THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT:

EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

A Dissertation

by

ERIN KELLY MELTON

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2011

Major Subject: Political Science

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Exploring the Importance of Environmental Support

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Kenneth J. Meier
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	Scott Robinson
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ABSTRACT

The Politics of Public Management:

Exploring the Importance of Environmental Support. (May 2011)

Erin Kelly Melton, B.A., Lincoln University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Kenneth J. Meier

The machinations of the political environments of public organizations present interesting questions for scholars and practitioners alike. Moving beyond simply recognition of the inherent role of politics in the administrative process, I uncover specific causal mechanisms from the external environment to assess their influence on public administration. To investigate this phenomenon, I utilize data from the public education sector, one of the most common areas of public service delivery.

This dissertation utilizes data from over 1000 Texas school districts. Given the heterogeneous nature of the state, these data are applicable to similarly structured organizations while the theories tested are tractable to other types of public policy. Unique to this project is the conceptualization of the role race plays for public organizations. Literature abounds with respect to how race affects clientele-agency relationships, but fails to address the effects of race and ethnicity at the upper echelons of public management. This research endeavor approximates reality in a meaningful way as our nation – and therefore our public organizations – becomes increasingly diverse in nature.

The findings suggest that support, and more generally, the politics of the environment, matter for organizational performance. In some instances, such as turbulence in the environment, the role support plays in public service delivery varies. It is also the case that the presence of a racial or ethnic minority at the top levels of public organizations has a detrimental effect and mitigates an otherwise strong, positive association between supportive attitudes in the political environment and agency outcomes.

DEDICATION

For my parents, Keith and Cassandra DeVan

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It seems as if the word "acknowledgements" fails to express the enormity of my gratitude to each individual that has played a role in my graduate matriculation. I could never repay the invaluable laughs, tears, and moments shared with each of you, but hopefully this will serve as an attempt at an earnest try.

I am extremely fortunate to have observed, learned from, and worked with a wonderful advisor whose care and concern for me as both a scholar and person have been demonstrated in multiple ways. Professor Kenneth J. Meier - affectionately known as "Cap'n Smooth" - made it his priority to ensure I recognized my own potential. I am eternally grateful for his support of my scholastic endeavors and understand that many of the opportunities I have been afforded would not have been possible without him. The opening of my view to not only what I might study, but ultimately who and what I could be is attributable to him.

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Professors Erik Godwin and Scott Robinson provided critical evaluations of my work and suggested interesting directions in which the project might progress. Their

"lenses of practicality" will likely increase the rigor and applicability of my ideas. I appreciate the time and effort they put forth to cultivate me as a scholar.

My scholarly development is not only attributed to current faculty members, but also to those from my undergraduate matriculation at Lincoln University. The advising that I received there allowed me to approach the thought of doctoral degree with confidence.

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members of my department – both faculty and students – I extend thanks for making my time at Texas A&M University a great experience.

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I am confident that God led me to Texas A&M University to receive my Ph.D.; however, God's plans are always so much bigger than a single reason or opportunity. God wanted me to grow spiritually and allowed me to do so under the leadership of Pastor Marie Nutall. For her love, wisdom, and encouragement, I am especially thankful. I admire her as both a person and spiritual leader; her "light" was so very precious in my life. To Deacon Lorenza Nutall and the members of New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church, "I feel good, oh, I feel so good, unh!" May God bless each of you for loving me! I also extend special appreciation to Pastor Parker and the members of Antioch Baptist Church. Your continued love, prayers, encouragement, and warmth have been invaluable.

When I think about my family, I do not know where I would be without them. They are my backbone and reason for wanting to succeed. To my grandparents, thank you for always believing in me. I have the best grandmothers in the world! I was blessed to have three grandfathers – two of which are deceased, but nevertheless present in my life and spirit always. It does not get any cooler than my grandpas! To the rest of my extended family, thank you!

God has blessed me with an excellent set of parents. He knew what I needed when He granted me them. I am grateful for Dad's unique love and Mom's encouragement. I know they bombarded heaven for me when I needed it most. When I wanted to give up or doubted my potential, they reminded me of my ability and worth. I mean hey, they even let me come home rent-free! I am extremely proud to dedicate this dissertation project to my parents - it would not have been possible without them.

Dear God, none of the pages listed heretofore or thereafter would have been possible without You. When You created me, You knew what I would be. You also knew that I would humble myself before You lacking adequate words to capture the amount of gratitude I have for everything You have done. Thank You for being faithful when I was faithless, for reminding me that You equipped me, and for neither leaving me nor forsaking me during this entire process. Thank You for allowing me to see the fulfillment of my dreams; my every endeavor and accomplishment, I give back to You. Amen.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Public management scholarship has suggested that public organizations are fundamentally different from private organizations as a consequence of their highly political functions and environments (Baldwin and Farley 1991; Fottler 1981; Kobrak 1993; Pandey and Wright 2006; Rainey 1989; Whorton and Worthley 1981). Although political scientists who study bureaucracy have discussed a variety of ways in which politics influences public organizations (Dahl and Lindbloom 1953; Heclo 1977; Meier 1987; Wilson 1989), they have focused more on the political aspects of the phenomenon and less on its organizational manifestations. This research typically occurs at the agency level with limited attempts to examine the effects of the political environment at the individual level.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the concept of environmental support as it relates to public management. Literature in the fields of public administration, public management, and organizational theory suggest that environmental support leads to increased productivity. Support also acts as an indicator of positive relationships among the public manager and his environment (Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, and Toth 1997; Shore and Shore 1995). This evidence of positive relationships leads to the assumption that there is little to no conflict, at least among these actors, and allots the public manager time and resources to contend with the organizational goals and responsibilities at hand. It is also argued that support for an

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This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.

organization is essentially what allows it to exist (Pfeffer and Salancik 2003). In other words, if individuals in a given community fail to support an organization, the organization fails. Finally, scholars suggest that support from the external environment seems to provide a certain level of legitimacy - that is, individuals support an organization because they consider the organization's actions acceptable and appropriate according to a predefined, socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions (Carpenter 2001; Massey 2001). Environmental support can be likened to the concept of feedback mechanisms. In instances of positive feedback, the organization interprets supportive positions from the environment as indicators that they are doing something right. Negative feedback, on the other hand, alerts the organization that it is doing something wrong (or at least performing actions that do not align with the preferences of members of the environment). This notice from members of the environment that the organization is not behaving in accordance with their preferences is also known in the political control literature as the concept of fire alarm oversight. By definition, fire alarms are mechanisms of voicing discontent that are strategically positioned in the external environment (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984). Members of the environment utilize these mechanisms to highlight dissatisfaction with organizations or promulgate preferences that have been overlooked or unmet. Organizations engage in iterative feedback loops which are likely to include both positive and negative feedback mechanisms. Essentially, it is feedback – either positive or negative – that serves as an indicator of support from the environment.

Theoretical Argument

Environmental support presents interesting, empirical questions for scholars of public management. It connotes that despite the inherent ability of the manager, a certain level of support from the environment being managed is necessary in order for an organization to exist. It further suggests that management is not a one-man show. In sum, the internal management of organizations is at least partly affected by the external environment.

This research tests the proposition that managers observe and later exploit environmental support for the benefit of their organizations. Research in this area is theoretically important because it links bureaucratic politics in political science with public management in public administration. Further, it sheds light upon the reality that factors outside the organization impact internal managerial efforts and thus organizational outcomes. The idea that exogenous factors affect managerial efforts is not at all new (Hicklin, O'Toole, and Meier 2008; Long 1949; Meier and O'Toole 2001, 2003, 2007), yet how support from members of the environment (i.e., members exogenous to the organization itself) is derived and potentially affects organizational performance are empirical questions that remain unexplored.

In seeking to understand the relationship among public management and the political environment, I propose the following model:

$$O_t = \beta_1(O_{t-1}) + \beta_2(E_t) + \beta_3(X_t) + \beta_4(R) + \beta_5(E_t * R) + \varepsilon_t \qquad [1]$$

where

O is some measure of outcome,

E is environmental support,

X is a vector of environmental forces, both resources and constraints,

R is the race of the superintendent,

ε is an error term,

the other subscripts denote time periods, and $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ and β_5 are estimable

parameters.

Meier and O'Toole (2006) incorporate three basic principles into their model of

management with regard to the systematic manner in which public management in

administrative systems actually takes place; those principles are adopted in like manner

here. First, the model is autoregressive – that is, the systems studied utilizing this model

are expected to "create processes and operating procedures that tend to reproduce the

same outputs over time" (Meier and O'Toole 2006). The autoregressive component of

the model is captured by the lagged dependent variable. Second, the model is nonlinear

rather than strictly additive given that factors have the potentiality to interact in a

multiplicative manner, rather than just an additive one (Meier and O'Toole 2006).

Third, the model's specification reflects O'Toole and Meier's view that public

management is contingent on a variety of other factors. This research focuses primarily

on the environmental component of this model to explore original research questions. I

include a discussion of the O'Toole and Meier model of public management in that I

largely borrow from its theoretical underpinnings and specification.

Many aspects of this model have been explored empirically in the public

management literature; however, the relationship between environmental support

specifically and organizational performance has not been examined heretofore. For this cause, I employ abbreviated forms of the model specified above to uncover the effects, if any, that environmental support has on performance. The appropriate specifications of the model are provided throughout, as they vary according to the research question.

An Ideal Setting: Education Policy

Educational policy is an exceptional area to test these claims. One reason school districts provide a unique opportunity to study this relationship is that they are highly professionalized, bureaucratic organizations composed of multiple members, yet led by a single governing body and public manager, namely the school board and superintendent (Bidwell 1965; Wirt and Kirst 2005). A hierarchical relationship exists between the school board and superintendent, yet this research seeks to expand the scope of potential influences on organizational performance by focusing not only on superiors or direct line subordinates (Mountford 2004; Wirt and Kirst 2005), but also on additional members of the environment (Chubb and Moe 1990; Meyer, Scott, and Strang 1987).

Second, data from Texas school districts provides an even greater advantage in that the state of Texas is extremely diverse on common cross-cutting cleavages such as race, class, and socioeconomic status. This is important given that the characteristics of Texas school districts represent approximately 1 of every 14 school districts in the United States (Hicklin, O'Toole, and Meier 2008). This induces great variation into the study increasing applicability, as the potential findings might be generalized to educational systems in other states and might inform other arenas of the public sector that are similarly structured.

Lastly, successful policy implementation requires school districts to work with members of the environment to foster educational success and solve educational problems (Meier and O'Toole 2003). Superintendents manage their districts within a broader constellation of other actors, who may be important sources of funds, staff, ideas, guidance, and additional resources. Consider parents who are often encouraged to attend parent-teacher conferences as well as school board meetings. It is possible that the by-products of such parental involvement are the reception and potential dissemination of information to their children in the home. In this case, students are encouraged both at home and school to perform well. Arguably, this plausible transfer of information is likely to take place between supportive, involved parents and their children. Coupled with support for the superintendent, the sheer number of instances wherein information is imparted to students could be greater and therefore the potential impact on educational performance might be greater as well.

Admittedly, cooperation is needed in any policy environment by its actors to ensure successful implementation, yet I deem the educational arena all the more dependent on supportive relationships to ensure optimal performance. Given the example above, it is plausible that members of the educational environment can act as reinforcing mechanisms inducing increased student achievement. The data allow testing of how the relationship between the organization and its external environment influences the internal happenings of the organization. This data set provides for the determination of whether support from the environment has a differential impact on performance.

Data on the performance and racial composition of the school districts is provided by the Texas Education Agency. This is supplemented by responses from a mail survey where district superintendents provided information about their management styles, goals, and time allocations (Meier and O'Toole 2003). Using data from over one thousand school districts, I empirically test the following three questions:

1) How does environmental support affect managerial strategy?

2) How does environmental support influence agency performance?

3) Does environmental support affect the performance of organizations differently contingent on the race of the public manager?

Each of these questions attempts to examine different aspects of the concept of environmental support in a school district stemming from three nodes: parents, the community, and school board. In the following sections, I discuss my theoretical and empirical approaches regarding each question.

I empirically evaluate this question using support as an independent variable to predict organizational performance. The data allow for the incorporation of environmental support into the model in two ways. One way is to evaluate each type of support – parental, community, and school board – as separate predictors of school district performance. The second method is to employ an overall measure of environmental support using factor analysis or an additive index. I argue that both ways of measuring environmental support are relevant for the research questions at hand. Employing each method potentially leads to three causal relationships: (1) a certain kind of support impacts performance, (2) support from any environmental actor affects

performance, or (3) both are related to performance. There are theoretical reasons why each scenario is plausible. In the first hypothesized scenario, it is conceivable that parental support may matter for student performance, while other types of support are insignificant. Parental support may be exemplified in the form of special attention to homework assignments or regular attendance at parent-teacher conferences. No matter its descriptive characteristics, parental support could in fact drive student performance while the other forms are unimportant. Should a specific type of support reach statistical significance, the argument could be made that it is a particularized type of support that is driving student performance. To generalize, it may be that support from a particular environmental actor is beneficial to the organization, while other sources of support are negligible. It is equally likely that the second scenario could occur – that is, support from any actor induces increased student achievement. This would lend the interpretation that the source of support is irrelevant; simply the presence of support is advantageous. Compared to the first scenario, this is a general explanation regarding the role of support in an environment. Finally, it is possible that particularized as well as generalized notions of support are related to organizational performance. Findings supporting any of the possible scenarios would be instructive given that this topic remains understudied in the literature. It is also true that findings using either method could be applied prescriptively to school districts specifically or public organizations generally due to the usage of an elaborate production function.

In sum, educational policy is an exceptional area to test my claims in that it provides three complementary avenues for exploration – that is, in the data there exist

bureaucratic, or administrative components, considerations of the political environment, and elements of managerial strategy. The linkages among public administration, political science, and public management are theoretically expounded upon throughout this discussion, while the data includes ample measures with which to empirically test my claims. Moreover, conclusions are expected to be generalizable to other public organizations given that they find themselves at the intersection of bureaucracy and politics.

The Role of Organizational Leadership in the Environment

Theoretical debate ensues in the literature regarding the role organizations or organizational leaders play in the survival and success of the organization. Some scholars hold that leadership is required to develop organizational support (Carpenter 2001; Long 1949; Rourke 1984) while others contend that leadership is irrelevant (Hannan and Freeman 1989; Kaufman 1985). In *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Public Policy* (1984), Rourke applies the concept of public support to the notion of power, suggesting that a bureaucratic "agency's power depends upon its ability to command the support of fervent and substantial clientele groups" (1). Rourke links this to leadership ability stating that leaders of the organization cultivate "clientele" (i.e., bases of support) in two ways. The first is to create a favorable perception toward the agency in the public at large. The second is by "building strength with attentive publics – groups that have a salient interest in the agency" (50). Support is therefore contingent on the style of leadership in organizations – that is, whether leaders decide to play an active role in the environment to facilitate and encourage supportive attitudes from the public. Rourke

further argues for the importance, especially in democratic societies, for an administrative agency to command strong political support in that a lack of support "severely circumscribes the ability of an agency to achieve its goals, and may even threaten its survival as an organization" (48). His theoretical contribution speaks to the relationship between bureaucracy and public policy. The argument that support is directly related to the acquisition and maintenance of power as well as organizational survival is empirically explored here.

Rourke's (1984) argument lends the interpretation that power is in part a function of support – when the environment is supportive of the agency, its power and authority are bolstered and thus the organization continues to exist. Decades prior to Rourke, Long (1949, 257) contended that "the lifeblood of administration is power." In like manner, Carpenter (2001) discusses the importance of political support for public agencies arguing that such support is an indication of legitimacy that leads to bureaucratic autonomy. In his view, political support translates into the ability of the agency to achieve its goals; legitimacy acts as a catalyst for organizational efficiency. I maintain that both the power and authority of organizations is at least partially derived from the support they receive from their environment. As preferences are met, members of the environment place confidence in the ability of the organization to meet their needs. School districts are consistently evaluated on their ability to meet the needs of students as well as other educational stakeholders. The power and authority within society that is allocated to school districts is a result of their ability to not simply perform, but to perform at a level that is widely regarded by the environment as

acceptable. Overall, school district performance is a function of the power and authority districts acquire from support within their environments.

In contrast, Kaufman (1985) argues that organizations do not have prescribed life expectancy. Rather, they are open systems capable of replenishing themselves from their environment. As their environments change, he suggests, organizations fail to adjust and, sooner or later, lose their ability to extract resources from their changed environments. Kaufman's perspective paints the picture that environmental change lends the organization to the possibility of demise or at least some level of organizational deficiency. More specific to this study, Kaufman suggests that if school districts fail to adjust to changes in their environment, they will lack support from the environment. Examples of environmental changes could come in the form of population shifts or alterations of state funding appropriations. Regardless of the source, school districts that are unable to adjust to change are unlikely to gain support from their environments and face potential demise. Little to no support for a school district from parents, the community, or the school board is likely to affect the entire gamut of indicators from student performance to district resources.

Hannan and Freeman (1989) have an even more pessimistic view of organizations; they base their conclusions primarily on population ecology theory. Population ecology is the study of dynamic changes within a given set of organizations. Using the population as their level of analysis, population ecologists statistically examine the birth and mortality of organizations and organizational forms within populations over long periods. Most organizations have structural inertia that hinders

adaptation when the environment changes. The theory contends that organizations survive simply because they have favorable environments. Management plays no role in developing public support; that is, managers are fortunate enough to exist in favorable environments (and thus politically supportive ones) or they are not.

In each of the theoretical arguments provided, success of the organization is contingent upon the status of the environment whether that status is one of change or stability.   However, the contrasts between the theoretical works of Rourke (1984) and Hannan and Freeman (1989) are striking in regard to the determinants of political support for the organization. On one hand, Rourke contends that support can be influenced by managerial actions as well as organizational performance. On the other, Hannan and Freeman maintain that public support is exogenously determined and essentially that management plays no role in its development.

Environmental Support and Managerial Strategy

It is clear from the extant literature that environmental support should matter for managerial strategy, yet the literature fails to address this question empirically. Before testing whether support matters for agency outcomes, it is of critical importance to uncover if it first influences the decision-making processes of public managers. Prior to environmental support having an effect on performance, it might cause public managers to make informed decisions with respect to the progression of their organizations. It is in these decisions that superintendents, for instance, resolve exactly how much they will focus on the external environment – that is, to what extent they will allow support (or a

lack thereof) to motivate their behaviors. In broader terms, what effects do environmental actors have on managers' strategic choices for public organizations?

