievement? The staff member answers.

They keep shelling out 100% of the funds. (Why?) "Well, let's say kids don't succeed. Then you have a question of the programs that aren't successful, the kids lose because you take away the money from them, so they get less services because they're not successful. Now is that really gaining your objective of helping those kids learn? Well, probably not, it's probably wiser to say, 'well, you've got to do something different then, to keep getting the funds,' and that's what they're saying now."

A State Board member agreed that the penalty clause idea failed. But the assertion that changing delivery systems had an effect remained.

. . . local school districts didn't think there would be a penalty. And they were right. Our bluff was called. And we lost the hand. It has had an effect though, when in essence you tell a district that in order to get the funds you have to change your delivery system to one that works a little better, you are shifting some things, you are doing some good.

Whether there is really any impact due to that piece of legislation is in question. With their staff of one, MDE cannot monitor projects to assure that promised changes occur. Murphy and Cohen visited five sites and found that the changes in delivery systems were at best trivial.¹ A representative of the urban schools agreed.

Now, the legislation allows MDE to withhold or recall money from a 'loser' district if that district refuses to change its delivery system. That's a goddamn farce. I have to be frank about it, you know, you could change from one book to another, or change something else, I've yet to have someone tell me, to define for me, what a delivery system is. It's what anyone wants to call it. And I suppose you could shift teachers, you could shift rooms, books, you could do this or do that, . . .

Some schools found the task of changing delivery systems to be more trouble than the money was worth, according to a member of the MDE Chapter 3 staff.

For the last two years we're taken a little. There is an escape mechanism; very, very little. And last year 17 schools decided to give up the money rather than go through that but in each case, it was a small amount of money, a small district. I think 1500 dollars. I think one district that was large gave some money back, not because of principle but because of laziness or ineptness.

Two themes emerge. First, the MDE has not been successful in implementing the penalty clause in any major confrontation to date, because the lobbies of the major urban districts have too much influence in the Legislature. No politician from Detroit is going to support a provision which could cost his city from one to eleven million dollars!

¹Murphy and Cohen, "Accountability in Education."

Second, the 39A provision for changing delivery systems has not resulted in significant change to date, according to Murphy and to sources interviewed in this study.

So if a district's students score poorly, it doesn't matter. What if they do very well? The following comment from a State Board member was recorded in May of 1975.

You know were getting a handle on that now, the cost effectiveness study, on the types of things that work. It doesn't seem right to me that for instance, Battle Creek works, assuming that results on an achievement test mean something, Battle Creek is producing 81% kids who achieve a certain level and other districts are achieving 40%. Well, it seems to me that some of the techniques used in Battle Creek could be used in other districts.

In June of 1975 the new formula for funding the next phase of Chapter 3 was released. At a joint meeting (Detroit, Middle Cities and MDE) the MDE staff representative announced the formula MDE planned to recommend to the Legislature. Battle Creek had done too well. It's students had improved so much they were no longer eligible. From a 1971 appropriation of \$269,600, the Battle Creek share of Chapter 3 dropped to zero. Who said "Nothing succeeds like success?"

To withdraw funds now from Battle Creek assumes that their students will continue to succeed with no supplementary funds. This is a very tenuous position. The political viability of Chapter 3 is surely not enhanced by this outcome.

Chapter 3 has not increased the effective legal power of the MDE to either withhold money or to mandate

programs. There were, however, other influences of the Chapter 3 program in MDE. The Chapter 3 program, with its quantitative, reading and mathematics emphasis, has been consistent with a similar trend throughout MDE.

MDE requires careful reporting by the schools. All school districts receiving money must submit objectives and evaluation plans to MDE before funding. Evaluation of pupil progress must be done by schools and the tests they may use are pre-specified by MDE. Children must be tested before and after programs and all results are forwarded to MDE. There are, therefore, large aggregates of numbers available to MDE for reporting to the Legislature and public. The ability to provide quantitative data has in itself served to enhance the credibility of MDE.

For example, Chapter 3 was discussed by MDE officials in their October visit with the Commissioner and staff of the U.S. Office of Education. USOE staff reemphasized the need for quantitative data to report--in their case--to Congress. Two conversations with staff from the National Institute of Education supported the assertion that governments--both state and federal--seek quantitative proof of success. The reputation of MDE is so great in this area that two members of the federal General Accounting Office attended several MDE presentations in order to learn about Chapter 3 and its methods for evaluating and reporting.

While this research has not investigated whether the assertion that governments want quantitative data is true, it is clear that the belief pervades those organizations which make a living by providing quantitative data. MDE is one of these.

The Accountability Model is a venture in that direction. One of the virtues of such a rational planning model is supposed to be its ability to facilitate public reporting. During the late 60's and early 70's MDE was beginning its advocacy of the six-step Accountability Model. This was the time of the birth of Chapter 3 with its provisions for rational planning, evaluating and reporting. The question of where the Chapter 3 idea originated arises, at MDE or "across the street?" One MDE staff replies

I think in both places, I think the Legislature . . . the temper of the times were such that the Legislature was very quick to grab on to this sort of thing . . . but I think the genesis of the idea came from this side of the street . . .

In the same vein, a State Board member discusses the impact of Chapter 3 on the agency.

Oh, wow. Christ, that had a huge impact. I don't know to what extent it was caused by the Legislature, or caused by the Department . . . I believe that our Department had a large influence on it, but . . . there was a general trend toward this; that is to say toward accountability and the use of assessment to determine the expenditure of funds.

Researcher: Did Chapter 3 change the extent to which you emphasized that?

Board Member: Oh yes. In fact it was the foot in the door.

Researcher: More than Title I?

Board Member: Yes, I would say so and here's why. Prior to the change in that section, we were talking about assessment and talking about accountability and asking for some funds. After the changes, it had been legislatively mandated!

The above account is somewhat optimistic, though. Chapter 3 did mandate careful testing and evaluation of pupil progress. It did threaten to remove funds from unsuccessful programs. But it has been argued here that the impact was small. It is the internal impact--the reinforcement of the MDE trend toward numbers--that has been largest. If Chapter 3 provides data and supports the general stance of the agency toward accountability, it can hardly be labelled an internal failure, in spite of the political losses. Another Board Member made the case for Chapter 3 differently.

I think we might get some more funds for it. I think it's a much more salable program to the people who give money out, to show that there is significant improvement because you use these types of methods and these methods are working and if you can show that to the Legislature, I think you're going to get some more funds for it.

And the MDE is not at all reserved about showing anyone who will listen that Chapter 3 works. Murphy and Cohen¹ refer to three separate statements by John Porter to Congress in advocacy of Chapter 3. In this research he was observed to make the same assertion to U.S. Office of Education staff including Commissioner Bell. In an interview for this study, Dr. Porter's enthusiasm continued.

¹Murphy and Cohen, "Accountability in Education."

We've demonstrated that we can make a difference in the lives of children; we can do a helluva lot better job in improving their performance in the basic skills than we've done in the past, on an aggregate basis. Therefore, I'm not interested in pressing Chapter 3 any more than I am Title I, cause we've made the point. It was a three year experiment to see whether it works and it obviously works. And works better than anything else in the nation . . . And so what I'm now saying to you and to the Chapter 3 staff and the Title I staff and the whole compensatory education unit, is that I'm convinced we can make a difference, in the lives of the kids and therefore we can reject outright the Jencks and all the other fellas that says other kinds of things.

One cannot criticize that goal. The basis of the assertion will be of interest.

MDE data on Chapter 3 have been collected since the inception of the program during the 1971-72 school year. The most recent piece of evidence was the Cost Effectiveness Study, a summary of which was presented to the State Board on February 25 of 1975. The report guardedly identified some concomitants of higher reading achievement such as planning time, in-service time, number of hours of instruction and overall expenditure. The report was written and verbally presented to Dr. Porter and the State Board as a beginning, a conservative beginning. There was, for example, no difference--according to the report--between Chapter and the federal Title I. Since Title I costs almost twice as much, Dr. Porter was quick--as shown earlier--to conclude that the Michigan program was more cost effective.

This is how MDE has gained attention at the national level. Their data collection is apparently effective and the numbers say the program is working. MDE is enthusiastic about making these facts known nationally.

A professional from the government "side of the street" was much more cautious.

Their conclusion on Chapter 3 and the compensatory education stuff, is that money does make a difference. . . . but only 11% of the three hundred and some chi square tests, or whatever they used . . . turned out to be significant. That's a pretty small percentage right there, I mean by chance, just by random selection you should have six of those or five of them out of the hundred that'll turn out significant. So first of all you're dealing with less than overwhelming results.

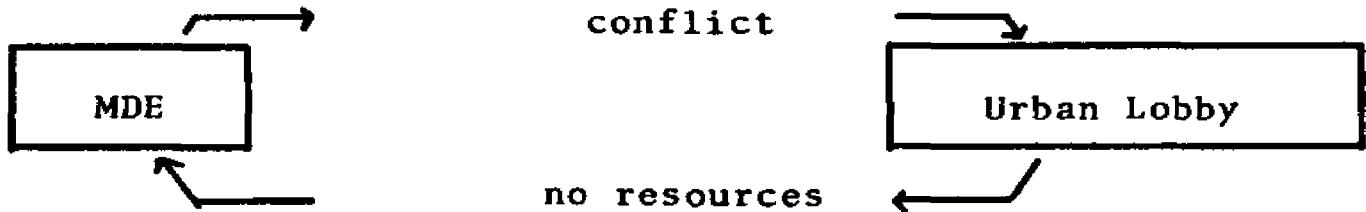
Concerning the apparently equal effectiveness of Chapter 3 and Title I, a staff member reported

I think it appears that way, but we have a much tighter evaluation design, we insist that every kid be pre-tested and post-tested and the scores be sent into us and we do the computations ourselves and we follow through on the errors to make them clean up the data so we have very tight evaluation controls. Title I does not have that and the other part of it is no one has really looked at who are the kids being served by Title I and who are the kids being served by Chapter 3. Chapter 3 is supposed to serve the lowest achievers, we don't know that that happens in fact because it would take one hell of an auditing team . . . 112,000 kids, it would take a huge auditing team to go in and see did the districts select their lowest achievers for Chapter 3 or is Title I really doing for those kids.

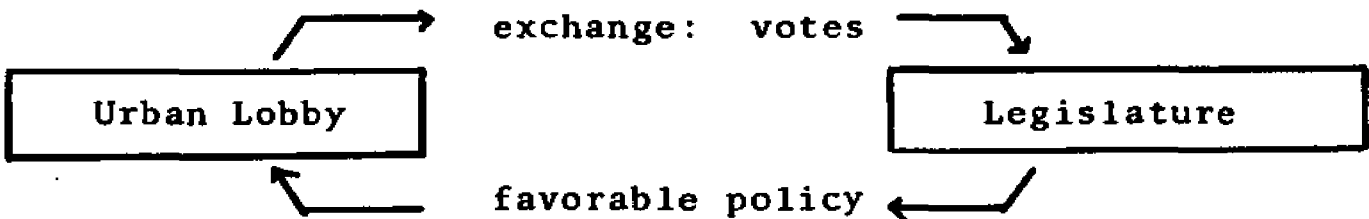
It is clear that the case is not closed. Still, through all of the disagreement and politics it appears that the expenditure of Chapter 3 money--according to the evaluations school districts provide--is having a positive effect on the reading and arithmetic scores of many Michigan students. MDE is an advocate of Chapter 3 and is very willing to take credit for its success.

Interpretation

The first major issue is the penalty clause. The MDE used a conflict strategy against the urban school districts and their powerful lobbying ability. MDE lost the battle and lost authority and power in the process.



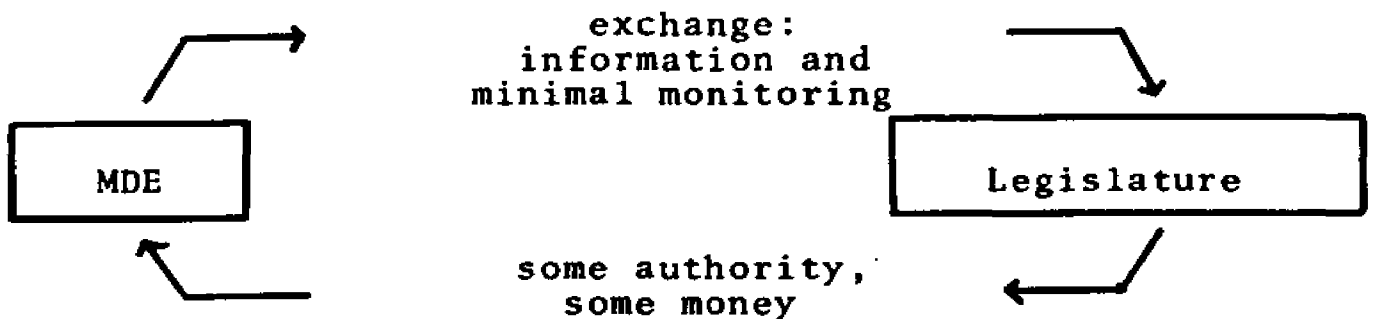
This is because a stronger bond was operating. The Legislature was the intervening member of the environment and the urban lobby had something to offer that MDE did not. The urban lobby could, if angered, reduce votes. That is the way to influence a legislator, it seems. For the Legislature did respond, for three years in a row, with policy decisions which favored the cities over MDE.



No matter how enthusiastic MDE becomes, it is unable to truly influence state policy making unless it is politically effective. But more of that will follow. As far as the Legislature is concerned, they have been observed in the two earlier cases to prefer a small, efficient, but not too

pushy education agency. That truth remains. To allocate \$112,500 to MDE to operate Chapter 3 suggests that the Legislature is not very interested in having MDE exercise aggressive leadership or monitoring. One staff member is not enough.

But the data MDE gets is useable to advance the general notion of rational planning. It has given the agency a national reputation as an aggressive and successful organization.¹ Thus the agency is able to parley a small amount of money into a large amount of data and credibility. The latter seems to have more currency beyond the borders of Michigan.



The basic exchange is pictured above. The MDE monitors the program at a level designed not to seriously disturb the major cities and gives the Legislature information assuring that the money is producing results. The Legislature provides enough authority and money to accomplish that much and no more!

¹See Murphy and Cohen, "Accountability in Education."

Professional Development Center(s)Introduction

The study seeks to identify ways in which they MDE acts to reduce uncertainty about resources in its environment. In the first three cases, the Legislature has been a consistent source of resources and consequent uncertainty. Lobbies have played an increasingly large role in the three cases already discussed.

The PDC issue is new, it has emerged and become important in less than two years. There are two aspects to this young issue which suggest MDE has, at an institutional level, learned some politics since its earlier ventures. First, MDE has focused its efforts on the Legislature as a source of resources, rather than any less clear constitutional provisions. Second, MDE has taken pains to gain the support of the other organizations and interest groups which are potentially affected by the issue.

A professional development center would be a place where teachers, other professionals, board members and others could receive training. It is assumed that a body of knowledge exists which can be transmitted. MDE and the others--teacher's organizations, colleges of education and so on--attempted to negotiate a model center for the Detroit area. It was assumed that a second pilot center would be established outstate (out of Detroit) soon after. Eventually, a state-wide network of centers was envisioned.

Planning by the coalition was proceeding--apparently successfully--during the spring of 1975. Information discussions with some legislators had, according to MDE staff, suggested that a million dollars to implement the pilot effort are forthcoming. At that time Wayne State University made an "end run" to the Legislature, requesting that a million dollars be given to them directly, to implement a professional development center.

The reaction of the other coalition-members, including MDE, and the eventual outcome of the conflict, proved MDE was wise in adopting a coalition strategy.

Text

The term "teacher center" has been a part of educators' vocabularies for some years. The first teacher centers were British and were simply places--likely empty classrooms--where teachers would share coffee, ideas and facilities such as science or audio-visual preparation areas. The U.S. Office of Education was an advocate of the concept as early as 1971 and has funded several variations of the same theme since.

MDE disburses literally millions of dollars yearly for in-service education, that is, education of teachers who are graduated, certified and employed. An Associate Superintendent reported that realization of this fact was recent.

There we realized finally that we were pumping out about five million dollars in professional level funds annually already, in about seven or eight different service areas and we had never really focused in on the fact that we were doing that.

As far as this case study is concerned, it appears that the present definition of teacher centers originated within MDE. When asked how the idea moved from MDE "across the street" the same Associate Superintendent made clear that the process was a long and evolving one.

. . . we started out five years ago saying they ought to take 30 million dollars out of the state aid act for in-service training and it eventually got whittled down to a million and finally to 150-200 thousand dollars. It passed the Legislature, by the way, so the ground-work had been laid with them and the Governor vetoed it. So we went back . . . that's when we started to talk seriously about the notion of a teacher center or a professional development center.

These are three assumptions which are crucial to the MDE definition of a professional development center. One is that teachers are not at present competent. Two is that there is a body of knowledge which can be transmitted to them which will make them competent. Three is that the colleges of education in Michigan have not been transmitting this body of knowledge effectively. These assumptions are verbalized by a wide variety of persons, as the following quotes will demonstrate.

It's daily and glaringly becoming obvious that we--our teachers--are short on being able to allow our students to become proficient in reading, writing, and communication skills. (Legislative staff)

But I must say, the job of training teachers isn't being done well enough. Even more importantly, the follow-up after a person is certificated and graduated is simply inexcusably lacking. (State Board member)

And the universities have really been teaching a lot of garbage in education, your administration over there isn't going to say this, but I think John Porter would say that

most universities and education programs are just teaching a lot of garbage. (Legislative staff)

A lot of people have been 'doing their thing in the classroom.' I've been on a lot of faculty curriculum committees and I know that the people who exert influence in them aren't necessarily the best people in the department . . . And these people doing their things in the classroom are not really concerning themselves with the performance of the teachers after they leave the college, they aren't looking at the product they are turning out . . . (MDE staff member)

It is apparent that there is agreement in Lansing about the need for better methods of in-service training. Agreement about the best response is harder to find. To follow that, the narrative must now return to the politics of professional development centers.

The Detroit Board of Education attempted in 1973-74 to impose a teacher-evaluation model on its staff. The evaluation model was called an accountability model (but was not really the same model the MDE had been advocating). For this and other reasons, a teachers' strike resulted. The Governor eventually intervened and asked MDE to commission a study of the accountability efforts to date. MDE used the situation to sell the idea of a "teacher center" for the Detroit area and drew up suggested legislation.¹ This was presented to a group of representatives of professional organizations in November of 1974. That meeting was reported to

¹This was sent to the State Board of Education as of November 5, 1974 by the Advisory Council for Teacher Preparation and Professional Development, with several suggested revisions which would reduce state control.

have been rather lively. Dr. Porter had called and chaired the meeting which included representatives from major state interest groups plus Detroit area groups such as the Detroit School District, the Wayne (County) Intermediate School District, and the Wayne State University from Detroit. The reception accorded the Porter proposal was reported in metaphor by another participant from MDE.

We drew up a statute for a state-wide network of centers. Now irrespective of the goodness or badness of the statute, it accomplished a purpose by a trick that he (Porter) often uses and that's to run up the flagpole something like that and have everybody start taking shots at it. And he will usually run it up pretty high on the flagpole and it'll be a pretty good flag and they don't just take a shot, they'll get out their cannons and machine guns and everything else and really go after it. In effect, what he did at that point was to take a catalytic role and absorbed a lot of punishment and abuse in the process . . .

Nevertheless, the group held together and continued to meet. A subcommittee was formed to submit a design. This subgroup was called the Detroit Design Team. It was given support by MDE, who also paid for a half-time staff associate to provide continuity. The staff associate was a faculty member from Michigan State University who was granted leave by MSU. One of the first changes was the name; the powerful administrator and principal groups wouldn't stand for a name like "teacher center." Thus the still-unborn organization was labelled a professional development center.

Recall that ideally MDE wanted to have a network of centers throughout the state. Detroit was to be the pilot effort, where questions of governance and influence and credit

would be settled. The Detroit Design Team was progressing well on these tasks in the spring of 1975. A peaceful settlement seemed in the making. The Governor was supportive so long as the resulting proposal was a joint one, approved by all participants. But that was the lull before the storm.

That Detroit effort was proceeding along pretty well and building some coalitions, when Wayne State did an end run into the appropriations committee for a million bucks. Now I find out yesterday that Wayne State will get about \$950 thousand if the Senate appropriations committee has its way. (MDE staff)

The move was simple and may prove to be effective. Wayne State University convinced some elected representatives that they (WSU) could do the job and they needed the money, both immediately. So the bill was introduced. In effect, the bill would give Wayne State almost a million dollars to run a professional development center. Wayne State would have full control and the other agencies would be left out.

