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Any effort to characterize the policymaking process in industrial democracies must include at the same time an analysis of both the organization of the state and the organized factions, parties, and interest groups that seek to influence the state. Both sides of the policymaking equation are important determinants of policy outcomes, and each interacts with the other to produce a distinctive national system of politics and policymaking. The importance of this observation is clearly illustrated when educational policymaking is examined in France and the United States.

One of the most distinctive features of American public policy is the country's extraordinary commitment to education. Comparative studies of social welfare and health care policies have shown that American expenditures on public services lag behind those in most western European countries, but in education U.S. expenditures are large by comparison with other countries.[1] Even though local and state governments provide the great bulk of the financing for education in the American system, education is a subject of great interest to policymakers on all levels of government. Education in France is also the subject of massive government investment. In 1982, expenditures for education became the largest single item in the national budget, exceeding even defense. Although this article is limited to only one policy area, it is a centrally important one. This article shows how the institutional structures of government, the activities of the state in encouraging and interacting with outside groups, the size and power of the groups outside of government, and the relationships among outside groups influence the process through which these large expenditures are made.

Governmental organization in France lends itself to the development of close, corporatist ties with outside groups. The organization of the United States government makes pluralist relationships of bargaining and compromise almost inevitable. Conflict appears to be built into the American governmental structure, while the unification of authority and the centralization of decision making in the French system appear specifically designed to mitigate conflict and to allow for coordination between the state and the largest interest groups. In the American system, power over educational policymaking is dispersed within the federal government between the department of education, the presidency, and the relevant congressional committees and is further shared with the fifty state governments and thousands of local school boards. Many important decisions are made at the state and local levels in America that would be made exclusively at the national level in France by civil servants in the ministry of education.

French and American bureaucracies have similar interests in building support for their programs, and both governments support and encourage outside groups. Our data will show that bureaucracies in both countries use essentially the same decision rules in granting

subsidies to outside groups and have close relations with similar types of groups. A full understanding of educational policymaking in the two countries, however, requires an analysis not only of the structures of the two governments and the operation of the state bureaucracies, but also of the interest group environments within which the two governments operate. We will demonstrate that the French groups are generally smaller, younger, and poorer than their American counterparts and are much more likely to be engaged in conflict with each other. American educational interest groups enjoy general consensus and agreement on goals, while the French groups are engaged in competition for members and resources and are divided by sharp ideological disagreements.

In the United States, cooperation among groups allows for cooperation with the national government, even though the government itself is not unified. Despite the more active role of the French state in attempting to create a corporatist policymaking system, and despite the centralization of the French policy process, which should lend itself more easily to cooperation, educational policymaking in France is much more conflictual and politicized than in the United States. The different interest group environments within which the two governments operate make cooperation the norm in the United States and preclude its development in all but a few cases in France. Indeed, the French government may be so active in promoting cooperation and growth in the interest group system precisely because it is forced to operate in an area where the groups are often sharply divided among themselves. The American government may be able to function in such a decentralized manner because of the greater societal consensus that surrounds its operations in the area of education.

Constructing the Data Sets

Surveys of groups active in the area of education in each country form the empirical basis for comparisons of the interest group systems in each country and of the relations between the groups and the state. Data were collected on the educational interest groups in the United States as part of the Michigan Interest Group Study, a survey conducted by mail in both 1980 and 1985 of all groups attempting to influence public policy at the national level that are open to membership by individuals or organizations. Data on the French educational interest groups were collected in a mail survey conducted in 1984 which employed many of the same questions from the instrument employed in the Michigan study. Since the two data sets were collected in slightly different ways, the first step was to produce lists of educational interest groups in the two countries that were truly comparable. The French survey was based on a list of 242 interest groups supplied by the ministry of education. This official list contained all those organizations known to exist by the agency in 1984. It includes a few groups representing parents and a few general youth groups, but it is dominated by groups that represent teachers, administrators, and other public service professionals. This list is as close to a census of all groups in the area of education which the ministry could create and maintain. It is not limited only to those groups with which the agency had close or cooperative ties, but includes groups of all types active on the national level. Mail questionnaires were sent to all of these groups, and 133 responded, for a response rate of 55 percent.