Recall the base model introduced earlier. The question of how environmental support affects strategy is formulaically represented using an abbreviated form of the model, as the following:

$$S_t = \beta_1(E_t) + \beta_2(X_t) + \beta_3(S_{t-1}) + \varepsilon_t \qquad [2]$$

where

S is managerial strategy,

E is environmental support,

X is a vector of environmental forces, both resources and constraints with respect to the public manager as well as the district,

ε is an error term,

the other subscripts denote time periods, and β_1 and β_2 are estimable parameters. This truncated form of the model tests whether managerial strategy is a function of environmental support, previous managerial strategy, and environmental forces. Logically, this year's strategy decisions could be the result of spillover effects from last year while factors in addition to support are likely to influence managerial plans of action. Although probable, these arguments must be empirically tested.

Linking Environmental Support to Organizational Performance

The model specification shown in [2] explores whether environmental support affects managerial strategy. An alternative model shown in [3] evaluates the question of whether environmental support alters organizational outcomes. More specific to this

study, how does environmental support influence passage rates on state-mandated testing and college board exams? Does environmental support influence attendance and graduation rates in a school district? The following model applies to this empirical chapter:

$$O_t = \beta_1(O_{t-1}) + \beta_2(E_t) + \beta_3(X_t) + \varepsilon_t \qquad [3]$$

where

O is some measure of performance,

E is environmental support,

X is a vector of environmental forces, both resources and constraints,

ε is an error term,

the other subscripts denote time periods, and β_1, β_2 and β_3 are estimable parameters. The model implies that organizational performance is a function of lagged performance, environmental support, and other school district-related factors.

Support for the public manager is hypothesized to matter for a few reasons. Public managers who perceive they are supported by their environment are likely to have less instances of conflict and are thus able to devote their efforts to the performance of their organization, or at least not to resolving environmental conflict. Support from the environment allows the manager to focus on those issues pertinent to the organization rather than assuaging or dealing with conflict stemming from the external environment. Furthermore, the absence of conflict potentially frees up time for the manager to focus on the performance of subordinates and staff. Given this explanation, support allows the manager to manage effectively *inside* the organization.

Race and Public Management

The third empirical chapter provides an interesting synthesis of public management and race and ethnic politics. Prior to this chapter, this dissertation tackles questions related to the politics of public management. By introducing considerations of race and ethnicity, I address a long-lasting, salient area wherein there exists great potential for political cleavages. Incorporating racial diversity into this study approximates reality as we theorize about the internal workings of organizations as well as the resulting outputs and outcomes of such entities.

Further, the extant literature delineates the centrality of race and ethnicity in education politics. A comprehensive assessment of the politics of education specifies four values that have dominated in that arena – quality, efficiency, equity, and choice (Meier and O'Toole 2004; Wirt and Kirst 1997). Race is a factor in each of these values as they play out in the policy process. A considerable amount of emphasis is placed on the issue of quality, particularly test scores. Race, more specifically the racial gap in test scores, is an integral part of this debate (Jencks and Phillips 1998; Meier and O'Toole 2004). While previous analyses consider the race of the student or teacher in terms of educational outcomes, this analysis explores whether the characteristics of the superintendent impact overall performance. Theoretically, this is important in that race plays a significant role in most if not all educational policy issues (Meier and O'Toole 2004). Moreover, considering race is important, as we know little regarding its relationship to the management of organizations.

I consider whether support works differently when the public manager, in this case, the superintendent, is a racial minority (African American or Latino). To empirically test the potential mitigating impacts of race on environmental support as it relates to performance, I present the full model:

$$O_t = \beta_1(O_{t-1}) + \beta_2(E_t) + \beta_3(X_t) + \beta_4(R) + \beta_5(E_t * R) + \varepsilon_t \qquad [4]$$

where

O is some measure of outcome,

E is environmental support,

X is a vector of environmental forces, both resources and constraints,

R is the race of the superintendent,

ε is an error term,

the other subscripts denote time periods, and $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ and β_5 are estimable parameters.

What remains unclear are theoretical reasons why having a minority superintendent might depress the effect of support on school district performance; however, I am unable to discount that the presence of a Black or Latino superintendent might not positively impact the role support plays on performance. I evaluate this question using the aforementioned indicators of performance; however, I supplement these indicators with race-specific ones to determine if there exist differences when only observing the performance of minority students.

Minority superintendents are likely to be representative of large minority populations in the district environment – that is, a minority superintendent is likely the

result of the pool of eligible candidates available. This translates into two realities in the environment. First, that there is a sizeable minority population and second, that this population is properly educated to satisfy requirements for upper level management in education. The presence of minority superintendents, then, can result in varying scenarios. For instance, it is plausible that minority superintendents will have a positive impact on minority students, yet have little to no impact on Anglo students. Minority students might comprehend the presence of a co-ethnic representative in different ways. On one hand, minority students could gain a sense of empowerment in observing a minority upper level manager. This empowerment could translate into better performance. In like manner, minority students may be greater engaged in their educational endeavors if they consider that a minority superintendent is advocating for their interests. Further, the question at hand uses environmental support as a primary indicator of performance. If it is the case that minority superintendents must endure differential hardships (when compared to their white counterparts) to gain support, this reality will affect the argument proposed here.

I empirically assess whether the presence of a minority organizational leader affects the overall performance of an organization. Given that the literature suggests a differential impact of minority teachers on the performance of minority students (Meier and Bohte 2001; Meier and Stewart 1989, 1991), it is likely that a minority in the upper echelons of management will prove beneficial for minority students as well. Although Pitts (2005) finds that diversity among teachers, rather than administrators, is positively related to increased student performance, this analysis differs from existing research in

that it explores the potentiality of a linkage between diverse managers and performance *as conditioned by* environmental support. Furthermore, a treatment of the racial composition of the school district and how it applies to its ability to perform is generalizable in that it can be applied to any organization serving in or composed of a diverse environment or a diverse population, respectively.

Conclusion

In sum, this dissertation is an exploration into the realities public managers face as they seek to manage their organizations. It takes into account that the external environment is largely influential in the ability of managers to effectively manage inside the organization: that is, that there is a politics to public management. Because we know little about this topic on the whole, I contribute to the literature by exploring the theoretical linkages among public administration, political science, and public management. With empirical testing, I tell a comprehensive, integrated story that supports the common theme in each chapter – that is, environmental support for public organizations is a necessary component to effective public management.

It is my hope that this research endeavor sheds light upon the importance of the political environment for public service agencies. An understanding of how the periphery of an organization assumes an undeniable role is likely to inform scholarly approaches to broader public management questions related to strategy, structure, and processes. In practice, I contend managers have always paid attention to external demands even when scholarship has lagged behind in assessments of such phenomena. Providing some clarity with regard to the organization-environment relationship has the

potential to not only influence the field of public administration, but also inform political

science by addressing the permeation of politics into bureaucratic behavior and

processes.

CHAPTER II

FROM POLITICS TO PERFORMANCE: HOW ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

IMPACTS PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

Public organizations are fundamentally different from private organizations as a

consequence of their highly political functions and environments (Baldwin and Farley

1991; Fottler 1981; Kobrak 1993; Pandey and Wright 2006; Rainey 1989; Whorton and

Worthley 1981). Although political scientists who study bureaucracy have discussed a

variety of ways in which politics influences public organizations (Dahl and Lindbloom

1953; Heclo 1977; Meier 1987; Wilson 1989), they have focused more on the political

aspects of the phenomenon and less on its organizational manifestations. This research

typically occurs at the agency level with limited attempts to examine the effects of the

political environment at the individual level.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the concept of environmental support

as it relates to public management. Because "organizations are inescapably bound up

with the conditions of their environment" (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), they do not

operate in a vacuum. Political support from the environment has the potential to

influence the outcomes of public organizations as well as mitigate how the manager

responds to environmental demands and pressures. As Hall (1972) puts forth, "any

comprehensive framework for classifying organizations must take into consideration the

array of external conditions under which the organization operates." The theoretical

question of importance is whether environmental support leads to better organizational

performance. And if so, what role might an intermediary mechanism of managerial strategy play in this relationship?

Conceptual Clarity

Before reviewing the existing literature, it is important to clearly establish a working construct for the concept of environmental support. Support, in its simplest definition, is defined as the ability to bear the weight of, sustain, or keep from falling, slipping, or sinking. When applied to organizations, it is easy to modify these definitions for an applicable conceptualization of support. For current purposes, *support* refers to behaviors or activities that immediately exhibit or subsequently lead to the sustaining of organizational efforts to achieve a predefined goal or purpose. With this operationalization, it is clear that support can stem from internal efforts, external endeavors, or some combination of both. This study pays strict attention to the *external environment* – defined as actors outside of the organizational that possess the ability to indirectly contribute (or take away from) the outcomes of the organization (Lewin and Minton 1986). "The external environment refers to all those things outside organizations, such as customers, clients, competitors, suppliers, governments, and trade unions…each of these factors and components comprising the external environment could be treated as a stimulus to which the focal unit is exposed and which may, alone or in conjunction with several others, elicit or affect the actions taken by that unit" (Tung 1979, 673).

Literature Review

Existing literatures suggest a link between support and organizational performance; however, empirical findings have been substantiated mostly using internal support - that is, supportive attitudes and behaviors stemming from within the organization most often in a top-down manner – i.e., from superiors to subordinates. For instance, the works of George, Reed, Ballard, Colin and Fielding (1993) and Shore and Shore (1995) introduced the concept of "supportive organizations" – that is, those organizations that take pride in their employees, compensating them fairly and looking after their needs. Linkages have been drawn among perceptions of organizational support and employee morale and job satisfaction (Cropanzano et al. 1997; Nye and Witt 1993); job performance (Eisenberger et al. 1990); organizational commitment (Cropanzano et al 1997; Eisenberger et al. 1990; Eisenberger et al. 1986; Nye and Witt 1993; Settoon et al. 1996; Shore and Tetrick 1991; Wayne et al. 1997); and turnover (Cropanzano et al. 1997; Wayne et al. 1997). These studies are in contrast to those that consider the external environment in that the source of support is internal and centralized (when compared to multiple external sources). What is less established in the literature is theory and empirical testing related to support stemming from factors outside the organization.

Since the late 1950s, leading organizational theorists have advocated an open-systems approach to the study of organizations. This approach, they argued, would allow an investigation of the organization-environment interaction and, therefore, render studies of organizations more holistic (Katz and Kahn 1966; Tung 1979). Since then, a

growing number of people have been exploring different aspects of how formal organizations interact with, shape, and are shaped by their environments (Kotter 1979). To date, scholarship reflects the fluctuations among schools of thought in relation to the importance of the environment as research has waxed and waned with attention sometimes focused on external effects, and at other times on internal processes. "Systematic efforts to diagnose external relationships have lagged behind efforts applied to internal" (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967). The literature on the impact of organization-environment relations is varied; a review of existing works is classified into themes.

The Importance of Studying Environmental Support for Public Organizations

Traditional and neo-classical writings in public administration have tended to treat external political factors as a given, beyond the scope of public administration. Yet these factors are of central concern because so many of the organization's actions are a result of pressures from the external environment (Wamsley and Zald 1973). For example, public organizations seek to manipulate their political environments for legitimacy and resources. Concomitantly, scholars of public administration must be able to assess environments in order to predict changes in overall structure and managerial behaviors. Therefore, environmental - specifically external - support is likely to matter for the organization in myriad ways.

Legitimacy

Scholars suggest that support from the external environment seems to provide a certain level of legitimacy - that is, individuals support an organization because they consider the organization's actions acceptable and appropriate according to a predefined,

socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions (Carpenter 2001; Massey 2001). Organizations must deal with environments to survive (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967) by engaging in political exchanges to secure autonomy and authority (Wamsley and Zald 1973). Support from external entities situates the organization to conduct its day-to-day operations without interference. Rourke (1984) argues for the importance, especially in democratic societies, for an administrative agency to command strong political support in that a lack of support "severely circumscribes the ability of an agency to achieve its goals, and may even threaten its survival as an organization" (48). His argument lends the interpretation that power is in part a function of support – when the environment is supportive of the agency, its power and authority are bolstered and thus the organization continues to exist.

In like manner, Carpenter (2001) discusses the importance of political support for public agencies arguing that such support is an indication of legitimacy that leads to bureaucratic autonomy. Organizations depend on support from the environment for their continuity. Supportive positions suggest to the organization that it is doing something right and that the outcome, as well as the potential processes to achieve that outcome, is acceptable. As it relates to organizational performance, political support translates into the ability of the agency to achieve its goals; legitimacy acts as a catalyst for organizational efficiency (Carpenter 2001).

Resource-Dependence

"All organizations find themselves dependent, in varying degrees, on some elements in their external environments. This dependence is usually based on the

external elements' control of some resources which the organization needs such as land, labor, capital, or information" (Kotter 1979, 87; see also Thompson 1967). Following Kotter's (1979) logic, support is another resource that the organization needs to survive, forcing it to depend on the external environment. "The key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources" (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978, 2). Thus, support is a critical asset for which the organization must rely on the external environment to consistently provide.

Without support - often but not always exhibited in the form of financial resources from the public and stakeholders - it is difficult for organizations to exist. Given that resources constitute the lifeblood of organizational productivity, the presence of these actors is integral for the organization to maintain its mission and goals. "Their [organizations] effectiveness derives from the management of demands of interest groups upon which the organizations depend for resources and support" (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978, 2).

The importance of the resource to the organization as well as the number of potential suppliers affects the degree of dependency (Kotter 1979). When considering support from multiple actors, how much the organization relies on the environment to provide such a resource has the potential to affect its autonomy. Organizations that depend on the same sources for funding, personnel, and legitimacy will be more subject to the whims of resource suppliers than will organizations that play one source of support off against another (Thompson 1967). "A major task for high-level administrators is to reduce or neutralize threats to organizational stability resulting from

dependence on the environment" (Aldrich and Pfeffer 1975, 327). In sum, the

organization relies on the environment to provide support in the form of resources as it

seeks to achieve effectiveness.

Management and Structure

A third perspective maintains that the reason why organizations are internally

managed the way they are often results from how the external environment is structured

(Woodward 1965). Put another way, managers strategically construct their

organizations to pre-empt problems stemming from the external environment. When

difficulties surface, mechanisms are in place to combat deleterious effects. "What

happens is a consequence of the environment and the particular contingencies and

constraints deriving from that environment" (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). In this case,

the environment acts as an impetus for the manager to prospectively or reactively create

processes to deal with demands from outside the organization (Cameron 1986; Goerdel

2005).

"To avoid having to cater to the desires of those they are dependent upon, risk

their organization's demise, accomplish their goals, and to obtain discretion in setting

goals, those who are in positions of authority in organizations generally try to direct their

organizations to somehow actively manage their external dependence" (Kotter 1979,

87). Managers are aware that they are not in complete control over the resources they

need for their organizations (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978); however, they must take

caution with opening up their organizations to each and every concern of outside actors

for the sake of preserving authority. Moreover, for each of the aforementioned reasons,

organizations – more specifically, managers – must effectively manage outside of their

organizations in order to ensure performance and effectiveness. The external

environment is not negligible. Instead, it is a factor that has far-reaching consequences

for the prospects of organizational design, management, and survival.

Theory

Part One: Linking Support to Organizational Performance

The current chapter evaluates whether environmental support impacts

performance. Stated broadly, how does the environment affect organizational

outcomes? Further, what role do managers play in the translation of support into

organizational outcomes? Consider the following model:

$$O_t = \beta_1(O_{t-1}) + \beta_2(E_t) + \beta_3(X_t) + \varepsilon_t \qquad [5]$$

where

O is some measure of performance,

E is environmental support,

X is a vector of environmental forces, both resources and constraints,

ε is an error term,

the other subscripts denote time periods, and β_1, β_2 and β_3 are estimable parameters.

Modified from the series of public management studies by O'Toole and Meier (1999,

2000) and Meier and O'Toole (2001, 2003), the model takes into account past

performance as a predictor of current performance levels, support from the environment,

and resources and constraints that exist in the organization-environment.

Support for the organization is hypothesized to matter for a few reasons. Public managers who perceive they are supported by their environments are likely to have less instances of conflict and are thus able to devote their efforts to the performance of their organizations, or at least not to resolving environmental conflict. Support from the environment allows the public manager to focus on those issues pertinent to the organization rather than assuaging or dealing with discord stemming from the external environment. Support enables public managers to focus their managerial efforts on performance and effectiveness. These indicators are most important as the manager considers current as well as future levels of organizational support and legitimacy. The effective organization is the organization which satisfies the demands of those in its environment from whom it requires support for its continued existence (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).

Furthermore, the absence of conflict (or presence of support) potentially frees up time for the manager to focus on the performance of subordinates. Less time spent on resolving conflict might also translate into additional resources as the manager has free time to seek them out. Given this explanation, external support allows the manager to manage effectively *inside* the organization. I expect environmental support to increase performance on both low-end and high-end indicators.

Part Two: The Intermediary Role of the Public Manager

The literature suggests that the environment should directly impact how well organizations perform and meet their goals (Katz and Kahn 1966; Perrow 1970; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). While acknowledging a direct relationship among these variables, I

contend that scholars should also consider the role managers play in how support from the outside affects the internal workings of organizations. Consider an updated version of the previous model:

$$O_t = \beta_1(O_{t-1}) + \beta_2(E_t) + \beta_3(S) + \beta_4(E_t*S) + \beta_5(X_t) + \varepsilon_t \qquad [6]$$

where

O is some measure of performance,

E is environmental support,

S is managerial strategy,

E*S is the interactive effect of environmental support and managerial strategy

X is a vector of environmental forces, both resources and constraints,

ε is an error term,

the other subscripts denote time periods, and β_1, β_2 and β_3 are estimable parameters.

Imagine a scenario where the external environment fails to support an organization due to poor performance. As a member of the political environment, the public manager takes the pulse of the environment and reacts accordingly. A variety of factors might lead to poor performance; therefore, it is at this point that the public manager turns inward to determine what changes should be made to assuage the external environment. Pressures from the outside could lead to small changes, such as re-evaluative and restructuring techniques, or large-scale alterations such as the hiring, firing, and appointing of staff or resource usage. Either way, it is clear that levels of support from the environment do not directly influence performance. Instead, it is the

manager that facilitates how much of an impact support, or the external environment more generally, will have for the organization.

A reverse case is also plausible. Consider alternative circumstances in which an organization experiences high levels of support due to optimal performance. Support in this case might still impact internal processes in that the manager might reassess, for instance, his time allocations in terms of networking activity. This could cause him to spend more time outside to maintain high support or more time inside to ensure continuity of good performance. In both scenarios, the manager takes a cue from the environment as it relates to managerial strategy and it is support and subsequent decision-making that make the difference for organizational outcomes.

