Policy-Making in American Education

——An Overview and Critique——

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Policy is any course or plan of action, but especially one designed to influence future decisions and actions. A policy can be viewed as an authoritative decision which guides other decisions.[1] Like the words police and politics, which it is related to, policy is derived from the Greek *politeia* (polity, the form or method of governance) which itself comes from *polites* (citizen) and *polis* (city).

It is significant, then, that the collection of concepts we are dealing with when we discuss policy is grounded exclusively in an urban base. These concepts are contained in a shared set of values common to urban humanity ('urbanity') and thus reflect the behavior of man in groups, not as individuals, pioneers or adventurers. This is a very important point, since many problems encountered in policy settings may actually have their origin in the conflict between those who embrace a policentric, group-oriented view of man with those who are striving to establish and/or maintain independent, individual identities.

Interestingly, innovators invariably fall into the latter category. It is from the well-springs of their creativity that dramatic new concepts flow, new paradigms that keep us moving along the path of increasing diversity and complexity. Today the indispensable spontaneity we associate with such individuals is scarce indeed, having been replaced by an organizational emphasis on malleability, obedience, dispensability, specialization, paternalism and, above all, planning.[2]

Since we are dealing, however, with an institutional (i.e., group) setting when we discuss public education, any examination of policy making should be primarily focused at this level of 'urbanity.' What is the structure of educational policy? How is it organized? What are its principal elements? These are important questions but they are questions that might more profitably be formulated as: Who comprises the structure? How are they organized? What are their principal agendas?

The way to understand those who institute policy-making and why is to ask the question, 'Who rules?' It is here that the concepts of policy and power are joined. But before we

examine the policy-makers and the 'control elements' which they command (which is, in effect, policy itself), we should first look at the structure and organization of educational policy-making in American schools.

Structure

The structure of American schools appears on the surface to be highly democratic, focused on the local community and its elected board. Through federal and state constitutions, the responsibility for education has devolved upon the states, which were, however, traditionally reluctant to sponsor education because of the financial burden involved. Except for Hawaii (which has a full state funding plan, but also 40% of its children in private schools) and Alaska (large parts of which are dominated by federal funding), the responsibility for financial support and political direction has in the main come to rest with locally elected boards of education, boards that are dominated by either 'leading citizens' or the promoters of emotive single-issues.

States have mandated curriculums and sometimes textbooks, but the structure of policy-making has traditionally been left to local school boards. This has changed in the past twenty years as funding has increasingly come first from federal and then state sources. Except for the emergence of political hot potatoes, which, depending on the community, could be textbooks, secular humanism, sex education, values education, religion, and so forth, the members of these boards have increasingly deferred to the judgements of their chief administrative officers — the superintendents and principals — when policy issues have been on the agenda. These people have generally turned to the state for guidance in policy initiatives. As Mitchell has pointed out, reformed state legislatures are widely perceived as the most powerful actors in educational policy-making today.[3]

Superintendents and Principals, on the other hand, are expected as professionals to formulate policy and statements about policy. Such statements are usually rubber-stamped by the school board. Initiative, when it comes from board members, is probably based on single issues or has arisen from educators in the first place (the various national studies on excellence are good examples). On the other hand, promotion may emanate from partisan politics, with state or federal level involvement (e.g., Bush, Reagan, Carter) as a vote-getting device and as an expression of ideological stance.

Certain important considerations have an impact on local, state and national policy-making. Foremost among these are the heavily-disputed arenas concerning the purpose of

schooling: political, social, and economic. The professionalization movement of teachers, the impact of social class differences, social mobility, inequality of opportunity/race, and the youth culture all have had significant effects on educational policy-making. From these and other sources have arisen powerful lobbies and unions which compete with more traditional sources of authority such as foundations and accrediting associations.

Organization

Historically speaking, there is little doubt that educational institutions adopted their dominant organizational model from manufacturing. The *factory model* was the clear winner by 1900 following a century of political jockeying between differing views as to which system of education was most appropriate. John Dewey notwithstanding, the structure of American schooling remarkably parallels the structure of American manufacturing.

Other views which lost out after a 19th century struggle included what Michael Katz[4] has called *paternalistic voluntarism* (the New York Public School Society, run as a noblesse oblige project by the rich for the poor), *democratic localism* (the adaptation to the urban environment of a community or district school model that was then current in country areas — and a model which still exists to a limited extent in rural America: its most damning characteristics were that it operated under the principle of majority rule, which can be tyrannical, and that it wasted resources by replication of tasks in city districts), and *corporate voluntarism* (single institutions as corporations with self-perpetuating boards of trustees, financed through tuition and/or endowment; these schools still exist as elite private academies).