The Michigan Interest Group Study is a survey of groups active in all areas of policy in

Washington, D.C. It had a response rate identical to the French survey, 55 percent, and a total of 857 respondents. In this paper, we use only the subset of those groups active in the area of education. The groups that responded to the Michigan study were asked how concerned their association was with public policies in eleven different policy areas, including education. The question read as follows: "Many associations have an interest in the level of federal government involvement in various areas of public policy. For each of the following policy areas, please indicate whether this association is very interested, somewhat interested, or not very interested in the level of federal government involvement." We produced a list of "core" educational interest groups who reported that they were "very interested" in education and who expressed very great interest in no more than one other field of public policy. This procedure left us with 146 American educational interest groups. The core education groups in the American data are strikingly similar to the French groups. There is a scattering of groups representing parents or students, but the groups in our American sample represent mainly teachers, administrators, and other public service professionals who work in the educational system, just as do those in the French data set.

The State

We focus on two factors dealing with the state, first, its support and encouragement of outside groups and, second, the patterns of its interactions with outside groups. Far from reacting passively to the creation and growth of outside groups, modern governments are heavily involved in subsidizing certain types of groups. In addition, governmental agencies may work closely with many outside groups, or they may retain close ties with only a privileged subset of groups.

Financial Support for Interest Groups The state plays an active role in both the United States and France in subsidizing and encouraging the growth of interest groups in the area of education. Fifty-nine percent of the French groups in our sample report receiving aid from the government either in the form of direct subsidies or seconded personnel. In 1984, over 1,200 civil servants were seconded by the ministry of education to work full-time in educational unions. Unions are not the only groups in the area of education to receive seconded government personnel; almost 1,200 additional civil servants worked full-time in other educational associations in 1984. This and similar programs of delegated personnel are not limited to the area of education in France. Every governmental ministry delegates a proportion of its employees to the representative unions, and private employers are required to do the same. Over 4,000 civil servants were delegated from twenty government ministries to work full-time on union activities in 1982.[2]

With almost 2,400 government employees seconded to work full-time in outside organizations, and with almost 60 percent of the groups in the area of education receiving this or another form of governmental subsidy, it is clear that the French government is heavily involved in encouraging the growth and maintenance of powerful interest groups in Paris. Interviews with the leaders of the main groups involved in education policy in 1983 and 1984 made clear that virtually all the national leaders of the groups attempting to influence education policy in France are themselves on the state payroll.

The American government is not as active in subsidizing interest groups as the French government, but 49 percent of the American groups in our sample report that they receive aid in the form of government grants or contracts. While our data do not indicate that the American government is as active as the French in delegating its own employees to work in outside groups, and while its support often comes in the form of contracts or grants to carry out specific tasks, its subsidies are nonetheless substantial. Not only does it give grants or contracts to fully half of the groups that express strong interest in educational policy (only marginally less than the 60 percent of the education groups supported by their government in France), but almost one-quarter (23 percent) of the American groups reported receiving grants of over $100,000. This amount exceeds the total budgets of most of the French groups in our sample.

Government agencies in both countries are heavily involved in subsidizing groups and in strengthening the interest group system. Either by delegating civil servants to work for them as in France, by granting federal contracts for services as in the United States, or by awarding direct cash grants, both governments are active supporters of the groups with which they deal. Neither could be said only to react passively to the creation and growth of interest groups.

Not only are both governments active in supporting the interest group systems, but they use essentially the same decision rules when distributing their subsidies, grants, personnel, and contracts. Table 1 shows that the French ministry of education, the U.S. department of education, and all the other government agencies in the two countries that maintain educational programs seem to be spending their money mainly upon the largest, the best established, and the most powerful elements in the interest group system.

The data make it seem that government agencies in the two countries use almost exactly the same decision rules in supporting groups, yet there are a few important differences. French governmental support seems to be more widely distributed than American support. In France, 32.7 percent of the groups in the first quartile of staff size—most of which maintain no professional staff whatsoever—nevertheless report receiving some financial support from the government, while only 18.9 percent of the American groups in the lowest quartile of staff size (less than three staffers) report that they receive financial support. The same pattern holds at the top of the distribution where 87.5 percent of the French groups in the fourth quartile of staff size (six or more staffers) receive governmental aid, while only 75.7 percent of the American groups in the fourth quartile (thirty or more staff members) receive governmental support. The French numbers consistently are higher in all parts of Table 1, no matter whether age, total revenue, or staff size is used to differentiate the groups.[3]

Government support is spread more evenly across the interest group system in France than in the U.S., but Table 1 shows that government support seems to flow to the most powerful and better established groups in each country. Presumably, government agencies are trying to build stable and sympathetic constituencies that will join cooperatively in the implementation of government programs and will be supportive when the agency makes requests for budget increases or new programs. These rules also seem relatively free from partisan overtones. While the Socialist government in power in 1984 was sympathetic on ideological grounds to many of the groups which it was subsidizing in the area of education, it built upon a program which had been created and enlarged during a period of conservative governments.[4] Similarly in the United States, our panel data from 1980 and 1985 indicate that governmental support of interest groups dropped during the Reagan years, but only marginally.