This could have several effects. First, the MDE would lose any hope of control. Second, a College of Education--the very agency the center was to replace--would carry out the center's function. Third, the precedent of college control would be set and might spread through the state. If so, all of the others--MDE, teachers, principals, administrators, board members, intermediates--would have lost the chance to have a legally assured voice in deciding what would be taught to in-service teachers in the professional development centers. Response was immediate.

Just prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Detroit Design Team--and just after the end run by WSU--a meeting was held in Lansing. Ten state-wide organizations were represented by their elected leaders and chief officers. The Superintendent of Education, Dr. Porter, presided. He

made his intent to dispense with all but one agenda item immediately clear. ". . . major issue is that we move post haste toward the establishment of a technical planning team to determine whether a teacher center or a professional development center can be put together outstate.

Another executive-level staff member had earlier explained why the interest groups were anxious to move on the "outstate" center.

. . . the outstate people are now saying to us, 'Well, let's get going on something outstate and let Detroit go its merry way, because we don't want Detroit's model;' what they're really afraid of is that we'll do something down there and slap that on everybody else.

During the meeting, an interest-group leader supported the idea of moving ahead on the outstate center. But he was also from Detroit and didn't want to give up on that battle. "This model puts all the control in the hands of the deans of the colleges of education!" That, as stated earlier, was totally contrary to the intent of the interest groups. The leader of another--and very powerful--interest group said, politely but firmly:

What we object to is Wayne State getting a million dollars to keep on doing what they're doing. I think we ought to get on with killing the Wayne State proposal.

Another voice noted that his "membership is adamant that work begin on the outstate center." Still another reported

that "the position of the _____ is essentially the same . . ." and so decisions are made.

Dr. Porter, on the calling of the meeting, said that he was concerned that everyone get this advance notice of the conflict. He feared that if they met cold "next Thursday in Detroit, everybody'd get so angry we'd lose a year's time."

Thus the possible open and emotional conflict was avoided. And without notes, minutes or anything so formal as a vote, two decisions were made. First, the groups would immediately begin to design an outstate center. Second, the lobbying abilities of many powerful interest groups would be turned against the Wayne State plan. And the latter was literally accomplished without action, support or verbalization by Porter. He just introduced the facts and watched.

What has been the impact of the issue--so far--on MDE? One is that the Department's public relations have improved.

Now the interesting thing about that is, we're usually the bad guys when we get together with the universities; now the last time we met with the so-called Design Team in Detroit, Wayne State was the bad guy. (MDE staff)

And, the bill to give the million dollars to Wayne State is not yet a certainty. One MDE staff reported conversing with a legislator as follows:

Except that they said to us yesterday, 'Well, maybe you guys ought to have control over the funds; we won't just give them to Wayne State . . .

Dr. Porter also

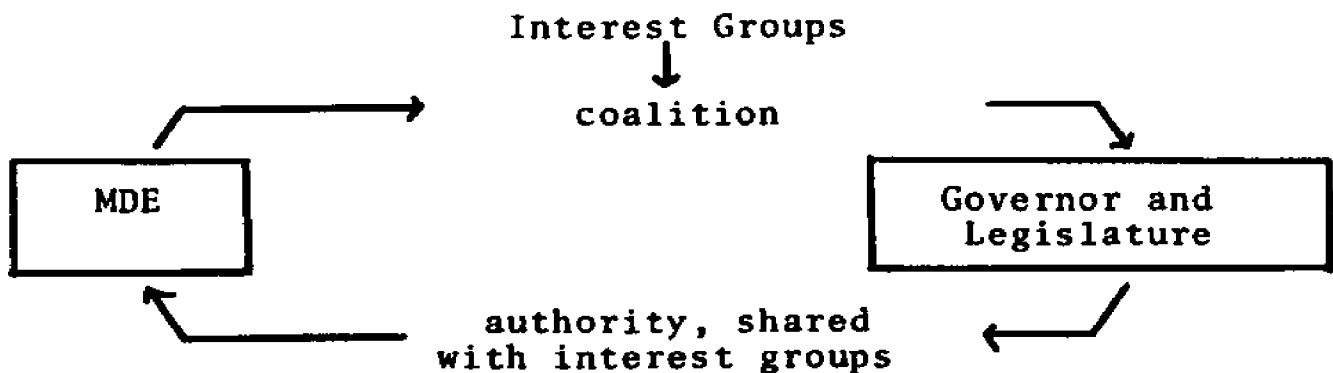
mentioned a conversation with a legislator, which suggested that the bill giving WSU the million dollars could be

written requiring that Wayne (1) have MDE approval for their proposal, and (2) provide an advance guarantee that the teachers use the center. Only then would funds be released.

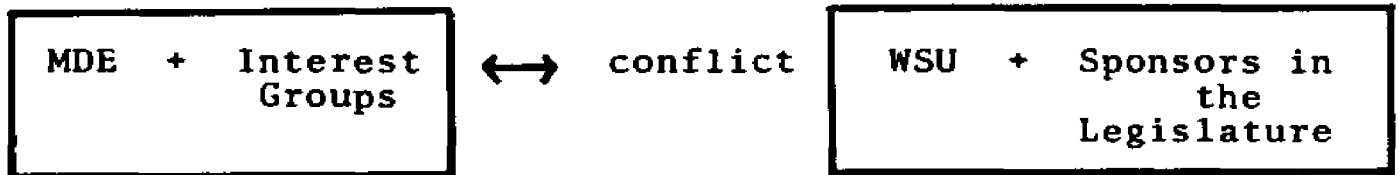
The other Colleges of Education do not seem to be as concerned as Wayne. A representative of Michigan State University's College of Education is pleased with the concept in its initial form, because it sets a precedent of general state funds for in-service education. He believes the colleges will be sure to get additional business through contracted courses and it will thus benefit him. State control, however, is rejected.

Interpretation

Initially, the Detroit effort was an attempt to build a coalition which would create a fundable design. The assumption was that, if all interested groups agreed on a plan of action, the Legislature would fund it and the Governor would not veto it. Consequently, the professional development center would come into existence and MDE would almost certainly retain some control. The ideal interaction would have looked like this.



However, the MDE was thwarted by the Wayne State University end run. The WSU lobby convinced some legislators to fund Wayne State and set up another potential coalition including WSU and some legislators. This was met by opposition from interest groups and set up a conflict for the attention of the remaining majority in the House and Senate.



What is the overall goal of MDE? If one adopts a broad definition such as "leadership and supervision over K-12 (at least) in Michigan," then it is possible to get another view of the PDC issue. The attempt by MDE to create and exert control over the professional development centers constitutes an attempt at annexation. Teachers are a source of uncertainty for MDE, since they do not always support MDE policy. If MDE were to set up a network of PD Centers, it could increase its control over the information teachers receive. This would, according to MDE staff, lead to increased use by teachers of the methods MDE staff believe are effective. MDE already regulates teacher training and certification, to gain similar control over in-service education would be a coup. At best (from the MDE view) they would have total control; they would annex that source of uncertainty. At least, and this is more likely, they will share membership in an ongoing coalition of policy makers.

Either way, MDE will be closer to teachers than is the case now. To gain any degree of control of in-service programs would help MDE to reduce uncertainty about the teachers and other professionals. But even to have a chance to communicate and to advocate is a significant opportunity, for these are also means of reducing uncertainty.

One final note is appropriate. The Legislature did not provide any funds to MDE for planning. What little money was used for the staff associate position was federal money from ESEA Title V. This serves to introduce the three case studies that make up the rest of this chapter, ESEA Titles I, III, and V.

Summary

A coalition of MDE and several interest groups sought (1) compromise and (2) funding from the Legislature. One member, Wayne State University, left the coalition and sought to acquire a million dollars from the Legislature. The coalition, including MDE, held and prepared to oppose the WSU end run. Thus by entering a coalition, MDE reduced uncertainty concerning the support of the other members-- with one dramatic exception.

Post Script

In state politics, events can change very quickly. In the case of the professional development centers, another major event has impacted since research was completed. The

PDC bill which is now in the Legislature--and which MDE staff expect to pass--reflects the result of compromise among the members of the original coalition.

In the most recent arrangement, Wayne State University will be the fiscal agent for the million dollars. The effect of this is that WSU does not have direct control, but must share authority with the Detroit schools, the intermediate district, the teachers' union and others. Further, the money is flowed through MDE and so that agency has a veto over expenditures. Continuous negotiation between all parties will undoubtedly be necessary. It is also likely that the plans worked on by the Detroit Design Team will resurface, since a plan for shared governance will be required.

Thus MDE has managed to occupy a crucial position in a coalition which will manage the PDC in the Detroit area. This ongoing membership will serve to reduce uncertainty about the other members regarding the center and perhaps other issues too.

Federal Programs and the Michigan Department of Education

It has been suggested in this study that the federal government is a major environmental element from which the Michigan Department of Education acquires resources. Eleven of the 13 major service areas of the MDE receive federal money from the U.S. Office of Education. Other federal agencies also provide resources, for example, the federal

lunch and nutrition program and the vocational rehabilitation program both originate beyond U.S.O.E.¹ Of the federal funding programs, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has been the largest single source of federal funds for education since its inception in 1965. In the 1974-75 school year the Michigan Department of Education will disburse or retain over \$200 million of federal money and almost half will be ESEA funds.² At one point, the Superintendent said that, "80% of our budget is federal money. We could probably give up the state money and not change what we do here very much."³ In fact, state education agencies are in some respects, extensions of the federal U.S. Office of Education (among others), since the state agencies such as MDE are the intermediaries in the flow of federal money. The specific role can vary. In some programs the state agencies simply disburse money according to a predetermined federal formula. In ESEA Title I, for example, recipients are determined in Washington, in Congress--not in Lansing. There are other programs over which MDE has some discretion. Operationally, discretion is the ability to decide how to spend money. In Title I, almost all regulations are written in Washington

¹John W. Porter, "An Exploration of State and Federal Relationships; the Possibilities and Complications," Lansing, Michigan: MDE, October, 1974.

²MDE Fact Sheet, February, 1975.

³As of April 6, 1975, according to the MDE Budget Office, 64% of filled positions were federally funded.

and MDE has no apparent discretion. In ESEA Title III, MDE can add requirements to the money before it is disbursed to schools on a competitive basis. At the other end of the continuum, MDE has almost total discretion over how Title V funds are spent.

The varying discretion is related to the purposes of the three titles. Title I is the federal compensatory education program and it is the intent of Congress that Title I money goes to school districts impacted by poverty. No means of interfering with those highly political dollars is provided. Title III is intended to develop, demonstrate and disseminate new ideas for programs. It is deemed reasonable by Congress to grant the state agencies some control over this experimental fund. Title V is intended to strengthen state agencies. It was the assumption in 1965 that such money should be highly discretionary, that state agencies knew their own needs. Each of these three federal titles is the subject of a case study here.

It is useful at this stage to review the magnitude of these federal Titles. The following are estimated MDE allocations for 1975-76.

Title I, flow-through to local districts	\$ 80,000,000
Title II, retained by MDE	4,000,000
Title III	6,454,000
Title V	1,175,000
Other ESEA Titles	7,371,000
TOTAL	\$ 99,000,000 ¹
Total for all federal programs	\$207,327,000 ¹

¹From MDE Fact Sheet.

It is necessary to ask in advance what the effects of these funds on MDE might be. One can conceive of the federal government as a source of uncertainty, with MDE acting to acquire resources or power. It has been shown that the amount of discretion varies and it is suggested that discretion is a resource worth seeking.

Alternatively, it is possible to conceive of MDE using these funds to reduce uncertainty regarding other sources of energy in its environment. Since the majority of federal money flows to schools, it is worth asking whether MDE is able to use federal funds to reduce uncertainty from --to exercise control over--the school districts and professionals. The present research has shown this to be the case and has discovered several means by which this occurs.

In review, MDE receives varying amounts of money and discretion from the three federal titles: ESEA I, III, and V. It has been asserted that since MDE occupies an intermediate position between the federal government and the schools that these funds (and discretion) serve two functions. First, they are a source of uncertainty in the environment of MDE. Second, it is argued that they are used by MDE to reduce uncertainty from other elements in its environment. That these two roles are compatible is demonstrated throughout the balance of this chapter. In order to provide more context for that effort, some of the history of ESEA will now be presented.

It was noted earlier in this study that ESEA passed because of a coalition effort. One MDE staff member conducted an on-site study of ESEA "as it grew," before he came to Michigan. In that study, Dr. Kearney (who is now an Associate Superintendent with MDE) focused on the role of a small task force that was selected by Commissioner of Education Keppel and appointed by President Johnson.

Johnson appointed his task force in July of 1964. They reported to him in November of 1964. They introduced the bill actually shortly after the first of the year, . . . the thing actually got through the Congress . . . and he did it in 90 days. And he just fashioned a lot of different coalitions.

From the beginning, ESEA was designed to serve a variety of political masters so it could get enough support to pass. That is why ESEA is an amalgam of categoricals rather than a simple general aid bill. Granted, the variety of titles does reflect the variety of needs in education and Kearney believes that the task force was in part responsible.

And supposedly, that brain trust was concerned not so much with politics and putting the whole thing together in terms of coalitions, but with the substance and the guts of really what education needed.

The largest component of the Act, Title I, was concerned with providing aid, by way of an impact formula, to areas with concentrations of poverty. This was undoubtedly a result of the Johnson Administration's concern with the "War on Poverty." Since Title I forms such a large part of the act (and of federal funding), that title does

typically receive the majority of attention. That will continue to be true here, although the very significant roles played by the other titles will not be slighted. It was impossible for many respondents to separate the impact of Title I from the general effects of ESEA; this fact also contributed to the decision to emphasize Title I here.

Title I of ESEA

Introduction

This study is concerned with the means by which MDE reduces uncertainty in its environment. It will be shown in this case study that Title I plays two roles in this regard. First, Title I is a resource--and not a totally certain one. Thus, from the point of view of MDE, Title I is an uncertain energy source. Second, MDE uses Title I money to reduce uncertainty about other parts of its environment.

Title I is a compensatory education program whose funding base depends on poverty. It gives money to counties in the U.S. where poverty is concentrated. Most of these are urban areas. Title I was passed in 1965 by a Democratic Congress under a Democratic President (Johnson) to serve urban areas, typical locations of Democratic voters.

Massive funding led to massive reporting. Since 1965, the federal Congress and the U.S. Office of Education have been increasingly concerned with quantitative

evaluations to justify the infusion of federal money. This trend has complemented a similar concern within MDE and has accelerated the MDE tendency to emphasize quantitative data.

MDE regulates Title I in the state but has very little discretion; the federal regulations and guidelines exclude major MDE modifications. A 1% administrative allowance is retained by MDE for the reporting and compiling functions. One part of the Title, Title I-B, allows MDE to set guidelines and to use the money more effectively as it attempts to reduce uncertainty in its environment.

Text

The Title I¹ program was established to meet the needs of students in areas impacted by poverty. In Michigan, 496 of the 530 school districts received some money from Title I in 1972-73. These funds served about 130,000 children, almost half of whom were from Detroit.² During that year, about \$347.00 per child was disbursed by MDE on behalf of the federal government.³

What is it that MDE does with all this money? MDE gives it to school districts, according to formulae and

¹Unless otherwise indicated, "Title I" refers to Title I-A, the basic section. Migrant is run differently, for example, and will not be a source of major concern.

²_____, "MEA Evaluation of the MDE Compensatory and Experimental Programs," (East Lansing, Michigan, October, 1974).

³John W. Porter, Memorandum to the State Board of Education, Lansing, November 5, 1974.

guidelines developed in Washington. Congress creates the funding formula which decides who gets how much. The U.S. Office of Education adds rules and guidelines which MDE enforces. Some form of evaluation is required and reports to the U.S. Office are also required. This is the framework of the program. Attention will now turn to the impact on MDE of Title I since 1965.

The most obvious impact of Title I--and of ESEA in general--was the growth of the agency. The sudden almost "dumping" of millions of dollars was a source of confusion at first and it was almost all Title I money. One Associate Superintendent described the effects in the early days.

It really had a tremendous influence on the agency, in terms of size, in terms of posture, in terms of throwing on them a whole new set of roles which they didn't really know how to handle, at least at that point, nobody had really started to think out what all that meant.

One Associate Superintendent, Dr. Ferris Crawford, has been with MDE since the late 40's. He recalls that before ESEA, the Department was more concerned with advocacy, with cooperation and with a consultant role. His description of the early days of ESEA tells how the changes began.

Some of us old timers just did what had to be done. Job descriptions didn't mean a thing. I just went right out of mine and looked after compensatory ed. . . . Meanwhile Al Kloster was hiring people and 'guys would come in and say, Mr. Kloster told me to report to Ferris Crawford' . . . it was like the A & P store. I'd have to sit down and figure out what this guy could do.

A different Associate Superintendent used different terms to describe the same level of initial upset.

They were still faced with the mental persuasion of never having enough money and all of a sudden the chickens had come home to roost. Educators had said 'all we need to solve our problems is more money' and all of a sudden they had buckets of money and God, they didn't know what to do with it and that's what happened to this agency, I think.

But the growth was handled it seems. The agency in 1975 is certainly not in turmoil, at least not in the sense that it was ten years earlier. MDE has learned how to be large, as the balance of this whole chapter will attest. One change was in the recruitment of staff, a process that has become not only more formal, but more intentionally concerned with diversity. The same Associate Superintendent described the transaction.

The other thing; Ira started it and John carried it out, was the giving of real attention to who you were hiring for those positions, now they began to get a little bit of turnover, not a lot, they began--instead of running out to rural Michigan--they started going and getting blacks and guys or gals that had been working in the large urban areas and with poor kids and with black kids and with--quote--educationally deprived kids;

"Ira" refers to the previous Superintendent, Dr. Ira Polley and "John" is the present Superintendent, Dr. John Porter. The change in staffing patterns is important in itself, but also in what it reflects. Title I focused the attention of a previously rurally oriented agency on the cities where most of the Title I funds were spent. Thus the emphasis on diverse staffing and especially the

recruitment of minorities, paralleled the changing focus of MDE, changing to take new notice of the cities and their diverse people and problems.

That was long before the affirmative action phenomenon began to have legal impact on agencies receiving federal funds. So not only was the agency made larger, but its make-up was altered. The rural became often urban, the predominantly white, male agency added at least some blacks and women. All of this was accomplished in the case of Title I by a 1½ administrative allowance. If changing the face of MDE had been a goal of ESEA, the money would have been demonstrably well spent.

The changes went well beyond size and demography. It is clear that the role of MDE has changed also. To a large extent, the regulation of federal money has become a primary MDE function. This has required that MDE act differently than pre-1965. For example, MDE must provide more than just money to the school districts. The Director of Title I identified the following major tasks.

With the money goes responsibilities. We have a responsibility to provide technical assistance to local districts, to conduct programs in accordance with federal regulations and state board policy . . .

There's a matter of working with local districts to develop POs, to get a design that will measure the progress, which means pre-tests, post-tests, there's a matter of assembling all this in a report' there's a matter of identifying successful delivery systems so that they can be disseminated to districts that are in need of them.

It is important to note that questions of evaluation, measuring and reporting are recurring issues. These are huge sums of public money and must be accounted for. To Congress and the federal agencies which act for them, solid information that money given was well spent is politically very valuable. Representatives and Senators want to get re-elected and proof that they spend public money effectively is likely to be useful. What is the impact of this dual task, of disbursing money and seeking positive evaluations.

Title I helped to push the Michigan Department of Education into a regulatory role. No matter how you slice it, T-I has regulations and if programs are not conducted in accordance with the regulations, you're subject to audit exceptions. And therefore the staff, much as they would like to be strictly curriculum people, have to be concerned with regulations.

While the speaker is the Title I director, the complaint was heard in many other places. While some old-timers bemoaned the loss of collegial relations with the field, others welcomed the chance to have legal authority, to exert power. Title I made it necessary that many people be involved in the latter task. The director continues:

Secondly, I think that T-I is probably the major program that has influenced the rise of the research, evaluation and assessment organization.

This refers to Research, Evaluation and Assessment Services, one of the larger service areas within MDE. The size of that subsystem--36 people, \$1,691,400 last year--documents the commitment of the agency to those tasks. There is not likely to be a reversal of that trend, at least so far as Title I is concerned, according to its director.