Katz calls the winner among these organizational models *incipient bureaucracy*. I prefer the term *factory model* for its descriptive power or, in its Late 20th Century incarnation, the organizational imperative. Later elaborations of the model were made by the prestigious Educational Policies Commission headed by Beard, Counts, Strayer, and others, in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Their emphasis was on egalitarian education, a stand that was increasingly de-emphasized in the 1980s.

In terms of political dynamics, it should be recognized that policy-making in American public education has traditionally taken place at three levels. Only one of these levels is highly visible, the constellation of educational policy-making bodies that parallels the structure of American government (at local, state and federal levels with legislative, judicial and executive involvement). This structure is dominated by a decentralized locus of con-

trol found in the local school board.

Since the year-to-year decisions involving system maintenance are made at this level it is widely assumed that it is here that policy-making is conducted, when what we are really seeing are perennial exercises in system maintenance. Few would dare to tamper with the basic organization and structure of educational policy-making at this level.

In fact, policy-making when it does happen at the local level is greatly influenced by previous formulations made by those William G. Scott and David K. Hart call 'the significant people'.[5] It is these people who have set directions for the U.S. since its founding, and while they were originally a landed gentry, the 'professional' industrial manager has now largely replaced them. The 'significant people' are responsible for the acceptance of the *factory model* of education over its rivals. If they do not serve on school boards, they influence those who do, those who aspire to be like them. They influence local boards through their own example as well as through their beliefs and practices (which are a frequent feature of the lay media or academic journals).

School administrators encounter other important participants in policy-making at the local level. To be effective, administrators need to recognize: a) community leaders b) board members c) teachers d) fellow administrators e) parents f) coalitions of the above. In each group the administrator is likely to encounter people who will judge and influence his policy-making. Gouldner[6] has identified the following categories of judges of administrative performance:

The Locals	The Cosmopolitans
1. The dedicated	1. The outsiders
2. The true bureaucrats	2. The empire builders
3. The home guard	
4. The elders	

This is obviously a useful scheme when analyzing policy-making, although it might also be noted that, like the American Revolution, any political issue will have one-third of the people in support, one-third against, and the remainder simply indifferent. Policy-making as it is constituted is truly the activity of small groups operating at the pinnacle of administrative power, especially as they exercise persuasion over that one-third of the public which remains uncommited.

There is no doubt that the uses that policy-making research is put to lie largely in the proposition that all behavior should enhance the health of the organization or institution. It

is an over-riding concern of educational administrators that they keep their organization healthy. These uses then determine the organization of decision-making and policy-making. This organization in turn revolves around the following key concepts: evaluation, choice, opportunity costs, and trade-offs.(7)

Forecasting is also viewed by many authorities as a critical element for system maintenance as it is so directly related to the future of educational institutions. To accurately forecast one needs control of variables — and control of variables can mean self-fulfilling prophecies. Random or deviant occurences need to be minimized and a collective will imposed. Control and predictability are the key elements. Spontaneity is the opposite of both. System maintenance is the ultimate goal, purpose and responsibility of the administrators of modern social institutions. If we are working in modern organizations as policy-makers we need to understand this fundamental need (of the organization, please note). It is the essence of policy-making — which we could also call planning.

One of the most important functions of modern policy-making is in the legitimation of planning as a concept and the corollary that goes with it — the diminution of spontaneity, a concept that contributed much to America but which now has the status of aberrancy. Educational institutions need systematic and informed predictions about the future. Policy-making provides them with these predictions, predictions which enable innovation to take place.

Innovation: Policy-Making in Action

Although the reality of American education today appears to be declining enrollments, disappearing revenues, and disenchanted teachers, much of the course content in Colleges of Education is irrepressibly upbeat, best described as a continuing "search for substantive innovations." These innovations are usually phrased in terms that most people see as ultimately helping American students: better conditions for teachers, greater equity of educational offerings and programs, improved teacher training, introduction of new curricular ideas and methods, etc. The urgency of such innovations is viewed against a backdrop of declining national productivity and increasingly fierce foreign competition.