Table 1 Percent of French and American Educational Interest Groups Receiving Government Funds, by Age, Revenue, and Staff Size

	France	United States
A: Creation Date		
1970–1984	39.3%	28.6%
1951–1969	57.1	48.6
1925–1950	76.5	51.4
1830–1924	65.2	59.2
B: Revenue[1]		
First Quartile	30.4%	25.0%
Second Quartile	45.8	32.1
Third Quartile	80.8	60.0
Fourth Quartile	95.0	75.9
C: Staff Size[2]		
First Quartile	32.7%	18.9%
Second Quartile	65.0	51.5
Third Quartile	72.4	53.1
Fourth Quartile	87.5	75.7

[1]Revenues are divided into approximate quartiles in each country: In France: less than 100K francs; 100K to 600K francs; 600K to 4M francs; and over 4M francs. In U.S.: less than $250K; $250K to $800K; $800K to $2.5M; and over $2.5M.

[2]Staff sizes are divided into approximate quartiles in each country: In France: zero; one; two to five; six and greater. In U.S.: zero to three; four to nine; ten to twenty-nine; thirty and greater.

It is consistent with corporatist practice that the French ministries should support the largest, and presumably most influential, groups, since they are tied to them through a formal system of recognition and consultation, but one might expect agencies in the pluralist American system to follow a somewhat less restricted strategy in building their constituencies. American agencies would be prompted to build support in several parts of the political spectrum, rather than to concentrate their resources on the largest, best endowed groups. In reality, however, both governments attempt to build strong and stable constituencies for their programs, essentially through the subsidization of the largest interest groups.

Interactions with Interest Groups Bureaucratic agencies of government in both countries use the same rules in granting access to interest groups as they use in deciding which groups to subsidize. In Table 2 we compare French and American responses to similar questions

concerning the degree to which interest groups are consulted by agencies of government during the process of decision making. The American groups were asked whether they were "regularly consulted by government agencies when they are considering new legislation or changes in policy." French interest groups were asked: "When the government is preparing a law or a decree which touches your interests, does the Ministry consult you on the contents of that new policy?" The American question was in yes/no form, while the French groups were asked to choose whether consultation took place "always, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never." In Table 2 those American groups who answered "yes" are compared with the French groups that answered either "always" or "usually." Since the American question

Table 2 Percent of French and American Educational Interest Groups Regularly Consulted by Government Agencies, by Revenue, Staff Size, and Receipt of Governmental Funds

	France[1]	United States[2]
A: Revenue[3]		
First Quartile	39%	50%
Second Quartile	41	57
Third Quartile	48	63
Fourth Quartile	67	72
B: Staff Size[4]		
First Quartile	34%	54%
Second Quartile	35	55
Third Quartile	50	59
Fourth Quartile	73	73
C: Receipt of Governmental Funds		
No	29%	53%
Yes	58	67

[1]Question text for French questionnaire: When the government is preparing a law or a decree which touches your interests, does the Ministry consult you on the contents of that new policy? ("Always", "usually" combined here as "yes"; "sometimes", "rarely", "never" combined as "no".)

[2]Question text for American questionnaire: Is this association regularly consulted by government agencies when they are considering new legislation or changes in policy? (yes/no).

[3]Revenues are divided into approximate quartiles in each country: In France: less than 100K francs; 100K to 600K francs; 600K to 4M francs; and over 4M francs. In U.S.: less than $250K; $250K to $800K; $800K to $2.5M; and over $2.5M.

[4]Staff sizes are divided into approximate quartiles in each country: In France: zero; one; two to five; six and greater. In U.S.: zero to three; four to nine; ten to twenty-nine; thirty and greater.

referred to "regular" consultation, French groups which reported that they were "sometimes" consulted were coded "no," along with those saying "rarely" and "never."