Thus, support in and of itself does not "make" public organizations perform well or poorly. Instead, it is an influence from the exterior with the potential to shape internal as well as external actors and processes. From these considerations three points emerge. First, it is clear that the manager must be prepared to function in either condition. Second, support is not a singular actor in organizational outcomes. Instead, support motivates managerial behavior and these factors collectively influence the organization. Finally, the public manager is in a privileged, yet difficult position – where he must manage both inside and outside the organization in order to make support *work* for the organization in the most effective manner possible.

Managerial Strategy

My theoretical argument to this point has suggested that organizations are likely to be affected by support, but that such support will first lead to managerial action and

then affect organizational outcomes. Chandler (1962) was the first to employ strategy as a descriptive concept. He concluded that strategy was key for organizational structure as well as performance. I borrow his conceptualization and define strategy as "the determination of the basic long terms goals and objectives of the enterprise, the adoption of courses of action, and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals" (Chandler 1962, 13). Strategies, as argued by Snow and Hambrick (1980) are developed consciously and purposefully. For current purposes, I adopt the logic of Chandler (1962) and Snow and Hambrick (1980) working under the assumption that managers form strategies attempting to consider a host of contingencies – one contingency public managers consider is their relationship to the external environment.

Miles, Snow, Meyer, and Coleman (1978) proposed a set of typologies to identify the strategies of managers. Their conditions for "typing" an organizational leader as one "type" versus another fit appropriately within the current framework. Miles et al. (1978) present four ways to categorize a manager according to his actions in relation to the environment. They offer these strategies as a way for organizations to solve their entrepreneurial, engineering, and administrative problems. An extension of their argument is that a manager might adopt a particular strategy as a result of variations in support from the external environment. My theory drives the decision to choose two of the four proposed strategies of Miles et al. (1978): *defender* and *prospector*. Because managers will either engage their environments or not, these types allow me to theorize further about whether managers use support as a motivation for behavior.

Defenders

The defender strategy suggests that managers deliberately enact and maintain an environment in an effort to keep the organization stable. Defenders desire to "seal off" their organizations preventing potentially deleterious influences from "entering its turf" (Miles et al. 1978). The Defender wants complete control in an effort to ensure efficiency – control for the defender is only attained by insulating the organization from externalities.

Managers might find it attractive to insulate their organizations from the outside. A number of factors seem worthwhile reasons for adopting a strategy of this sort such as economic, social, and political forces; labor unions; competitors; and customers/clientele. With this host of actors that might sway the organization in an unpredictable number of directions, one might argue that an organization is considerably better off simply leaving the environment out of the equation. Even in cases where the environment cannot be ignored, having mechanisms in place to reduce environmental influence might also be attractive to the defender. Yet, in the midst of trying to control and protect, the defender risks a great deal. First, it is likely impossible to completely insulate your organization from environmental pressures. Time devoted to the accomplishment of such a task will outweigh benefits as well as bear very little results. In an information age where people are influenced by multiple factors and receive information in multiple ways, it is unlikely that an organizational leader will be successful in such efforts. Such time could be spent on other meaningful tasks such as the coordination of subordinates or protection of the agency.

Second, disregarding what the environment has to offer an organization and focusing primarily on its potential ability to do harm might place the organization's clientele at an extreme disadvantage. The environment is an information source for units situated within it to better gauge their efficiency, learn about clients, and adapt in a manner that retains organizational mission, but also retains clientele, allowing the organization continued existence. Failing to listen to members of the environment is risky while not knowing what your clientele needs is the first step to serving them poorly. The environment provides such information in relation to clientele, for example, but also other aspects of the organization.

Third, paying attention to what information the environment provides and allowing it to inform decision-making also affords tools during times of adaptation to the environment. Environments change and organizations must change with them. Signals of change, how to change, and even when to change are likely available to the organization that takes its environment into account. Refusing to do so might result in the organization's downfall or even its demise. In sum, the Defender strategy, on the one hand, has the potential to protect the agency from detriment and ensure its continued existence. On the other hand, the defender risks a great deal by being unable (or unwilling) to respond to major shifts in the external environment.

Prospectors

Theoretically, one might consider the prospector as the antithesis to the defender. Rather than viewing the environment as an influence to ward off, the prospector finds utility in engaging the environment for new opportunities. The prospector takes pride in

innovation and favors a dynamic environment. In order to unearth and make use of new opportunities, the prospector "must develop and maintain the capacity to survey a wide range of environmental conditions, trends, and events" (Miles et al. 1978). Unlike the defender, the prospector views the outside as something to be utilized rather than avoided. Change, as opposed to the narrow, consistent stance of the defender, characterizes the prospector; it is used as a tool to gain a competitive edge over others. Where the defender desires control, the prospector seeks to facilitate external relationships.

Like the defender, the prospector strategy is not without risk. While it may be beneficial in some instances to continually change with the environment in which an organization is situated, this type of strategy "runs the primary risk of low profitability and an overextension of resources" (Miles et al. 1978, 553). Change characterizes the managerial style of the prospector, yet it is plausible that the mission and goals of the organization do not frequently change. What is likely to undergo alternations are the means with which to fulfill such goals. It is difficult to coordinate effective internal operations in the presence of constantly amending practices and methods within an organization.

Like the defender, time devoted to maintaining such strategy (as it relates to the external environment) might be better applied to internal machinations. When efforts and resources expended are inequitably devoted to the outside, it is not illogical to conclude that the organization might suffer internally. For this cause, the prospector is

described as inefficient when his attention to the periphery of the organization supersedes his ability to manage internally.

Additionally, a prospector might run the risk of losing legitimacy. As stakeholders and competitors perceive the prospector's organization allowing the environment to greatly influence processes, these actors might conclude that the organization has a fleeting identity able to be swayed by the outside. Becoming entangled in the environment, rather than allowing the outside to be a resource, is an unfortunate by-product of this type of strategy.

The Miles et al. (1978) typologies present a workable framework for assessing how managers might behave conditioned on their environments – more specifically, contingent on levels of support from the outside. Understanding how low or high support might motivate a manager to choose one strategy over another is imperative to assessing how much of an impact the external environment has on internal operations.

The Interrelationships of Support, Strategy, and Performance

Contingent on the organization, prospecting or defending might prove beneficial for the organization. More specifically, a public manager actively working to insulate their organization from the environment might experience high performance because external opinions, influences, and threats have been eliminated. The leader can lead without suppressing externalities in that he has actively pursued tactics to prevent pressures from outlying actors. But what about the counterfactual? Defenders might also experience low performance because they have failed to listen to the concerns of the environment. What is needed by the clientele (and thus for the organization to continue

its existence) is unknown by a leader of the organization that shuts himself off. Failure

to know the needs of clientele is likely to result in a disappointed, underserved clientele.

Table 2.1
Theoretical Expectations of Environmental Support, Managerial Strategy, and Performance

	Low Performance	**High Performance**
Low Support/ Prospector Strategy	Support may be too low to adopt a strategy that focuses primarily on the outside. While attention is devoted outside, workers on the inside may see an opportunity to shirk and underperform.	Support is low, yet new opportunities might increase how well the organization performs.
High Support/ Prospector Strategy	Time spent outside the organization to find and experiment with new ideas, coupled with high support, might cause internal efforts to stifle performance.	Support is high, and using what the environment has to offer leads to good performance.
Low Support/ Defender Strategy	Support is low and being insulated from the environment prevents adequate servicing of clientele.	Low support might otherwise cause low performance, yet the insulation of the organization from the environment has kept the organization safe and able to perform well.
High Support/ Defender Strategy	Support is high, but failing to listen/respond to outside might result in low performance.	In instances of already high support, insulating the organization from the environment might maintain organizational effectiveness.

Following this further, Table 2.1 suggests an evaluation of the prospector in like

manner. A prospector might experience high performance as a result of seeking out of

new opportunities and employing them in a manner that better served the clientele.

Improvements in technology, employee skills sets, and structure, for instance, might

logically translate into increased organizational effectiveness. Yet, a prospector strategy

might also prove harmful. The exploring of cutting-edge opportunities results in increased time spent assessing the external and therefore will reduce time spent on the internal workings of organizations. It is also possible that the manager might make the wrong choice with regard to which new opportunity to explore. Given these circumstances, it is not a logical leap to consider how an organization might suffer. Despite an active, albeit a well-intentioned managerial strategy, the organization might perform poorly. The aforementioned scenarios evince the importance of this line of inquiry. Scholarship knows very little with regard to what strategy managers employ contingent on environmental support. Even more critical is the investigation of what strategy managers employ, contingent on support, and the resulting effects on organizational performance.

The proposed strategy combinations are not mutually exclusive. Some managers might be able to meet their goals and achieve their missions by employing a narrow strategy characterized as either prospective or defensive. In reality, skilled managers will likely combine some elements from both types of strategy to best serve their organizations although combination is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for organizational performance. This general framework for considering these relationships is applicable to a host of contexts – that is, across policy areas and agency types. Noteworthy is the fact that these theoretical expectations do not suggest that support and strategy will collectively affect performance in some readily predictable direction. Instead, the scenarios represent the causal theory that the two mechanisms will work

together, while their actual effect (i.e., positive or negative) is the empirical question being explored.

Data and Methods

In sum, the theoretical argument put forth here suggests that if the environment has the potential to influence organizational outcomes, it must do so through an intermediary mechanism of managerial strategy. This "middle man" between support and organizational outcomes might be in the form of prospecting, utilizing the environment to one's advantage; or defending, through the shielding of environmental influences. Support, or lack thereof, is likely to change how the manager responds to as well as interacts with both his internal and external environments. Changes in managerial strategy, then, result from feedback in the environment, yet it is these two things in concert that affect organizational outcomes.

Empirical testing of these relationships requires the ability to compare similar organizations with varying levels of environmental support as well as the specific actions of managers. The data used in this study are drawn from independent school districts in Texas. Each school district counts as one unit of analysis. "Independent" refers to the district's autonomous position, as they have elected their own board, can set budgets, and tax rates, as well as acquire bonding authority by a vote of residents in the district (Goerdel 2005; Meier and O'Toole 2001, 2003). Texas has more than 1000 diverse and independent school districts that face different obstacles respective to their particular contexts.

To illustrate this point further, data taken from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and used for this analysis suggest that school districts vary greatly on common characteristics such as the amount of full-time personnel, minority student populations, and financial resources. For example, the average district has an average enrollment of 3,955 students, yet the range is from 6 to 211,762 students. The standard deviation of 11,750 shows the data include a variety of districts, ranging from small to large. Enrollment is only one example of the rich variation of the data, while multiple scholars using the data note that the districts "run the full spectrum from rich to poor, urban to rural, and multiracial to monoracial" (Meier and O'Toole 2001, 2003).

Data on managerial strategy were obtained from surveys of Texas school district superintendents. Using mail questionnaires, respondents answered a battery of questions related to their leadership abilities, time allocations, and goals. The first survey, conducted in 2000, generated 541 usable responses, resulting in a 55% response rate of all Texas school districts. Subsequent surveys conducted in 2002, 2005, 2007, and 2009 have exceeded this response rate. The surveys collectively measured superintendents for five time periods allowing for the assessment of managerial strategies across districts, but also within districts over time. Data from both sources are combined into one panel dataset, covering nine years (or the academic years, 2000-2009). Missing data on specific items reduces the total number of cases, especially when analyses include districts with minority populations.

Measures

Environmental Support

Environmental support, one of the key causal mechanisms of this analysis, is a composite measure. Superintendent perceptions of support from parents, the community, and school board were compiled into an additive index. Rather than evaluate the role each of these types of support might individually play, my theory calls into question whether external support matters for organizations at all. For this cause, it is acceptable to use an indexed measure to capture this concept.

Superintendents were asked "How well would you rate the (parental support, community support, school board support) in your district?" Their responses range from inadequate (1) to above average (4). Superintendents varied considerably in their responses to these questions with the plurality of responses (across the three types of support) falling between the categories of average and above average. The overall index of all three environmental actors ranges from 3 (inadequate) to 12 (above average).

There is great utility in using this subjective measure of the environment. For a superintendent to rate his or her district's support as above average, there are likely tangible actions being demonstrated by environmental actors. The reverse case, however, is also true. When district support is reported as inadequate, it is likely that superintendents are experiencing negative feedback or potentially no evidence of environmental support at all. In either case, the *perception* of what is taking place provides great insight (and is arguably highly correlated) with what is *actually* taking place in the district environment. Researchers are sometimes concerned with using

perceptions due to the problems of social desirability reporting on the part of respondents or over-reporting. Levels of performance, for instance, are a candidate for response inflation. In an investigation of the potential pitfalls of common source bias in public management research, Meier and O'Toole (2010, 3) found that "managers consistently overestimated the level of performance in the organization" and that [managers] "…respond to surveys in ways that reflect favorably on themselves in terms of both organizational performance and the adoption of the most current managerial practices". Support from the environment is arguably less prone to such error given that the superintendent is able to distance himself from what is taking place in the environment versus how well the organization is actually doing.

Accounting for parents, the community, and the school board is appropriate because they provide a glimpse of the environment from multiple perspectives. Not only do the reasons why these actors show support differ, but how such support is demonstrated across actors varies greatly as well. These particular variables provide intuition of what is in the mind of the practitioner and provide understanding to the researcher for theory-building.

Managerial Strategy

Superintendents have a host of strategies at their disposal to deal with internal operations, external events, and both simultaneously. It is not the case that superintendents, or public managers more generally, are trained specifically to defend their organizations from the environment or to engage in activities for prospective, fresh opportunities. Rather, superintendents employ multiple strategies contingent on the

circumstances they face. The question, therefore, is not whether superintendents will choose a strategy. Instead, the question is, considering particular contingencies, which one (or combination of them) will be chosen? It is reasonable to expect that superintendents have multiple ways to exhibit their affinity for a defender or prospector strategy.

To test this claim, I utilize two measures. Superintendents that agreed with the statement, "I strive to control those factors outside the school district that could have an effect on my organization" were classified as defenders. Prospector-type superintendents agreed with the phrase, "Our district is always among the first to adopt new ideas and practices." These variables were measured strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4).

I expect managerial strategy to be decided upon on a contingent basis. That is, when a particular strategy is necessary, a superintendent will employ such action contingent on his desired outcomes. Given this assumption, I expect that both the defender and prospector strategy will be significantly related to performance. The proposed theory lends no interpretation that I should hypothesize in a directional manner for either strategy as both have the potential to lead to differential outcomes for organizations.

Environmental Forces: Resources and Constraints

Public managers find themselves working in volatile environments. This is no different for superintendents who face daily challenges to their ability to effectively manage (Goerdel 2005). Literature in education policy and public school management

provides guidance on how to assess challenges to superintendents that come in the form of environmental constraints as well as opportunities (Hedges and Greenwald 1996; Meier and O'Toole 2001).

Jencks and Phillips (1998) found that racial inequalities and income disparities are negatively correlated with educational performance, particularly when focusing on standardized testing. Scholarly evidence like this leads researchers to include metrics of race and poverty when assessing educational performance. Taking this scholarship into account, I include three measures for race and poverty, namely, the percentages of African American, Latino, and poor students in a given school district. It is expected that these variables will be negatively related to organizational performance.

Constraints present an undeniable problem for superintendents; however, the amount of resources a district possesses might circumvent some of these issues. Following the basic tenet that schools with more resources generally perform better (Wenglinsky 1997), I employ three measures of resources in this analysis. Total instructional expenditures, average teacher salary, and teaching experience to capture the effects of financial as well as human capital for the district. Resources are expected to be positively associated with school district performance.

Dependent Variables: Organizational Performance

To empirically assess the theory that environmental support and managerial strategy matter for organizational performance, I use three indicators of school district performance. Following the proposed arguments, chosen measures must be such that support from parents, the community, and the school board would be theoretically

meaningful. Passage rates on state-mandated testing, passage rates on college preparatory exams, and attendance rates are all examples of performance that have the potential to be mitigated by support from actors outside the organization.

To test the effects of support and strategy on state-mandated testing, I utilize overall passage rates on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, or TAKS, exam. The test is measured as the percentage of overall students who pass all parts of the statewide standardized test each year. Students in grades three through eight and eleven are evaluated in the areas of mathematics, writing, and reading. As a high-stakes test for the state, the results consistently receive media attention and are politically salient for all actors involved. Almost all members of the district – both internal and external – have a stake in how well students perform on these tests.

Stakeholders such as parents, the community, and school board each have a vested interest in the performance of students on the TAKS. Parents, for instance, are interested in the adequate education of their children. In districts where the community is gainfully employed by the school district, failure to perform well means the potential demise of the district and a loss of revenue as well as employment opportunities. The school board, however, plays a somewhat different role than other members that lie on the periphery of the district. As the political oversight mechanism of the district, (most often) elected members of the school board actively support and monitor mechanisms for evaluating student achievement. Although the mechanism driving their support, as well as its demonstration, might differ from the other actors discussed here, the fact

remains that school board members work with the superintendent to promote student performance.

Another indicator in which the environment is likely to have a stake is the percentage of students who pass college preparatory exams. Measured as the percentage of students who score above 1110 on the SAT or its ACT equivalent (24), the overall perception is that students are being prepared for college. The logic behind using such a measure is that students are gaining necessary tools to excel over and above that which is required simply for the satisfying of state-legislated testing. In this case, efforts are made to produce individuals that will be successful beyond the boundaries of the district alone. For parents, the community, and the school board, higher levels indicate that the district is not only doing its job in the current time period, but also for future time periods as it prepares students for higher education.

Additionally, I assess how support and strategy relate to the percentage of students that attend school on a daily basis. Students must learn and retain necessary material in order to pass high stakes testing that is state-mandated or college preparatory. This transmission of information from teacher to student cannot take place if the students are not physically there. It is likely that the district that possesses high levels of absenteeism is also low-performing on more difficult measures of district performance.

I utilize Ordinary Least Squares Regression to test the proposed relationships among environmental support, managerial strategy, and organizational performance. Due to the panel design of the data, I model the effects using panel-corrected standard errors (Beck and Katz 1995).

Findings and Discussion

Environmental Support and Performance

The first set of models is drawn from equation [5] representing the argument that environmental support would positively affect organizational performance. Table 2.2 suggests that in every case, support from outside the school district leads to greater levels of student achievement. Support from outside the district – that is, support that lies beyond the walls of a school and beyond such that is demonstrated by teachers, principals, and staff – impacts the organization in meaningful ways. Not only are students affected by what they see while at school during the year or attending class during the day, but the environment acts as a reinforcing mechanism of sorts by supporting scholastic endeavors.