Most serious discussions of innovations in American education do seem destined, however, to be short-changed as visions of the future when the reality of hard decision-making arrives at that most important moment in the school year: the approval of a

district's budget. Choices made at this time are pregnant with philosophic, practical and policy implications for a local school board and its community.

Before proceeding further, a few notes on the meaning of innovation are in order. If innovation is broadly defined as that which encourages progress, most Americans are innovators. In this sense, to be against innovation could even be considered un-American. There is a division, though, between those who see innovation as 'renewal' and those who see it as 'making new.' In approaching policy issues, the former take what can be called a *maintenance-oriented stance* and the latter a *performance-oriented stance*. Those with a maintenance-orientation are concerned with innovation through more efficient use of current resources, while the performance-oriented innovators look more towards the expansion of resource commitments to education.

Much of the problem, then, has to do with conceptual frameworks regarding the nature of change. The manner in which substantive innovations are accepted (and, perhaps more importantly, implemented) depends a great deal on the cultural baggage a school and a community carry to any situation. There are, in fact, two forms of change which societies commonly embrace: *incremental* and *emphatic. Generally speaking, people who favor incremental change are maintenance-oriented, and people who favor emphatic change are performance-oriented.*

Although incremental change, as explicated by Lindblom ('muddling through')[8] is acknowledged as the most widely-applied model for on-the-ground decision-making, innovation can and does occur in emphatic, even dramatic, bursts as well. This dramatic change can be termed 'punctuated equilibrium,' to borrow a phrase from recent evolutionary theory and biologist Stephen Gould. Historically speaking, it takes place in times of economic and political stress. At these moments the stage is ripe for wholesale changes in the structure of education and educational institutions. Budgetary outlays far exceed anything previously thought possible. The equilibrium is in effect suddenly altered ('punctuated') by a rapid redirection of resources.

In spite of the commonly-held view that 90-95% of a school's budget is committed to recurring expenses (notably personnel), and that only the remainder is available for reallocation, it is the position of this essay that the entire budget and budget process can and should be examined in a new light if substantive innovations are sought.

Even those of a maintenance frame of mind who believe more in incremental change can be persuaded to expand their horizons beyond the level usually thought available for reallocation from a district's budget (5-8%). A common target that may escape the atten-

tion of these innovators, for example, is the 80% of a district's allocation usually thought inviolable and untouchable : personnel.

This 80% may be approached in a number of ways. First, the elimination of positions (including administrative), along with the retirement of employees at the top of the salary scale, can be undertaken as a common method of making money available for innovation. The complication of a highly labor-intensive technology, staffed by relatively non-interchangeable specialists, many of whom enjoy the safety of tenure, can be addressed in other ways, too. For example, encouragement for specialists to widen their credentials can be given through career ladder incentives which reward continuing education. Contract provisions can also be looked at for possible changes that would benefit both teachers and the school district.

The budget process of public educational institutions, usually seen as an advance of glacial proportions, can be viewed differently, particularly in times of troubles. Suddenly, the possibilities for a joined commitment to the greater good becomes reality, a commitment that translates into a cascade of dollars, mainly intended for innovations. Unfortunately, the relation of innovation to budget-making is little understood and less acted upon.

What is the relationship of budget to policy? Which should drive which? Should the budget guide policy or should policy guide the budget?

Background (History) of Support for Public Education

The historical record of the public commitment of resources to mass education is unequivocal: in times of significant social stress, allocations for innovative educational programs and ideas have been substantial. Even those with a maintenance-orientation strive during those times for school innovation.

A major rationale for the first substantial money made available for the purpose of public education was to transmit a common culture to a nation of immigrants. Not coincidentally, the peak immigration period (1900-1910) coincides with the first massive expenditures for education. The ebb and flow of public dollars in this century has been clearly related to fears regarding national strength, cohesiveness and productivity. To cite a few examples, we need only turn to the extensive contributions made to education by the New Deal, the GI Bill and the legislation following Sputnik. Following the national reports on excellence in education made public in 1983, many Americans believed they had

entered another era of expanding public commitment to education. Mixed results ensued, with some states expanding their commitments and others cutting back, combined with much talk but little action from the federal government and the President.

An additional and important question looms in any discussion of educational change circa 1991, of course: have television-saturated Americans substituted images for reality? Some commentators believe the TV-induced malady of substituting the image for reality has gone beyond the previous stages of image-making and image-manipulation employed in the selling of products and politicians.