Table 2 displays an unmistakable pattern. No matter whether the interest groups in the two countries are differentiated by the size of their staffs, their budgets, or receipt of financial support from the government, government agencies in France and the U.S. always consult mainly with the best endowed interest groups. The larger and richer the interest groups, the more likely they are to be consulted by agencies when policies are being formulated. As might be expected in a formalized corporatist system, these tendencies are somewhat stronger in France than in the U.S. In each portion of Table 2, where the groups are divided into quartiles, the French agencies are less likely to consult with the smaller, poorer groups, although the American and French agencies consult with the larger, richer groups at about the same rates. Where budget size is concerned, for example, 39 percent of the French groups in the first quartile report being consulted, compared to 50 percent of the American groups in the first quartile. Among French groups in the fourth quartile, 67 percent report being consulted, compared to 72 percent of the largest American groups. The pattern, however, is slightly uneven. Getting money from the government, for example, does not seem to lead to prior consultation quite so readily in France as in the U.S., although the French government is much less likely to consult with groups it does not subsidize.

The message from these data is clear. In both countries, the agencies of government and the largest educational interest groups seek each other out for consultation and advice in the early stages of policymaking. This process is more pronounced in France than in America, but the differences are not large, and the patterns of interest group access in the two countries bear a strong resemblance.

The Groups

Researchers studying French policymaking have generally noted that French interest groups are small and weak.[5] However, these reports have varied depending on the sector of the economy on which they have focused. Several writers have noted the powerful groups which dominate single areas and have described corporatist patterns of policymaking in these sectors.[6] In some cases the researchers studying French groups have come to similar conclusions as those studying the state, but in other cases their conclusions have been diametrically opposed.

Those who have studied the group system in the United States also have come to different conclusions depending on the economic sector (such as agriculture, transportation, and health) which they have studied. While many have noted the strength and diversity of the groups active in American politics,[7] others have noted the monopoly status and close cooperation of groups in particular sectors of the economy.[8] The literature on subgovernments, iron-triangles, and the like has many corporatist overtones and is in any case a far cry from the open system of pluralist interaction described by others. Those taking a broad view of American groups have been struck by their strength and diversity and have concluded that the system must be marked by conflict and bargaining, but those focusing on the relations among groups and between groups and the government in a number of different sectors of the economy have described cooperation and consensus more than conflict.

The Size, Wealth, and Age of Interest Groups Despite the similarities in the types of groups present in the French and American samples, despite the centralization of the French governmental structure which encourages groups to be active at the national rather than only at the local or regional levels, and despite the more active role of the French government in subsidizing groups, there are impressive differences in the size, wealth, and even the average age of the groups in the two systems. American groups have larger staffs, are better financed, and are older than their French counterparts, as Table 3 shows. These data confirm previous studies of the French interest group system which have emphasized the smaller staffs and less developed organizational resources of groups in France.[9]

Thirty-three percent of the American groups were founded prior to 1924, and 57.1 percent before 1950, while only 18.1 percent of the French groups were founded before 1924, and only 44.9 percent of the total were in place by 1950. The growth of the educational systems of both countries has been accompanied by the creation of associations representing new professional specialties among teachers and administrators, but our data indicate that the American system spawned such groups much sooner and in greater numbers than the French system. Of course the disruptions associated with two world wars may have caused many French groups to reorganize, and there was a spurt of growth in the immediate postwar period in France. We suspect that the French group system was not as highly developed as

Table 3 Age, Revenue, and Staff Size of French and American Educational Interest Groups

	France	United States
A: Creation Date		
1830–1924	18.1%	33.3%
1925–1950	26.8	23.8
1951–1969	33.1	23.8
1970–1984	22.0	19.0
B: Revenue (Thousands of US Dollars)		
Less than 12.5	24.7%	7.9%
12.5 to 125	40.9	12.6
125 to 250	5.4	11.0
250 to 800	16.1	22.0
800 to 2,500	6.5	23.6
2,500 and over	6.5	22.8
C: Staff Size		
Zero	30.8%	7.6%
One	12.0	3.8
Two to Five	14.3	26.5
Six to Ten	17.3	16.7
Eleven to Twenty-five	14.3	19.7
Twenty-six to One hundred	8.3	21.2
Over One hundred	3.0	4.5

the American even before the war, however, and in any case our data show that it was far less developed in 1984.

The budgets of the French groups appear minuscule when compared to the American groups. One-quarter of the French groups report budget totals of less than 100,000 francs, the equivalent of only $12,500 at 1984 exchange rates, and two-thirds of the French groups have budgets of less than $125,000. Only the very smallest American groups operate on such limited budgets. In fact, as Table 3 shows, almost three-quarters of the sample of American educational interest groups operate on budgets that exceed $250,000, and over one in five American groups have budgets that exceed $2,500,000. Only 13 percent of the French groups have budgets in excess of $800,000.