Table 2.2
The Effects of Environmental Support on Organizational Performance

	Overall Pass Rates	SAT/ACT Above Criterion (1110+)	Attendance
Environmental Support	**.117 (.069)****	**.307 (.103)*****	**.042 (.013)*****
% African American Students	-.166 (.012)***	.077 (.019)***	-.019 (.002)***
% Latino Students	-.069 (.007)***	.039 (.012)***	-.009 (.001)***
% Low Income Students	-.053 (.010)***	-.364 (.016)***	-.002 (.002)*
Teacher Salary	-.188 (.013)***	.078 (.021)***	-.108 (.235)
Teacher Experience	.720 (.051)***	.399 (.087)***	.114 (.010)***

Table 2.2 continued

	Overall Pass Rates	SAT/ACT Above Criterion (1110+)	Attendance
Class Size	.377 (.099)***	.271 (.182)*	-.047 (.019)***
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	.126 (.196)	-.404 (.372)	.042 (.037)
Lagged Performance	.493 (.013)***	.044 (.016)***	-.016 (.015)
Intercept	41.551 (2.117)***	22.300 (3.460)***	96.712 (1.518)***
N	3574	2881	3528
R^2	.60	.31	.12
F	588.31	141.03	51.57
Standard Error	7.33	9.87	1.38

p<.10*; p<.05**; p<.01***, one-tailed test

This effect is especially important as one considers that this data is across time. In the current time period *t*, students experience an increase on performance that is immediate, or in the short-run. Using the lagged measure of performance on the TAKS exam, for example, it is clear that the effects of environmental support also continue as time progresses, i.e., time t+1, t+2,…, t+k. For example, the long run impact is calculated using the following formula:

$$\beta = \beta_0/1-\lambda \qquad [7]$$

where β_0 is the beta coefficient for environmental support, or .117, and λ is the beta coefficient for the lagged dependent variable of overall pass rates, or .493. As a result, the long run impact of environmental support on state-mandated testing is .231. This lends the interpretation that because environmental support has increased the value of overall pass rates in year t, then in year t+1, this larger value of current levels of TAKS

performance also influences the size of organizational performance in the next year. Such effects continue to occur in future years gradually becoming smaller, or forming what is known as a geometrically distributed lag (see Griliches 1967; Hamilton 1994). The take-away point is that the relatively small impacts of environmental support, a factor arguably out of the superintendent's control, can have a significant influence on how well the district meets its goals in the short and long terms. This confirms the earlier works of writers such as Katz and Kahn (1966), Perrow (1970), and Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) who theorized about the role of the environment. I extend their logic by addressing a specific causal mechanism of environmental support and find that superintendents, specifically, but public managers, more generally, must pay attention to the environment as it has the potential to influence the organization, despite the best of managerial efforts.

The Contingent Effects of Managerial Strategy

The models shown in Tables 2.3 and 2.4 test the claim that support is not a single actor in the outcomes of organizations. Put a different way, the models assess whether support and strategy work collectively to affect organizational performance. Recall in this analysis that superintendents were characterized as either defenders or prospectors as it related to their external environments. In order to analyze these mechanisms, I employ equation [6]. The difference between the equations is that the current form includes a multiplicative interaction term for environmental support and managerial strategy. For each of the three types of district performance, I assessed whether the

defender or prospector strategy was influential in explaining variation in student

achievement.

Table 2.3
The Contingent Effects of Environmental Support on Organizational Performance (Defender)

	Overall Pass Rates		SAT/ACT Above Criterion (1110+)		Attendance	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Environmental Support	.271*** (.083)	.212 (.346)	.432** (.172)	.338 (.635)	.054*** (.012)	.027 (.052)
Defender	-.286 (.219)	-.458 (.999)	.009 (.466)	-.295 (1.835)	-.062* (.033)	-.141 (.152)
Defender*Support	-	.019 (.109)	-	.005 (.202)	-	.009 (.017)
% African American Students	-.011 (.015)	-.011 (.015)	.054* (.031)	.054* (.027)	-.009*** (.002)	-.009*** (.002)
% Latino Students	.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	.022 (.018)	.033* (.016)	.002 (.001)	.002 (.001)
% Low Income Students	-.068*** (.013)	-.068*** (.013)	-.405*** (.026)	-.386*** (.022)	-.015*** (.002)	-.015*** (.002)
Teacher Salary	-.072*** (.017)	-.715*** (.170)	.141*** (.040)	.569** (.259)	.265 (.261)	.261 (.261)
Teacher Experience	.082 (.063)	.082 (.063)	.109 (.140)	.304** (.119)	-.051 (.095)	-.065 (.952)
Class Size	.010 (.103)	.010 (.103)	.427* (.234)	.450* (.238)	-.096*** (.016)	-.096*** (.016)
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	-.550*** (.182)	-.550*** (.182)	-.406 (461)	-.346 (.436)	.128 (.278)	.129 (.278)
Lagged Performance	.746*** (.018)	.746*** (.018)	.042* (.024)	.039 (.022)	-.007 (.015)	-.007 (.150)
Intercept	28.495*** (2.512)	29.022*** (3.902)	22.101*** (5.084)	24.889*** (7.010)	98.308*** (1.469)	98.562*** (1.544)
N	1277	1277	1039	1473	1263	1263
R^2	.79	.79	.42	.34	.23	.23
F	488.33	443.60	72.99	68.69	36.69	33.36
Standard Error	4.89	4.89	9.38	9.83	.74	.74

$p<.10$*; $p<.05$**; $p<.01$***, *two-tailed test*

For every indicator, the left column shows the independent effects for superintendents and their strategy choices while the right column depicts the beta coefficients when the interaction term is included in the estimation. Although the beta value and corresponding t-statistic in Table 2.3, Column II suggest that the interaction is statistically insignificant, research by Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006) suggests that even when regression results suggest no relationship that the researcher should graph the results in that relationships may exist across the range of the variable that sum-of-squares techniques may not evince. As such, Figure 2.1 is a better representation of the findings.

Figure 2.1
Marginal Effect of Support on Overall Pass Rates as Defender Strategy Changes
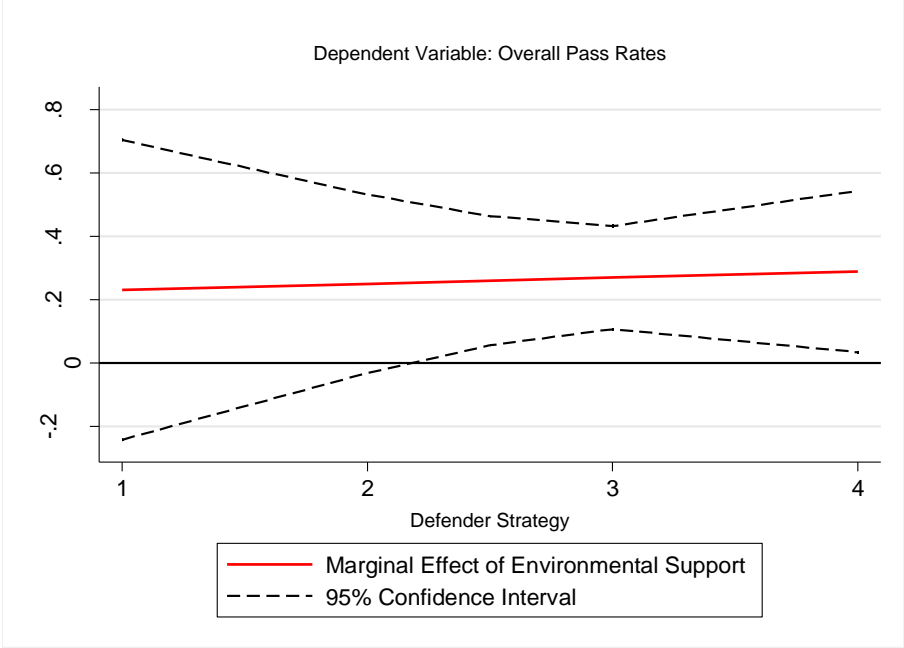
This figure shows the marginal effect of environmental support on overall passage rates does not vary across superintendent levels of "being" a defender. The 95 percent confidence intervals (denoted by the dashed lines) are both above zero for those superintendents that agree and strongly agree with the defender strategy. The straight line, which in this case, denotes a consistent marginal effect across levels of defender strategy suggests that environmental support influences district performance, yet the contingent effect of strategy that the manager takes is not significant. In other words, the effect of environmental support from parents, the community, and school board, positively affects passage rates on state-mandated testing, and the role of a defender strategy is trumped by environmental support.

Similar effects are shown in Figures 2.2 and 2.3 where the relationships among environmental support, strategy, and indicators of college-readiness and attendance are depicted. The figures further demonstrate that support from the outside exceeds any impact the superintendent might play in shielding the organization from the outside. The independent effects as shown in Tables 2.3 & 2.4 lend the interpretation that external support matters more for performance than the strategy the manager takes in relation to the outside.

Figure 2.2
Marginal Effect of Support on SAT/ACT 1110+ Rates as Defender Strategy Changes

Dependent Variable: SAT/ACT 1110+

Defender Strategy

— Marginal Effect of Environmental Support
- - - 95% Confidence Interval
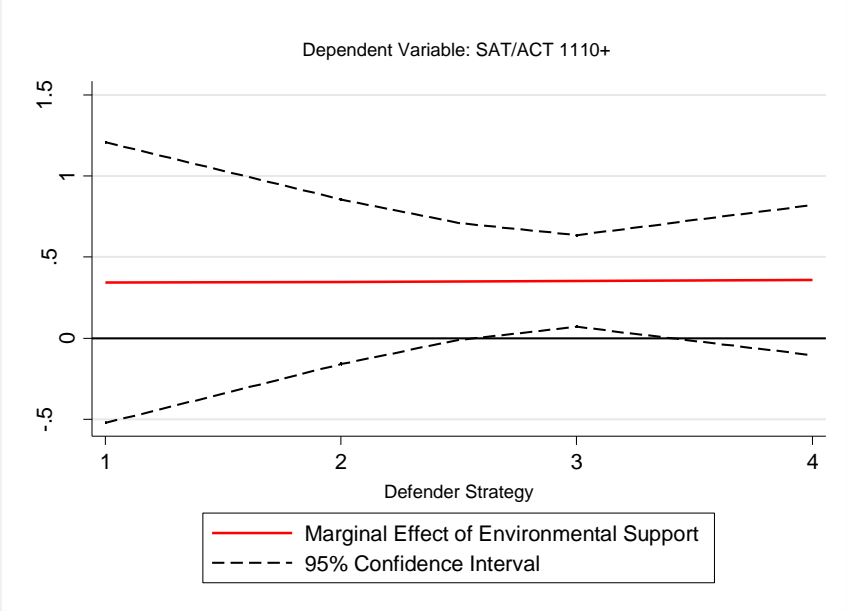
Figure 2.3
Marginal Effect of Support on Attendance Rates as Defender Strategy Changes

Dependent Variable: Attendance Rates

Defender Strategy

— Marginal Effect of Environmental Support
- - - 95% Confidence Interval
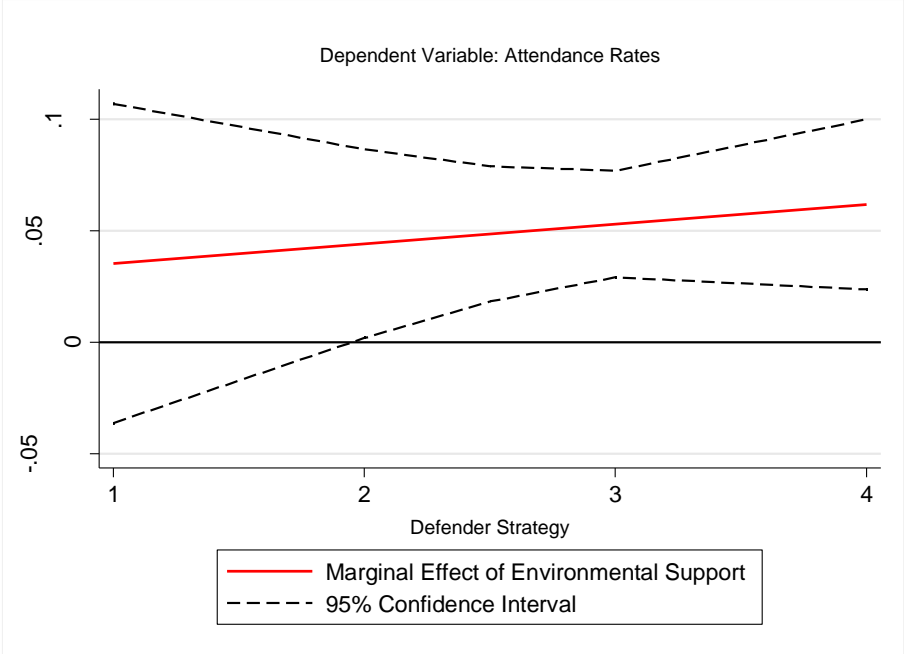
Table 2.4

The Contingent Effects of Environmental Support on Organizational Performance (Prospector)

	Overall Pass Rates		SAT/ACT Above Criterion (1110+)		Attendance	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Environmental Support	.254*** (.084)	-.182 (.301)	.430** (.174)	.501 (.597)	.052*** (.012)	.038 (.045)
Prospector	.038 (.218)	-1.462 (1.019)	.005 (.461)	-.177 (2.030)	-.017 (.033)	-.065 (.155)
Prospector *Support	-	.165 (.110)	-	.010 (.218)	-	.005 (.017)
% African American Students	-.010 (.015)	-.010 (.015)	.054* (.032)	.045 (.030)	-.009*** (.002)	-.009*** (.002)
% Latino Students	-.005 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	.023 (.018)	.019 (.017)	-.015*** (.002)	.002 (.001)
% Low Income Students	-.070*** (.013)	-.069*** (.013)	-.406*** (.026)	-.401*** (.024)	-.015*** (.002)	-.015*** (.002)
Teacher Salary	-.753*** (.171)	-.076*** (.017)	.138*** (.040)	.131*** (.037)	-.271 (.260)	-.272 (.260)
Teacher Experience	.080 (.063)	.081 (.063)	.106 (.140)	.071 (.132)	-.001 (.010)	-.001 (.010)
Class Size	-.004 (.104)	-.002 (.104)	.427* (.235)	.474** (.217)	-.097*** (.016)	-.097*** (.016)
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	-.583*** (.183)	-.583*** (183)	-.419 (462)	-.137 (.424)	.107 (.278)	.107 (.278)
Lagged Performance	.746*** (.018)	.747*** (.018)	.043* (.024)	.044* (.024)	-.007 (.015)	-.007 (.015)
Intercept	28.372*** (2.500)	32.178*** (3.553)	22.431*** (4.995)	21.776*** (6.966)	98.279*** (1.471)	98.415*** (1.532)
N	1277	1277	1038	1184	1263	1263
R^2	.79	.79	.42	.41	.22	.22
F	482.66	439.43	73.48	81.36	36.26	32.95
Standard Error	4.92	4.92	9.39	9.42	.74	.74

$p<.10$*; $p<.05$**; $p<.01$***, *two-tailed test*

The other type of strategy tested was that of the prospector. Recall that superintendents that considered their districts among the first to adopt new ideas and practices were coded as prospectors. Like in the case of defender strategy, the managerial choice to utilize the environment to one's advantage does not supersede environmental influences when it comes to district performance. Figures 2.4-2.6 suggest that across types of student achievement, environmental support remains a positive and significant predictor of organizational performance while the seeking out and exploiting of new opportunities does not affect this relationship.

Figure 2.4
Marginal Effect of Support on Overall Pass Rates as Prospector Strategy Changes
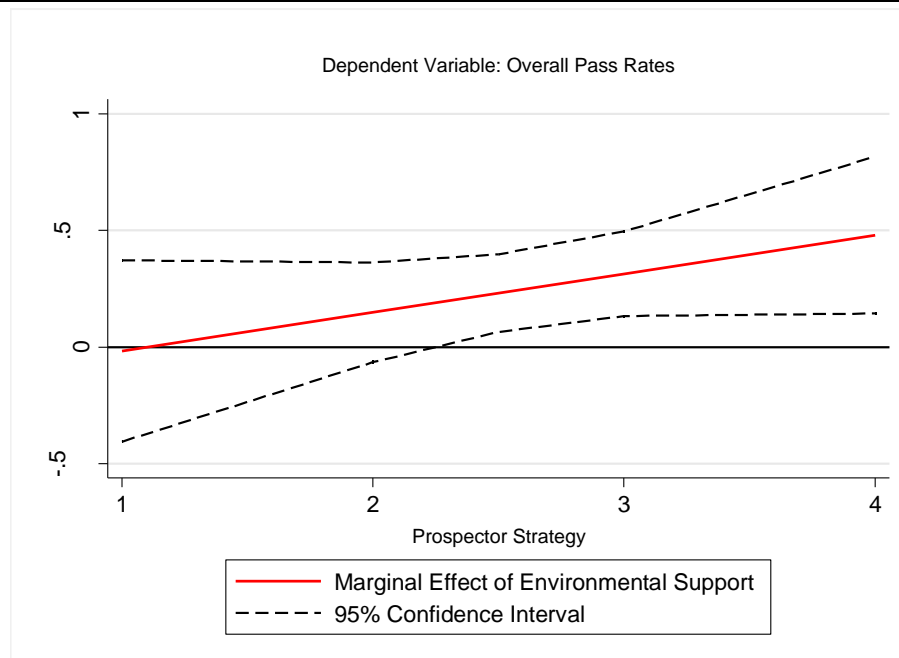
According to these data, the superintendent's choice to defend or prospect the environment is negligible for performance of the organization. Across multiple indicators that vary in political salience as well as task difficulty, levels of environmental support lead to increased student achievement, yet the relationship of the manager to the external environment is insignificant. These findings corroborate the work of Pfeffer (1977) who noted various theoretical reasons for expecting that individuals might have less effect on organizational outcomes than would an organization's context. One reason he stated was the fact that many of the things that affect organizational results are not necessarily controlled by participants. Although Pfeffer (1977) theorized about public organizations, his work lacks empirical evidence of this sort to buttress his claims.