For educational issues, too, is the perceived world crowding out the real world, with consequences that both seem odd and (sometimes) ominous? How serious are the problems of education really? Is the educational 'crisis' simply another case of television selecting the interesting over the boring, the simple over the complex, and the concrete over the abstract? Is it real or is it just more fodder for TV (60 Minutes, anyone?), this 'educational crisis'?

More importantly, are we substituting what is wise and reasonable for what is orthodox and market-driven on our educational agendas? Have enclaves of moral and innovative discourse simply been ignored in search of what is efficient and 'sellable'? The answers lie in the future, but educational leaders are actively searching for answers to these dilemmas today.

Substantive Budget Innovations: Conceptual Frameworks

Two possible conceptual frameworks face those who would innovate in the public schools. These frameworks operate simultaneously at three levels: national, state and local. All three are essentially concerned, at least in a democratic society (and there is some question on this), with the public perception of what constitutes issues important enough to signal resource committement.

Again, it is significant that the manner in which these resources are committed depends on whether one views innovation as a) making new or b) renewal. The first represents what we have called the performance framework, while the second represents the maintenance framework. Of course, each framework contains elements of the other view, but the dominant ethos is one or the other, performance or maintenance.

Both groups believe their view is unique in representing progress for America and both believe that what they are doing is innovative.

The first conceptual framework (performance) holds that we are truly facing a time of crisis, that priority should be attached to mobilizing public opinion to the view that it is a crisis of local, state, and national political significance. For such a conceptual framework to be acted upon a substantial number of people should be aroused who view the present as a crisis of national well-being and even survival.

The second possible conceptual framework that innovators may face (maintenance) is at least partly based on the idea that our age is indeed one of electronic chimera, of powerful, effervescent images of an ever-bolder, increasingly instant 'reality'. This 'reality' vanishes or is transformed to something ponderous (and uninteresting) when it is put to the test of an issue as mundane or complex as budget or policy formulation.

In this case, the electronic image manipulates on-the-ground commitments of resources away from intangible, grey areas and towards dramatic single issues that are easily, visibly solvable (more guns, less butter). Or it simply ignores them after an initial, bewildering media blitz, followed by the hunt for other, more politically receptive prey for its hypnotic cathode rays. Such a shifting reality makes it easy to believe issues no longer in the camera's eye no longer exist. For this conceptual framework the key response for educators is couched in a maintenance framework.

The first step in any serious examination of a school district's strengths and weaknesses is for the board to arrive at a clear conceptual framework. This framework should state, explicitly or implicitly, the values of the district. After such a framework is decided upon — and this framework is really a grounding of the community's belief system — the board may or may not come to the conclusion that innovation is necessary.

In some instances or areas, the board may conclude, given its conceptual framework, that the status quo 'does not need fixing if it isn't broken.' Programs that do a good job need review, but this review could spotlight an exemplary, commendable performance. Not all innovations need be considered in light of economic allocation, either. High morale is itself a spur to innovative performance.

If the public can be mobilized to view the present as a harbinger of a dangerous future, though, substantial resources can be assembled for the innovations so often discussed in Colleges of Education. Since this appears unlikely in the short term, it is important that any district seriously concerned with innovation at least introduce and develop the concept of a planning document. This document should explicitly state the district's values and positions in terms of a performance or maintenance model.

Planning Recommendations

The primary recommendation for any board, whatever its orientation, is the creation of a planning document clearly identifying and prioritizing issues for district attention in a time framework. As well as concentrating energies in the right places, such a framework can help reduce inefficiency, thus freeing up money for innovations.

There are additional recommendations which could be made to a school district if a governing board has asked for a set of policy statements for the introduction of substantive educational innovations. Much depends on how the policy analyst views the local board's orientation. How does this orientation reflect the ethos of the community and the school?

If the board sees the community's perception of education as an urgent matter, innovations will be conceptually related to performance. The possibility of an expansion of resources is then great. Growth is an apparent priority for such a community.