It is certainly true that the budgets of the French groups are much smaller than their American counterparts, but the budgetary figures reported by the groups are slightly misleading. We noted earlier that the French government seconds thousands of personnel to work in the outside groups, and the salaries of these staff members do not appear in the budgets of the French groups, so budget totals do not accurately reflect their total organizational resources. More accurate comparisons can be made using the total staff sizes of the French and American groups, which are displayed in Section C of Table 3.

Once the seconded civil servants are included in the staffs of French interest groups, they still remain smaller than the American groups, but the differences are not so great as when the budgets are compared. Fifty-seven percent of the French groups have fewer than five staff members, compared to only 38 percent of the American groups. Forty-three percent of the French groups have no full-time staff or only one paid staffer, as opposed to only 11 percent of the American groups. Almost half (45 percent) of the American groups have more than ten staff members, while only one-quarter (26 percent) of the French groups exceed this number. Thirty-one percent of the French groups have no full-time staff at all.

The data displayed in Table 3 show that educational interest groups in the French system are not as large or as wealthy, or presumably as active, as those in America. Both systems predominantly represent the professionals who deliver educational services (teachers of physical education, psychological counselors, school superintendents), rather than students or parents, and since the structure of occupational roles in the two systems is similar, about the same number of groups have emerged in each country. Because of the greater size of the American educational system, however, the American groups tend to have much larger memberships and much more revenue. The American groups also began appearing decades earlier. The relative weakness of the French educational interest groups certainly makes it difficult to develop corporatist relations with governmental agencies, despite the efforts of the state to foster closer relations. This is probably the principal reason why the French government is so generous in its material support of interest groups. In the absence of governmental aid, the groups would be even smaller, and governmental negotiators would have even fewer representatives of affected interests with whom to deal.

Conflict and Cooperation among Interest Groups Our examination of the relationships between interest groups and agencies of the national government in France and the U.S. has revealed many striking similarities. The similarities end, however, when we examine the relationships *among* interest groups in the two systems. The French interest group system is rife with intergroup conflict despite the formal structure of corporatist consultation and the

generally cooperative arrangements that most of the groups maintain with the ministry of education. In the U.S., there is comparatively little conflict among groups, and in fact much cooperation and coalition building, despite growing disagreements with the department of education during the Reagan administration. The educational interest group system in France reflects the deep, often emotional conflicts in the society over the appropriate aims and methods that should be employed in the schools, while the American groups generally reflect a professional and public consensus on the value and the fundamental goals of education.

Of course, there is great conflict in France between supporters of the public schools and partisans of the private, church-supported system. The intensity of this conflict and the consensus among the public school groups in their opposition to the private school organizations often make it seem that consensus might be the norm among the public school groups. While the public school groups are indeed united in their *laique* consensus, this is of little help in promoting cooperation on questions affecting only the public schools or in circumstances affecting the public and private schools equally. Conflict among education groups in France is not limited to the public-private school debate, though this is by far the most noteworthy and visible conflict to the outsider.

The ideological conflicts among education groups in the public sector in France center around the Socialist-Communist split. This is reinforced by pedagogical and jurisdictional differences between the groups. For example, the largest elementary school union has a Socialist leadership, espouses a pedagogical platform that emphasizes the need for greater equality in education and focuses on the early years of schooling, and makes every effort to lure members away from the dominant secondary school union. The dominant secondary school union has a Communist leadership, a pedagogical program emphasizing achievement rather than equality, and attempts to resist the efforts of the elementary school union to gain membership at its expense. The fact that both these unions are members of the *Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale* (National Education Federation, FEN) does little to soften their hostilities. The FEN has been described as a "battlefield on which the two largest members exchange artillery fire."[10] As one FEN leader described the tone of their internal meetings during an interview in his Paris office: "Certain subjects are eminently conflictual, and we have special sound-proof rooms where we hold our internal debates!" The fights between the member unions of the FEN (and between the FEN unions and others) are political, ideological, categorical, and pedagogical at the same time. The fact that these groups can agree to demonstrate against the private schools, in short, does not imply that they share a consensus about the questions facing the public schools.

We do not have exactly comparable questions in our two surveys about the patterns of intergroup conflict and cooperation, but indications of the differences between the two systems are so strong that they appear over and over again in our data despite slight differences in measurement. For example, when French groups were asked whether there existed "one or more organizations with which your organization finds itself often in disagreement," 72.3 percent said yes, and a whopping 54 percent of the total sample described their conflict as "very great (questions of principle)" in a five-point scale which also included the milder descriptions of "fairly great," "not very great," "not very great at all (questions of detail)," and "none." Only about one-quarter of the French groups reported no competition. Conflict is the norm in France, but in the United States consensus is much

more common. When American groups were asked whether "some organized groups oppose the policy aims of this organization," only 28.6 percent said yes, and only 23.1 percent of the American groups said that they worked in a policy area "marked by intense conflict or disagreement over fundamental policy goals."