I think we're going to be more involved in program decisions based on the evaluations and I think its going to get down to the building level soon. We may be making program evaluations at the building level.

Building-level evaluations have already been proposed to the State Board and are under study. If MDE were able to fund by building and collect data by building, the potential for regulation would be enhanced. This would be consistent with the trend of MDE and Title I toward increasingly more careful measurement of cognitive growth.

It is not only Title I programs which are subject to evaluation. Evaluation has become an institutionalized concern, according to another senior staff member.

. . . it's also led to the point where now we do a lot of evaluation in compensatory ed., we're going some in general ed., there's a real push on to do it in special ed and there's a push to do more on voc. ed., in other words, that whole notion of finding out who gets what dollars for what and what happened has kind of started to permeate not only this whole agency, but all of education . . .

The emphasis on evaluation seems to have been either initiated or enhanced by ESEA money, especially Title I. When the Michigan Compensatory Program followed and later became Chapter 3, stringent reporting requirements were imposed. The sum of these two programs is a compensatory education capability with large potential impact. One Associate Superintendent summarizes as follows:

What you've got now, partly as a result of Title I, is more of an agency concern with the whole area of compensatory education and you certainly have much more potential for the agency to do things, since there's \$60 million there, plus another \$22-23 million

in the state program (a-1 since T-I, the \$60 million is T-I money). You're talking there of \$70-80 million over which the agency has considerable control in terms of getting it out into the districts . . .

These are large changes in the agency, especially since all MDE gets is a 1% administrative allowance. But that is not the only part of Title I available to MDE.

There is another section of Title I which gives MDE a resource as valuable as money: discretion. Title I-B goes only to districts that survive three qualifying cuts. The first is effort and the second is intensity of poverty level. The third appears to be whatever MDE wants to add. Last year, according to the director of Title I,

we did set some criteria that were approved by the State Board of Education. It was that districts would use this money for management systems for individualizing instruction, e.g., It would be a system that uses performance objectives, that has an individualized approach, has a method of keeping track of students' progress . . .

In summary, the MDE required applicants to adopt its Accountability Model and to do so using a diagnosis-prescription type of system. This subsection was worth \$2.8 million in 1973-74 and slightly less in 1974-75. The funds allowed MDE to run some valuable and expensive experiments and to advocate their Accountability Model, both at federal expense. Thus MDE in fact manages to retain more than the simple 1% administrative allotment. It is interesting and not surprising that the Title I-B money was spent in a way that compensated the directions and themes already present and encouraged by the major section, Title I-A.

MDE does not have to extend itself to be certain of these funds. Title I money, whether I-A or I-B, is at least as certain as state funds. Only an action by Congress could create a major change and the MDE keeps track of Congress in several ways. First, the MDE employs a full-time liaison (translation: lobbyist) who spends three days a week in Washington. Second, the Council of Chief State School Officers maintains via computer and telephone links, almost instantaneous communication with their memberships. Third, MDE staff and Superintendent Porter most of all are regularly in D.C. and in touch with representatives and senators who regularly influence education. Thus MDE has several intelligence-gathering strategies to reduce what little uncertainty about Title I might exist.

While there is little uncertainty about actual funding of Title I, there is uncertainty about the extent of MDE control and discretion over the money. A second issue--the funding base--is entwined here. When Title I was created, it was created as an anti-poverty program as part of the War on Poverty of the Johnson Administration. The allocation formula is a type of impact aid; that is, counties having heavy concentrations of poverty are given funds. But that isn't all, according to the MDE director of Title I.

Title I is very restrictive about who can be served. . . . First they have to establish target areas. They have to have documented their target areas. . . . then when you go within the schools that are eligible, there has to be a needs assessment. This will determine which

children are the low achievers . . . the lowest achievers. These are the ones who can be served. . . . when we know their needs, it is quite flexible as to how we meet their needs.

Thus Title I serves students who are poor and academically unsuccessful. The Director continues:

Many times I've smiled about the push to put money where the low achieving kids are; were already there.

This disagrees with the advocates of a switch to an academic funding base, like that of Chapter 3. Chapter 3 funds only on the basis of low academic achievement. But a concentration of low achievement is needed and this is why the result is often the same, "because the concentrations of low achieving students are in the areas where there are high concentrations of low-income children." (MDE Title I director)

This issue is relevant to the problem of communicating with the federal government. The Republicans in the U.S. Senate are interested in changing Title I to an academic funding base. Senator Qwee (R. Minn.) has been the largest voice in that move. Logic has it that such a change would move at least some Title I money into the suburbs because many students there achieve poorly. The fact that Title I was passed by a Democratic majority and serves urban centers where Democratic support is strong is not lost on the Republicans.

One of the professional staff who works for the Senate Minority (Republican) Committee is Chris Cross. Cross visited Michigan late in 1974 to exchange ideas with MDE staff.

In a day-long visit, Cross met with several MDE personnel whose interests were in assessment and compensatory programs. He was told of the Michigan experience and the benefits of an academic funding base. He was also told of the success of Chapter 3 and the fact that MDE agreed Title I should move to an academic funding base. It was also noted that the Title-I-Migrant program is subject to extensive state control. This was viewed by all present as a good thing, which is not surprising in light of this case study to date.

Cross was not hopeful of legislative changes in the near future which would enhance the role of MDE. "There is a strong anti-state bias among the Democrats," he said, "they just don't trust the states."

In general, Cross was assured that MDE supported the intent of the minority proposal and in turn MDE received a lot of news of present and pending events in the Congress. The interchange was thus mutually beneficial.

Earlier in the year, a much larger exchange occurred. The U.S. Office of Education invited two states to come to D.C. and tell O.E. about their programs. Texas and Michigan were chosen as the two innovative and potentially interesting state agencies. There were two days of presentations and a private administrative seminar with Commissioner Bell and his deputies. Only the MDE Executive Council plus the MDE lobbyist attended that invitational session. Throughout the three days one theme recurred: the U.S. Office should

increase the power of MDE with respect to the locals in order to improve education. The following several examples will illustrate and document the theme.

Dr. Porter presented a summary of MDE-federal interaction to the USOE members at the administrative seminar. Under "What the Office of Education Can Do for Us to Help Improve Our Program," the following ideas appeared.

1. There should be active involvement of department staff in developing the new rules for ESEA Title I.

2. There should be greater emphasis on educational disadvantage rather than socio-economic status for identifying target groups (for Title I) . . .

3. Section 731 of PL 93-380 requires . . . evaluation of programs funded under the act. We . . . support . . . and advise the Commission not to bypass state education agencies in this activity . . . make available to state education agencies funds and appropriate guidelines for conducting the required evaluations.¹

In fairness, it must be noted that the MDE document included several ideas as to how the state agencies could help themselves also. The emphasis, though, was on the role of USOE--that was the purpose of the meeting! It is evident that MDE views OE as a potential source of both power and legal authority. A large number of the MDE suggestions had

¹John W. Porter, "An Exploration of State and Federal Relationships."

to do with increased input and requests that USOE enhance the authority and discretion of the states. Money was in fact a secondary issue according to the items MDE staff submitted.

In another session in D.C. concerning compensatory education, an Associate Superintendent from MDE said he would like to be able to have a sign-off on Title I applications before they are sent to D.C. At present, the state agencies may require an evaluation design, but have little control over locals beyond that. The money in effect passes by them.

In the Administrative Seminar, Superintendent Porter complained about the present lack of control (by MDE) over Title I and other federal programs. He said that everything "the feds" do to enhance local control hurts the state agencies.

Porter showed the audience in that Seminar a diagram showing the elements which interfered with MDE efforts to influence children, in his view. His assertion was that all of the interest groups and established professionals form a chain, a barrier (which is similar to that suggested by Iannacone¹) to his attempts to innovate. "The chain must be loosened so we can get down to classrooms and down to

¹Iannacone, Politics of Education, especially the contention that established persons and systems in education tend to function as closed systems.

children and youth." The idea that a richer, more powerful MDE could be more successful was made very clear.

One of the federal staff suggested that Congress was the source of anti-state feeling. It is there the laws which by-pass the state agency originate, he said, because some "don't trust the states as far as they can throw them!"

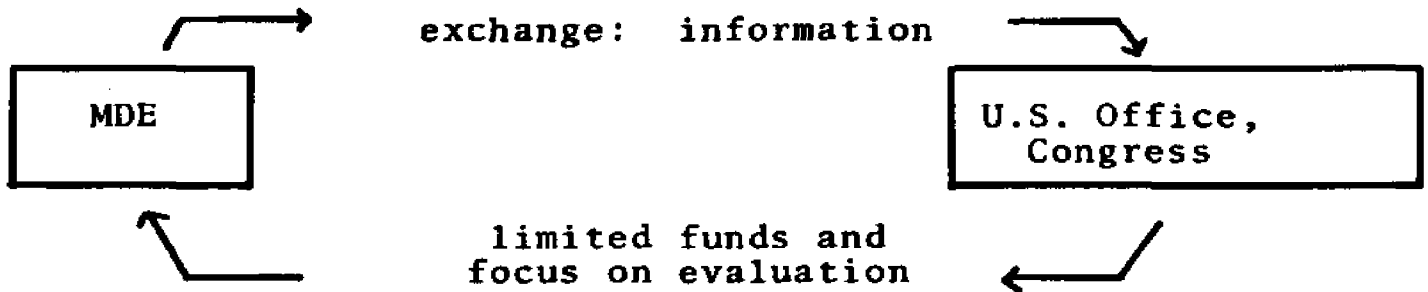
In his concluding remarks, Superintendent Porter said, "We need your help to do what you agree with, cause a lot of people are against us." And with that, Michigan Education Week concluded also.

The summary from this point of view is that MDE took advantage of a chance to advocate their methods and to advertise their needs. Short-term rewards included about a hundred thousand dollars "captured" by an associate as a result of his presence in D.C. and several new or improved communication links. The long-term benefits can only be inferred at this stage. Certainly, improved information and communication must be regarded as desirable outcomes by themselves. The meeting served to reassure both agencies that they had common goals and methods and that there were still untried means of mutual support which could be investigated.

Interpretation

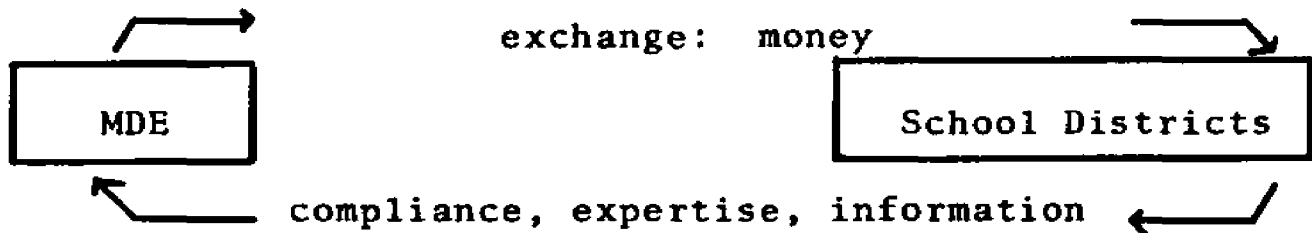
There is little uncertainty about the continuation of Title I. It is also likely that MDE will continue to

receive its 1% allotment to administer and evaluate. Even though this money does not add to the discretion of MDE, the emphasis on evaluation matches that of MDE and thus argues and extends its cause. All MDE need provide in return is credible information concerning money well-spent.



The strategy is one of simple exchange, then.

Title I-B is less simple. MDE is given a lot of discretion to use federal money to further its own ends and hopefully, those of children. (The focus on "What's in it for MDE?" is not intended to imply any lack of concern on their part for the cognitive growth of students.) MDE can use Title I-B to experiment, to get local districts to try the MDE model and to create demonstration projects which can later be advocated and disseminated.

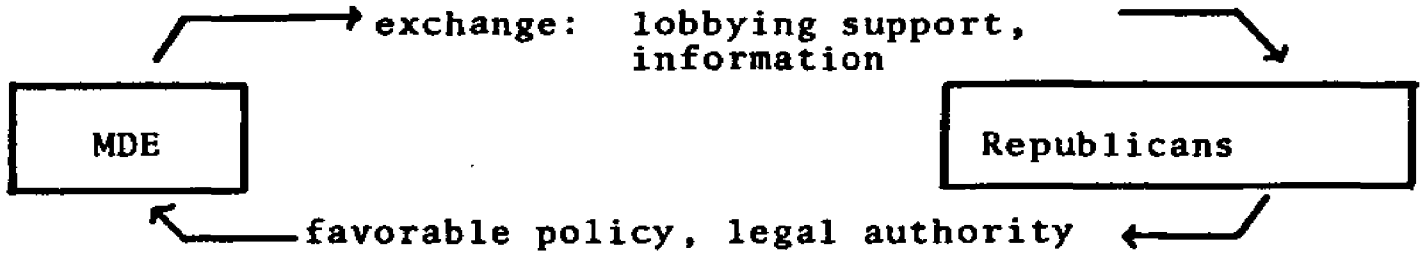


So the model is still one of exchange, but it is slightly more complex. Generally, the outcome for MDE is that it

gets to spread the word about programs it advocates, about the Accountability Model in general. Having school districts try out these ideas may reduce the chance that they will oppose MDE, at least to some degree.

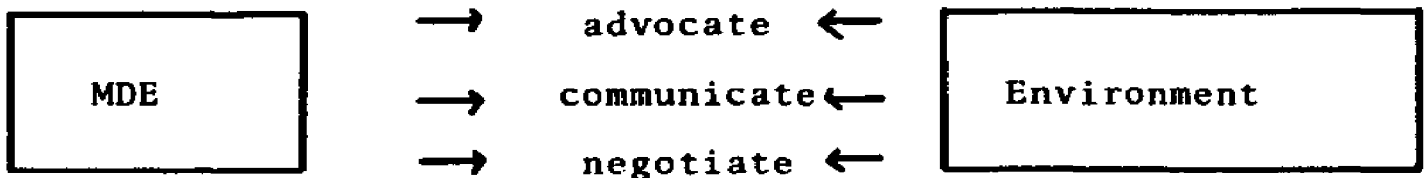
In both of the above cases there has been little uncertainty about the behavior of the U.S. Congress or U.S. Office of Education, that certain money is used, in the case of Title I-B, to reduce uncertainty concerning local districts. But not all aspects of the federal scene are so consistent. The interactions with Cross and with the U.S. Office were both in pursuit of other less certain goals; increased federal dollars and increased power for MDE and for increased support of MDE from the point of view of the others.

There is all sorts of potential. The Republicans could get their bill through and Title I would move to an academic base. In the eyes of MDE, this would be a victory and might also increase their power. Whether MDE would in the end have more power would depend on the language of the bill. Certainly the MDE argument would get a hearing. In the case of the U.S. Office, the MDE is offering the same bargain. MDE wants control and would like to align with USOE on goals. The mutual support would strengthen the ability of both to regulate local districts. In both cases there is a potential exchange.



But only potential.

These can hardly be labelled as true exchanges since there was no exchange beyond that of promise, of suggested future contracts. Yet MDE did advocate and advertise and gathered much information in return. Both interactions contained a negotiating component; they were actions prerequisite to exchange or other cooperative strategies involving firm organizational commitment. This is illustrated below.



There will be no attempt to integrate this at this stage, because additional examples occur later in this study. This will serve notice, though, that some modification of the list of 13 strategies seems to be needed.

Summary

MDE exchanges information for federal money. There is little uncertainty about that arrangement. The Title I emphasis on evaluation has been complementary to MDE predispositions. MDE expertise gained by administering both

Title I and Chapter 3 has made MDE a valued ally of the U.S. Senate Republicans. Discretion available in Title I-B has allowed MDE to develop and advocate their own rational planning "Accountability" model. This increases the ability of MDE to reduce uncertainty about the schools and their support for MDE programs.

Title III

Introduction

This research is concerned with learning how MDE reduces uncertainty in its environment. In the case of Title III, it is discretion which is the resource provided to MDE that achieves this goal, in part.

Title III is the part of ESEA which is designed to develop new methods of educating children. Title III funds may be expended for identifying or developing new "delivery systems." Funds are also used for evaluating and validating these delivery systems and for dissemination and adoption. The role of the state agency is one of an informed advocate.

In the case of MDE (at least) this "informed" definition is based on highly quantifiable data. Projects are evaluated by two sets of outsiders before validated status is granted. Then, selected validated delivery systems are advocated and disseminated. The measurement emphasis exists in the U.S. Office and matches the predispositions of MDE. MDE loyally passes on to the participating (i.e. funded)

school districts both the general emphasis on quantification and their own Accountability Model version of planning and evaluating. MDE has, because of the federal regulations, considerable opportunity to add state-level priorities to requirements for funding. This discretion is used to reduce uncertainty in several ways.

Text

In 1965, when ESEA was passed, its major concern was with compensatory education for children living in poverty conditions. Consequently the bulk of the money which was appropriated went to school districts which were impacted by poverty-level families. Beyond this, there were several supplementary titles of which Title III was one.

Title III was intended to help districts develop "innovative and exemplary" methods for helping children learn. The emphasis here was not so restricted to low-income students, although they were a major audience. An MDE staff member who was with MDE at the time offered the following retroactive rendition of the motives of the 1965 Congress.

Now they said, I don't think school districts know much about this; they haven't dealt with compensatory programs before. The idea's good, but who knows a damn about it, what strategies work and what don't work; we'll have an experimental program going on here . . . if we know some things work, we ought to replicate them around the country . . . so we produced an E and D act, and that's Title III.

However folksy, the description does match the outcome as will be shown here. The federal Congress provided for a "research and development" component in education with particular concern for finding new methods in compensatory education.

In order to carry out this function in Michigan, MDE has created an administrative subsystem called the Experimental and Demonstration Centers (E and D) Program. In theory, this unit has goals similar to ESEA Title III but can receive funding from various sources, including state sources. In fact, as of May 1975, almost all support for the E and D program was from Title III. Since in terms of funding the E and D program is really the Title III program, the two can be considered as one for purposes of this discussion. We are interested in what Title III does and what it does is fund the E and D program. The outcome is the same.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed on April 11, 1965. The speed with which the bill moved was mentioned earlier in connection with Title I. The U.S. Office of Education did not have much time to write their guidelines before they were suddenly on the spot, ready to disburse millions of dollars. This lack of time to look ahead may have contributed to some of the problems that arose later, particularly with Title III.

Title III was written in unrestrictive language to encourage experimentation, not federal direction. The state agencies had two choices. They could pass the money on virtually untouched in terms of restrictions. Or, they could impose further control at the state level. One Associate Superintendent who was with MDE in the 60's advocated that state controls be added then.

. . . and I proposed to the Board that it ought to take some strong positions as to what it would fund. It ought to decide where the major weaknesses were, it ought to decide in accordance with an assessment of major problems and weaknesses within our system and it ought to put some money into some experimental and demonstration projects in those areas, in order to beef them up.

One member of the State Board intervened vehemently in favor of an unrestricted pure-grant format that the proposal to control was defeated.

This state of Michigan has had a long history in the minds of people that they control their own local education system and they wanted to be free to spend the money like they wanted to spend it, as if it were put on a stump and they've had a long-standing belief that that's inherent in their right. And, of course, I don't think other states quite believe that, except maybe for Indiana. Given that, it's not surprising that we were maybe a little more loose than others at the first.

Some years later, however, the State Board had changed enough that a new policy was implemented. MDE could determine major state priorities each year and could restrict most funding to those categories. For example, a single year could be dedicated to reading, to mathematics, to affective projects, or to evaluation models. As of 1975, the E and D program operates in this way.

In the meantime, the Title III program continued as a grant program without any systematic control by the State Department. Projects were chosen for funding by an advisory group of educators and lay persons from beyond MDE. State Board approval was then required. While the agency did have some discretion, there was not a lot of direction given. Advocates of a directed program have called the early Title III program a "pork barrel," and accused it of rampant cronyism. An Associate Superintendent who came to MDE in the late 60's reported attending a Title III conference where project directors and MDE staff were present. "It was like old home week!" he said. He was very critical of these early programs and was enthused about the fact that "that's all cleaned up now."

It is not possible to know whether these charges are accurate. It is interesting nevertheless to observe the attitude of newer members of MDE about that earlier, less formal and less quantified period. Whether or not there was abuse, the hint of it helped to make the case for control of project goals and for increasingly rigorous evaluation.