By perceiving innovation as growth and then drawing on Thomas F. Green's 'modes of growth,'[9] we note the following possibilities for a community with declining enrollment:

1. Growth in available funds by increasing the pupil-teacher ratio, thereby decreasing the number of classroom units in the system
2. Growth in attainment: expansion of rates of attendance/survival
3. Vertical expansion: adding levels either at the top or at the bottom of the system
4. Horizontal expansion: assumption of responsibilities for educational and social functions that are either new, that have been ignored, or that have been carried out by other institutions (e.g., values education, formerly the church's province)
5. Differentiation: of programs or institutions or both
6. Growth in efficiency or intensification: doing more in the same time or the same in less time
7. Growth in time: extension of the school year and/or day
8. Growth in personnel: regardless of declining enrollments or other factors; a concern with quality in terms of staff-student ratios

Of course, each of these 'modes' conceals an important social belief. If the board sees the community's perception of education as less urgent, then the innovations which can be introduced will be related to maintenance functions — simply improving existing programs, with perhaps some of the growth possibilities outlined above. Both the perfor-

mance and the maintenance views can and should look beyond the traditional 5-8% growth figure, however, towards additional generation of income. Here are some practical suggestions for innovations in a school budget:

Recommendations for Innovations in a School Budget: Performance Concept

1. Public relations campaign for greater resources at both the local and state levels
2. Public relations campaign for a longer school year at both the local and state levels
3. Involvement of all concerned publics in school goal-setting (e.g., through nominal group technique, delphi method, etc.)
4. Encourage administrators and teachers to stay longer and broaden skill base by providing a series of financial and career incentives
5. Establish an educational foundation in the community
6. Provide financial incentives for teachers willing to take higher numbers of students in classes; weight more difficult classes that require more preparation time
7. Promote cooperative pooling with other, nearby school districts, for teachers and services that districts under-utilize (e.g., foreign language teachers, educational specialists, et al.)
8. Initiate innovative programs in areas that are presently well-funded; a good example would be the current attention being given to 'gifted and talented' programs
9. Explore state levies for additional possible funding

Recommendations for Innovations in a School Budget: Maintenance Concept

1. Surrender of some of the numerous objectives now existing (a possible value — rather than doing a lot of things badly, doing a few things well)
2. Initiation of a commercial support network (with, for example, businessmen, civil bureaucrats, and/or military personnel teaching appropriate classes through donated public service time)
3. Establishment of an educational foundation — active solicitation of corporate support
4. Increased pupil/teacher ratios (this could potentially free up considerable money)
5. Provision of early retirement incentives for people at the top of the salary scale; replacement with beginning teachers if possible
6. Business foundations asked to separately sponsor and fund innovative programs such

as computers

7. Maximization of state-mandated assistance to special programs, increased funding that can have a beneficial spill-over effect on other programs
8. Solicitation of booster club donations of time and money for coaching and extra-curricular program
9. Exploration of state levies for additional possible funding

Common to both sets of proposals are elements of innovation : some of them 'making new,' some 'renewal.'

Evaluating the Recommendations: Policy into Practice (Costs and Benefits — Monetary and Non-Monetary)

Evaluations of change and change agents in school districts have discovered the importance of a setting that is supportive and that promotes mutual adaptation among personnel. Conversely, school districts which lack a clear conceptual framework or that have factions at odds with each other will hardly be in a position to effectively introduce innovations. For these districts, maintenance functions take precedence. This conceptual framework of a district (its ethos) is the context, and in many ways the most critical factor, in school innovation. Nearly all other factors hinge on ethos.

Research has shown that administrators, particularly building principals, occupy key positions in terms of supporting and facilitating innovations. Generally speaking, the necessary energizing of a staff for the implementation of innovations comes from the Principal. In this sense, it is once again apparent that the introduction of innovations requires more than just money.

The public also needs to be made aware that having the right money, ideas and people for an innovation may not be enough. Outside appearances can be misleading when the inside picture is one of complex demands on time/energy as well as of a leadership often wary of another round of ineffectual, soon-to-be-forgotten proposals.

An effective method for evaluating the particular recommendations made here would be to follow each one using the 'heuristic' of Berliner and Fenstermacher for staff development proposals. This heuristic is a useful tool for approaching any study of innovations: Do the proposals have worth (conditions: theory, moral, evidence), merit (conditions: sensibility, variability, incentives, maintenance), and success (conditions: objectives, instruc-

tor, diagnosis, application and duration)? Obviously, one of the really valuable aspects of this evaluation tool is its applicability to local circumstances.

What are the general costs and benefits, both monetary and non-monetary, of the sets of recommendations given above? For the performance model it is apparent that a heavy committment is called for on the part of the participants. How realistically can such a commitment be justified? Again, it all depends on how deeply both the local community and those in the schools feel about the issues involved. The character of most communities calls for at least some innovation ('fresh blood'). The etent of these depends a great deal on local beliefs regarding the distributive benefits of education, including non-educational social benefits.