Besides being deeply divided, the French groups are more likely to report the existence of rivals who seek to replace them as representatives of their members. When French groups were asked whether there were "any other groups which seek to defend the same interests as those which your organization defends," 86 percent said yes, and the median number of competing groups mentioned was three. Ten percent of the French groups mentioned more than eight groups with which they were engaged in competition. When the American groups were asked about the amount of competition they experience within the field of education, only 26.2 percent of them chose the statement, "This association engages in continuous competition for members or resources with other associations in this field," while 44.1 percent chose the statement, "This association competes for members or resources only from time to time with other associations in this field," and 29.7 percent reported "little competition" with other associations.

American groups also seem to be more prone than the French to cooperate with each other in the pursuit of their policy aims. The American groups were asked to characterize themselves concerning "the degree to which they coordinate their activities with those of other associations." Only 11.3 percent chose the statement, "This association normally operates alone when engaging in public affairs," while 43 percent said that they sometimes joined "ad hoc coalitions with other organizations," and 45.8 percent said that they normally coordinated their "public affairs activities with other organizations" that share their goals. About 75 percent of the French groups agreed with the statement that formal or informal ties existed that would allow them to "act in common" with other organizations in the field of education, but only 8 percent reported that such common actions took place very often, while 22 percent reported that common action was rare. Forty-seven percent of the French groups reported that common actions with other groups occurred never or only rarely, as compared to only 11 percent of the American groups. Despite the differences in the wording of these questions, it seems plain that American educational interest groups operating in a system supposedly marked by hard bargaining and continuously shifting alliances are more prone than the educational interest groups in France to engage in cooperative actions and much less likely to be engaged either in competition or conflict with each other.

Conclusion

The policy systems associated with education in America and in France obviously are not identical. The two countries differ in almost every important feature of their bureaucratic and legislative processes, yet the relations between bureaucratic agencies and interest groups in the field of education are very much alike. Where there are differences, moreover, they often run counter to the expectations created by the general characteristics of the two governmental systems.

At the outset, it is not surprising to find that educational interest groups in America are

older, better established, larger, and more active than their French counterparts. The differences would be even greater if it were not for the generous subsidies provided to interest groups by the French government. We also find, however, that government agencies in the U.S. provide large amounts of financial support for interest groups, and in both countries these grants mainly go to the larger, wealthier, older, and better established groups. American interest groups have developed many sources of income beyond government subsidies and thus are able to assemble large staffs that engage in efforts to influence the Congress, and they strive to mobilize public opinion behind their policies. Some of the American groups even have direct access to the presidency, a relationship enjoyed by only a handful of the largest groups in France. French and American groups relate to about the same number of bureaucratic agencies, but the relationship of French groups with the ministry of education is the crucial test of their influence. While American groups that experience poor relations with the department of education may still enjoy ready access to congressional committees or may be able to reach some of their goals through the courts, a French group with no access to the ministry of education has many fewer governmental access points. Those groups capable of generating mass mobilizations may be able to force the government to pay attention to their demands, but this is often a last resort of those who can not generate support from within the governmental structures. For example, when medical students demonstrated in the streets in the spring of 1983, they succeeded in generating enough political pressure to force the government to alter the proposals which offended them, but shortly afterwards decisions reverted back to the civil servants and others in the ministries of health and education where the students' views held very little sway.[11]

When the focus of attention shifts from the relations between government agencies and interest groups to the relations among the many educational groups within the two systems, we find striking contrasts between the two countries. The French groups are locked in bitter rivalries and seldom join each other in cooperative coalitions. The American groups, on the other hand, report that there is relatively little conflict over education, and they often join together to work toward the same public policy goals. The French interest groups working in a system organized along corporatist lines exhibit the traits usually associated with a pluralist system, while the American groups working in a supposedly pluralist system share a sense of purpose and a level of professional consensus that one might have expected to find in a corporatist system.

Our data suggest that one can not properly characterize the broad operating principles of a national policymaking system by reference only to the relations its central bureaucratic agencies maintain with the interest groups operating in their immediate policy areas. The French government makes every effort to manufacture cooperation and consensus, but its efforts are continuously frustrated because of deep social and religious cleavages in the society which are reflected in the interest group environment. The government heavily subsidizes the educational interest groups it would like to join with as partners, but fierce rivalries among clerics, Communists, and Socialists constantly upset the neat, centralized system it seeks to build. The American government is not as active as the French in attempting to build consensus surrounding its educational policies, but it is much more successful. The lack of organized opponents and the high level of cooperation among those

groups active in the area of education in the U.S. make the task of the American department of education much simpler than that of the French education ministry.