Even if funds were mismanaged, control of the goals, the major topics of the projects would not be a necessary solution. Control and monitoring of financial responsibility and requirements that money really got to the projects would have been more appropriate. But the hints of abuse

combined with the general growth--as described here--of evaluation, assessment, testing and a general cognitive emphasis won out. The discretion which had earlier been passed on to schools was now assimilated by MDE. The state began to restrict goals year by year and the emphasis on evaluation increased.

Dr. Crawford, who was with MDE before and after 1965, reported that the school districts did not seriously object to their loss of discretion.

Oh, they'd had the first blush. And some of our school boards were sick of projects that they weren't sure of and then getting challenged at the end, for having no defensible results. I think there was a general change in attitude of the applicants, knowing that it was time to get out and hoe corn. Those first years, I think everyone had their hand stuck out for money and they were hiring people right and left and in my opinion being very irresponsible in using the money.

Apparently there was no effective opposition to the increased control MDE exerted. The implications of that legal ability to control Title III funding will now be examined.

An executive-level staff members from MDE reported that

Well . . . we don't look too seriously at applications unless they follow the prescribed six-step accountability model program. It has introduced the concept of accountability to local school districts.

This gives MDE some general control in that they can use Title III to advocate and require adoption of their planning model. There are, though, more specific ways in which power can be "skimmed off" Title III dollars.

When asked how, specifically, a state agency adds its own priorities as a filter, on top of Title III, the director of the E and D Program replied as follows.

Well, you see under the federal regulations, we can establish our own priorities . . . each year we do a needs assessment throughout the state, getting the perceived needs of superintendents; one year it might be fine arts, another year it might be math . . . so that we establish our own state priorities for funding and we're allowed to do that for Title III, so that we can in essence cut down the competitive nature of it by limiting the categories of funding. . . . This year we were talking about delivery systems analysis, we were asking school districts to, in terms of whatever grant they were interested in, reading or math, or social studies, what have you, to analyse for us their procedures for deciding what alternative systems they want; the analytical procedures they went through and how they evaluated that procedure. So we're still getting all kinds of projects . . . but we're asking each one of them to document for us the analytical procedure they used in terms of the six-step model.

This clarifies the general method of operation. MDE can focus the six million dollar annual share of Title III as they wish. From these general guidelines, the advisory council chooses projects which are, in turn, subject to Board approval.

How else does Title III help to advance the MDE model? One group of converts is called the 6/5 (pronounced six-five) schools.

In fact, we have a Title III consortium this year, made up of the 6/5 schools and we're funding them and we've hired a consortium manager who's going to document the procedure and package the instruments and everything else, just using the six-step model, not telling them what material to use, or what PO's to use or anything else, just documenting how a local school can use the system to improve instruction.

It's going to be housed in Waterford, because the consortium manager is going to be there . . . and that's Marilyn . . .

. . . and Waterford is going K-12 Accountability and we're funding three other school districts--Sault Ste. Marie, Grand Rapids and Wayne Westland, to work into the system at Waterford and use Marilyn as a consultant. And Marilyn is going to try to coordinate the activities. And those three school districts are only going to do it at the elementary level. Then there are eight other school districts that we are funding at a very minimal level, sort of on the periphery of the circle and they're going to observe and contribute what they have done with the packages and the bank of materials and this kind of thing.

These eight other districts are mostly large and influential urban school districts, so this opportunity to influence them is significant. And it was done with Title III money. Thus Title III gave MDE a chance to play its advocate role and a chance to involve some major clients with its model. This may help to reduce uncertainty associated with those school districts.

There are still other nuances to the Title III story. While the uses of Title III above are relatively controlled by the agency, there are even more controlled methods of applying money. One is contracted research and development. The director described how this is done.

We have discretionary monies under our administrative monies that we can contract for special kinds of activities. For example, we contracted for the development of a document called "Accountability, a Management Tool for Teachers;" we're contracting with Bloomfield Hills and Westwood School District to do a comparative study on the implementation of the six-step Accountability Model. That's a contract, it's not a competitive grant, it's a contract between us and those school districts. We've also contracted with Batelle, Incorporated to do a process model for the generating of affective objectives.

In cases like this, the MDE can determine exactly what project Title III money will be applied to. In the examples listed above, MDE contracted for services which would support their advocacy of the Accountability Model. Title III money, especially this latter very discretionary section, thus served to support the general goals of the agency and to increase their competence in those areas.

The concept of an Experimental and Demonstration Center implies that someone--or some agency--has determined that something is worth demonstrating. In the case of the E and D program of the Department of Education, the agency assumes it knows what should be demonstrated and uses Title III money to do so.

For example, the E and D concept requires a multi-stage filtering process. After being funded, projects must be validated. This entails essentially an audit of a project's evaluation data by an independent person or agency. Then an MDE classification committee finally decides which projects shall become demonstration sites.

The good data plus the impact for implementation is what we're really looking for. And when we get that validated data, we can nominate some as demonstration sites, staff nominates them, that doesn't come from the field.

This point is crucial--it is the MDE staff who decide what shall be "demonstrated." And only demonstration-level projects can be eligible for adapter/adopter grants. This simple means that if a school district likes an idea, it can apply for some Title III funds to implement the idea. But

this only applies to ideas which MDE staff have approved.

On this same topic, the Superintendent responded to a challenge from a colleague who had said that the E and D Centers were "the same as the old Resource Centers we had 30 years ago."

Dr. Porter replied that the E and D Centers are to be "new, significantly different . . . in a resource center you're responsible to what the people out there want to demonstrate . . . we can demonstrate out of this office what makes a difference."

One of the things that the MDE regularly demonstrates is its preference for cognitive projects. Three years ago an ad hoc committee of MDE staff and field personnel successfully pressured the agency to fund some projects dealing with the affective domain according to a former director of the E and D program. ". . . we literally went back to the files and searched for projects to fund. B_____ had been high on the list before, so it was chosen."

When an executive-level staff member was asked why most Title III projects have cognitive goals, he replied, "You know why? Because they're easier to measure!" He also mentioned other sources of criticism.

The MEA has said that for some time, "all you're doing is testing the cognitive. How about the affective domain?" That was a good way of attacking accountability.

It appears that MDE has regularly used Title III funds to reduce uncertainty in their environment. Specifically, they have used this money to advance and advocate their view of how educational planning should occur--the Accountability Model. Title III money has bought MDE, each year, almost six million dollars worth of focus on cognitive goals, a large collection of materials and a lot of exposure for the MDE Accountability Model. What has this done to the structure and priorities of the agency in the years since 1965?

The effect of Title III has been similar to that of Title I. The agency has had to regulate the federal money it has disbursed. It has had to provide increasingly more rigorous reports to the federal government via the U.S. Office of Education. Consequently, measurement and evaluation have become priorities of the agency. Perhaps the emphasis on measurement and rational planning is a result of federal requirements of that type. Or on the other hand, perhaps MDE uses the necessary regulating and measuring activities which accompany federal money to retroactively justify its own predisposition in that direction. It is simply too late to sort out the direction of influence. It is, however, possible to describe the results of the union. MDE, using federal money, has changed. The outcomes are described by four MDE staff, three of whom are executive-level staff, the other is the director of the Title III program.

The MDE staff do agree that the agency has taken a more regulatory stance.

Any time that you invest in an agency power through control approval, funding approval, any of these things, you enhance the regulatory aspect of it, and the agency gets to thinking along that line. I separate the word "service" from "regulating;" any time you're regulating somebody you're not providing him a service. So I think we have gone from a service agency largely, except for certain laws we had to enforce, to one of control. Money, and the controls that went with it, brought regulatory powers and we just lapped it up. And I think our Department as a whole . . . sees itself as regulatory.

An Associate Superintendent perceived that Title III had been influential in that change.

I think Title I caused this agency really, eventually, to get serious about the whole question of evaluation, as did Title III. While we don't do an ideal or perfect job yet, I think the evaluation work that's now being done is far superior to where we were not long ago and for a good example of that, read the latest Title III evaluation . . .

The Director of E and D Program suggested how Title III was continuing to impact on the agency.

Well, if it hadn't been for Title III this whole move toward identifying successful practices would not have occurred. Title III itself is unique in that that's its objective; finding promising educational practices. So I think that the whole direction that the State Department's taking right now is because of the impact of Title III.

This refers especially to the demonstration concept, whereby the agency would take an advocate--rather than a regulatory--role. But the methods of thorough measurement of pre-specified objectives would remain, because the gauntlet projects must run to achieve demonstration status is highly quantitative. Evaluation is still the key activity.

Concerning the level of ability of the districts and their projects, the Deputy Superintendent was quite supportive.

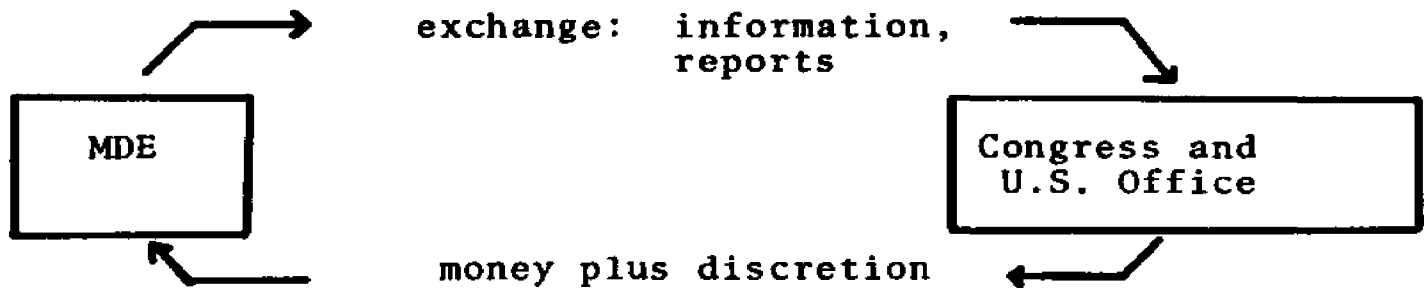
They're becoming more sophisticated than they were. But they aren't to the point where all of us are really happy with them yet. They will be. I think if you give us another year or two years, they'll all have rather sophisticated means of measuring the progress, to really determine whether or not the program is worth a damn, whether the program really did what it was intended to do. Now as a local school superintendent, I would have to sell these projects to my constituency or to my board of education. Now, unless . . . you can show me that what you did in that particular program, a way of measuring progress, I'd have a heck of a time selling my board of education, on using that program, on spending money . . .

These are not the idle reflections of dissatisfied staff. These are the perceptions of the agency's roles according to the people who act for MDE, the people who decide how its human and financial resources will be spent. Title I and Title III will bring over \$86 million to (and through) the Department next school year. That is a lot of regulating. No matter what is the origin of the desire to be regulatory, the disbursement and monitoring of \$86 million requires the agency to behave in that fashion. It has been shown here that senior MDE staff perceive that the whole agency is more regulatory now than before ESEA, perhaps because of ESEA.

Interpretation

Title III money, like all federal funds, comes from the U.S. taxpayers via action by the Congress. As far as

the Congress is concerned, money well spent may mean public support, votes, and fulfillment of whatever expectations they held for the program. Thus the minimal role that Congress requires the U.S. Office and the state agencies to play is regulatory. Someone has to monitor the money and report to Congress that it was spent according to the intent of Congress and hopefully that it had some impact. Thus the basic relationship between MDE and the federal government is a rather simple exchange, money for reports.

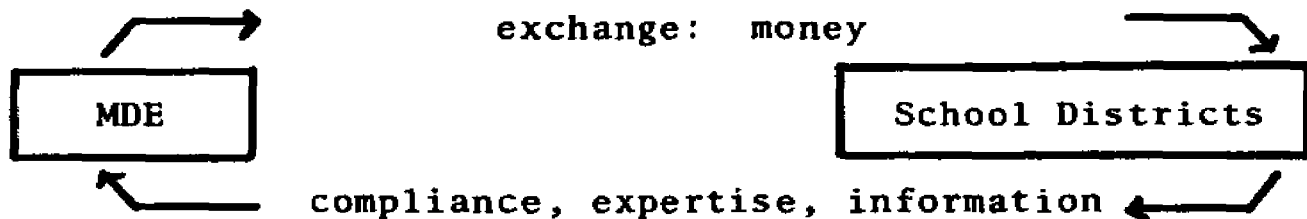


Barring some flagrant abuse, there is no real uncertainty about the continuation of this resource.

The state agencies have more discretion over Title III than Title I and are also able to use some Title III money for contracted services. This is an even stronger role than that mentioned earlier regarding Title I-B. The two are complementary in that both advocate structured planning and evaluation models.

The discretion and money that MDE retains from Title III are used to increase the options MDE has, to engage in activities it otherwise couldn't afford. In the cases above MDE exercised some control over all Title III project goals

and methods. Thus, for the projects funded by MDE with Title III money this year, the analysis of delivery systems is no longer a source of uncertainty. It will be done. The decision about control of that phase of the projects was simply removed by MDE. The discretion of local districts in this regard approaches zero. The same is true with contracted services. There is no discretion about the outcome, it is pre-specified and paid for.¹ The interaction could be illustrated as follows.



The impact of Title III can be summarized differently.

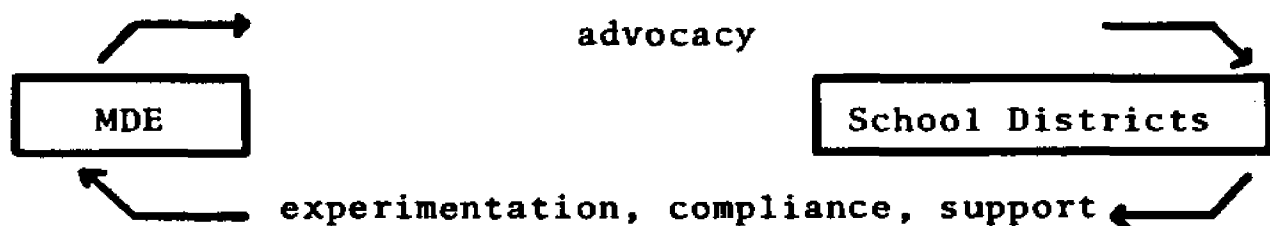
Two other strategies are suggested, one of which is new. First, Title III can be viewed as having increased the capacity to respond of MDE; it has allowed MDE to increase its options. The agency has gained a significant amount of information and expertise and has become more complex.

¹It is not accurate to consider this a form of annexation since no one is forced to comply--the districts can simply choose not to apply for Title III funds. Consequently the exchange category was emphasized.



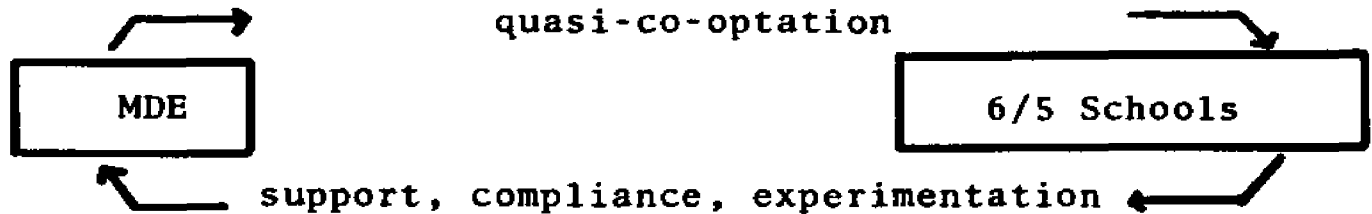
This is similar to the process of anabolism, mentioned earlier, or to the concept of creating organizational slack as described by Cyert and March.¹

Second, the agency has used the Title III money to advocate specific methods of operation. To date, little of this has been done, but the whole demonstration center concept revolves around an advocate stance. It is the same as advertising and (hopefully) creating a demand for one's product. By funding the 6/5 consortium, the Department has added to its own resources in that staff can refer to the support of the 6/5 schools. In one of the six regional workshops MDE held to explain and advocate its Accountability Planning Model, staff did exactly that, the support of the 6/5 school was proclaimed very clearly by MDE personnel. It is the hope of MDE that more districts will be convinced by this advocacy to support the policies of MDE and perhaps to "try them on." The ideal, from the point of view of MDE, is illustrated.



¹Cyert and March, A Behavioral Theory of the Firm.

Also, the schools themselves are more likely to become advocates of the process they have been involved in developing. While this is not truly co-optation, since MDE does not give up any of its own decision making ability, there are similarities of form. MDE does fund the consortium, but on the other hand cannot totally regulate the way in which the schools interpret and adapt the MDE model. So MDE loses some control but gains some support, potentially.



The uncertainty about the reaction of these schools to MDE has been, at least for the moment, reduced.

There is little uncertainty about the continued flow of federal Title III money to MDE. Title III helps MDE reduce uncertainty about the school districts, in that it provides (1) regulatory power over applicants, (2) funds to maintain MDE, and (3) discretion about how some of the money may be spent. MDE assumes a regulatory role and an advocacy role with respect to schools as a result of Title III.

Title III has been shown to be important to MDE, and it has been argued that the reason is discretion. The ultimate case of discretionary money, however, is not Title III, but the next (and last) case within this chapter, Title V.

Summary

MDE has used its legal powers regarding discretion in Title III funding. That legal authority has restricted the use schools may make of Title III funds. This has the effect of reducing uncertainty about those schools and districts. MDE also enhances its own expertise and increases its options via Title III, since some money and much information is retained by MDE each year. Title III has contributed to the advocacy role of MDE and also to the general tendency toward quantification.

Title V: The Contingency Fund

Introduction

This is the last of seven case studies which were investigated in order to determine how the Michigan Department of Education reduces uncertainty in its environment. To this point it has been shown that the federal government provides two things to MDE. One is simply money and the other is discretion. In Title I, the money was relatively certain, but MDE had little discretion over the spending of it, with the exception of Title I-B. Title III provided an opportunity for MDE to exercise more discretion and to impose institutional priorities on over six million dollars of federal money. Title V provides even more discretion to the state agencies who receive it.

An Associate Superintendent at MDE described the effect of Title V from its origin to the present.

Plus once again, a million bucks coming in, which the superintendent says, 'I'll spend just about any way I want to spend it.' It was just about a flat grant--still is--and a helluva lot of people were hired with Title V money . . .

While the style is different, the formal description of Title V provided by Meranto¹ agrees that there were few restrictions and that this situation was intentional.

Policy: To establish a program for making grants to stimulate and assist states in strengthening the leadership resources of their state educational agencies and to assist those agencies in the establishment and improvement of programs to identify and meet the educational needs of the state.

Title V money is to be used to strengthen state education agencies. The way this occurs is at the discretion of the agency.

There are two general ways in which Title V is used. One, agencies can use it to grow, to become more complex, to increase their own options. Second, the money can be spent externally to advocate, to control or to engage in proactive strategies. In either case the money can help the agency to reduce uncertainty in its environment.

The major critical works regarding Title V have been provided by Jerome T. Murphy. He made two conclusions about Title V. One was that Title V money was spent in the same places other money was, no new patterns or activities

¹Meranto, The Politics of Federal Aid to Education in 1965.

resulted. The second conclusion was that agencies avoided new and uncertain behaviors by spending the money in reactive ways, in a response to crisis pattern. It will be shown here that there is some basis in Michigan for adopting both assertions here, but that they are insufficient to explain the range of Title V expenditures.

Text

Title V was intended to strengthen state education agencies. The Johnson Task Force described earlier said, concerning the role of the state, that

The role of the state is strategic--it enjoys a certain leadership potential--not always achieved but always there. The Task Force is convinced that state education agencies must be given new strength and vitality...¹

The result of that opinion was the creation of ESEA Title V. We will now turn to an examination of the way Title V was spent in Michigan in order to determine what the impact has been. It is important to recall the two contentions of the Murphy study,² that Title V money was spent in familiar ways, "more of the same," and that it was spent in a reactive crisis-by-crisis fashion. Both contentions will be evaluated here.

While not all years are alike, it will be instructive to examine the way MDE spent its Title V allotment of \$1,178,968 for fiscal 1974. The descriptions are paraphrases

¹The Task Force, in Murphy, State Education Agencies and Discretionary Funds, p. 1.

²Murphy, State Education Agencies and Discretionary Funds, and "Title V of ESEA."

of the MDE report to the USOE as of December 5, 1974. The dollar figures are from that same report.