Figure 2.5
Marginal Effect of Support on SAT/ACT 1110+ Rates as Prospector Strategy Changes
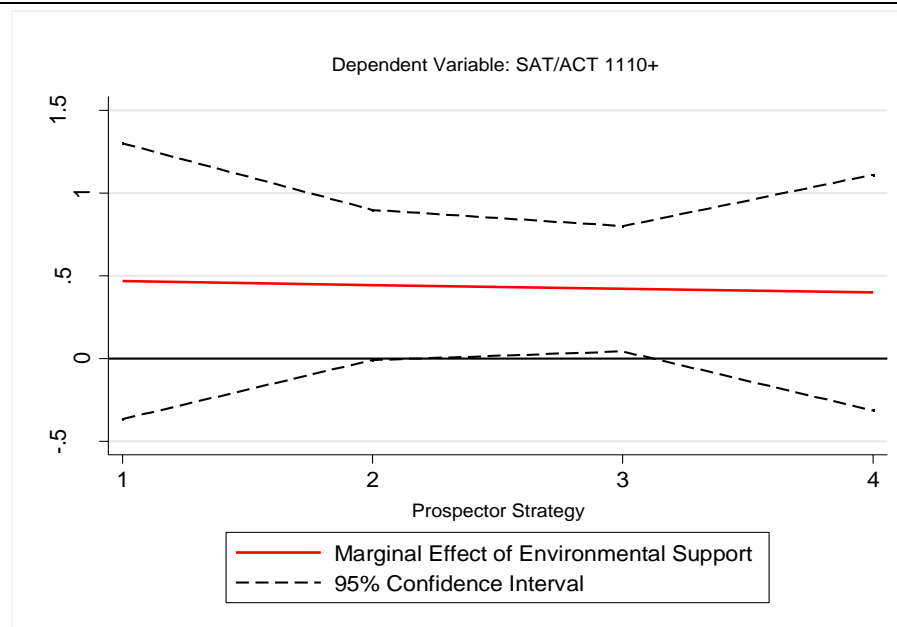
Figure 2.6
Marginal Effect of Support on Attendance Rates as Prospector Strategy Changes
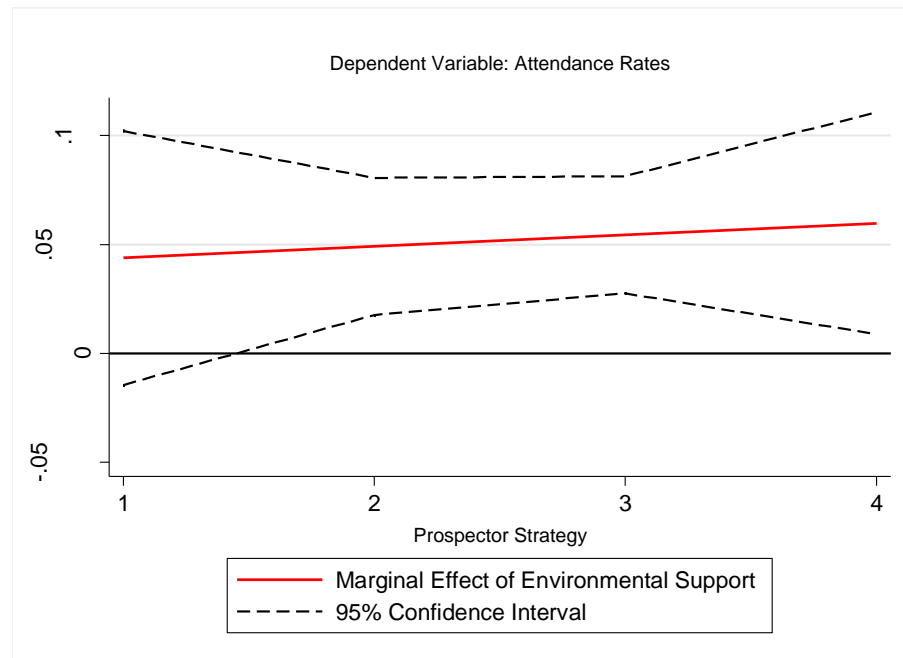
These findings are theoretically as well as practically interesting for a few reasons. First, the results suggest that managers' strategies in relation to the external environment are irrelevant for organizational performance. How superintendents choose to handle the environment does not matter for the performance indicators tested here.

Second, not only is the managers' strategy choice irrelevant, but it is also trumped by actors on the periphery of the organization. In every case, the independent effects demonstrate that environmental support is a strong predictor of student performance and that strategy is not. This is not to say that managerial strategy is not related to performance. One must be careful in such an assumption. The findings

suggest that certain types of strategy, like those extrinsically related to the organization, are inconsequential (for these types of performance).

Third, it may be the case that the environment will display attitudes and behaviors of support no matter what the superintendent does. Each member of the external such as parents or the school board might exhibit such support differently, yet their support may remain loyal and consistent no matter if the superintendent attempts to ward off the outside or allow it inform institutional ideas and practices.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was first to determine whether support external to public organizations mattered for organizational performance and second, whether support affected public organizations, yet on a contingent basis, more specifically mitigated by managerial strategy. Using the most common form of public organizations, school districts, I find that backing from actors outside the inner workings of the district, like parents, the community, are school board is integral for student achievement on state-mandated testing, college-readiness, and attendance rates. Counter to my expectations, the choice of a superintendent to engage his environment or work to seal off the organization from the environment did not matter for performance under conditions of support. It may be the case that support from the environment, rather than a strategy to relate to the environment, is what really matters for organizations. Moreover, the results suggest that factors from outside the organization trump the choice of a manager's plan of action in relation to how he will deal with the environment.

This study is not without limitations. First, the data allow for a test of a superintendent's *affinity* rather than actual implementation of a defender versus prospector strategy. While agreement with such practices might evince the likelihood that a superintendent would practice such a strategy, there is no guarantee that such actions take place consistently or at all. A better way to capture the practice of these strategies is an alternative measure that specifically asks superintendents what actions they take that map on to these types of behaviors. This suggestion hearkens back to the idea of perception versus actual behaviors. This is not to say that managerial strategy might somehow then show a contingent effect. It is to say, however, that a more rigorous test might corroborate the current arguments.

Second, it is very important to note that the effects discussed do not suggest that *all* types of managerial strategy are inconsequential for organizational performance. The take-away is that the course of action a manager takes *in relation to his external environment* is negligible, but these findings say nothing in relation to what a manager does inside, conditioned by environmental support or any other potential contingency. It will be interesting to further this line of inquiry to assess other elements of strategy that relate to decision-making internal and external to the organization.

Third, this work might be extended to determine whether environmental support leads to a particular internal management strategy given the insignificant results related to members outside the organization. It is plausible that the environment provides a cue for managers and they turn inside to develop a course of action that is internally-focused.

Managers might take the environment into account as they make decisions, yet actual translation of effects from the outside might take place inside the organization.

This work has prescriptive use given the finding that superintendents' strategy choice, as it relates to the periphery of the district, is of no significance for the tested areas of student achievement. Because of the direct effects shown for environmental support, superintendents must still employ some type of plan to regulate what happens internally. For instance, it may not be beneficial for a superintendent to pursue an external management strategy for indicators of performance, while other district-related issues such as expenditures per pupil or types of programs offered may show differential effects. In other words, a strategy as clearly defined as defender or prospector as it relates to the outside might be unimportant, but managers must still pay close attention to the outside given the role external actors play in organizations' ability to achieve their goals.

In sum, the external environment, an influence theorized about in previous scholarship, yet not empirically tested, has the potential to influence how well an organization performs. Thinking beyond school districts, the theory is tractable in that other types of public organizations are likely affected by factors that lie outside the walls of organization. Managers must be aware of such influences as they have the ability to trump managerial efforts.

CHAPTER III

TESTING TURBULENCE: EXPLORING THE DETERMINANTS OF

MANAGERIAL STRATEGY

Introduction

Organizations exist in turbulent, often hostile, environments which pose a constant threat to their growth and survival (Smart and Vertinksy 1984). According to Miles, Snow, Meyer, and Coleman (1978), organizations should continuously reexamine their strategy and its fit to the demands posed by the environment. In the long term, only those organizations capable of enduring change to their environments survive. Management's primary function, however, is to organize and use the organization's available resources in ways that minimize the impact of environmental threats and pressures on the organization (Steers 1977). To maximize long term effectiveness, organizations need to develop the capability not only to cope with day-to-day events in the environment, but also to cope with external events that are both unexpected and of critical importance (Smart and Vertinksy 1984).

The strength of such capability and how well organizations are able to "cope" with external influences has much to do with the problem at hand and those in place to confront it. To date, great headway has been made in theorizing about and measuring turbulence. Scholars have extended beyond operationalizations of the concept and have begun to link turbulence to the ability of an organization to meet its goals and to succeed. What has been less studied empirically is the intermediate role that managers of organizations play in dealing with changing external environments. In this chapter, I

encourage scholars to consider what strategies managers employ during times of turbulence.

Turbulence, both internal and external to the organization, has been demonstrated to negatively affect chances for organizations to meet their goals and sometimes to survive (Anderson and Tushman 2001; Boyne and Meier 2009; Kuivaleinen, Sundqvist, Puumalainen, and Cadogan 2004; Li and Atuahene-Gima 2001; Lin and Germain 2003; Power and Reid 2005). In large part, sources of turbulence most frequently discussed are those that relate to financial as well as information resources for organizations. Scholars have repeatedly demonstrated, however, that these types of support are not the only kinds that public organizations need to exist. Political support, derived from policy stakeholders and other members of the environment, is also necessary for organizations to meet goals and accomplish tasks. In other words, studies of environmental support that encompass a larger spectrum of potential sources of support are needed to holistically assess public organizations.

Even less explored is the effect political support has on managerial strategy. In response to environmental turbulence, how managers act can assist in the ability of the organization to readily absorb change or to succumb to it. Understanding the role of the manager in the ability of organizations to withstand turbulence is critical, in that the relationship of turbulence to organizational performance may not be as direct as scholars suggest.

This chapter will: (1) review the current literatures on the concepts of turbulence and environmental support for organizations; (2) bridge the gap between these lines of

inquiry, arguing for the importance of studying environmental turbulence as it relates to support; (3) theorize about how environmental support affects managerial decision-making and strategy; and (4) discuss how support for organizations has theoretical as well as practical implications for public managers.

Conceptual Clarity

It is imperative to clearly establish working constructs for the concepts of environmental support, turbulence, and the external environment. For current purposes, *support* refers to behaviors or activities that immediately exhibit or subsequently lead to the sustaining of organizational efforts to achieve a predefined goal or purpose. Support might stem from machinations within or external to the organization. This analysis focuses on the *external environment* – defined as actors outside of the organization that possess the ability to indirectly contribute (or take away from) the outcomes of the organization (Lewin and Minton 1986).

Environmental turbulence has often been identified as the major challenge facing modern organizations (Cameron 1984; Drucker 1980; Huber 1984). *Turbulence*, broadly defined, is a measure of change that occurs in the factors or components of an organization's environment (Emery and Trist 1965). It exists when changes faced by an organization are nontrivial, rapid, and discontinuous (Cameron, Kim, and Whetten 1987). "At one end of a continuum of change there is a static environmental state (no change); at the other end, a turbulent or dynamic state where all factors are in constant flux" (Smart and Vertinsky 1984, 200).

Literature Review

Organizations both respond to and operate upon the contexts in which they are embedded (Leavitt, Pinfield, and Webb 1974). Smart and Vertinsky (1984, 200) argue that "the environmental context provides experiences for learning, and through the processes of selection, bounds the strategy space of an organization as it responds to crisis situations." Thus, the environment plays a huge role in the success of the organization as well as the set of strategies available for a manager. Organizations are not insulated from their environments, but instead the two exist simultaneously and interact through feedback systems. The environment can be viewed as a deterministic force to which organizations respond (Anderson and Paine 1975; Bourgeois 1980; Duncan 1972).

Considerations of how the environment affects organizations are part of the tradition of contingency theory. Contingency theory suggests that organizations perform better if they adapt their internal characteristics to their external environment (Burns and Stalker 1961; Miles et al. 1978; Pennings 1992). Emery and Trist (1965) were the first to note the increasing flux and uncertainty in political, social, economic, and technological settings in which organizations operated. They further discussed the influence on the internal operations of organizations affected by the degree of "turbulence" in their environment (Rainey 2003). Burns and Stalker (1961) contributed to the view that effective organizations adapt their structures to contingencies. Done in Great Britain, their study analyzed a set of electronics firms undergoing considerable change and facing uncertainty from their environments. Burns and Stalker (1961)

provided some of the foundational typologies for characterizing how the environment can influence an organization. Most important for this analysis is their argument that emphasizes a need for a proper adaptation of the organization to contingencies if it is to survive.

Additional works like Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) and Thompson (1967) further developed the contingency perspective. These authors collectively found that pre-established structures to combat shifting and unstable environments are the best response for organizations. Having systems in place to thwart the potentially detrimental effects of turbulence allows the organization to absorb the shock of change and continue to meet its goals.

A wave of scholarly attention to the importance of contingencies eventually transformed into an era of authors using some of the aforementioned works prescriptively as a blueprint for effective organizational design. What is less clear, however, is the managerial strategy – as a result of turbulence – that was commensurate with notions of organizational design.

Because this chapter is an effort to uncover the effects of the environment as it relates to support, it is also imperative to review the literature that argues not only for assessing turbulence, but for doing so using the particular mechanism of political support for public organizations. Existing literatures suggest a link between support and organizational performance; however, empirical findings have been substantiated mostly using internal support - that is, supportive attitudes and behaviors stemming from within the organization most often in a top-down manner – i.e., from superiors to subordinates

(see George, Reed, Ballard, Colin and Fielding 1993; Shore and Shore 1995). Linkages have been drawn among perceptions of organizational support and employee morale and job satisfaction (Cropanzano et al. 1997; Nye and Witt 1993); job performance (Eisenberger et al. 1990); organizational commitment (Cropanzano et al. 1997; Eisenberger et al. 1990; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa 1986; Nye and Witt 1993; Settoon et al. 1996; Shore and Tetrick 1991; Wayne et al. 1997); and turnover (Cropanzano et al. 1997; Wayne et al 1997). These studies are in contrast to those that consider the external environment in that the source of support is internal and centralized (when compared to multiple external sources). What is less established in the literature is theory and empirical testing related to support stemming from factors outside the organization.

Environmental Support for Public Organizations

Although traditional scholarship in public administration has tended to treat external political factors as a given, such influences are of central importance in that many organizational actions are a result of environmental demands (Wamsley and Zald 1973). Well-documented is the notion that public organizations seek to manipulate their political environments for legitimacy and resources. Understanding the environment positions scholars of public administration to assess environments in order to predict changes in overall structure and managerial behaviors. Therefore, environmental - specifically external - support is likely to matter for the study of organizations in myriad ways.

Legitimacy

Organizations must deal with environments to survive (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967; Thompson 1967). By engaging in political exchanges to secure autonomy and authority (Wamsley and Zald 1973), a certain level of legitimacy is provided for the "supported" organization. The facilitation of such "exchanges" depends on the ability of the organization to obtain support from the outside. Supportive attitudes for an organization are most often exhibited when individuals consider the organization's actions acceptable and appropriate according to a predefined, socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions (Carpenter 2001; Massey 2001). Rourke (1984) argues for an administrative agency to command strong political support in that a lack of support "severely circumscribes the ability of an agency to achieve its goals, and may even threaten its survival as an organization" (48). This lends the interpretation that power is in part a function of support – that is, when the environment is supportive of the agency, its power and authority are reinforced.

Resource-Dependence

Resources constitute the lifeblood of organizational productivity while the presence of external actors is integral for the organization to maintain its mission and goals. "The key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources" (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). No matter the agency type or purpose, support is an invaluable asset for which the organization must rely on the external environment to continuously supply. "Their [organizations] effectiveness derives from the management of demands of interest groups upon which the organizations depend for

resources and support" (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). In sum, the organization relies on the environment to provide support in the form of resources as it seeks to achieve effectiveness.

Management and Structure

Organizations are often internally structured the way they are as a result of the external environment (Woodward 1965). Put another way, managers strategically construct their organizations to pre-empt problems stemming from the external environment. "What happens is a consequence of the environment and the particular contingencies and constraints deriving from that environment" (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). In this case, the environment acts as an impetus for the manager to prospectively or reactively create processes to deal with demands from outside the organization (Cameron 1986; Goerdel 2005).

Cognizant is the manager that knows he is not in complete control over the resources needed for his organization (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978); however, caution must be taken with opening up the organization to each and every concern of outside actors for the sake of preserving authority. Moreover, for each of the aforementioned reasons, organizations – more specifically, managers – must effectively manage outside of their organizations in order to ensure optimal levels of performance and effectiveness. The external environment is not inconsequential. Instead, it is a factor that has far-reaching consequences for the prospects of organizational design, management, and survival.

A Timely Topic

What is the utility of assessing changes in the political environment of organizations? Although previous attempts have been made to empirically capture the consequences of turbulent environments, I agree with Boyne and Meier (2009, 801) that "the concept of the organizational environment in these models, however, has not been clearly elaborated; and the theoretical and empirical effects of turbulence, in particular, have not been explored." This chapter both extends this criticism by suggesting that recent scholars have overlooked the empirical effects of turbulence. It attempts to assuage such concerns by tracing out the effects of turbulence as they work *through* an organization.

Additional shortcomings in this line of research include that researchers have employed problematic measures of turbulence as well as focused primarily on private organizations (Boyne and Meier 2009). My goal in this chapter is not to revisit well-stated criticisms, but instead to introduce an additional layer of inquiry building upon their logic, one that I propose is theoretically valuable and necessary to approximate the realities that are a result of turbulence in the political environment. I seek to address how changes in the political environment are arguably not just meaningful for organizational outcomes, but for the strategies managers select prior to these outcomes.

Theory: Managerial Strategy - A Filtering Mechanism

Why is it important to examine managerial strategy when considering the turbulence of the environment? Does managerial influence have the potential to alleviate the effect of environmental changes on the organization? If so, what actions do

managers take as a result of environmental turbulence? These questions more holistically capture the potential impact of turbulence on organizations. Turbulence in the political environment has the ability to affect what takes place inside the organization. Such permeation or penetration into the organization must happen through a filtering mechanism. In this chapter, that filtering mechanism is managerial strategy.