The activities of the governments, the policy process surrounding education, and the level of investment which each country has made in its public education system can not be understood without reference to the social forces that have developed around the two systems. In order to characterize accurately the national policymaking systems of modern democracies, the analyst must investigate both the formal institutions of government and the social environments in which they operate. The institutional arrangements that governments create can have an important impact on the outcome of public policy by magnifying the power and influence of certain actors and by reducing the influence of others, but it is not always possible to resolve all conflicts within these formal processes. Formal constitutions and even massive governmental subsidies are not enough to overcome the influence of fundamental social forces which have shaped the educational systems in each country.

The two educational systems developed in very different circumstances, and their different histories explain the different interest group environments which surround them. The American system of public education grew essentially out of a vacuum. Schools were built in areas which previously had none; public education grew quickly and without any organized opposition. When American school teachers of the nineteenth century established schools where none had existed before, they generally had the support of virtually the entire population. When French *instituteurs* of the time of Jules Ferry arrived to open school houses in remote villages, on the other hand, they literally had to take students away from the priests. Towns were immediately divided in two, between those who would continue to send their children to the priests and those who would send them to the public schools.[12]

The public school system in France became the symbol of the battle between republicans and monarchists, between church-goers and anticlericals, between the political parties of the left and those of the right. To this day, it has lost only little of this symbolic quality. While the republicans have won the battle over the expansion of the public school system, the legacy of the great conflict between the *école de la république* and the *école de l'église* contributes to a lack of consensus surrounding the educational system. The organizations that were built up in support of the public school system are closely tied to the political parties of the left because of the peculiar role of education in the expansion of the republic. Of course there is support for the increased opportunities associated with education in France, but each effort at expansion takes on political or partisan overtones, making cooperation and agreement difficult.

Not only are French groups which support public education more divided among themselves than their American counterparts, but they also operate in an environment of latent partisanship. Issues which would generate a consensus across the political spectrum in the United States can lead to partisan conflict in France because of the nature of the historical development of the educational system. Educational policymaking in the U.S. rests on a broadly based national agreement among all factions that public education is a cornerstone of the nation. Even in a period of shrinking federal expenditures under the Reagan administration, and despite rising tensions between public and private educators, there remains a consensus about the great value of public education as a gateway to opportunity, and most political leaders firmly agree that it should be protected and opened up for the broadest possible participation.[13] This broad consensus reduces the level of

conflict over education at the national level and allows the educational interest groups to work together to reach a goal shared by all of them: to gain more support for education from the federal government. Arguments arise among these groups over the priorities that should be established and over how the federal programs should be administered, but there are few disagreements over the ultimate purpose or value of public education. These factors have allowed American educational policymakers to operate in the kind of consensual manner usually associated with a centralized, corporatist system despite the extreme decentralization and fragmentation of governmental decision making in the U.S. In France, neat corporatist arrangements have been the goal of the state, and the organization and activities of the government have worked in this direction, but the organizational and societal conflicts associated with this public service have made this goal unattainable.

The strongly held sentiments that bind together the educational interest groups into a cooperative policy community in the U.S. also allow the government to take the lead in encouraging political mobilization in support of this policy community's programmatic goals. Education is a public good from which many individuals in the society receive almost no direct, material benefit. Support for the provision of such an expensive public good in the pluralist American system, as is the case in similar policy areas like programs for the elderly and services for the handicapped, children, and the mentally ill, comes primarily from the organizations representing the professionals who provide the services, backed by government agencies, private foundations, and commercial suppliers in the field. If the government in America actually was only a passive instrument that responded to pressures from those forces that were able to organize themselves for political participation with private resources, it would be almost impossible for it to provide any public goods beyond the barest necessities for the maintenance of public order. Organized support for many elements of the welfare state would never emerge unless the government itself, in league with public service professionals acting as representatives for their clients, played a central role in the process of political mobilization. The government is able to play this central role only in areas like education where a strong national consensus exists about the legitimate needs of those who are receiving the public service. In the U.S., the "public school was the only established American institution in which social reformers and the state could effectively join forces. In Europe, class privileges and antagonisms, and the unresolved jurisdictional conflicts between states and churches, prevented such a joining of forces."[14]