1. "Other general management," \$192,019, 16%, used for: expanding assessment, advocating the Accountability program, internal planning, federal liaison, Indian and Latino education.
2. "Personnel management," \$877,153, 7%, training sessions, liaison with Civil Service, recruiting, grievances and related clerical-technical.
3. "Information Services," \$92,442, 8%, news releases, newsletter, media liaison, other P.R. document preparation.
4. "Legislative," \$66,176, 6%, analysis of proposals, support of Legislative Advisory Council and lobbying/liaison with state Legislature.
5. "Machine data processing," \$314,364, 26%, increasing amount of computer use for data processing.
6. "Fiscal management," \$112,017, 10%, implementing new accounting and reporting systems.
7. "School management," \$13,141, 1%, safety, transportation and cooperative programs.
8. "Research," \$15,209, 1%, Accountability study, contracted to Market Opinion Research firm.
9. "Other consultative," \$39,739, 3%, writing performance objectives, reviewing E and D project applications.
10. "Teacher certification," \$89,553, 8%, all phases.
11. Carry-over, \$167,164, 14%. The USOE did not approve this money until spring of 1974. Rather than be forced to make a hasty decision, MDE carried the money over into the next fiscal year, 1975.

There is a great variety in the type of expense. It is argued here that there are four recurring types of expenditures. First, in some cases the simple "more of the same" criticism is justified. Second, there are cases in

which capacity is increased and the agency is truly strengthened. Third, in some instances Title V money was spent reactively to protect the agency from threats. Fourth, there were some new and proactive uses of Title V funds. Several examples of Title V expenses follow; these will be categorized after they are presented.

The Research, Evaluation and Assessment service area was an early recipient of a large amount of Title V money. The director of that service area recalled that

As this research division came into operation, some Title V monies were put in by Ira Polley to get it started. There came a time when other monies became available, and Title V monies were withdrawn and later if the other monies left, Title V monies were put back here; it was used just to plug a hole here. Now I think that Dr. Porter has made a conscious effort in the last year to 18 months to change that. He has said that he would like to see Title V money used increasingly for research and development activities.

Two points emerge. The first is that Title V has been a "finger in the dyke," in the past. The second is that there appears to be an attempt now (at least in the perception of the above respondent) to use Title V money for endeavors beyond the minimum operating levels.

Another use was demonstrated in the PDC issue. The history of the MDE attempt to create a professional development center has been presented above. When the Detroit Design Team (a subset of the 19 "interested" parties having influence in the Detroit area) needed staff assistance, Title V money provided it, enhancing the proactive ability of MDE.

As shown above in the "Research" element of the 1974 uses of Title V, MDE had to "run a survey on Accountability last year--we had no choice, it's one of those things the Governor says, 'Do it!' and where are you going to get the money?" Title V. This is an instance where some sort of reactive strategy was the only option. The Governor's request resulted from the Detroit teachers' strike and that was beyond the range of any proactive strategies MDE could use. It was Title V that defended MDE from that source of uncertainty, because the extra funds had increased the options available to MDE.

In the case study of higher education, the staff of MDE was reduced after a confrontation with a powerful senator. An executive-level staff member described the present State Board office

The rest of the office around here operates almost exclusively on Title V money, because Porter's insistent that this office be as self sufficient from state funds as possible.

What is the point of insulating the State Board's support services from the Legislature? The same respondent continued.

But you know, there are days when the Legislature is mad at us and at any given moment they can just chop you to shreds; they can allow you \$3,000 to operate with--they wouldn't go that far,--but even if they short-changed us, let's say at a 75% level, we'd be hurting. See, right now we can juggle accounts . . . (and use Title V to operate).

When the local districts get mad at us and run to the Legislature and say, 'Kill the State Board!' there's

no easier way of killing anybody than through money. You just shrink their operation and that's it.

MDE uses Title V to protect the support office of the State Board from possible legislative cuts. Thus the Board and MDE generally, can--according to that logic--have more freedom to be aggressive, to occasionally confront the more powerful Legislature and/or Governor.

In a similar case, the state-wide Spanish-American organization, la Raza, pressured the MDE and Legislature last fall to appoint a high-ranking Latino to interact with that constituency. The pressure was strong enough and so politically delicate that members from MDE and state government met with the la Raza executive. The MDE was able to create a staff position for "Latino Education" in their office of School and Community Affairs. The position and support services were funded for the first year by Title V. The Governor agreed to move the position to the state budget the following fiscal year.

MDE use of a subsection of Title V provides another example of Title V expenditures. Almost all of the Title V funds are intended for use by the state education agencies. This study has restricted its focus so far to that main part of Title V which accounts for 95% of all the allocation. This is officially section 503 of Title V and is referred to also as V-A. This serves to differentiate that section from the other of interest here, Title V-C.

State agencies have some control over whether V-C money is retained or is flowed through to school districts. In 1974, the MDE received its first allotment from Title V-C.

We flowed through to local school districts something like \$150,000 . . . on a competitive basis. . . we developed a request for proposal . . . with staff from all across the agency and people from outside--Frank Bertallay from University of Michigan--and made six awards of about \$25,000-\$30,000. Those six districts are developing models for planning and evaluation purposes at the local school district level. They have, as part of their proposal, committed themselves to building a planning and evaluation office within the district . . . initial planning toward that, documentation for their local board to substantiate the need. We funded three different kinds of districts, districts that had no planning and evaluation capability, a couple that did and there was one instance, Marquette County Intermediate. . . most of the local school districts were so small that they could never support independent planning and evaluation activities, so we got those going.

This is consistent with the planning orientation of Title V. The MDE here did the same thing as with Title I-B and Title III. That is, federal money was used and given out to locals, but was given with many 'strings attached.' When the strings are woven together, a lot of districts find themselves thoroughly tied to the MDE Accountability Model.

The total allocation in the V-C case referred to immediately above was about \$400,000. Some was given to local districts, some was retained. While MDE legally had the option in this regard, the local districts can be very forceful in their criticism if they think they've been excluded from money they could have had. MDE avoided that potential confrontation in two ways.

First, MDE used their retained money for an internal task that was unassailable: reducing the amount of data-collection MDE required locals to do. The fact that this was previously done with V-A money which MDE could now free may have influenced their choice.

Second, MDE used a co-optive strategy to assure that the schools would not object. They explained their plan (to give some money to locals and some to MDE) to representatives of the school districts. MDE sought advice regarding the latter task, as was the intent of the federal legislation.

We were expected to involve outside advisors, and did. . . we put together an ad hoc group, Stu Rankin from Detroit, Bob Muth from Middle Cities, Norm Weinheimer from the School Boards Association and Don Currey from MASA. (Michigan Association of School Administrators) . . .

They gave us some very specific advice, we met with them two or three times; we made the case to them, that, the state agency, by using that money (internally) could have a much broader impact than if we flowed the money into grants, and they agreed with that. They reviewed the proposal; they had a couple of minor questions on our proposal, they didn't have any predetermined . . . it was intended to strengthen the planning and evaluation abilities at both the state and local level. We sought advice from them as to how we could best do that. As I remember the first time we met, we had drafted out a very general plan . . . one of the very specific areas we were looking for advice; in flowing money through to the local school districts, we had to establish some criteria, so we bounced some criteria off of them . . . we felt as I remember, we should put some parameters around it; the districts should at least be of adequate size, to support that kind of office in the long term . . . the district should have some sort of commitment to support the office in the long term.

The MDE used an honest and successful attempt at co-optation to legitimize their plans, to retain some funds, to reduce chances of opposition and to advance their own rational planning (Accountability) model. This was an example of co-optation in the classical sense defined by Selznick. MDE was assured that the constituents of these representatives would not object to the MDE plan. But once strong outside influences are invited into the decision making process, some control is lost. MDE staff could not ignore the advice they had requested. Co-optation does cost and the cost is in freedom of decision.

It was suggested in the third chapter of this dissertation that federal funds generally and Title V particularly helped state agencies recruit and retain more talented people. One Associate Superintendent at MDE agreed.

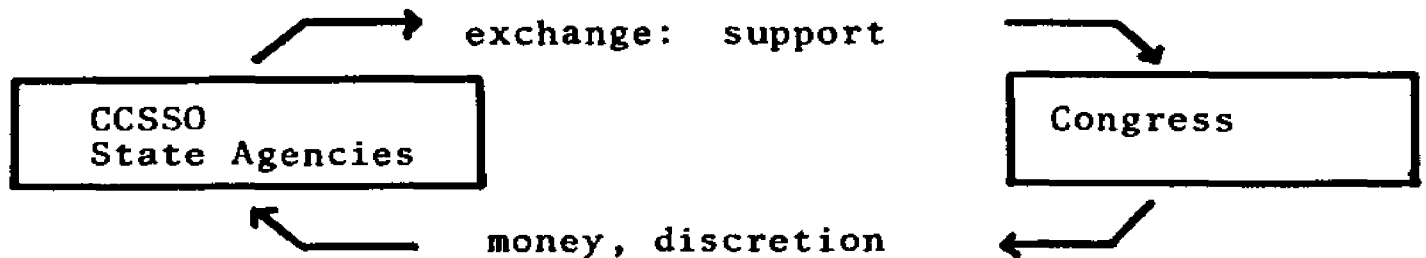
. . . I think that a lot of good came out of that; it gave a guy like Polley (former State Superintendent of Education), for instance, a relative blank check to go out and recruit and pull in kinds of people that he never would have been able to pull in under other circumstances.

To increase the variety and level of expertise of the staff of an organization is to increase its capacity to respond to uncertainty in a complex environment. Title V has done this for MDE. While the acquisition of talented people does not assure they will do anything productive, it is certainly the first step! This aspect of Title V must be considered a legitimate (according to the intent) case of simple strengthening and increasing the options of the agency.

Interpretation

There is more to Title V than "more of the same."

It would seem, in retrospect at least, that the strengthening of the state agencies would be a good policy for the federal Congress. Stronger state education agencies could be expected to act more aggressively in pursuit of the goals which accompanied the federal dollars. Good reporting is also politically valuable to elected officials. In addition to these, it was suggested by Murphy¹ that the Council of Chief State School Officers was rewarded by Title V for lobbying in support of ESEA.

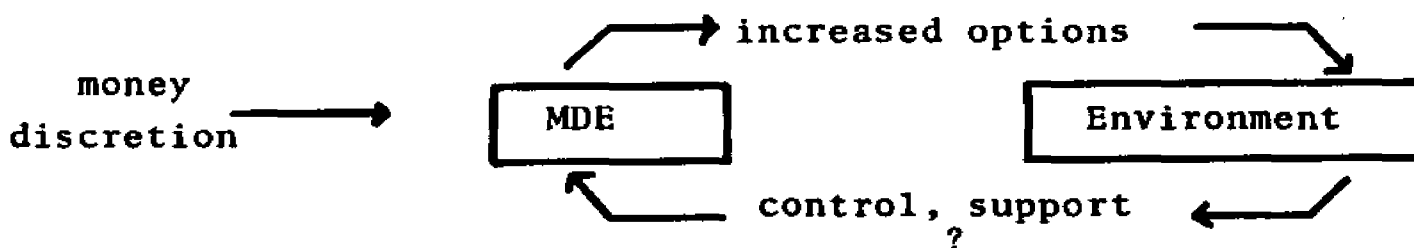


But how was the money used in the states? According to Murphy, money was used reactively, and for the same short-range behaviors as were evident before ESEA. Since the present Michigan agency was created just prior to ESEA, it may not have accumulated such a store of precedent to follow. In fact, the present study of MDE shows that, with regard to Michigan, Murphy was both right and wrong. Title V money has been used here in four different ways.

¹Ibid.

First, there are some uses of Title V that, in the absence of some new justification, have to be categorized as "more of the same." In this category are "processing of 507 applications (for employment)," "holding 45 grievance hearings," "processing approximately 4,000 personnel insurance claims," and the processing of "16,000 provisional teacher certificates," and so on. While the categorization is subjective, these do match the type of activity referred to by Murphy and observed by him in other states. These activities do not contribute to planning and proactive behaviors. Congress did not allocate a million dollars a year to MDE to certify teachers.

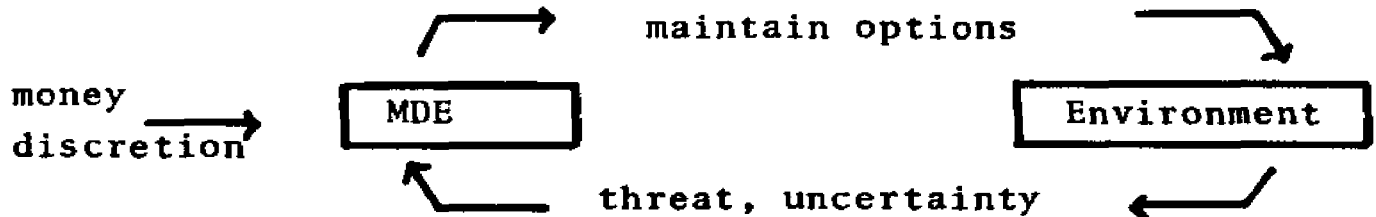
The second type of expense is subtly different. The increased computer capacity and fiscal management capacity are not totally new or proactive activities. But they do increase the capacity of the agency; they increase its options. While these activities are old directions, they represent very new levels of ability and service, at least to the federal government in terms of reporting. Local districts received limited benefit. The overall ability of MDE to employ higher caliber staff is another example of the increased options afforded by Title V money. While not qualitatively different, the agency is stronger.



The above diagram illustrates this effect of Title V money. Since much of the money has brought undifferentiated capacity (like "organization slack"¹), it is not possible to describe all resources that may be affected by this capacity now or in the future. It is reasonable to expect that this strengthening will be useful to an agency operating in a complex environment, which MDE is doing.

The third use of Title V money is the one that the Murphy studies have not made explicit. What is the use of the "plugging holes" function? Title V protects the State Board from the whims of the state government. It allowed MDE to employ staff on short notice to support the professional development center concept. It allowed quick response to the Governor's demand for the "Accountability study." It enabled the MDE to respond to the powerful Spanish-American lobby. All of these are, as Murphy accused, short term and reactive behaviors, on the surface. But the fact is that the increased options created by Title V have prevented serious threats to MDE functioning. The State Board can be proactive because it has the ability to react to a threat by the Legislature. The PD Center can be pursued on the spur of the moment without draining money from some other critical task. The study was completed without short-changing some other objective. And the threat of a conflict with la Raza was avoided.

¹See Cyert and March, A Behavioral Theory of the Firm.



Without constant input from Title V, some MDE functions would succumb to the continued uncertainty of that very complex environment.

Title V is in this instance a slush fund, a contingency fund. It allows MDE to maintain its options, insulated from environmental uncertainty. Title V is often applied to reactive needs to assure that other more complex proactive processes are not threatened by diminished resources. This use of Title V seems reactive on the surface, but it has been shown that there are secondary benefits which are less evident. This illustrates a benefit of studying a total institution as is the case here. Murphy criticized Title V expenditures as being reactive. He studied only Title V in a variety of state agencies. If he had observed Title V in context in an agency, he might have found that they--like MDE--apply Title V reactively in one place to protect other aspects of the agency.

Fourth, there are cases in which MDE used Title V money in proactive manner and for purposes matching closely the intent of the legislation. These include planning and general leadership, as shown by MDE in their constant advocacy of their Accountability Model.

The MDE planning office specifically and the process of internal planning generally have received Title V money in recent years. The funding of six districts to develop planning capacity belongs in this category also. The use of Title V money to create performance objectives, for state and federal "liaison," and for public relations publications is similar in that these are proactive uses of money. In each case, the goals of MDE are advanced in a premeditated way. Thus, at least in the case of Michigan, it is possible for a state education agency to use significant amounts of ESEA Title V money in a proactive manner.

Thus it seems that the assertions made by Murphy are true but are not sufficient to describe events in Michigan. There is a tendency here to follow a "more of the same" orientation, but that is not the only use of Title V here. Further, it has been shown that such expenditures may truly strengthen the agency by increasing its complexity, its options, as in the case of the increased computer capacity.

While it was shown here that Title V was indeed used reactively, it was argued that such expenditures were defensive, that they served to protect the agency from real threat. It was also shown that in the case of MDE, some proactive uses of Title V were made. These two assertions refute the Murphy conclusion that Title V dollars were spent only reactively and that this did not serve the intent of

Title V. So at least in Michigan, the Murphy observations are true but not sufficient.

Summary

Title V has been used by MDE in several ways. First, some was absorbed by pre-existing activities which appear to be totally state responsibilities. Second, Title V increased the options of MDE, increasing its capacity to reduce uncertainty. Third, defensive use of Title V money enabled MDE to maintain options in the face of threats to its resources. Fourth, some Title V money has been used for proactive behaviors such as planning and advocacy. All except the first have helped MDE to reduce uncertainty about its environment.

Other Cases

Introduction

It has been the intent of this study to determine how MDE acts to reduce uncertainty in its environment. It has been concerned with showing how MDE uses a range of strategies to acquire resources from elements of its environment. Most of the environmental elements are other organizations with which MDE interacts. Seven case studies were conducted to accomplish this task. They have been presented here; four deal with state-level issues and three with federal programs.

There are, however, other MDE behaviors which were observed in the nine months of research that are not adequately illustrated by the seven cases. This section attempts to rectify that omission by dealing with six special recurring strategies. The first is the end run which has already been introduced. The second is co-optation through hiring of critics. The third is use of advisory organizations. The fourth is communication involving shared memberships. The fifth involves inter-agency meetings and the sixth is concerned with extra-agency interactions.

The End Run

"End run" is a football term. It refers to a play in which any back runs literally around the end of his and the opposition's lines to the goal. The term has been adopted by politicians to describe a case in which any person or group by-passes the opposition and runs directly to the source, usually the Legislature or Congress. The behavior is typically used when formal channels are either very slow or obviously in opposition. Such was the case in several instances in the present study.

The Special Education service area is one example. As described earlier, the Special Education staff of MDE was accused of entering a coalition with the parent lobbies in special education. The parent lobbying groups, especially Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens (MARC) made use of this support. The Legislature was so intimidated by the

threat of a MARC-run petition that the Mandatory Special Education Act (198) was passed. Also, MARC initiated a suit to force MDE and others to serve children in state-run institutions. In both cases, the MDE Special Education staff were believed to have encouraged and assisted MARC. This allowed the Special Education staff to by-pass the internal goal-setting procedures of MDE and get their own goals mandated. This shows how a subsystem can in fact set an organizational goal via a boundary-spanning coalition. It is also a clear instance of response to an external constituency, in this case the clients--both retarded and parents, and other professionals in the schools.

Wayne State University (WSU) was in need of funds, but was uncertain of the outcome of the negotiations regarding the Detroit area professional development center. Consequently they went directly to the Legislature in search of a million dollars, hoping to avoid control by either MDE or client groups. The end run was around the other members involved with MDE in planning that center. Wayne State failed, in part, but the million dollars will come and WSU will surely receive most it, even if they lost much of the control. (This end run was external to MDE, but still affected MDE operations.)

A Latino member of the MDE staff has been described as a common user of the political clout of la Raza. According to several other MDE staff, he asked la Raza to intercede

on his behalf regarding a promotion. Apparently MDE was likely to comply, although that is less certain. When MDE staff and state government representatives met with la Raza, however, that group was interested only in establishing the Latino Education liaison position described earlier. The first MDE staff member was "jilted" and no one who was interviewed knew why. This is another case of a subsystem dealing directly with an external constituency, even though success was limited in this case.

The Food Service section of MDE was the initiation of another apparent end run. A bill was introduced in the Legislature in April to provide \$20 million to schools for help with lunch programs. The chances of getting the money to schools and having it spent intelligently before the end of the school year were small. The bill was well backed by a lobby in Dearborn interested in school food service. An MDE associate was concerned that internal MDE staff were supporting the bill. The associate told his suspect a lie about the bill and "within one hour! Within one hour two legislators had calls down here on that very point--from this guy in Dearborn!" The bill did not pass. But even so, the alliance is clear. An MDE subsystem is responsive to a constituency and entered into a coalition to by-pass the MDE power structure and influence the Legislature directly.

The MDE Office of School and Community Affairs was accused of initiating a complaint regarding a job description

which had inadvertently shown preference for women over minorities. The School and Community Affairs Office functions as the desegregation office, complaint department and internal advocate for minority interests. It is agreed in the agency that their loyalty to NAACP is often greater than to MDE. Yet the Superintendent was not concerned and he expressed a guarded approval of the operation "because for Chicanos and Latinos, for blacks, and the rest of the people that have all kinds of problems, that group tends to kind of mollify those issues before they hit me pell mell. . . they perform a very valuable service." The office serves as a buffer and as a communication link for very powerful interests. This MDE subsystem is also responsive to its own constituents, sometimes at the expense of the ability of the MDE to exert control over it.