As the American public demands better management of school systems, an important question is raised: can school systems retrench economically and still be innovative? A first step that any school board would want to make if it wishes to be viewed as innovative would be a highly visible, symbolic gesture of support for innovation.

George Bailey[10] has identified four important components required in order to concentrate resources on results:

(1) policy direction and commitment

(2) a goal-based management system

(3) a process for setting goals and priorities

(4) decentralized budgeting and allocation of resources

In a Rand Corporation study of federally supported innovation programs published in 1984 [11] researchers found non-implementation to be common. The most that could be hoped for was a process of mutual adaptation between the participants and the project itself through certain modifications of each. The critical importance of those participants who actually deliver services directly to clients, the so-called 'street-level bureaucrats,' should be highlighted. These individuals need to be allowed the opportunity to buy into the process, to be given some degree of ownership of any change.

William L. Boyd[12] notes that the shaping or making of policy actually continues through the implementation process because of the tendency of those involved to compromise reforms. The Rand researchers found that "bottom up" rather than "top down" approaches to decision-making appeared more likely to result in successful implementation of reforms. As many authors have pointed out, those who must implement changes need to participate in selecting and planning innovations so that they will feel ownership in the process.

Effective school districts promote the participation and adaptive abilities of school staff in school innovation. The lack of staff turnover in troubled times means that innovations, to be effective, can only occur by working with the staff available. A coordinated, cooperative team approach is incumbent. This approach begins with individual teachers.

The Implementation of Policy: 'Where the rubber meets the road'

What really happens in schools is at yet another level of policy-making: the individual classroom teacher. Real 'policy' is what ends up being taught in the classroom, with many 'professional' teachers regarding themselves as the best arbiters of this process. Teachers formulate their own ideas about what is important and what needs to be conveyed in the limited time available in the visible curriculum. Like local boards, the hidden curriculum of the classroom is influenced by the beliefs and goals of dominant coalitions as expressed by peers, media, and 'the significant people.' Yet we must not forget that the classroom teacher is in a sense the ultimate policy-maker (someone vulnerable, however, to the media manipulations of those who think they know what is best for the future of these institutions and society).

It should be noted, finally, that we will seldom know who the real policy-makers are, since they are cloaked in a shield of elitist invisibility. Cardinal choices are made by a handful of men, in secret. The activities of the members of the Bohemian Club, the Trilateral Commission and other organizations of significant individuals are typical cases in point.[13] This secretiveness is not so much from design as from the nature of modern institutions, which can only function effectively as planning and purpose pyramids when information is controlled through a hierarchical form that facilitates decision-making as well as organizational response. A new age is upon us — and policy-makers will be key players.

The Future of Educational Policy-Making

What of the future of educational policy-making? A number of trends stand out. The first is that middle management, mainstays of policy proposals and implementation, are now rapidly being replaced by computers. With the corporate structure changing an overwhelming emphasis is being placed on education and retraining. In recent years companies like IBM have spent as much as $700 million on education on education alone. Many corporations now offer in-house degree programs: Rand has a Ph. D., while Humana (the

health giant), Northrop, and others have M.A. programs.

Clearly, as the times become more complex and as managers who can serve in times of crisis are more in demand, those who are leading will not only need to have outstanding educations but will have to take on more and more of the functions of policy-making formerly reserved for middle-level managers.

America is setting its priorities now for the 21st Century, with much of that prioritizing is taking place because of competition from abroad. Yet the polarization in American society today is palpable. Anyone with poor training or pre-training seems consigned to the never-never land of the service sector and the blocked, frustrated expectations that entails. Unfortunately, issues of equity and overall social productivity are being shelved in favor of anything conceived as immediately 'efficient' and/or profitable.

Setting policy which gives social direction is the ultimate goal of policy-makers from premier institutions. But they are influenced by research in these institutions, in turn influencing the direction of educational policy by their work. Unfortunately, the increasing specialization of policy and decision-making means greater myopia when it comes to setting priorities.

Clearly, the position of a nation that has only five per cent of the world's population but that utilizes anywhere from 25-60% of the world's resources (depending on the commodity basket) is increasingly untenable. Yet ironically the trend is for power and decision-making to be even more concentrated. A similar problem looms in the educational world. Unless there is a massive investment in education, policy-making will be carried out by a narrower and narrower segment of the population sitting at the apex of organizational America's pyramid. Like diminishing genetic pools that have eliminated their own chances for future survival through over-specialization, policy-makers make what appear to be more and more sophisticated decisions that often actually exclude the populations they serve.