Scholars have consistently studied the concept of strategy as the nature of managerial work and roles over time. The literature has sought to develop general conceptions of managerial activities and competencies. "Ever since the classical theorists began trying to define the role of the administrator, the approach of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting (POSDCORB), or some variant of it has served as a guiding conception of what managers must do" (Rainey 2003, 299). Often coupled with this view is the constantly repeated notion that managers in all settings do pretty much the same general types of work (see Allison 1983; Mintzberg 1972; Whetten and Cameron 2002). Amidst a host of typologies and theories in relation to strategy, works can be classified as *normative*: instructing managers on how to formulate strategy by scanning the organization's environment to seek opportunities that might turn into organizational capabilities or *descriptive*: explaining how strategy is really formed. More recent works offer an amalgamation of both approaches.

The strategy concept has its main value, for both profit-seeking and nonprofit organizations, in determining how an organization defines its relationship to its environment in the pursuit of its objectives (Bourgeois 1980). Upon an examination of

the literature in relation to "what strategy is" or what is meant by the term, differences remain apparent. Among the many proposed strategies, there exist two key purposes. One is to define the segment of the environment in which the organization will operate while the other is to provide guidance for subsequent goal-directed activity within that niche (see Hofer and Schendel 1978).

At this point, it is critical to settle on a working construct of the concept of managerial strategy if we wish to better understand how it is affected by environmental turbulence. Here, *management strategy* refers to the plan of action of whoever is exercising control over some part of the corporation (Lynn, Heinrich, and Hill 2001; Spulber 1994, 356). Additionally, strategy is defined as "the determination of the basic long term goals and objectives of the enterprise, the adoption of courses of action, and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals" (Chandler 1962, 13). Strategies, as argued by Snow and Hambrick (1980) are developed consciously and purposefully. For current purposes, I work under the assumption that managers form strategies attempting to consider a host of contingencies – one contingency public managers consider is their relationship to the external environment. By definition, managers not only observe what actions should be taken, but also possess authority to exercise necessary behaviors. As such, management strategy can be a significant and independent contributor to organizational performance (Lynn, Heinrich and Hill 2001).

Management strategy is concerned with identifying and managing the organization in light of firm-specific factors (termed in the generic management literature as "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats" or "SWOT") (Lynn,

Heinrich, and Hill 2001). Arguably, such "firm-specific factors" might arise from a

turbulent environment. It is equally plausible that opportunities for a public organization

as well as threats to it might be the result of changes in the external environment. The

action (or inaction) that managers take affects whether such turbulence can be turned

into performance gains for the organization or if it will depress overall success. Koberg

(1987, 798) suggests that "…policy makers who are intendedly rational will attempt to

choose courses of action that solve their problems with minimal financial and human

cost to their organizations." In spite of this assertion, the literature provides little

guidance in terms of how strategy is affected during times of change.

The argument that political support will affect the strategies that managers

employ requires a theoretical framework for assessing such claims. I employ the set of

typologies proposed by Miles et al. (1978) in order to identify the strategies of managers.

Their conditions for "typing" an organizational leader as one "type" versus another fit

appropriately within the current argument. Miles et al. (1978) present four ways to

categorize a manager according to his actions in relation to the environment. They offer

these strategies as a way for organizations to solve their entrepreneurial, engineering,

and administrative problems. An extension of their argument is that a manager might

adopt a particular strategy as a result of variations in support from the external

environment. My theory drives the decision to choose two of the four proposed

strategies of Miles et al. (1978): *defender* and *prospector*. Because managers will either

engage their environments or not, these types allow further theorizing about whether

managers use support as a motivation for behavior.

Strategy Choices

The defender strategy suggests that managers deliberately enact and maintain an environment in an effort to keep the organization stable. Defenders desire to "seal off" their organizations preventing potentially deleterious influences from "entering its turf" (Miles et al. 1978). The Defender wants complete control in an effort to ensure efficiency – control for the defender is only attained by insulating the organization from externalities. Defending, on one hand, has the potential to protect the agency from detriment and ensure its continued existence. On the other hand, the defender risks a great deal by being unable (or unwilling) to respond to major shifts in the external environment.

Theoretically, one might consider the prospector a direct opposite of the defender. Rather than viewing the environment as a pressure to ward off, the prospector finds usefulness in engaging the environment for new opportunities. The prospector takes pride in innovation and favors a dynamic environment. In order to unearth and make use of new opportunities, the prospector "must develop and maintain the capacity to survey a wide range of environmental conditions, trends, and events" (Miles et al. 1978, 552). Unlike the defender, the prospector views the outside as something to be utilized rather than avoided. Change characterizes the prospector as it is used as a tool to gain a competitive edge over others. Where the defender desires control, the prospector seeks to facilitate external relationships.

Like the defender, the prospector strategy is not without risk. While it may be beneficial in some instances to continually change with the environment in which an

organization is situated, this type of strategy "runs the primary risk of low profitability and an overextension of resources" (Miles et al. 1978, 553). This is likely because it is difficult to coordinate effective internal operations in the presence of constantly amending practices and methods within an organization.

Networking

Well-established in the literature is the concept of public managers operating in complex networks, dealing with an array of actors to procure resources, build support, coproduce results, and overcome obstacles to implementation (Meier and O'Toole 2003, 2005; Milward 1996; Milward and Provan 1993; O'Toole 1997). "Public managers often operate in networked settings, where program success necessitates some collaboration and perhaps coordination with parties over whom they exercise little formal control" (Meier and O'Toole 2003, 690). Although the rational agency head would be hard-pressed to succeed without such networked interaction, he still makes a choice with respect to networking in his environment. Time spent networking reflects how managers perceive their environments (i.e., managers see the environment as "worth" interacting with).

The networking strategy, therefore, is one worthy of attention as it lies along the continuum of potential managerial behaviors. Moreover, it captures an element of strategy that the prospector and defender strategies do not – that is, the perceiving of an opportunity to work with others as a way to solidify successful policy execution for one's own agency.

As it relates to turbulence, my conceptualization of management strategy is based on contingency theory. To reiterate, "contingency theories of management (Scott 1981; Burns and Stalker 1961) argue that when organizations see their environments as turbulent and complex they respond in ways that reflect the variety in the environment" (Ashmos, Duchon, and McDaniel 2000, 577). In other words, organizations successfully adopt different strategies under different circumstances or contingencies (Rainey 2003). Therefore, the effect that turbulence potentially has on the overall performance of organizations is *contingent* on the intermediary choice of strategy that a manager adopts. Turbulence from the environment must work – either positively or negatively – *through* a filter of management. Turbulence causes managers to implement certain strategies while negating others. It causes organizations to employ certain actions while unapologetically ignoring alternatives. It is these managerial choices of strategy that result in variations in performance when it relates to turbulence, not simply a direct relationship among the environment and the organization's performance alone. Boyne and Meier (2009) argue, if the environment changes, then structure should also change, so turbulence will require internal adjustments. Given that, I ask, what role does the manager play in such "internal adjustments"? In this chapter, I encourage scholars to think beyond direct relationships between the two variables of environmental turbulence and organizational performance by introducing a third: managerial strategy.

It should now be apparent that I define alternations in the political environment as a form of turbulence. I argue that this particular form of turbulence will affect how managers of public organizations make strategy decisions. Contingent on levels of

environmental support, a manager will assess his or her environment and respond accordingly, selecting the best strategy for organizational success and survival. Some interesting questions arise when one considers the lack of influence a manager actually has on levels of political support. Environments tend to be favorable to organizations or not; organizations are often aware of the environment's perception of them. In other words, despite the best efforts of public managers, political support waxes and wanes simply due to the whimsical nature of the political environment. What becomes evident is the reality that although they may not control the source or rate of change of support, managers can determine *how* they allow political support to affect their strategy choices.

Under conditions of low political support, for instance, managers might opt to "defend" their organizations from the environment. Managers might perceive low levels of political support as a factor able to depress organizational morale, performance, or success. Rather than allow potentially negative attitudes to thwart organizational outcomes, managers might choose to insulate their organizations as much as possible. This is a plausible scenario and strategy choice for an organizational unit existing in a less than favorable political climate. Yet, this same condition (e.g., low political support) might lead one to prospect. Low support might indicate the need for change – in programming, strategy, organizational mission, or even previously stated goals. Managers may prospect the environment in order to find new opportunities or methods of implementation in order to increase support. For a prospecting manager, ignoring environmental input is too risky in that it could offer solutions on how to obtain, regain, or maintain supportive attitudes.

Arguably, it is further conceivable that a manager might not choose discretely between operating as a defender or prospector. Depending on the nature of the change(s) in political support, one could observe the public manager synthesizing elements of both strategy types – that is, choosing to insulate the environment from externalities while simultaneously using the outside as a resource for information on how to develop, manage, and sustain support. To illustrate this point, consider a case where an organization changes from average to high levels of support. A recent change to high support might reinforce current managerial and organizational activity. It might also afford the manager the perception that he is doing something right. The logical expectation is that the manager would continue his leadership style, but also think about how he could continue to receive increased backing from his environment. Rather than focus on a single strategy, the complexity, dynamism, and volatility of the political environment is likely to force managers to combine strategy choices, either alternating between each style or amalgamating particular aspects – as needed – in order to facilitate favorable relationships in the organization-environment relationship (Boyne and Walker 2004). Empirical testing of these claims is necessary to uncover how turbulence in the political environment influences the behavior of top-level managers.

In either case, we observe the public manager in a privileged, yet difficult position. As a bureaucrat, he or she must ensure the delivery of public goods and services and do so in an efficient and effective way. As a bureaucrat operating in a politicized environment (i.e., or as a politician), the manager must be aware of the context in which her organization sits and act accordingly. The external environment

presents the public manager with a few interesting questions. Do I engage the environment or protect my organization from external influences? Do I allow extrinsic demands to inform my decision-making? If so, to what extent should the environment influence my behavior? What strategy should I adopt to combat the potential negative effects of turbulence? And finally, what effect will these decisions have for my organization overall? Each of these might best summarized by a manager asking the more general question: how do I deal with the politics of the environment?

Data and Measures

My theory suggests that environmental turbulence works through an organization, yet it is managerial strategy that determines how such turbulence will affect the organization. The reality is that the manager must observe changes in the environment and possess ample discretion to make internal adjustments in response to external happenings. Empirical testing of these relationships requires the ability to compare similar organizations with varying levels of turbulence in their environments as well as the specific actions of managers. Data on managerial strategy and environmental turbulence are available in the education system. Educational policy is an exceptional area to test these claims for two reasons. One reason school districts provide a unique opportunity to study this relationship is that they are highly professionalized, bureaucratic organizations composed of multiple members, yet led by a single governing body and public manager, namely the school board and superintendent (Bidwell 1965; Meier and O'Toole 2001, 2002, 2003; Wirt and Kirst 2005). A hierarchical relationship exists between the school board and superintendent, yet this research seeks to expand the

scope of potential influences on managerial strategy by focusing not only on superiors or direct line subordinates, but also on additional members of the environment (Chubb and Moe 1990; Meyer, Scott, and Strang 1987).

 Furthermore, the educational arena is appropriate because successful policy implementation requires school districts to work with members of the environment to foster educational success and solve educational problems (Meier and O'Toole 2003). Superintendents manage their districts within a broader constellation of other actors, who may be important sources of funds, staff, ideas, guidance, and additional resources. Cooperation is needed in any policy environment by its actors to ensure successful implementation, yet I deem the educational arena all the more dependent on supportive relationships to ensure optimal performance. Given the aforementioned theory, it is plausible that members of the educational environment can act as reinforcing mechanisms affecting district achievement and superintendent decision-making. These data allow testing of how the relationship between the organization and its external environment influences the internal happenings of the organization. This data set provides for the determination of whether support from the environment has a differential impact on managerial strategy.

The data for this analysis come from the state of Texas. More than 1000 diverse and independent school districts face different obstacles respective to their particular environments. The heterogeneous nature of the state induces great variation into the study increasing applicability, as the potential findings might be generalized to educational systems in other states and might inform other arenas of the public sector

that are similarly structured. To illustrate this point further, data taken from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) suggest that school districts vary greatly on common characteristics such as the amount of full-time personnel, minority student populations and financial resources. For example, the average district receives approximately three thousand dollars in state aid, yet the range is from $87 to $14,105. The standard deviation of $1600 illustrates that the data include a variety of districts, ranging from rich to poor. This is one example of the richness of the dataset and its unique variation on a host of relevant factors.

In an original mail survey, Texas school district superintendents answered a battery of questions related to their leadership styles, time spent in and outside the district, and goals. Conducted in 2000-2009, the surveys collectively measured superintendents for five time periods allowing for the assessment of managerial strategies across districts, but also within-district differences across time. Data were combined into one panel dataset, covering nine years (or the academic years, 2000-2009). Missing data on specific items reduces the total units of analysis, while districts with small minority populations complicate this problem. These data have been used in multiple studies of performance and management and remain an exceptional dataset to test various relationships in the public sector (see Boyne and Meier 2009; Hicklin 2004; Meier and O'Toole 2003; Pitts 2005; Pitts, Hicklin, Hawes, and Melton 2010).

Dependent Variables

Managerial Strategy

Superintendents possess a set of strategy choices when dealing with internal operations, external events, or some combination of both. Neither public managers, more generally, nor superintendents specifically, are trained to insulate their organizations from the environment or to participate in activities for prospective, fresh opportunities. Rather, top-level administrators employ multiple strategies contingent on the circumstances they face. The question, therefore, is not whether superintendents will choose a strategy. Instead, the question is, considering particular contingencies, which one (or combination of them) will be chosen? It is reasonable to expect that superintendents have multiple ways to exhibit their affinity for a defender, prospector, or networking strategy.

To test this claim, I utilize two measures. Superintendents that agreed with the statement, "I strive to control those factors outside the school district that could have an effect on my organization" were classified as defenders. Prospector-type superintendents agreed with the phrase, "Our district is always among the first to adopt new ideas and practices." These variables were measured strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4).

I expect managerial strategy to be decided upon on a contingent basis. That is, when a particular strategy is necessary, a superintendent will employ such action contingent on his desired outcomes. Given this assumption, I expect that both the defender and prospector strategy will be significantly related to changes in

environmental support. The proposed theory lends no interpretation that I should

hypothesize in a directional manner for either strategy as the political environment has

the potential to lead to differential decision-making processes for public managers.

Networking

In education, technical and political demands placed on school district

superintendents encourage them to develop, solidify, and use ties with other important

actors in their environments:

> The most important of these include their own school board (the elected
> body responsible for overall local policy), the relevant state-level educational
> department (a source of funding that varies in importance from state to state, as
> well as the locus of many regulations), state-level legislators (who frame general
> education policy), local business leaders (who play crucial roles in supporting the
> locally enacted taxing decisions that drive much of school district revenue), and
> other superintendents (professional colleagues and sources of experience and
> innovation in the turbulent world of education) (Meier and O'Toole 2003, 690).

Thus, each potential network node has a purpose; however, I contend that the frequency

of networking with each of these nodes is highly contingent on what is taking place in

the environment.

According to my theory, managers' networking will be affected by

environmental support in the environment. As change takes place in the environment,

managers networking frequencies might be altered. Consider a scenario where the

percentage of Latino students in the district increases from one year to the next. It is

plausible that a superintendent might network at a greater frequency in order to gain

support from and information about his new constituency. Because information is

shared in networks, greater interaction with the community will likely place the

superintendent in a better position to deal with changes in the district population. A

contrary causal mechanism is also plausible. That is, considering again changes in the Latino student population, a superintendent might network less, thereby freeing up time to work internally to combat potential problems associated with such change. Rather than hypothesize that turbulence will inherently translate into less or more networking, my approach in this analysis is to first establish whether managerial strategy acts a filtering mechanism for turbulence at all.

Networking is measured as a factor of five items that account for the frequency of interaction with the school board, parents' groups, local business leaders, state legislators and other superintendents. All five items loaded on the first factor, with an eigenvalue of 2.14; no other factors were significant. Factor scores from this analysis were then used as a measure of management networking, with higher scores indicating greater network activity. I consider this measure an accurate indicator of strategy, in that networking with the environment constitutes a segment of the range of activities managers must do.

Independent Variables

Environmental Support

Environmental support is employed as a composite measure. Superintendent perceptions of support from parents, the community, and school board were compiled into an additive index. The current inquiry does not require an assessment of the role each of these types of support might individually play. Instead, my theory calls into question whether external support matters for managerial strategies at all. For this cause, it is acceptable to use an additive index to capture this phenomenon.

Superintendents were asked to rate levels of support (from parents, the community, and school board) on a scale of inadequate (1) to above average (4). Superintendents varied considerably in their responses to these questions with the plurality of responses (across the three types of support) falling between the categories of average and above average. The overall index of all three environmental actors ranges from 3 (inadequate) to 12 (above average).

Despite concerns of over-reporting, inflated managerial responses, and common source bias (see Meier and O'Toole 2010), there remains great value in using subjective measures of the environment. When superintendents rate levels of support as above average, they are likely describing directly observable behaviors of environmental actors. The alternative case, however, is also possible. When district support is reported as inadequate, it is likely that superintendents are experiencing negative feedback or potentially a lack of environmental support altogether. In either case, the *perception* of what is taking place provides great insight (and is arguably highly correlated) with what is *actually* taking place in the district environment.

Accounting for different actors is appropriate in that they provide a glimpse of the environment from multiple perspectives. Not only do the reasons why these actors show support differ, but how such support is demonstrated in times of turbulence will likely vary across actors as well. From these indicators, scholars and practitioners gain greater leverage on the question of how changes in the environment affect managerial choices.

Environmental Forces: Resources and Constraints

District-Related

Because alternations in the environment come from a variety of sources, it is also necessary to account for other potential drivers of managerial strategy. Hanushek (1996) points out that when predicting performance, a standard education production function includes resources and constraints. Since I theorize that turbulence is filtered through managerial strategy, the factors that have been found to impede performance are likely to also affect strategy.

To capture district-related characteristics, I use the percentages of African American, Latino, and low income students. Scholars have found support for the fact that both race and social class play a significant role in the U.S. school system (Jencks and Phillips 1998; Coleman 1990). The education of these students, when compared to that of Anglos, is often characterized as difficult due to their lack of educational resources in the home, a reality evidenced in the achievement gaps among these racial groups.

Also included are instructional expenditures per pupil to account for the amount of financial resources in the district that a superintendent is able to work with. Any impact found between the amount of turbulence and managerial strategy then is therefore isolated from the potential impacts of minority student presence and financial pressures. I expect instructional expenditures to be positively associated with managerial strategy while minority and low-income students are expected to contribute to task difficulty for the superintendent.