The Wayne State University end run occurred beyond MDE and was a potential (though short-lived) threat. The la Raza group apparently deserted one previous confidant, but now interacts with the Latino Education specialist. In the other cases, the MDE subsystems who initiated the end runs provided MDE with a communication link to their constituents as a continuous side-effect of their actions. This occurred because in most of the above cases, the end run involved a boundary-spanning coalition. In each case there were at least two members, one of which was a subsystem of MDE. The others included the special education

parent lobby, la Raza, the food service professional lobby and the black community.¹ The communications which accompany these end runs allow MDE to constantly measure and predict the actions of some members of its environment, thus reducing uncertainty.

The MDE is affected by many elements in its environment. The constant end runs are a way in which particular MDE subunits maintain communication and coalitions with members of that environment. In order to reduce uncertainty about these environmental groups, parts of MDE share both information and common tasks. Thus there are strategies to reduce uncertainty operating at several levels.

Co-opting by Hiring

Co-optation was shown earlier to be a major proactive strategy for reducing uncertainty. MDE uses a special type regularly. In several instances the MDE has hired some of its strongest critics. This cannot be regarded as a total annexation of the criticism. First, the person hired still maintains ties with the organization which spawned him or her. Second, the organization the person hired represents continues. What MDE does gain is a permanent sort of co-optation and an institutionalized communications link with an organization which is a source of uncertainty.

¹Since the Wayne State strategy did not involve a boundary-spanning coalition, it is not reiterated here.

Again, Special Education provides the first example. The various special education lobbies were criticizing the Department of Education long before Act 198 was passed. One leader emerged.

There was only one man they all trusted and that was Marv Beekman. The Department tried to hire Marv and he kept saying 'not unless you meet this condition' and they kept meeting whatever conditions he set. He'd be sitting at home and would find John Porter showing up at the door with a new offer. Finally he couldn't do anything else but come and he came in 1970.

The recruitment procedure may be metaphorical, but the hiring is fact. Beekman served as director of Special Education Services at MDE until his recent retirement. While with the Department he was known as an advocate of his client groups and was a communication link with them. As a member of MDE he influenced the actions of that agency. That is the cost of co-optation.

The assistant to the Superintendent for School and Community Affairs is a highly political black. He is a former secondary principal from Detroit. He is the MDE communication link with the Detroit school administrators, especially the black administrators. He also interacts with black citizen groups, especially but not exclusively in Detroit. The previous occupant of that position was also a black, though he has a less strong urban background. I had occasion to ask John Dobbs, the present occupant, to help me avoid the formal Detroit schools hierarchy and put me in informal touch with three Detroit educators. In half

an hour my appointments were set up, after a brief series of chatty, first-name phone calls. Dobbs is supposed to know Detroit and he does. He also advocates the needs of that constituency. So while his hiring serves to enhance communication with that constituency, it also introduces a new element to the decision making processes of MDE.

The Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) is a long-standing critic of MDE, especially of the Accountability Model and the unilateral way its implementation was begun. When the post of Deputy Superintendent became vacant, MDE hired a former MASA president to fill it. Thus another lobby had an insider to relate to. But MDE also had another new voice to contend with, another element in the decision making process.

The story of la Raza has already been told. One of their members filled the position of Latino Education specialist. The position was created in response to the lobbying of la Raza, the organization which MDE recognizes as the "official" voice of the Spanish-American power groups. According to one MDE staff, the Latino power structure is typically disunited. "Every city is a mafia unto itself and every mafia has its don." The opportunity to maintain contact with the one Latino organization that seems to exert broad influence in the state was accepted. Another new communication link was created, but another voice came along too.

Early in the discussions concerning the professional development centers (PDC) tempers were very short. MDE tactfully retreated from a leadership role and let the 19 interested parties decide how to proceed. When the smaller Detroit Design Team was created as a subunit, MDE accomplished a truly Bismarkian political coup, serving two goals at once.

First, MDE subsidized a staff position to assure their own communications (and good image!) with the group. Second, the person they chose was a faculty member at Michigan State University, whose support would be critical to long range success. The influence MDE would have to allow the newcomer to exert was judged to be an acceptable cost for an opportunity to strengthen the coalition.

In all of these cases, MDE has hired persons whose loyalty would always be divided. The pay-off for this risk is ongoing communication and consequent reduced uncertainty. There was no case during the time of this research that persons in these positions created any serious disruptions for MDE by their actions. Perhaps it is possible, after all, to serve two masters.

In each case the new member served as a communication link between the two agencies to whom loyalty was owed. Both gained information but both lost some independence in decision making as a result of the commitment. Co-optation is a strong, but costly strategy for reducing uncertainty.

Councils and Commissions and Boards and Co-optation

Some of the communication links discussed in this section occurred as a result of co-optive hiring. They are thus fairly recent and were established in response to threat. They are reactive, even though co-optation in the long term is a potentially proactive strategy for reducing uncertainty.

The end runs were mostly situational, in response to a specific need. The communication links that facilitated the end runs had been in existence earlier. Communication in general is an ongoing problem, not something that can always be dealt with reactively. This section investigates one means by which MDE stays in continuous touch with several sources of potential environmental uncertainty.

MDE interacts with a large number of groups. There are advisory groups which are set up by MDE. There are semi-autonomous boards who report to MDE or to the Legislature. Some are ad hoc, some are legislated, some are constitutional. The State Board of Education refers items to these groups as a Legislature uses its own committee system. At one Executive Council meeting, MDE staff discussed the fact that the system of councils allowed them "to sidestep a very controversial issue," to let it cool. On the other hand, the Superintendent noted, "if we want to do something, it's gonna take a helluva lot longer for us to do something, so it cuts both ways."

Another MDE staff noted that the major groups are composed primarily of professionals, of representatives of the major interest groups.

We have what we call the administrative procedures, I don't know where the name came from, but . . . we refer a lot of items out to these groups until we take final action. We developed all these advisory committees in which the bulk of the advisory committees are really the education (lobbying) groups, you know, each one of them has eight to ten to twelve members. The citizens are minor segments of that. I think they have their input on things like that too.

While it is not possible to describe all of these interactions, the point is easily made. What follows is a list of organizations represented at one meeting of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education. This is a major, active advisory group. Note that other, more specialized advisory groups are also represented here.

- Governor's Office (one person)
- Legislature (Two House, Two Senate)
- Michigan Association of School Boards (one)
- Michigan Association of School Administrators (one)
- Michigan Education Association (one)
- Michigan Federation of Teachers (one)
- Michigan Association of Elementary School Principals (one)
- Michigan Association of Intermediate Superintendents (one)
- Michigan Teacher Training Institutions (one)
- Michigan Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (one)
- Vocational Education Advisory Council (one)
- Special Education Advisory Council (one)
- Compensatory Education Services Advisory Council (one)
- General Education Services Advisory Council (one)
- Research Evaluation and Assessment Services Advisory Council (one)
- School Management Services Advisory Council (one)
- Teacher Preparation . . . Council (one)
- Citizens-at-large (six)

Whatever is on the agenda, this Council serves as a general communications device. In an environment which is uncertain, all communications, information, measurement and prediction are helpful. In reference to the meeting I attended, the Superintendent noted that if he had business with Senator Gilbert Bursley, it would get done there. He mentioned other meetings coming up where he would, by chance, be able to talk to the Governor and to the president of Michigan State University, all off the record and without the need to formalize an appointment.

In addition to the groups included in the above list, each of the major ESEA Titles has an advisory body. While their influence is ubiquitous, two quotes will illustrate the range of impact which is possible.

The federal government requires the chairman of every one of the advisory groups for federal projects to sign a statement that they have been involved . . . not necessarily obeyed, but involved. The State Board of Education does the same thing for state projects.
(Associate Superintendent)

Unintended consequences? The one positive thing I see is the effort that has gone into parent involvement which has resulted in a much greater awareness in the parents of these children, that there are things that they can do, that they can have an influence on the educational establishment; this has been a big plus and I think it has been a factor in the program's success. On the state level, parents are involved. Two were sent to D.C. last week to review some new language. I would guess involvement in Detroit would be in the hundreds, on advisory councils, every building has an advisory council . . . and they don't make many moves down there without checking with the parents, whereas five years ago, they wouldn't have listened to the parents. (Title I director)

It is interesting to note that Titles III and V have, as of July 1, 1975, been combined under a new Title, ESEA IV. While there are few substantive changes, Title V will now be subject to the scrutiny of an advisory council as Title III was before. This may have the effect of carrying out a suggestion Murphy¹ had, that Title V could benefit from a little scrutiny and even hostility. He felt public examination would prevent pure absorption of the money and would require more thoughtful, proactive expenditures. It is likely that the system of committees and councils has this effect generally on MDE. This network facilitates communication with and input from the MDE environment. Once the uncertainty has been reduced, MDE still must respond if it is to benefit from the information it has gained. Thus, while such networks provide information they also exert influence on the decisions the MDE can make.

The groups do not, in most cases, have legal authority over MDE actions. They do provide MDE with constant information about its environment. On any given issue, MDE could likely ignore the information and survive. But once MDE accepts and acts on the input these groups offer, it has engaged in co-optation. To share information is to share information. To share authority is to be co-opted. Thus the network of advisory groups serves as a means to tell MDE and others when co-optation (or coalition or

¹Murphy, Title V of ESEA.

whatever!) is necessary. The groups and ensuing meetings and referrals serve to inform prior to adopting a stronger strategy. After a while it is not enough to only "know" that the MEA opposes your plan, eventually you have to act. But the fact that MEA comes to the meetings gives both organizations lots of notice as to what the possible actions and outcomes are.

Shared Memberships

The groups discussed in the preceding section exist because of MDE, for the most part. Their purpose is to advise and they are essentially satellites of MDE, communication devices for the primary--but not exclusive--benefit of MDE. There are other groups to which MDE devotes attention that are more equal, in which MDE is one of many equal members. Two groups of this type will be examined here.

One such group is the Education Commission of the States. Most of the 50 states have a membership in this organization. According to the Michigan enabling legislation, "It is the purpose of this compact to establish and maintain close cooperating and understanding among executive, legislative, professional educational and lay leadership on a nation-wide basis at the state and local levels."¹ Michigan appoints a delegation which includes the Governor

¹Public Act 359, State of Michigan, Approved by the Governor, January 9, 1973.

(or representative), two legislators and four at-large members. One of the four at-large members must be the head of the state education agency. In Michigan the others include a representative from higher education, one from the Michigan Education Association and one from the Michigan Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students. The MDE federal lobbyist also meets with the group and reports on pending legislation.

The Council of Chief State School Officers has been mentioned earlier. The group has a Washington-based office and is known as a powerful lobbying force on behalf of the state education agencies. The Council attempts to keep all members informed of pending legislation to the point that a teletype service is used by some of the states. The Chiefs are thus "never more than 15 seconds away from Washington."

Both of these organizations are potentially coalitions. On a day-to-day and meeting to meeting basis they may generate little more than memoranda and resolutions. But when the need arises support for an issue can be mobilized. And in the meantime, all members have up-to-date information. The information-sharing aspect itself is a useful means of reducing uncertainty.¹ It serves as a base,

¹The meeting of the Education Commission of the States provided an excellent and humorous example of the dual function of these meetings. Superintendent Porter arrived early and immediately entered a private (and intense)

as a prerequisite, to deciding whether more powerful strategies for coping with the uncertainty should be employed. These shared memberships provide that prerequisite information and constitute potential coalitions in and of themselves.

Inter-Agency Meetings

MDE does not share memberships with all elements in its environment. Nor can it count on serendipity to arrange communications. Thus there are many cases in which MDE participates in meetings or projects with others. The interactions discussed here were initiated by MDE. Some are ad hoc, some more formal; some recurring and some unique. The common theme is that MDE plus one or more other agencies interact.

The first is a recurring meeting of educational leaders.

We spend a lot of time with the local people . . . for example, every three months John Porter has a luncheon which is called an educational leadership luncheon . . . to that one we invite the president and executive secretary of every major educational group in this state. The State Board comes to it. It's an open luncheon, he opens it up and says, "now what are your views?" and they go around and each one gives his pet gripe or caution or reaction to something. It's a good meeting.

One meeting of this was observed. In that case, the group solidified around one issue, and the passive communication

conversation with the MEA representative. They pursued their negotiations with such fervor that both were late for lunch more than half an hour later.

network galvanized into a coalition of ominous power. They were successful in the legislative goal which brought them together at that time.

The State Board has committed itself to formal meetings with a variety of powerful groups during 1975. With one exception (the Council), the meetings are with independent organizations from the environment of MDE. For the first half of 1975, the following were scheduled.

- The Council on Elementary and Secondary Education
- Michigan Association of School Boards
- Michigan Association of School Administrators
- Michigan Education Association
- Michigan Federation of Teachers
- Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
- Michigan Association of Elementary School Principals

The mutual value of such meetings is attested to by the fact that all invited organizations did respond. This is in addition to an unknown number of breakfast meetings between Superintendent Porter and the leaders of these other organizations, and the other contacts already described. The above suggests that the communication function is so important that in addition to all of the other interactions, MDE felt the need to formalize and institutionalize the State Boards contact.

Another example of communication with an external group--in this case a coalition--is provided by the Committee of 23.

The Committee of 23 is an organization of superintendents of Intermediate School Districts. They meet on a regular basis with an Associate Superintendent from MDE to discuss matters of mutual concern. The Associate is expected to carry their concerns to MDE and according to observations in this study, he did so accurately and faithfully. On the other hand, at the meeting of the Committee of 23, he explained and usually supported the positions of MDE.

The Michigan Council of Teachers of Math have created a book of objectives, test data and prescriptions. The MDE encouraged this effort because it supported their Accountability Model. This is the same group that shared the task of writing the controversial performance objectives several years earlier.

In another attempt to communicate, six "workshops" on accountability were held by MDE this year. These meetings were to respond to one of the recommendations of the Accountability Study to assure that professionals "understood the MDE model." Superintendent Porter was quoted as being concerned that "the message gets out." In addition to the basic advocacy function, some co-optation was accomplished, in that known critics of the Accountability Model were asked to comment after the presentation. The fact that half of the MDE staff left before that part of the program in the Grand Rapids workshop diminished the agency's credibility, however.

On two occasions in the Executive Council, references were made to planned cocktail parties for the Congressmen in one case, aides in another. For one of these, Dr. Porter said, "I want to give them some feelings about what we are doing" and asked staff to prepare "a checklist of federal concerns that we have for this year." Whether this is called communicating, advocating or lobbying, it is a valuable function. Dr. Porter discussed this role, saying that he kept in regular touch with a small but strategically placed number of federal representatives and senators. He made it clear that his role was strictly to provide information. "I don't go with my hand out. I leave that to our lobbyist."

During Michigan Week at the U.S. Office of Education, one presentation concerned the MDE assessment program, a crucial and unpopular part of their Accountability Model. MDE asked two vociferous critics--an urban superintendent and the executive-secretary of the Michigan Education Association--to accompany them and comment on the assessment program. The criticism was strong but civilized and USOE staff praised MDE for their open behavior.

In all of the above examples, MDE interacted with some other group or agency. The variety of the interactions is part of the message--the environment of MDE is diverse and, for the most part, composed of other organizations. It is necessary that MDE maintain contact with all of these,

because they are all sources of uncertainty. This section has described some examples of how MDE did this during the time of this study.

Extra-Agency Interactions

Not all of the educational groups (or meetings) in Michigan seek to have MDE as a member. Some are selective, asking for MDE input only on demand. Three such coalitions will now be examined.

The first of the three external coalitions is the Congress, whose full name is the Michigan Congress of School Administrator Associations. Eight organizations are represented:

- Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education
- Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators
- Michigan Association of Professors of Educational Administration
- Michigan Association for Public Adult and Community Education
- Michigan Association of School Administrators
- Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals
- Michigan Community School Education Association
- Michigan Council of Vocational Administrators

The Congress has adopted a very comprehensive legislative program which is predictably supportive of higher funding levels for education and of other programs favoring administration.

The Congress is not a priori either for or against MDE, it seeks only the advancement of legislation favored by its members. Only one MDE-Congress interaction was noted in the study and that was briefly reported to have been very hostile on the part of the Congress. That report was from the executive-level MDE staff member who represented MDE at a meeting at the request of the Congress.

The Middle Cities Education Association (MCEA) has appeared at various times in this study. The executive director of MCEA is also half-time appointed as assistant to the Dean of Education at Michigan State University. This tie was sought by the MCEA to help add research and in-service capability to their already powerful lobbying ability. MCEA operates several administrative-level task forces which invite MDE participation selectively. Several points are worth noting.

First, the executive-director of MCEA sits on two MDE Councils, the legislative and compensatory education groups.

Second, the MCEA has a contract with the MDE to design a management information system. The chances that such a system will be disadvantageous to the urban districts are small.

Third, the two recently co-sponsored an Education Fair and a Career Opportunities Program conference, the latter in concert with Detroit schools.

Fourth, the MCEA is winding up a two-year Title III grant from MDE to develop curricula and criterion-referenced tests for elementary mathematics and reading.

Fifth, MCEA has begun a development project in vocational education planning. The top MDE vocational education staff has been asked to serve as a member of the project's advisory board.

Sixth, as this is written, the 13 MCEA superintendents plan to meet with Superintendent Porter for half a day next week to discuss "matters of mutual concern."

While the Middle Cities is a powerful coalition in its own right, a policy of peaceful co-optation seems to be followed by them. Certainly they are in touch with MDE often enough that neither one faces much uncertainty about the others intentions. Each organization uses these several opportunities to communicate and to give and seek information.

The most diverse of the external coalitions is surely the Education Forum. Included in the nine members groups are:

- American Association of University Women
- League of Women Voters of Michigan
- Michigan Association of School Boards
- Michigan Association of Elementary School Principals
- Michigan Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Michigan Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students
- Michigan Congress of School Administrator Associations
- Michigan Education Association
- Michigan Federation of Teachers

The organization exists as a communication channel, as a way to keep informed on a wide variety of issues. Items discussed at the one meeting attended included the following: juvenile code revision, an information system concerned with youth offenders, career education, the teacher negotiation bill, a bill dealing with substitute teachers, "teacher centers" and a general legislative briefing.

Their most ambitious undertaking to date was the production of a comprehensive position paper concerning educational accountability. The paper was critical of MDE efforts to date and advocated more local involvement in accountability versus the state model.

The Forum has intentionally been saved for last, because it is the only agency observed which consciously examined its function as a communication channel. Forum members verbalized this purpose in my presence. There was a concern with having "advance, rather than reactive input." A member was concerned with "the nature of input at a point where its more likely to make a difference." More likely than what?

The context of that comment is illustrative. The Forum members had heard about a proposal for the Michigan Youth Services Information System (MYSIS) too late. That is, the agency proposing the system was committed to it by the time Forum members learned of it. Consequently the Forum could only oppose, they had missed the time at which compromise would have been possible.

Thus we were placed in a position of "challenging" somebody else's "pet," rather than being in a position to contribute--in initial stages--to the clarification of a problem and the development of possible solutions.¹

There was a wish to avoid these conflicts in the future, to know about events early enough to have constructive input. In other words, there was a desire to reduce uncertainty about the environment.

The memo quoted above alerted the Forum membership to the desirability of systematic ongoing communication links such as the Forum itself represents. Some questions from the memo will serve to illustrate the range of the concern and the extent to which the issues have been defined.

ARE THESE THE QUESTIONS?

1. In what ways are inter-agency channels now open and being used? (and in what ways?)
2. In what ways are professional associations now in systematic contact?

4. To what extent are representatives of youth-serving groups interacting together with legislators/councilmen/supervisors in the development of laws/decisions/actions pertaining to youth?
5. Are we providing sufficient input to representatives of education in any advisory groups related to youth-serving agencies?

The members of the Forum do regularly communicate with MDE. Department of Education staff are regularly invited to present MDE programs to Forum meetings. Thus,

¹Memo to Forum members, from the MASCO representative, Lansing, Michigan, March 19, 1975.

while the Forum does not include MDE in its membership, MDE can benefit from the existence of the Forum's communication channels too. The existence of the Forum validates the assertion that the problem of reducing uncertainty is not one that is of interest only to MDE. The existence of the Forum and the other external coalitions, also validates the assertion that organizations in a complex environment will use ongoing communications strategies--be they councils, boards, clients, conferences, workshops, associations, coalitions--to reduce uncertainty about their environments.

Interpretation

While this section has intentionally been a pot pourri of events, it is nevertheless possible to make cohesive summary statements.