Possibly the most important technological change appearing on the horizon, the marriage of computers and telecommunications (where everyone has the chance of being informed) requires great communicators. Yet for all the recent hoopla, education in general is receiving less and less concrete assistance in the development of such people. Aside from research projects and areas of study that are fat from defense projects or the attentions of corporate America (the so-called hard sciences), the decline of a generalized education is everywhere evident.

Ironically, the very nations that have provided an impetus for America to change

(those competing with the United States for scarce resources) are themselves investing more and more in generalized education — in a very public recognition that people are the most important natural resource. Education is far and away Japan's major investment, for example, and a growing one as functions formerly delegated to schools are becoming increasingly privatized.

Harlan Cleveland, one of America's most respected public policy planners, has pointed out that we need to imagine ourselves as post-war planners in the middle of a great war, faced with the questions of what we need to do when it's over and how we are going to arrange for the management of that new society. New information systems, new security systems — and, above all, new educational systems, will need to be put in place if we are to survive as a dominant power.

It is interesting in this context that the biggest fears for leaders (thus, the tasks they set as study for their policy-makers) originate in concerns about crisis management and crisis control. In these scenarios the ultimate crisis is war brought upon us by accident. While that may be the greatest fear of those William Scott calls 'the significant people,' the more likely danger in the long-term is the disaster of a polarized population (and polarized world), part over-educated, most under-educated. This tragedy is already upon us. Yet the agenda continues to be crowded with concerns about power and control rather than a society as if people mattered.

In some ways, then, we should welcome crisis, if it is real. One's perception of this will finally rest for most people in a quiet assertion of belief or doubt. If performance is the dominant perception we can except that any innovation will be in areas of expanding efficiency. If, on the other hand, the present really is a new crisis in education, then the performance-orientation will dominate. A crisis presents opportunities to those willing to utilize them. It is important to remember here that the pressures of decline have invariably produced the most far-reaching innovations and improvements in American schools.[14]

Notes

(1) Roald Campbell, Luverne Cunningham, et al., *The Organization and Control of American Schools* (Columbus, Charles Merrill Pub. Co., 1980), p. 166.

(2) William G. Scott and David K. Hart, *Organizational America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979), p.54.

(3) Douglas E. Mitchell, "Educational Politics and Policy: The State Level," in Norman J. Boyan, *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, p. 453. New York : Longman, 1988. See also Catherine Marshall, Douglas Mitchell, and Frederick Wirt, "The Context of State-Level Policy Formation," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 347-378, Winter 1986.

(4) Michael B. Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Scholols* (New York: Praeger, 1975), Chapter 1.

(5) Scott and Hart, *(1979), Op. cit.*

(6) Alvin Gouldner, "Cosmopolitans and Locals: Toward an Analysis of Latent Social Roles," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 2,3 (December 1957) :pp 281-306; 2,4 (March 1958) :440-480.

(7) William L. Boyd, "Policy Analysis, Educational Policy, and Management: Through a Glass Darkly?" in Norman J. Boyan(1988), *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, pp. 504. New York: Longman, 1988.

(8) C.E. Lindblom, *The Policy-Making Process*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980.

(9) Thomas F. Green, *Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980.

(10) George W. Bailey, "Focusing Local Resources on School Improvement," in Odden, Allan and Webb, L. Dean, eds., *School Finance and School Improvement: Linkages for the 1980s*. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co, 1983. A related article is Henry M. Levin's "Cost-Effectiveness and Educational Policy," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol 10., No. 1, pp. 51-69, Spring 1988.

(11) Arthur E. Wise, Linda Darling-Hammond, Milbrey W. McLaughlin, and Harriet T. Bernstein, *Teacher Evaluation*. Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 1984.

(12) Boyd, 1988, *Op. cit.*

(13) Old wealth, such as that represented by the Rockefellers and Fords, still has great influence but its grip on the direction of the times has increasingly been lost to those 'organization men' who have risen to the top by dint of their own committment to and understanding of the institution's needs. The classic study in this context is of course William H. Whyte, Jr.'s *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

(14) For an interesting view on the effects of the crisis atmosphere on education in the 1980s, see Joseph Murphy, "Educational Reform in the 1980s: Explaining Some Surprise Success," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 209-222, Fall 1989.