Manager-Related

Managerial strategy is also likely to be affected by personal factors attributable to the individual superintendent. First, I include measures of superintendent experience, superintendent tenure, and the highest educational degree the superintendent received. Education and experience capture micro-level characteristics that might influence a superintendent's choice as it relates to strategy during turbulent times. I hypothesize that the more education a superintendent has, the more likely he or she is to possess information regarding how to deal with the external environment during times of turbulence. Further, both superintendent experience, measured as the amount of years the superintendent has held that title in any district, and superintendent tenure, measured as the amount of years the superintendent has held the position in the current district, are likely to affect the strategy employed when considering the effect of turbulence. My justification for including these measures is so that any support for the relationship between managerial strategy and environmental turbulence will be over and above levels of strategy attributable to experience and educational background.

Discussion

Environmental Support and Managerial Strategy

Results from Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regressions suggest that environmental support is related to managerial strategy[1]. In other words, as environmental support increases in the political environment, managers find greater

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[1] Using ordered probit regression, the stated results hold and provide greater precision in predicting behavior contingent on particular levels of environmental support. For instance, at high levels of environmental support (E>10), superintendents are 24% more likely to choose a defender strategy. In like manner, superintendents are on 9% more likely, on average, to employ a prospector strategy upon increases in support.

affinity for both the defender and prospector strategies of leadership. Backing from the environment is positively associated with managers insulating their organizations from while also finding new opportunities in the environment. These findings are relatively intuitive and confirm the works of Kotter (1979) and Wamsley and Zald (1973) that maintained organizations interact with, shape, and are shaped by their environments. Added here is empirical support for these theoretical claims using the most common form of bureaucracy, or school districts.

Taking a closer look at the models shown in Table 3.1 it is clear environmental support affects managerial strategy not only in the current time period but also in future time periods. The short term impact of environmental support increases defender strategy by .222. This effect is relatively small, yet this beta represents the relationship of support to the choice of insulating the environment in the current or short term only. Due to the autoregressive term included in the model, the long term impact of support can be determined using the following formula:

$$\beta = \beta_0/1-\lambda \qquad [7]$$

where β_0 is the beta coefficient for environmental support, or .222, and λ is the beta coefficient for lagged defender strategy, or .369. As a result, the long term influence of support on defender strategy is .351. Put another way, if environmental support were to increase by one unit (that is – for instance, from average to above average levels), the equilibrium value of defender strategy would increase by .351. The long run impact provides intuition about the magnitude of the findings. There is a gradual process of adjustment taking place in future time periods which buttresses the employing of a

dynamic, rather than static, model specification. As a single driver of strategy choices,

support represents only one factor that managers must consider. Upon reverberation, the

effects (from only one source) remain determinative for managerial decision-making and

therefore organizational performance.

Table 3.1
The Impact of Environmental Support on Managerial Strategy

	Defender	Prospector	Networking
Environmental Support	**.222**** **(.091)**	**.053***** **(.009)**	**.024**** **(.010)**
Manager-Related Resources			
Lagged Managerial Strategy	.369*** (.015)	.274*** (.027)	.102*** (.025)
Superintendent Experience	.026 (.265)	.002 (.003)	.003 (.003)
Superintendent Tenure	-.044 (.190)	-.063 (.190)	-.044 (.203)
Superintendent Education	.017 (.017)	.002 (.017)	.047 (.081)
District-Related Resources			
Instructional Expenditures (per pupil; dollars)	.170 (.134)	.008 (.134)	.002 (.148)
Percent Black Students	.076 (.139)	.001 (.001)	-.005 (.152)
Percent Latino Students	.108 (.094)	.001 (.001)	.002** (.001)
Percent Low Income Students	.124 (.135)	.004 (.001)	-.002 (.001)
Intercept	2.612*** (.135)	1.994*** (.136)	-.040 (.147)
N	1608	1659	1366
R^2	.15	.17	.13
F	20.27	16.83	12.94

$p<.10$*; $p<.05$**; $p<.01$***, *two-tailed test*

Similar impacts are found for the relationship between environmental support and the managerial activity of prospecting the environment. As Table 3.1, Column 2 indicates, a unit increase in environmental support leads to superintendents' exploration of the environment for innovative methods of running the district. Noteworthy are the coefficients for environmental support. In both cases, each beta is statistically significant (when compared to the other indicators), thereby suggesting that support – a factor arguably extraneous to managerial influence - has greater impact over time when compared to other plausible drivers.

In order to comprehensively assess managerial strategy, recall that I include an additional measure of strategy, more specifically, superintendent networking activity. As shown in the third column of Table 3.1, environmental support also affects how much time superintendents spend networking with the school board, parents' groups, local business leaders, state legislators, and other superintendents outside the organization. Backing from the external environment likely provides the superintendent information about the quality of the nodes with which she interacts as well as an ability to infer how much time should be devoted to each node. In sum, the politics of the environment *does* affect how superintendents manage their organizations – it is the case the public managers take into account the external environment in their leadership styles.

Because the control variables in Table 3.1 have similar effects across each of the models, I discuss them collectively. Contrary to my expectations, other factors hypothesized to affect managerial strategy were found to be unrelated. Managerial-specific resources such as experience or education do not affect superintendents'

defender, prospector, or networking strategies. This is counterintuitive given that superintendent experience (in the district and overall) as well as education are likely drivers in the decision-making processes they make. The results affirm that the environment is the driver of the decision to ward off or engage the environment.

In no instance are instructional expenditures per pupil related to managerial strategy. This null finding might be attributed to the fact that strategy outside of the organization takes place apart from resources internal to the district. It is illogical to assume that superintendents do not strategize to gain alternative and additional sources of funding; however, the data show that the average school district receives 50% of its total revenue from the state. It is quite probable that the indicators I employ do not capture such factors that would impact managerial activity outside the organization.

Of the student population measures employed in this analysis, the results are mixed. For the defender and prospector strategies, the presence of low income students in the district positively increases superintendents' seeking out of new opportunities and engaging of the environment. Because the literature consistently finds that poverty is correlated with greater education problems (Jencks and Phillips 1998), managers' attention and efforts are likely to be redirected depending on changes in the amount of low income students that enter the district. The model shown here predicting managerial networking suggests that the percentage of Latino students in the district influences how much time the superintendent will spend outside the district facilitating external relationships. It is interesting that the coefficient for Latino students is significant while the others denoting student populations fail to reach standards of statistical acceptance,

thereby suggesting that the Latino student population has a greater impact over time when compared to other student influences. Admittedly, given that this data is from Texas, the aforementioned effect might be due to the larger presence of Latinos in Texas, when compared to other states. Educational issues in this population are likely to affect networking more (when compared to other minority groups) possibly because of sheer numbers, but I argue for a more systematic justification. There are well-established educational tasks associated with Latino students with which managers must contend including a need for bilingual teachers and programs as well as the building of parental support and involvement from Latino parents. My measure of networking includes interaction with parent's groups, yet I presume that the Latino student population might lead to, for example, a shift in managers' attention from minimal amounts of networking to greater amounts.

Testing Turbulence

The arguments put forth in this dissertation chapter might be summarized in two ways. First, the external environment will play a role in the strategy decisions of managers. Second, I expect the decisions managers make about strategy to fluctuate contingent on turbulence in the environment. Put another way, how do managers in turbulent environments allow political support to influence their strategy choices? In the previous section, I demonstrated that managers are affected by their political environments. In each case, whether the superintendent chooses to insulate his organization, engage her political environment, or actively pursue outside relationships, political support is a driver of these decisions. In fact, in every case, the manager finds

himself operating in each strategy choice at an increased rate as a result of stakeholders' support in the environment.

In order to assess whether superintendents differential employ environmental support in their decision-making contingent on turbulence, I partitioned the data into two parts: one with affirmative responses to the question "My district frequently undergoes change" and another with negative responses to that survey item. In this case, I utilize the subjective perception of the superintendent – that is, whether she considers herself operating in a turbulent environment. Arguably, answers from superintendents as it relates to their strategies are reliable given that they are personally describing the environment as volatile[2].

As the results in Table 3.2 indicate, environmental support leads to a defender strategy when the environment has been termed turbulent. That is, superintendents protect their organizations from harm and attempt to seal them off from externalities when the "district frequently undergoes changes." This is completely intuitive given that the change the environment experiences has the potential for deleterious effects on organizational performance. Change has the potential to stem from numerous sources and the manager must survey the environment to determine how to handle such turbulence when it takes place. In cases where superintendents do not consider their districts as turbulent, the role of political support fails to reach standards of statistical significance.

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[2] It is further logical to assume that managers are reacting to a perception of turbulence. In other words, why would superintendents react to something they didn't perceive? For a similar treatment using perceived indicators of turbulence, see Davis, Morris, and Allen (1991).

Table 3.2

The Effects of Environmental Support on Managerial Strategy Contingent on Turbulence

	Defender		Prospector		Networking	
	Turbulence	*No Turbulence*	*Turbulence*	*No Turbulence*	*Turbulence*	*No Turbulence*
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Environmental Support	**.024**** (.012)	**.038** (.053)	**.058***** (.012)	**.163***** (.063)	**.037***** (.013)	**.083** (.072)
Superintendent Experience	.001 (.003)	-.012 (.011)	.002 (.003)	.009 (.013)	.056 (.292)	.019 (014)
Superintendent Tenure	-.003 (.004)	.010 (.018)	.001 (.004)	-.026 (.021)	.090 (.393)	.007 (.030)
Superintendent Education	.006 (.022)	.208 (.153)	-.011 (.022)	.296 (.184)	.050** (.024)	.369 (.227)
% African American Students	-.011 (.015)	-.011 (.015)	.054* (.031)	.006 (.012)	-.083 (.206)	.004 (.012)
% Latino Students	.004 (.008)	-.004 (.008)	.022 (.018)	-.003 (.007)	.220 (.136)	.001 (.007)
% Low Income Students	-.068 (.013)	-.068 (.013)	.004** (.002)	.014 (.011)	-.254 (.202)	.001 (.010)
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	-.550 (.182)	-.550 (.182)	-.406 (461)	.300*** (.115)	-.045 (.204)	.016 (.012)
Lagged Strategy	.746** (.018)	.456** (.061)	.042* (.024)	.039 (.022)	-.089 (.015)	-.007 (.150)
Intercept	2.84*** (.172)	1.70 (2.512)	2.22*** (.171)	-2.02 (1.254)	-.079 (.194)	-2.91** (1.47)
N	795	538	798	637	776	663
R^2	.09	.09	.10	.04	.11	.05
F	4.33	3.60	2.09	1.99	6.69	2.63

$p<.10$*; $p<.05$**; $p<.01$***, *two-tailed test*

Alternatively, both superintendents that do and do not consider their districts as turbulent are increasingly willing to engage their external environments for new opportunities and ideas (prospectors). This finding points to the critical nature of the periphery for superintendents and public managers more generally. Leaders of public

organizations are not naïve; they are aware that their existence is in part due to (and sustained by) their political environments. Utilizing actors and methods extraneous to the organization is imperative. It is apparent that superintendents in both turbulent and non-turbulent environments are aware of this reality and demonstrate it in practice. The larger coefficient for the relationship between support and strategy in non-turbulent contexts (see Table 3.2, Model IV) points to a rather intuitive reality, that is - greater prospective activity occurs under conditions of perceived stability.

Finally, as it relates to networking, superintendents increase their amount of external activities under conditions of instability. One might initially expect a superintendent to shy away from networking in an effort to focus his attention on the sources of turbulence and how to assuage potential consequences. However, there is some utility to networking during times of turbulence. First, the environment might provide information on how to fix problems. Second, observing what is actually taking place in the environment (through directly engaging it) better situates the superintendent to protect his or her organization from harmful effects. Third, and finally, observing how the environment changes from one time period to the next affords the superintendent tools necessary to prevent future complications due to turbulence.

Overall, turbulence affects what strategies managers employ in order to deal with their external environments. Whether it involves simply engaging the environment or implementing a specific strategy related to the outside, environmental support increases this decision to engage with the environment.

Conclusion

The purpose of this analysis was to determine whether the external environment, more specifically, environmental support, affected managerial strategy. Past research has determined that turbulent environments can impact public organizations in myriad ways while the overarching consensus is that turbulence negatively affects public program performance. Rather than assume a direct relationship between turbulence and organizational performance, I offer theory suggesting that managerial strategy acts a filtering mechanism. That is, turbulence works through the decisions managers make in order to have an effect, either negative or positive, on the organization.

The findings offer a few interesting conclusions. First, environmental support increases superintendents' employing of defender, prospector, or networking strategies. Put simpler, a relationship with the external environment is increasingly facilitated when managers experience backing from stakeholders. The "outside" affects how managers perceive their role in relation to the environment as well as what actions they take as a result. Second, turbulent organizational environments lead the superintendent, in every case but one, to implement a different strategy when compared to non-turbulent ones. Managers, therefore, are paying attention to the alternations they observe. They internalize such change and allow it to determine, at least in part, their personal choices with respect to leadership style and practices. The political environment in most cases is "speaking" and this analysis demonstrates that managers of public organizations are listening.

This study is not without limitations. First, the strategies employed here represent only some aspects of managerial strategy. Additional considerations of strategy might include other activities such as the delegation of duties to subordinates and the creation of programs to combat the potential effects of district turbulence. I am also interested in taking a step backward from observing managerial activity to consider managerial perception as it relates to turbulence. Because perception often precedes action, understanding how changes in the environment affect managers' perceptions of their role during such times is also worthy of scholarly attention.

Additionally, I conclude that this work can be extended to determine whether less interaction with external actors translates into greater internal management efforts. Time is an invaluable resource for managers, yet if less time is devoted to one area of managerial activity, it is plausible that such time is redirected internally. Empirical support for this theory would mean that environmental support and turbulence not only affect managerial strategy in terms of frequency, but also in terms of direction. This work has prescriptive use given the finding that superintendents increase their strategies in times of turbulence. If environmental support, as the literature (and the current chapter) suggests, is integral to the employing of a management strategy, then superintendents can plan a priori for times of change in the environment. Understandably, this does not apply to turbulence that stems from unavoidable, unexpected circumstances. In sum, I find that environmental support does in fact affect managerial strategy. I urge scholars to rethink the relationship between turbulence and

public organizations by suggesting that a comprehensive evaluation of this process

should include the role of the manager and the politics of the environment.

CHAPTER IV

MANAGER OR MINORITY: EXPLORING THE DUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

Race in the United States has driven scholars across disciplines to investigate its effects on individuals, institutions, and processes. For political science, the undeniable presence of race in the political system provides scholars with an opportunity to study how race becomes a politicized factor with the ability to shape as well as interact with political drivers such as party affiliation, ideological identification, perceptions of personal efficacy, and levels of trust in government. In the last decade, public administration has adopted this trend, yet has done so looking more into questions of representation (Bradbury and Kellough 2008; Keiser, Wilkins, Meier, and Holland 2002; Meier 1993; Pitts 2005, 2007; Selden 1997; Wilkins and Williams 2008, 2009), as it relates to public service delivery, and less in relation to how race plays out in the political environment of public organizations.

A perusal of the literature in each of these subfields presents a unique opportunity for a timely, necessary line of inquiry. Such inquiries might be best summarized with the question: what role does race play for public organizations? A knee-jerk reaction begs the question of why does it matter. And further, what would such an approach contribute to the larger study of political science or the subfields independently? Responses to these questions should be provided up front. First, the saliency of race in our political system is not negligible. From the beginnings of our

country, race has served as "a profound determinant of one's political rights, one's location in the labor market, and indeed one's sense of identity" (Omi and Winant 1994). Race has and will likely continue to have major implications for our political system as well as broader political themes of representation, equity, and democracy.

Second, public organizations are the way in which everyday citizens interface with government. From daily provision of utility services to local law enforcement, the citizen is inundated with elements of public administration. The populations that these organizations serve are diverse on a host of cleavages – including socioeconomic status, class, and race. Not only do public organizations serve a diverse clientele, but they are also comprised of a diversity people at the superior and subordinate levels. This heterogeneity within agencies lends itself to a variety of inputs to and outcomes for the organization. This reality points to the question of how scholars should address the role of race as it relates to the political environment.

Until now, the dissertation has examined how environmental support affects public organizations. Attempts were made to evaluate how the external environment influences the outcomes of the organization, be those outcomes related to the individual leader or the unit altogether. The purpose of this chapter is to further investigate these claims adding a layer of inquiry. Put another way, how does race affect the relationship of the external environment to the organization? That is, how is the connection between support and the organization affected when the leader of the organization is a racial or ethnic minority? We might expect this factor to affect how managers perceive their environments as well as how the outside responds to such diversity at top levels of

organizations. Although literature in public administration abounds addressing the role

of diversity in organizations, scholars lack an understanding of how high-ranking

administrators fare in the political environments in which they operate. It is not the case

that the literature has overlooked race, instead, race has been studied in a circumscribed

fashion – internal to the organization without an accounting for the external. The present

goal is to evolve from a discussion of managing diversity to posing the inquiry of what

happens when the manager *is* the diversity. In posing this query, we switch modes from

studying the managing of racial and ethnic differences to diversity personified by the

highest levels of administration. Moving into this realm of investigation allows scholars

the opportunity to conceptualize diversity at lower *and* upper levels of government.

Conceptual Clarity

The current question of whether environmental support works differently for

organizations led by minorities necessitates clear conceptualizations of the terms utilized

consistently throughout this analysis. A lack of definition for these ideas would likely

prove detrimental to the reader and therefore pausing for a moment to discuss

meaningful terms is imperative[3].

The most recent term included in this dissertation is *race* – or "the classification

of human beings according to supposedly hereditary physical and/or psychological

traits" (Kamtekar 2002). As "a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts

and interests by referring to different types of human bodies" (Omi and Winant (1994,

55), race is a term with multiple meanings, derivations, and conceptualizations.

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[3] See earlier chapters for conceptualizations of *support* and *external environment*.

"Despite its uncertainties and contradictions, the concept of race continues to play a fundamental role in structuring and representing the world" (Omi and Winant 1994, 55). Debates surrounding the meaning of race are not the focus of this chapter. Instead, I operate from the well-established assumption that racial identity in the United States is a politicized characteristic, maintaining the importance of perceiving "…race as an element of social structure rather than as an irregularity within it" (Omi and Winant 1994, 55).

Literature Review

Neither environmental support nor race in public organizations is a novel area of inquiry. For decades, researchers have put forth great efforts to conceptualize the role of the outer environment of public agencies. Scholars have also attempted to identify how the common cleavage of race affects organizations and the delivery of public goods and services. An appraisal of the literature affords three significant conclusions. First, environmental support has often been theorized, but rarely empirically assessed. Second, diversity at subordinate levels of organizations is the primary focus for most of the extant research on race and organizations. Finally, an assessment of how support affects organizations led by minority administrators is non-existent. Due to the lack of overlap between these concepts, the current analysis reviews past research on these topics separately.