Perhaps more important than the relations between the government and any particular group in either country are the relations among the groups themselves and between the groups associated with the policy area and the broader society. The mutual hostility and competition which characterize the relations between groups in France make it almost impossible for the government to impose order or to establish a consensus within the policy community. The French groups are much more likely than their American counterparts to raise objections to governmental plans, if only because they are in competition with each other for members. Many objections take on partisan overtones, thereby reducing the chances for broad social consensus about the nation's educational system. In the United States, a different organization of outside interest groups, which is characterized by lower levels of competition over members, makes it easier for the policy community to achieve consensus. A climate of consensus allows coalition building among proponents of federal

aid to education in the United States where there is suspicion and acrimony in France, despite the incessant efforts of the French government to encourage cooperation and unity.

NOTES

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1. See Arnold J. Heidenheimer, "The Politics of Public Education, Health and Welfare in the USA and Western Europe: How Growth and Reform Potentials Have Differed," *British Journal of Political Science,* 3 (1973), 315–340; Anthony King, "Ideas, Institutions, and the Policies of Governments: A Comparative Analysis," *British Journal of Political Science,* 3 (1973), 291–314, 409–424; and Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Hugh Heclo, and Carolyn Teich Adams, *Comparative Public Policy,* 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).

2. Frank R. Baumgartner, "French Interest Groups and the Pluralism-Corporatism Debate," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans, 1985.

3. There is the theoretical possibility of autocorrelation in sections B and C of Table 1, dealing with revenue and staff size. Those groups receiving government aid in both countries might have larger budgets and staffs precisely because of the impact of the governmental aid which they receive. This is not the case, however. The largest government grants go to the groups which already have the largest staffs and budgets. Recalculation of the figures in Table 1 to exclude those portions of the staff and budgets which are due to state support leads to virtually identical results as those reported.

4. See Baumgartner.

5. This literature is voluminous. See, for example, Henry Ehrmann, *Organized Business in France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), *Interest Groups on Four Continents* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1958), "French Bureaucracy and Organized Interests," *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 5 (1961), 534–555, "Interest Groups and Bureaucracy in Western Democracies," in Reinhard Bendix, ed., *The State and Society* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968); Jean Meynaud, *Les groupes de pression en France* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1958), *Nouvelles études sur les groupes de pression en France* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1962), "Les groupes de pression sous la Ve République," *Revue Française de Science Politique,* 12 (1962), 672–697; and Frank L. Wilson, "Alternative Models of Interest Intermediation: The Case of France," *British Journal of Political Science,* 12 (1982), 173–200, "Les groupes d'intérêt sous la cinquième république," *Revue Française de Science Politique,* 33 (1983), 220–254, "French Interest Group Politics: Pluralist or Neocorporatist?," *American Political Science Review,* 77 (1983), 895–910, "Reply to Keeler," *American Political Science Review,* 79 (1985), 822–823.

6. John T. S. Keeler, *The Politics of Neo-Corporatism in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Louis Bériot, *Le bazar de la solidarité* (Paris: Lattès, 1985); Alain Cotta, *Le Corporatisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984); and Denis Segrestin, *Le phénomène corporatiste: Essai sur l'avenir des systèmes professionnels fermés en France* (Paris: Fayard, 1984).

7. Robert F. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951); David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951).

8. See Thomas L. Gais, Mark A. Peterson, and Jack L. Walker, "Interest Groups, Iron Triangles, and Representative Institutions in American National Government," *British Journal of Political Science,* 14 (1984), 161–185.

9. See Ehrmann; Meynaud; Andrew Cox and Jack Hayward, "The Inapplicability of the Corporatist Model in Britain and France: The Case of Labor," *International Political Science Review,* 4 (1983), 217–240; and René Mouriaux, *Les syndicats dans la société française* (Paris: Presses de la Foundation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1983).

10. John S. Ambler, "Neocorporatism and the Politics of French Education," *West European Politics,* 8 (1985), 23–42.

11. See Frank R. Baumgartner, "Parliament's Capacity to Expand Political Controversy in France," *Legislative Studies Quarterly,* 12 (1987), 33–54.
12. Antoine Prost, *Histoire de l'enseignement en France: 1800–1967* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1968).
13. Harry L. Summerfield, *Power and Process: The Formulation and Limits of Federal Educational Policy* (Berkeley: McCuthchan Publishing Co., 1974); Stephen K. Bailey, *Education Interest Groups in the Nation's Capital* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1975); Norman C. Thomas, *Education in National Politics* (New York: David McKay, 1975).
14. Heidenheimer, "Politics of Public Education," pp. 320–321.