First, when the end run strategy is used by a subunit of MDE, it usually constitutes a boundary-spanning coalition. These enable MDE to maintain contact with the external coalition members. This reduces uncertainty about the behavior of the external member that does not exact a price in control of internal goals.

Second, to co-opt an external group by hiring its representative is to intentionally create a boundary spanning coalition. This enhances communication and thus reduces uncertainty. On the other hand, it is less easy to control a member whose loyalties are divided.

Third, there are several advisory bodies whose sole purpose is to advise MDE. Most relevant members of the environment of MDE are represented. These bodies serve to tie MDE to those elements of its environment and to keep both sides informed prior to the need for stronger strategies.

Fourth, the two groups (observed) in which MDE shares membership serve as communication links also. They are also potential coalitions if issues arise--the very existence of these groups assures that some common interests exist.

Fifth, MDE interacts with many other organizations. In the section on "Inter-Agency" meetings, situations were described in which MDE initiated an interaction or was otherwise the focus of interaction. All organizational members of the environment of MDE take this role at one time or another: state government, federal government and interest groups representing professionals and public. Communication which reduces uncertainty is inevitably one product of these interactions.

Sixth, several coalitions of members of the MDE environment exist. These regularly communicate with MDE to reduce uncertainty also, but do so on their own terms and at their own request. One group verbalized the reduction of unanticipated conflict as a purpose of its existence.

The only general statement which is appropriate at this stage is that MDE is involved in many, many interactions in which communication to reduce uncertainty is one product. The implication of this behavior will be considered in the next chapter.

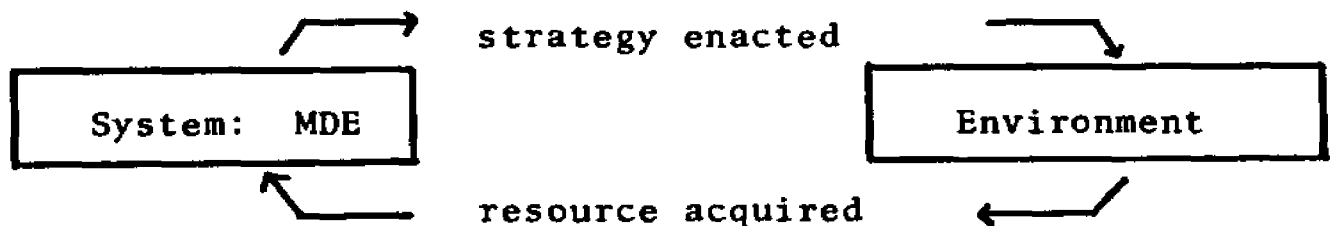
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain how the Michigan Department of Education attempts to reduce uncertainty in its environment. The descriptive aspect of that purpose has been accomplished in chapter five. A summary of those findings will follow, in the first section of this (sixth) chapter. The balance of this chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the implications of the findings. It is here that the "explain" part of the original purpose will come into play.

Summary

A four-part model was used throughout to describe attempts by MDE to reduce uncertainty in its environment. In order to distinguish it from a separate model which follows later in this chapter, that model will be referred to here as "the descriptive model." That descriptive model follows.



In each case examined here, MDE is the system of concern, the consistent part of the model. The other three parts are, (1) the strategy, (2) the environment, and (3) the resource. What follows immediately is a summary--in terms of this model--of the major attempts by MDE to reduce uncertainty as reported in this study. Next, these will be reanalysed according to the other three components of the descriptive model in order to identify patterns and preferences.

The Case in Review

In Higher Education, MDE avoided short-term dependence on the constitution in the courts in its attempt to seek legal authority over universities. Instead, MDE entered into an exchange with the Legislature, wherein MDE would provide (quantitative) information in return for minimal funding. It is important to recall that there was consensus between the subsystem and the government that the higher education function could profitably be totally removed from MDE.

In Special Education, the MDE subsystem was thought to have engaged in a boundary-spanning coalition with the parent lobbies, especially MARC, to seek legal authority from (1) the Legislature, and (2) the courts. This association with MARC and others served as an ongoing communication link, a means of reducing uncertainty. The state agencies affected by the institutional issue maintained a

similar ongoing communications link to help measure and predict each others behavior, thus reducing uncertainty.

In Chapter 3, MDE attempted to exchange information with the Legislature for authority. The urban lobby had more power and offered the Legislature votes in return for favorable policy. Thus MDE lost the conflict with the urban lobby and had to settle for a different exchange with the Legislature, one of quantitative information for minimal funding. But MDE also gained much expertise and thus increased its own options.

In the professional development centers issue, MDE joined interest groups and universities in a coalition to seek funds and authority from the Legislature. When Wayne State University (WSU) made an end run past the coalition members to the Legislature, conflict resulted. The rest of the coalition, including MDE, held and modified the WSU attempt. In the end, MDE was given some legal authority by the Legislature, but operational control of the center will be shared by the coalition members including WSU.

In Title I, MDE faces little uncertainty. So long as the USOE and Congress are given supportive (quantitative) evaluations, money will flow and MDE will retain some administrative dollars and some discretion regarding Title I-B. MDE in turn uses this to advocate its rational Accountability Model and to contract with some school districts to implement or develop that model. Michigan Education Week and the visit

of Chris Cross exemplify attempts at communication in search of new types of mutual support.

In Title III, the actual flow of money from the USOE (and Congress) is relatively certain, requiring only quantitative evaluations in exchange. The extra discretion which accompanies Title III money is used by MDE to increase its own options. For example, MDE contracts in that districts must implement the MDE Accountability Model in projects to obtain funds. MDE thus plays an advocacy role. Some of these--e.g., the 6/5 schools--become almost co-optive because the schools have some ability to interpret that rational model and potentially modify it.

Title V comes to MDE from Washington, from the USOE and Congress, to strengthen MDE and requires only continuous quantitative information in return. It does so not only by allowing MDE to increase its options generally, but also to maintain options in case of threat. Some Title V money was spent proactively on planning and some was contracted--like Title I-B and III--to enhance the advocacy role of MDE. In a case of contracting with Title V-C money, co-optation of four powerful interest groups was required.

Several other small cases were presented. Several examples of end-runs as boundary-spanning coalitions were presented. These were observed to depend on ongoing communication links with environmental elements. This

communication was facilitated by the MDE tendency to co-opt powerful interest groups by hiring one of their leading members. A cost in terms of control accompanies each strategy. Three other examples of recurring communications involving MDE were described. These included advisory bodies, shared memberships and interagency meetings. It was also observed that extra-agency coalitions exist and that these also serve as communication devices. These extra-agency coalitions communicate with MDE according to need. Any of these communication networks can be viewed as a potential coalition.

It is a characteristic of scientific research in all fields that data and theory do not exist independently, but impact upon each other. In this study, the data gathered have demonstrated that the descriptive model is inadequate. There are strategies which were observed that do not fit the model. Consequently, before the model can achieve its maximum potential as a conceptual tool it must be modified. What follows is an examination of the adequacy of the three parts of the model (MDE is the fourth) and a summary of MDE activity according to the revised model. The most abstract component, the list of strategies, will be examined first.

The Strategies

There were 13 strategies for reducing uncertainty which were proposed in chapter one. These fell into three

categories: passive, reactive and proactive. The immediate task is to evaluate whether the three types do in fact describe the range of strategies observed.

The three types were initially defined as follows. Passive strategies were those in which a system exerted no energy to reduce uncertainty, to acquire resources. Either due to ignorance or to conscious decision, the system ignores or absorbs any threat or stress. The second type listed in chapter one was reactive. In a reactive strategy, the system responds to a known problem or shortage by modifying itself. That system may change either the structure or its behavior. In the third type of strategy, the system acts proactively. That is, the system attempts to intervene, to exercise control over its environment. The system attempts to act upon its environment to make that environment more hospitable or supportive.

It was discovered in this research that a new category was needed to describe the range of strategies observed. The new type is preactive. Systems appear to engage in a body of activities which are not really reactive (as thought earlier) but in fact precede any of the others, in many cases: passive, reactive or proactive. For example, to gather information, to measure, to acquire data, to communicate; all are means of obtaining intelligence about the environment. Consequently they reduce uncertainty about the environment and equip a system to decide which

type of strategy to use next: passive, reactive or proactive. They are strategies which precede action, in many cases and thus are labelled preactive. It will be argued in the second half of this chapter that MDE uses preactive strategies not only to gather information about the environment, but also to filter that information according to input MDE can react to.

Two other strategies discussed before can be moved to this category. These are first, maintain options, and second, increase options. Both can be conceived of as ways an organization might prepare for future action. They reduce uncertainty because they increase (or hold constant) the number of situations with which a system can cope. In fact, the options available to a system help to define the type of environment within which it can survive.

No changes were made in the passive category. A system can ignore a change or threat or shortage--a source of uncertainty--or it can knowingly absorb the uncertainty. Such a strategy may be the result of a conscious choice and may therefore follow the use of a preactive strategy. For example, the Board of Control of a utility could be well-informed concerning opposition to a rate increase. Preactive strategies would produce such information. Then, the Board could consciously decide to ignore the wishes of its constituents and impose the increase. Without knowing the consequence, the decision was made that the utility

could absorb whatever uncertainty or threat the clients could bring to bear. Such action would, however, be risky even for a powerful organization.

The set of reactive strategies needed substantial modification. With the creation of the proactive category, several strategies which were previously considered reactive were moved to the new category. It was recognized that the end run is in fact a means of avoiding uncertainty, so that behavior would be categorized as a reactive strategy, in part.¹ The way that MDE uses co-optive hiring is a reactive strategy for two reasons. First, in all examples here the hiring was a response to pressure from some element of the environment. (e.g., la Raza, MASA). Second, the effect was to change the nature of MDE and that is the essence of the definition of a reactive strategy. Thus co-optation can be proactive or reactive, by situation. Other strategies could sometimes also be reactive--e.g., when exchange is forced on a system, it is a reactive exchange. In general, the adoption of a reactive strategy constitutes an admission of failure of the present mode of operation.

The proactive category was enlarged. It was decided that to advertise or to advocate was to attempt to change the environment, and therefore these should be considered

¹If an end run includes a coalition, that may be classified as proactive.

proactive means of reducing uncertainty. While planning in itself does not create an impact on the environment, it was felt that conceptually, planning would fit better here than in the preactive category.

The modified categories and the strategies they include are shown in Table 7. The lessons of this research require that the reader be cautioned that many more strategies surely exist. But the four types, preactive, passive, reactive, and proactive probably exhaust the conceptual range.

Also shown in the same figure are the choices of strategies made by MDE, by case study. Several conclusions are warranted. First, no passive strategies were observed. This may be a methodological problem, that is it may be that when such decisions are made (or not made!) there is no public utterance for the field researcher to observe. In most cases a system would adopt a passive strategy in response to a trivial threat--not the sort of thing to require a vote. Alternatively, it is rare that a complex organization would consciously choose to not act in the face of uncertainty. The risks are too large. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that trivial instances will be missed by the methodology and significant instances are likely to be rare. MDE simply cannot choose to give back federal money, ignore legislation or stamp its mail from the MEA "Return to Sender." A complex organization in a complex environment must act.

Some reactive strategies were observed. The end runs were most common and even these can be conceived of as resulting from proactive coalitions entered into by subsystems of MDE. The co-optive hirings of outside critics as a response to stress can also be conceived to be a reactive--not a proactive--response to uncertainty. The fact that a general influence of ESEA, especially Title I was to change the character of MDE personnel is recorded as a post facto response. The tendency to quantification is a different behavior for MDE since 1965 and is partly a result of the federal programs. This trend also can be categorized as a post facto response to all ESEA Titles and to Chapter 3 also. A more complete discussion of that trend will occur later in this chapter.

Numerically, proactive strategies dominated. The most common strategy was exchange. This included formal contracts, grants, non-formal agreements of support and similar exchanges. Coalitions, especially the boundary-spanning type associated with the end run, were also observed, as were some attempts at co-optation in the truly proactive sense (e.g., Title V-C). Federal funds were used differently in that only with federal money was MDE able to engage in specific advocacy and planning behaviors related to (and restricted to) the seven cases. The only cases of conflict observed were associated with two state programs, Chapter 3 and PD Centers.

The preactive category is the new one and has proved to be quite valuable. Two of the strategies, increase options and maintain options, are only associated with federal programs. This matches reality since only federal money carries enough discretion to allow an agency to enhance its capacity to an extent in excess of that needed for minimal maintenance.

All other preactive strategies observed are related to communicating: measuring, predicting, collecting information and similar endeavors. Most of these instances were observed in the "Other Cases" category. This occurs because when an issue has formed, has taken on an identity sufficient for a researcher to recognize it as a case, it is past the preactive stage. For the most part, the communication links which were observed exist to tell members what will happen next. Thus in Title I, the only preactive communication that was noted was with regard to the possible change in funding base. In Special Education, there was active communication associated with the threatened court suit. The communication networks are at work all of the time, but in mature cases they are less evident, becoming obvious only when a new source of uncertainty is identified.

The Environment

MDE has, in the cases presented earlier, dealt with a diversity of environmental elements. A review of these

interactions is available in Table 8. A discussion of these will serve to emphasize some points needed later in this chapter.

The case studies were intentionally chosen to reflect the range of major environmental influences. Consequently it should not be surprising to notice that according to Table 8, the cases reflect a wide range of major environmental influences. There are, however, some more helpful observations.

The 1963 constitution proved, in two cases, to be an unuseable source of legal authority. The Legislature was the most common source of resources, followed closely by the U.S. Office. This is an accurate reflection of the energy output of MDE even though federal funds dominate the agency. The Legislature is a less certain source than the federal programs, and so requires a disproportionately large amount of attention. There is one major reason for this competition for the attention of the State Legislature. Specifically, the interest group activity that directly impacts on MDE occurs at the state level.

In all four state-level cases, plus the "other cases" section, interest groups exerted influence. In no case did MDE manage to implement a major activity which disagreed with the prevailing interest group's position. It appeared, according to the cases studied here, that because of their political clout, the interest groups have a virtual veto

TABLE 8.--Elements of the Environment of MDE Which Were Accessed by MDE During the Study.

	Higher Ed	Special Ed	Chapter 3	PDC	Title I	Title III	Title V	Other Cases
1963 Constitution	X	X						
Legislature	X	X	X	X				X
Courts (State)	X							
Other State Agencies		X						
Interest Groups	X	X	X	X			X	X
School Districts					X	X	X	X
General Public		X						
Federal Government					X			X
USOE					X	X	X	
Courts (Federal)		X						

power over the activities of MDE. The implications of this and of the generally diverse and powerful environment of MDE will receive more attention later in this chapter.

The Resources

There were two types of resources which were typically sought and sometimes acquired by MDE in the cases studied. The first was money. In all seven cases MDE received some money. This is meaningless in itself until the extent of control over the money--the discretion--is known.

MDE was more successful in obtaining discretion with federal dollars and interest group opposition was less strong there.

The other resource sought in all cases and less often achieved was favorable policy. That concept includes legal authority, which is what MDE wanted from the Legislature in the four state level cases. Discretion over money can also be described as an outcome of favorable policy.

Some specific programs helped to build the MDE store of information and expertise. This occurred with Chapter 3 most obviously and that expertise was put to use by MDE in discussions with the USOE and the representative of the federal-level Republicans. MDE information was the commodity advanced by that agency regarding higher education. The Legislature "bought" only a little. To the extent that MDE has control over money it disburses, this is also an important resource and was regularly used in exchanges and contracts when the money was federal and was accompanied by some discretion.

In summary, MDE typically seeks favorable policy (especially legal authority) and money, in that order of intensity. The commodity MDE has to offer is often expertise or information. When that information is quantitative data supporting wise expenditure of money, then that information is in demand by both state and federal levels

of government. This fact has helped to make MDE very conscious of their ability to gather quantitative evaluative data. This tendency is discussed more fully in the next section of this chapter to which we will now turn.

Implications of the Research

It has been shown that MDE does reduce uncertainty about its environment. The methods by which this is accomplished have been subsumed under four general types of strategies: preactive, passive, reactive, and proactive. In the seven case studies, proactive strategies predominated. The observations of other cases showed that an ongoing network of preactive strategies was used to inform the agency about emerging issues.

In spite of the continuing application of a variety of strategies to reduce uncertainty, MDE does not appear to be an organization which dominates its environment. The MDE Accountability Model is omnipresent, but has not, according to the cases studied here, been implemented widely. The MDE has used a variety of strategies to encourage use of the model and has invested resources in that effort. Still, rational planning has definitely not taken Michigan by storm. If MDE can successfully reduce uncertainty, and concurrently advocates use of a rational planning model, one can reasonably ask why the influence and power of the agency are not larger than they have been shown to be here.

What are the factors which limit the influence, the power, and the rationality of MDE?

MDE allocates resources to a diverse clientele. The diversity of clientele is mirrored by the physical spread of the agency among several buildings. It is not the physical nature of the agency which weakens it, however, it is the concomitantly diffuse control of resources throughout different levels of MDE. There is not an effective means to set priorities and allocate resources centrally--and it may be that this condition cannot be changed.

A second limitation of MDE is the relative political power of the elements in its environment. MDE is not viewed as a legitimate policy maker by members of its environment and is in fact prohibited from activity in that regard. At the same time that the real influence of MDE is thus challenged, the tendency toward quantification and rationality is encouraged. The federal government especially rewards MDE for quantification. The State Legislature is a less regular advocate, but at times encourages MDE in its role as a rational planner and quantifier.

The immediate result of these influences is the emphasis by MDE on rationality as a method of operation, as a system goal. On the one hand, MDE is rewarded for such behavior. It is prohibited from more substantive involvement in policy making on the other, by the diversity and the political power of the elements in its environment.

Thus MDE is required to supply resources to a diversity of environmental elements without really disturbing the powerful members there. The MDE emphasis on rationality provides a means of walking this tightrope.

The MDE has generated an additional means of reinforcing its own behavior. The network of preactive strategies is in fact a filter which is used to redefine inputs from the environment in rational terms. This way MDE creates its own enacted, rational environment where the closed-system logic of the Accountability Model is operative. Having created this enacted rational environment, MDE behaves as if it were real--by quantifying, planning, and acting according to its own rational model. This behavior has two outcomes. First, as shown above, it is rewarded in some cases. Second, MDE is allowed by powerful environmental elements to impose rationality within limits--until such behaviors constitute attempts at influencing educational policy. MDE is viewed by members of its environment as a technical agency, and technical subsystems are not typically policy makers. That is the role of the political system. Thus in order to influence education--rather than simply quantify it--MDE must succeed in the political arena. But since MDE has almost zero control over the basic political commodity--votes--such efforts are likely to have limited success.

This introduces the final, exploratory phase of this study. It seeks to deal with the causes of MDE behavior and to eventually introduce a series of propositions which could have more general applicability for studies of similar organizations. In pursuit of that goal attention will now be given to a discussion of MDE behaviors as outlined above.

Environmental Diversity

The legitimate clientele of MDE are determined by the 1963 constitution and later by the Legislature, for the most part. The agency has been described here as a conglomerate. It must serve general education, compensatory education, special education, vocational education, higher education, post-secondary students, teachers, community colleges, rehabilitation cases, state employees, governors, bureaucrats and politicians. Responding to such diversity has the effect of destroying the integration, the cohesion of the agency.

For example, MDE has in the recent past hired representatives of school administrators, special education parents, Black administrators and parents, and the Latino community. Yet these are potentially competitive constituencies which are elements of a coalition involved with a diverse set of interest groups. The strategy was successful, but the amount of control which remains with MDE (or with any other single member) is small. Titles I-B, III

and V-C were all used to contract with school districts for projects in support of the MDE Accountability model. In each case some legitimation would result, but also in each case the imprint of the contracting district would have subtly altered the model. Title I has a huge impact on MDE in that it brought in a lot of money--but it also changed the character of the agency and enlarged its focus on urban and minority issues. In each case the elements in the environment of MDE altered the nature of the agency and not all in one direction. The diversity of elements to which MDE must respond makes it impossible for the agency to be cohesive, integrated.

In one instance MDE sought to control funds in Chapter 3, in another it tried to create and control professional development centers. But the diversity of members concerned with the latter assures that the outcome will serve the needs of the lowest common denominator. The power of the urban lobbies will inevitably force MDE to recognize that Chapter 3 is politically motivated general aid to urban schools. The fact that these conflict with other demands such as special education is important. The same dollars cannot serve both the mentally handicapped and the urban poor. The attention of MDE is (legitimately!) divided among several constituents, most of whom have an internal advocate. The agency is necessarily "torn" in its efforts to deal with such diverse constituents. Yet, on an issue-

by-issue basis MDE is successful in reducing uncertainty about these elements, often via proactive means.

This points out a contradiction in the research so far. It was suggested that organizations in complex environments will necessarily prefer proactive strategies. It has been shown that proactive strategies comprise a large portion of the activities of MDE. One would therefore expect that an organization with such investment in proactive behaviors would dominate its environment. Yet such is not the case with MDE, as the examples above illustrate. The reason for this is disarmingly simple, and is consistent with previous findings. Proactive strategies applied over a diverse group of strong environmental forces tend to cancel each other out.

MDE deals with a large group of environmental influences. It uses many proactive strategies to deal with these groups. Often, it is successful in reducing uncertainty which originates with these diverse environmental elements. But the elements are highly diverse and that causes the breakdown. There is nothing that MDE can offer or impose which could have meaning or purpose across such a diverse environment. The Accountability Model is general enough, but in being so general it loses the ability to have dramatic impact across such diversity.

The parents of the retarded children do not want a planning model, they want guaranteed funded service. La

Raza did not seek "Accountability," it sought an insider in MDE. The urban districts reject "Accountability" and lobby for Chapter 3 money. The interest groups and Wayne State did not do battle for Accountability in the professional development center--they wanted a million dollars and a share of the governance. There are two lessons here. First, many of the cases presented in this study show that the goals of the constituents MDE must serve are not able to be subsumed under the MDE's best effort at a general way of behaving, the MDE Accountability Model. Second, it is doubtful that any other general scheme could encompass this range of activity.

In sum, it has been argued that the environment of MDE is diverse and organizationally irrational. MDE attempts to reduce uncertainty regarding a wide range of environmental elements. The responses of MDE are as diverse as the demands which the environment creates. Attempts to respond to these diverse demands tend to be self-defeating.

Control of Resources

A three-part model describing the MDE (or any other organization) will be used. The first premise is that organizations have been shown to interact with their environments. It is not news that a system interacts with its environment. The question here is which parts of a system interact with the environment?

A model of system behavior exists which can be adapted to answer that question. It is taken from James D. Thompson's interpretation of the work of Talcott Parsons.¹ Parsons' original model suggested that organizations "exhibit three distinct levels of responsibility and control--technical, managerial and institutional."² Parsons and Thompson agree that there is a qualitative break between the three. The model will be referred to from here on as the Thompson-Parsons model.

Organizations are said to possess a technical core; a set of recurring rather predictable tasks such as assembling cars, ringing cash registers, or processing teaching certificates. There is typically very little control of the resources of the organization at this level. Closed-system assumptions can (ideally) be made about the technical core. According to Thompson, "the logical model for achieving complete technical rationality uses a closed system of logic--closed by the elimination of uncertainty."³

For the moment we will bypass the managerial level and discuss the institutional level of organizational existence. This is the level at which, in the Thompson-Parsons version--the organization is open to the environment.

¹Thomson, Organizations in Action, particularly chapters one through five, pp. 3-100.

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Ibid., p. 11.

Constant interchanges occur. These are the executive and board of directors of the organization, those who commit its resources and seek certainty on its behalf. Use of strategies requires a control of resources that usually exists only at this level.

According to Thompson, "a significant function of the managerial level is to mediate between the two extremes . . ." ¹ Since "managerial" has a business connotation and the need here is for a more general model, the term "administrative level" will be substituted. The characteristics do not change. The administrators in this model exist in the middle of the organization, "ironing out some irregularities stemming from external sources, but also pressing the technical core for modifications as conditions alter." ² In the ideal case, this level would have limited control of organizational resources.

At the three levels, different types of tasks dominate. In the technical core, rational, technical tasks should occur. At the administrative level, mediating tasks, the realm of the administrator, would be in the majority. At the institutional level the organization is open to its environment. Here the resources of the organization are sought, acquired and disbursed. This is the interface with the other organizations which compose the environment.

¹ Ibid., p. 12.

² Ibid., p. 13.

The assertion is this: MDE is not integrated on a system level, it is a collection of subsystems over which the institutional level exercises barely nominal control. This occurs because many subsystems must respond to uncertain environmental influences. These influences are diverse. The system--MDE--is unable to achieve integration of its subsystems because control of resources is exerted at the administrative level.

The end-run examples are useful here. On two occasions the Special Education subsystem was accused of entering coalitions with outsiders which resulted in commitments of MDE resources that were not made at the institutional level. The original confidant of la Raza was said to have often used that group to pressure MDE to formally comply with his own goals--at least those goals which la Raza supported. A member of the MDE food services staff was said to have formed a coalition with the professional association to exert influence of the Legislature to increase his budget--without using the institutional channels. The Office of School and Community Affairs is irregularly accused of similar alliances, alliances which inevitably commit resources of MDE without approval at the institutional level.

The MDE habit of hiring to co-opt an external critic supports this tendency toward diffusion of control of resources. The former director of Special Education was

hired to deal with the increasingly vociferous parent lobby. The effect was to reduce uncertainty about that environmental element and also to give up some control of resources to the administrative level--that is where the Director was placed. In addition to its ties with the black parents and professionals, the Office of School and Community Affairs is the administrative home of the new Latino Education specialist. His hiring, and the hiring of the Black who is in charge of the Office, was a response to a particular constituency. The result was to allow influence from the Black and Latino constituencies to be heard and to have control of some of the resources of MDE. For the two positions are of a "staff" nature, not really a part of the institutional level of MDE.

The resources of the agency are limited. Yet the institutional level has been shown not to have total control of how resources are allocated. In this way the diverse elements of the environment of MDE reduce the ability of the agency to maintain integrated behavior at the system level. Rather, MDE is a conglomerate of subsystems. Each subsystem may be successfully reducing uncertainty about its particular constituency by using preactive and even proactive strategies. But the same degree of certainty does not exist in a general sense of the agency as a whole. MDE adapts and survives and even prospers, but it does so in a dozen directions.

The fact that MDE emits responses to these constituents from both administrative and institutional levels increases the effect of the environmental diversity. The two elements--diffuse control and diverse demands--support each other to create an agency which is unable to achieve integration.

Policy Making and Measurement

MDE suffers from a lack of integration. One reason is the simple diversity of environmental elements and their demands. Another is the fact that MDE responses are emitted at various and uncontrolled levels. These facts have secondary effects because the agency has been frustrated in attempts to act at a policy level, MDE emphasizes the technical, quantitative aspects of education.

There are limits to the influence MDE is able to exert. It was shown in the study of higher education that the ability of MDE to influence higher education was limited. In one instance it was limited by the University lobbies. Chapter 3 was removed from MDE monetary control because the urban school districts were threatened. The Michigan Association for Retarded Citizens seems to have a much stronger voice than MDE in determining policy for special education. In the professional development center issue, MDE could only succeed in concert with the interest groups--and they were disunited. When MDE regulates

accounting procedures or the color of bus fenders on the tests which one can use to evaluate Chapter 3, the constituents will comply. These are technical items which do not threaten others; they are recognized as the legitimate domain of MDE. But whenever MDE has ventured into the policy level--as in the cases above--the interest groups have successfully opposed the Department.

MDE "rules" with the consent of the governed. Within the range of behaviors which are not viewed as threatening to the interest groups or other constituents, MDE is not opposed. But attempts to create policy are universally opposed. Because almost all of the interest groups are more politically powerful in the Legislature than MDE, the Department's activities are proscribed.

The general trend toward regulation and toward quantification has been mentioned in several places earlier. To demonstrate that MDE is consistently rewarded for its quantitative emphasis, the following review is presented. First, MDE was funded at a minimal level to provide quantitative information about need. In Chapter 3, the ability to measure results and demonstrate--according to MDE--that the state program was cost effective was the saving grace. That was all the Legislature funded MDE to do, in the long run, and the experience was used by MDE to gain credibility at a national level. In most federal programs, all MDE has to do to receive money is to provide

documented numbers. This is required by USOE and apparently by Congress. Since a majority of MDE staff are federally funded (64%), and federal emphasis is on numbers, the quantitative emphasis of MDE is predictable. Efforts by MDE to influence educational policy have been met with opposition. Efforts to extract numbers have been met with dollars. The result should not be surprising.¹

The Rational World of MDE

Because the environment of MDE is diverse MDE must act in such a variety of ways that no integrated action occurs. One means of dealing with the diverse demands has been the diffusion of control of resources to the administrative level. This enhances the trend toward lack of integration.

Concurrently MDE is prohibited by the power of the elements in its environment from being an effective policy maker. On the other hand MDE is rewarded by both state and federal governments for the production of quantitative information.

The net effect of this collection of influences is the emphasis within MDE on rational planning, an emphasis which is made explicit in the Accountability Model and

¹This is similar to, but not the same as, the argument by James D. Thompson that organizations which cannot justify qualitative outcomes tend to revert to quantitative, technical-level evaluations.

in the general trend toward quantification of education. A rational technical world is more predictable, contains less uncertainty than a more political world. In a rational world, output is measurable and efficiency can be sought and achieved. It is a closed system.

The emphasis on rational planning amount to reducing the tasks of the agency to measurable, quantifiable ones. This is similar to eliminating a source of uncertainty by enclosing it in the technical core where all things are known and rational, where closed-system assumptions are operative.¹ Similar conclusions are arrived at by conceiving the MDE trend to rational planning as a system goal.²

The Accountability Model is not a goal, it's a safe way of operating, a method of operating which has been rewarded in past, whereas forays into the policy making arena have not. This condition of being dedicated to a method of operation is referred to as a system goal. This is a state in which the organization's resources are devoted to survival and to a particular way of behaving while surviving. There is thus no product goal, no particular outcome which

¹See Thompson, Organizations in Action, especially chapters 1 and 7, for a complete discussion of this tendency.

²See Charles Perrow, Organizational Analysis: A Sociological View, (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1970), Chapter 5 and Amitai Etzioni, Modern Organizations (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1964), Chapter 2.

is desired. The point is to behave in such-and-such a way while continuing to survive. All organizations have some system goals, such as low overhead, efficiency, high dividends, worker satisfaction or a particular management style. Such goals are a problem only when they supplant product goals, when more attention is paid to how the organization operates than whether it operates effectively.

By default, MDE has come to be in this state. Since attempts to act on its environment in a significant and integrated way have so regularly been frustrated. MDE has retreated from the policy level to an entrenched defense of rationality, quantification and "Accountability."

Preactive Filtering

In addition to the causes of this trend already mentioned, there is another MDE behavior which perpetuates this trend to rationality. This is the whole realm of preactive communication strategies. By using preactive communication links as filters, MDE creates a rational environment. That is, whatever the condition of the environment (and it has been shown to be diverse, irrational, political and uncertain) MDE translates its perceptions into rational ones. The real environment is filtered through the MDE communication links and is transformed. MDE creates an artificial, enacted, rational environment-- and then responds to it in a rational manner.

For example, in the environment of MDE there are children who can't read. Millions of dollars and hours have not changed this. MDE translates that problem into one which can be dealt with in a rational manner. MDE asserts that "new delivery systems will improve reading" (Title III). MDE asserts that the problem is the teachers and the districts, both of whom should be punished by withdrawal of money (Chapter 3). MDE asserts that the problem is the teachers and retraining them will solve it (PDC).

Or, in the higher education arena, MDE perceives that output should reflect need and that both can be quantified to assist in planning and coordinating. Title I has been unsuccessful in eliminating the effects of poverty, so MDE advocates a change to a "more rational" academic funding base.

None of this is unreasonable, all systems enact their environments to some extent. It is the consistent pattern of MDE behavior that is interesting and the fact that this enacted environment is part of a self-perpetuating feedback loop whose center is rational behavior. To observe that visually, attention is directed to the summary model in Figure 13.

A Model of MDE Behavior

The summative argument developed in this chapter is shown in Figure 13.

Item (1) shows the real environment of MDE. It is a complex and diverse environment, definitely not rational or ordered. It contains powerful elements which can affect MDE.

From the environment, diverse demands (2) impact on MDE. These are dealt with by MDE via strategies which are successful on a one-at-a-time basis, but which are also as diverse as the demands (3). Consequently the agency does not behave in an integrated fashion. A concurrent phenomenon contributes: MDE responds to its diverse constituents at both administrative and institutional levels. This lack of structural cohesion (4) allows resources to be allocated from a variety of levels (5). Thus the tendency to diverse responses (3) and the disintegrated structure are thought to be mutually supportive.

An agency responding to diversity in such an incoherent manner is not able to exert major influence on educational policy (6). For that reason, MDE avoids such product goals and adopts rational behavior as a system goal (7). Not only is MDE unable to exert influence at a policy level because of the diversity of its environment and responses, but on those occasions when MDE has ventured into the policy arena, political prohibition (8) has resulted. This supports the tendency away from policy making goals toward rational system goals.

Concurrently, federal (especially) and state governments reward (9) the production of quantitative data (10) and thus encourage rationality. Internally, information about the real environment (11) is transformed into rational terms by the use of preactive communication strategies (12). This amounts to the creation of an enacted environment (13). MDE then treats the enacted environment as if it were real and responds via rational planning and quantification. This tendency toward rationality is limited in turn by the political system.

It is the writer's judgement that this situation represents a condition of equilibrium. MDE meets enough of the needs of its various energy sources to continue the same level of existence. The agency can pursue its formal system goal of rational operation without disrupting the business of serving la Raza, MARC, Middle Cities, Detroit and the Legislature. An environmental change could upset the equilibrium, as could a major change in the organization's structure, a change affecting its ability to meet environmental needs.

Until then, MDE will continue as it is, very effective in reducing uncertainty--through use of strategies and rational planning--but will have difficulty producing change or impact on education at a policy level.

It is possible to conceive of the behavior of MDE as the result of the dynamic interaction of two sets of

forces. There is a rational subsystem, a set of forces encouraging MDE to behave in a rational, quantitative manner. But there is also a political subsystem, limiting the extent to which MDE can be effective in imposing its rational will on its real non-rational environment. The extent to which MDE acts rationally or politically with regard to a given issue is dependent on the interplay of these two subsystems.

This is why reduction of uncertainty is not in itself sufficient to assure dominance of an environment. MDE does well in reducing environmental uncertainty--and should apparently be able to make closed system assumptions as a result. But uncertainty is typically reduced on an issue by issue basis at various levels in diverse directions, because of the diverse environmental demands. These are influences from the political subsystem, and they limit the ability of MDE to act rationally. The simple lack of power is the other limit. As far as information goes, MDE does well in reducing uncertainty but this does not by itself create a closed system. The missing element is control, and this is the commodity which is allocated by the political subsystem, thus limiting the ability of MDE to act out its rational model and make its enacted environment real.

Researchable Propositions

Field studies are often justified as being useful for generating hypotheses. The explanatory model presented

in Figure 14 facilitates that task in this instance. Rather than formal hypotheses, however, a set of propositional statements is presented here. The task of translating these into testable, measureable hypotheses is a task beyond the domain of this study.

1. As the diversity of elements in its environment increases, MDE devotes increasingly more time to applying strategies to reduce uncertainty regarding those elements.
2. As environmental complexity increases, the ability of MDE to enact strategies in an integrated manner decreases.
3. As environmental complexity increases, the organizational locations through which resources are disbursed will become more diffuse.
4. As ability to maintain integrated behavior decreases, ability to act on a policy level decreases.
5. As ability to affect policy decreases, emphasis on the system goal of rationality increases.
6. As powerful environmental elements increase opposition to MDE policy level behavior, MDE increasingly emphasizes rationality of operation.
7. As powerful environmental elements reward MDE for rational behavior, emphasis on rationality increases.
8. As its emphasis on rationality increases, MDE increasingly uses preactive communication filters to enact a rational environment.

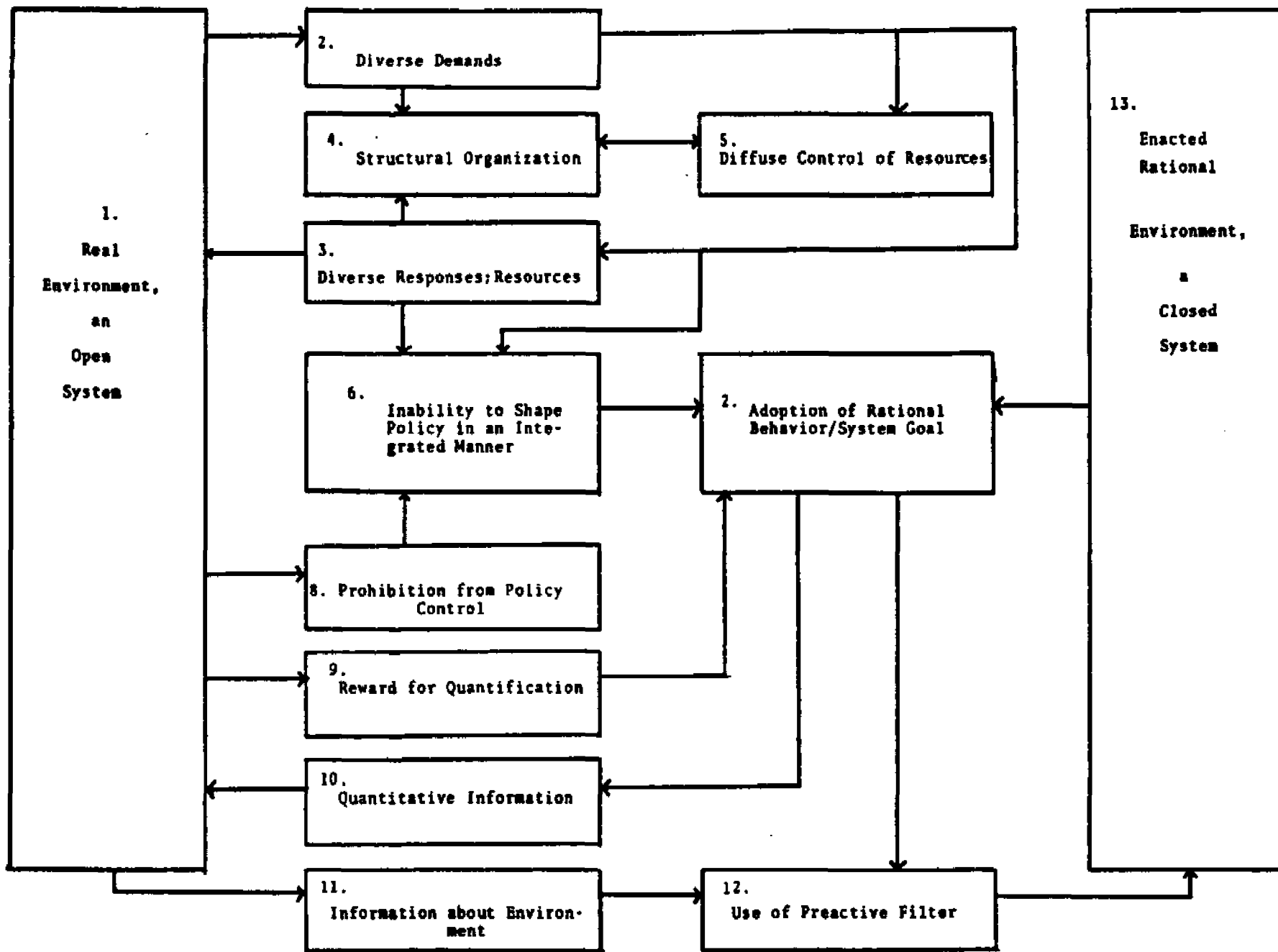


FIGURE 13.--How MDE is encouraged to behave in a rational manner.

9. As emphasis on rationality increases, MDE increasingly responds to its rational, enacted environment.

10. As emphasis on rationality increases, MDE will increase attempts to impose rational planning on its constituents, the public schools.

11. As MDE preoccupation with rationality decreases services to powerful environmental elements, MDE will be prohibited from further expansion of its rational model.

12. As the environment remains constant and the structure of MDE remains constant, this system of behavior will constitute a self-regulating system in equilibrium.

And why should it be otherwise? The environment of MDE is complex and the elements therein have diverse needs. Some response must be given and the present arrangement seems to work. The judgement is a philosophical and political one. If one believes a state agency should dominate its environment, this arrangement is a failure. But if one believes in "a policy of benign neglect," the MDE might be considered too aggressive as it is. The answer, like the environment of the MDE, is not rational--it's political.

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