Environmental Support

The organization-environment relationship is one of critical importance to the public organization (see Katz and Kahn 1966; Tung 1979; Wamsley and Zald 1973).

The notion that the external environment acts as a provider of legitimacy (Carpenter 2001; Massey 2001) and resources (Kotter 1979; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978) and serves as a determinant of organizational management and structure (Cameron 1986; Goerdel 2005; Woodward 1965) suggests that the external happenings of organizations are not inconsequential. Although systematic efforts to diagnose external relationships have lagged behind efforts applied to internal (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967), the reality remains that the environment plays an important role for the public service organization and therefore the public manager. In order for scholars to tell a comprehensive story, both internal and external determinants of managerial behavior and agency performance must receive ample consideration. Even greater precision is warranted when considering the role of the minority top-level administrator. Accordingly, the next section illustrates that researchers might need to adjust their theoretical "lenses" for *minority* public managers.

Minorities in Management – Why We Should Care

Mainstream organizational theories concentrate on the factors affecting organizational productivity: how fast, how plentifully, and how well something is produced or, in the case of human service organizations, how well and how efficiently people are processed, sustained, or changed (Schiele 1990, 147).

> "This focus underlies bureaucracy's principle of rationality (Weber 1946), scientific management's notion of maximum productivity (Hasenfeld 1983), the human relations approach that increased worker satisfaction will induce increased productivity (Kaplan and Tausky 1977), decision-making theory's concepts of "satisficing" and performance gap (Hasenfeld 1983), the attributes of a "highly effective organization" identified by Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), the natural-system model's emphasis on goal displacement and how it causes the unattainment of formal, official goals (Scott 1967), and the political economy's

focus on how the distribution of power and the availability of resources both within and without organizations shape the choice of service technologies used for production."

Noteworthy also is that mainstream theory focuses on the individual, rather than the organization as a collective. Because of a concentration on such traditional (efficiency-oriented) factors, organizations led by minority administrators might be overlooked. Should their focus, decision-making, and thought processes include more than that which is listed above, we lose the ability to assess the minority managerial experience. In some ways, such an orientation constrains the minority manager placing him into a confined space where he must "fit the mold" and model of traditional theory. There is no opportunity for the minority administrator to express himself in the unique ways that scholars have suggested (Herbert 1974; Hunt 1974; Nkomo 1992).

Second, "for the most part in the literature, race has been considered an issue or a problem. Or race enters the discussion of organizations only when "minority" employees are studied" (Nkomo 1992). In this case, two things become clear. Rather than view race as a potential for a wealth of viewpoints and perspectives, racial diversity has been discussed as a complication and a precursor for strategizing on behalf of the organization. Scholarship has ignored foundational principles of democracy and equity and rendered it acceptable to view race as a deficiency or difficulty rather than an advantage. Further, researchers have focused on minority subordinates and their occupational distributions, levels of job satisfaction, affirmative action/equal employment opportunities, job attitudes and motivation, and job performances. Quite plausible is the notion that the theoretical contributions and subsequent findings of these

works might be applicable to the minority manager. One difference between superiors and subordinates, however, is their interaction with the political environment.

Third, despite the critical works done on the topics of representative bureaucracy and the effects of a diverse workforce, public administration remains deficient with respect to understanding what happens when the "face" of the organization is one of color. When the minority agency leader interacts with his environment, how does the environment perceive him? How do environmental actors view agencies led by racial and ethnic minorities? Do the stigmas attached to race and ethnicity in everyday society translate to the upper echelons of management? These are the puzzles scholars should concentrate on considering the increasingly diverse nature of our society and therefore our public agencies.

Race and Public Organizations

An examination of the scholarship of race in public organizations yields two conclusions. First, scholars have both included *and* excluded race in their study of organizations. Second, two streams of research have successfully taken race a step further to assess organizational diversity in the public sector, namely representative bureaucracy and diversity effects.

Inclusion and Exclusion?

As it relates to the exclusion of race in studies of organizations, Nkomo (1992) argues that "organizational scholars continue to conceptualize organizations as race

neutral."[4] That is, race has been silenced in the study of organizations due to errors in the intellectual production of knowledge, as stated by Minnich (1990). The errors are best summarized as the problem of generalizing or universalizing based on the dominant few white males – taking the perspectives of these groups as the norm and the ideal of humankind (Minnich 1990). This has led to a great deal of knowledge about the experience of only one group, yet generalizations of theories and concepts to all groups (Nkomo 1992). "We do not acknowledge that these universal theories emanate from an inadequate sample and, therefore, there is the possibility that the range of a theory or construct is limited" (Cox and Nkomo 1990).

The issue is not just with generalizing from the dominant group, but also from considering this group as being the best or the highest category and that all other groups must be defined and judged solely with reference to that hegemonic category (Keto 1989). Even when racial minority groups are "included" in research, they remain excluded due to their relegation to subcategories; their experiences are seen as outside of the mainstream of developing knowledge of organizations (Nkomo 1992). These observations call for an inclusion of race in a manner that taps into the totality of the organizational experience – that is, an incorporation of race at both the superior and subordinate levels.

Moreover, an overview lends a parallel interpretation that there has been an examination of race in organization literature, yet "when management researchers have

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[4] This notion of race neutrality is grounded in the foundational work of Weber (1946). In his classic formulation of bureaucratic structures, he argued that organizations are assumed to be created apart from individuals who inhabit them.

studied race, much of the research is narrowly focused, ahistorical, and decontextualized; in this research, race is mainly treated as a demographic variable" (Nkomo 1992). In the last twenty years, attempts have been made to rectify this gap by examining race as a value in and for organizations. That is, perceiving race as an opportunity for organizations to maximize their performance outcomes. In research on representative bureaucracy and diversity effects, scholars have assessed "the employing of a public bureaucracy that matches the general population on salient indicators of diversity, such as race, ethnicity, or gender" (Pitts 2005; see Meier and Nigro 1976; Mosher 1982; Pitkin 1967; Selden 1997). A second stream of research, that has been somewhat lacking in recent years suggests mixed results as to whether "racial and ethnic diversity results in benefits or drawbacks to organizational performance" (Milliken and Martins 1996; Pitts 2005; Willoughby and O'Reilly 1998; see the collection of 1950s and 1960s studies by Hoffman and Maier 1961; Katz, Goldston, and Benjamin 1958; Levy 1964)[5].

Summary

The preceding sections provide a foundation for exploring the question of how race plays out in the environments of organizations. Glaringly apparent is that we know virtually nothing with regard to how race affects the managerial level. Further obvious is the notion that we have no insight regarding how race and environmental support

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[5] Earlier studies have been replaced by more recent ones that attempt to assess the "value" of diversity in organizations. Grounded in the theories of previous works, contemporaneous investigations still remain inapplicable for current purposes given that they focus on subordinate variations in racial and ethnic background, the serving of a diverse clientele, or some amalgamation of both. Changing social values as well as the attainment of top-level positions by minorities renders the question of diversity at uppermost levels of public organizations one worthy of scholarly attention.

might collectively influence organizational outcomes. The existing works paint an ample picture from which to discuss the part these mechanisms play in an organization, especially when examining top levels of management.

Theory: Race, Environmental Support, and Public Organizations

In earlier chapters I demonstrated that environmental support from stakeholders affects levels of organizational performance, the strategies managers employ and how managers combat times of turbulence. The external environment is complex and it has the ability to influence what managers do as well as the outputs their organizations produce. These findings contribute to the larger study of public management by assessing how politics is inherently infused into the administrative process.

The next step, however, is to utilize the previous chapters and existing literature to argue that considerations of race in the relationship between environmental support and organizational outcomes are necessary. When taking into account the politicization of race in our society, it is not illogical to assume that a racial minority might interact with his political environment differently when compared to his non-minority counterparts. This interaction is not just how the manager might relate to his environment, but also in the reverse direction of how the environment might relate to him. Immediately, the top-level bureaucrat that (in earlier chapters) was once in a privileged, yet difficult position finds herself potentially in an even more complicated situation.

Manager and Minority: Reconciling the Duality

Why might a different causal story be told for minority managers? Why might a

manager of color have a distinct experience with the external environment? Some

researchers have investigated this question from a more general viewpoint, not

addressing issues of environmental support. For instance, O'Reilly and Roberts (1973)

concluded that whites and non-whites approach their jobs with different frames of

reference. They argue that as a subculture, minorities bring with them a contrasting

view of their jobs compared to whites. Such differences, they contend, will be reflected

in job perception as well as the level of satisfaction one is to derive from it. Shortly

thereafter, Herbert (1974), in his seminal work, addressed the role of the minority

administrator. He examined the "problems, prospects, and challenges" that

administrators of color face and ultimately concluded that "minority administrators do

have an important and unique role to play in the public management field" (Herbert

1974, 556). For Herbert (1974), the presence of the minority administrator goes beyond

a symbolic representation and translates into an active role where the group to which the

administrator belongs expects that administrator to not only advocate for responsive

government for all, but also for the group in particular. "It is important to recognize that,

as the number of minority professionals and administrators at all levels of government

increases, the expectations of minority people for more responsive government will

probably expand simultaneously" (Herbert 1974, 559). Because it is likely that

administrators of color will arise out of communities with high concentrations of

minorities, the need to satisfy these stakeholders is immediate while being a "traditional"

administrator (that is, one not solely advocating for minority concerns (Selden 1997)), is

also immediate. Overall, Herbert (1974, 560) provides a set of "role demands" – "the

dilemmas and forces mentioned…confront all administrators, but the minority

administrator seems to be subject to their weight more than most." What is the result of

the "weight" to which Herbert (1974) alludes? How relevant is his argument for

contemporary scholars as they assess the role of the political environment?

Some of the "weights" that Herbert (1974), among other scholars note include

the trade-offs between upward mobility while adhering to organizational norms, norms

that have traditionally ignored the plight, needs, and priorities of minority groups;

choosing between satisfying government role expectations that may not always align

with their own perceptions, goals, or expectations; and figuring out the correct formula

to contend with the amount of demands minority groups place upon them (see Burton

and Tryman 1996; Henderson 1979; Murray et al. 1994). For these reasons, coupled

with the saliency of race in the political environment, the following pages evince why

one might expect the minority manager to have a unique managerial experience.

Support and the Minority Manager

Given that environmental support matters for managerial strategy and

organizational performance, one might expect that this phenomenon is no different for

the organization led by a minority manager. Yet, the literature suggests a particularized

experience for the administrator of color. One area in which to assess potential disparity

is environmental support. If the contributions of Herbert and other scholars are accurate,

then we should expect the political environments in which organizations sit to be affected by race.

Members of the political environment may act as reinforcements of the difficulties that minority managers encounter. On one hand, minorities in powerful positions might internalize their presence as being reflective of the needs of their minority group, but this may not be the case for all minority administrators. What might further complicate this situation is serving a clientele that expects one to play such a role. Taking on the responsibility is complex enough, yet knowing that individuals require such advocacy is an even greater obstacle. When considering support, one might plausibly contend that when the clientele is not satisfied with the performance of the organization, they fail to show support. But including the race of the manager intensifies this reality. When organizations led by minorities fail to respond in the manner the group deems acceptable, the minority manager might experience a personalized disappointment while simultaneously acknowledging that the organization is unlikely to gain support as well (see Henderson 1979). This duality of experience exists for the manager of color who must deal with his own ideas and perceptions of role but also contend with the environment in which he operates.

Some evidence of this duality is found in earlier, purely theoretical works that lie at the intersection of racial identity and public administration. Schiele (1990) introduces the relevance of the Afrocentric paradigm to explain the unique vantage point of minority bureaucrats. The Afrocentric model conceives individual identity as collective (Akbar 1984; Baldwin 1981; Nobles 1980; Schiele 1990). Rather than emphasize the

individual organization member, the Afrocentric perspective "rejects the idea that the individual can be understood separate from the others" (Schiele 1990, 149; see Akbar 1984). Cook and Kono (1977, 26) state, "individuality in the sense of self in opposition to the group disappears and is replaced by a common understanding or common goal." In practice, administrators of color are predisposed to focus on the unit as a whole rather than individualized perspectives or motivations.

Whether the derivation is from traditional African philosophical assumptions or the realities of day-to-day dealings among minorities in their communities, it is clear that the minority administrator brings with her a set of assumptions about her role and expectations for behavior. The underlying theme of the works mentioned is that a notion of collective identity drives decision-making processes for administrators of color. What implications might a collective identity have for the public manager and by extension, the public organization? In practice, one might expect an otherwise hierarchical organization to convert into a flatter, more pluralistic one. If the minority manager operates under the assumption that what is individually appropriate is also best for the organization overall, he might be more inclined to engage in participative methods, reducing the distance between superiors and subordinates. It is also plausible that the minority administrator might seek to allow his adherence to principles of collectivism to unite the organization. Common cross-cutting cleavages of race, class, and gender might prove an opportunity for the manager to utilize collectivist strategies across the agency as a whole (rather than simply with members of the manager's own racial group). Such a predisposition might create not only a collective orientation among minority top-level

administrators and minority subordinates, but a shared identity for the organization in general. With these examples of contrasting roles and expectations in mind, minorities in organizations are prone to strategize in ways counter to non-minorities, increasing the likelihood that organizations led by the two groups will experience disparate outcomes.

A counter argument puts forth that once minorities have reached the upper echelons of management that one should expect notions of commonality and responsibility to be socialized out of them (Romzek 1990; Simon 1957; Thompson 1976). In other words, the higher up a minority climbs in ranking, position, and prestige, the less likely he will be to internalize pressures. "…administrators are socialized by the organizations they work in and adopt behaviors and preferences that are consistent with organizational goals, thereby minimizing the influence of their own personal values on bureaucratic behavior" (Wilkins and Williams 2008, 656; see Downs 1967; Gawthrop 1969; Meier and Nigro 1976; Simon 1957; Thompson 1976; Weber 1946). In their study of police officers, Wilkins and Williams (2008, 656) suggest that "organizational socialization may actually strip away the racial identity of black police officers and replace it with an organizational identity. In essence, this process may transform those officers who are black in blue to simply blue." Although this is a valid argument, it is critical to keep in mind that the politicization of race continues to take place extrinsic to the organization. Internally, the manager might delegate issues of "advocating for" to subordinates, yet the external environment will continue to view the organization as headed by a racial minority. To extend this logic a step further, members of the environment will evaluate the agency using a particular lens. For the minority manager,

this lens is likely a racialized one. The "face" of the organization remains in tact for the periphery of the organization regardless of whether the manager assumes such a role inside the unit. This realization is critical because it approximates reality. Although one might (choose to) be socialized out of a minority advocacy position, the environment will nevertheless continue to perceive the administrator in this manner[6].

As an additional note, support and race are politicized notions worthy of examination for public organizations. Support from actors in the environment functions in a very political fashion – with stakeholders choosing to value some elements of organizations over others and allowing their supportive (or unsupportive) attitudes to follow suit. Race, in a similar vein, is an undeniable feature of the United States' political system and plays into the decision-making processes of public administrators. How an environment responds to a public manager of color is likely to be centered on notions of racial structure actualized by the current political system. Although factors that lie outside of the span of control for public managers, support and race have the potential to influence public organizations in ways yet to be explored.

Data and Measures

In sum, the theoretical argument put forth here suggests that if the environment has the potential to influence organizational outcomes, it likely does so in a different manner in light of a minority manager. In other words, environmental support will have disparate outcomes in districts led by minorities when compared to those managed by

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[6] As a member of the racial group, the clientele are unlikely to change their perspective of "their" public manager's role. Regardless of what takes place internal to the agency, clientele are likely to perceive a co-ethnic in terms of advocacy *and* authority, even if the individual administrator has self-selected out of an "advocating for" role.

their non-minority counterparts. In part, levels of performance result from feedback, yet it is plausible that the attaining of such outcomes is driven by more than one environmental factor.

Empirical testing of these relationships requires the ability to compare similar organizations with varying levels of environmental support as well as the specific actions of managers, both minority and non-minority. The data used in this study are drawn from Texas school districts. Taken from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the districts vary greatly on common characteristics such as the amount of full-time personnel, financial resources, and minority student populations. The rich diversity of the state affords more than 1000 diverse and independent school districts that face contrasting obstacles with respect to their particular contexts.

In addition to objective data, I utilize responses from an original survey of Texas top-level district administrators, or superintendents. The survey instrument included a series of questions related to perceptions of performance, district aspirations, and managerial practices. Initial data were collected for five time periods allowing for meaningful comparisons across districts and time. Data from both sources are combined into one panel dataset, covering five years (or the academic years, 2000-2005). Missing data on specific items reduces the total number of cases, especially when analyses include districts with small minority populations.

Environmental Support

Environmental support is likely to stem from multiple sources in a school district. The diverse nature of stakeholder interests likely motivates managerial behavior in more

than one direction. Because superintendents evaluate backing from their environments from greater than one actor, I employ ratings of support from parents, the community, and school board. I do not hypothesize particularized causal mechanisms for each actor's influence on districts led by neither minority nor non-minority managers; therefore, I compile these indicators into an additive index. An accounting for different environmental actors is appropriate because their inclusion provides a glimpse of the organization-environment relationship from multiple perspectives. Not every member of the periphery of the organization will respond similarly to a minority manager while demonstrations of support from these groups might vary across types of stakeholders as well.

Superintendents were asked "How well would you rate the (parental support, community support, school board support) in your district?" Their responses range from inadequate (1) to above average (4). Superintendents varied considerably in their responses to these questions with the plurality of responses (across the three types of support) falling between the categories of average and above average. The overall index of all three environmental actors ranges from 3 (inadequate) to 12 (above average).

Race of the Superintendent

In order to assess whether districts led by minority superintendents fare differently, data on the race of the superintendent were obtained from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). In some cases, the race of the superintendent was validated

by visiting the district's website[7]. TEA maintains current, as well as archival data,

related to the demographics of Texas Public School Superintendents, including

information on their racial and ethnic, educational, and sex distributions[8]. Dichotomous

variables for were provided for each superintendent, coded "1" for minority

superintendents and "0" for Anglos.

Interesting patterns emerge from these data. The trends illuminate the

heterogeneous nature of the state and the nation overall. In 2002, there were 29 African

American and 77 Latino Texas superintendents. The change in African American and

Hispanic superintendents totals over three percentage points from 1995 to 2002, while

Anglo superintendents declined by four and one half percent[9]. While Anglo

superintendents remain the overwhelming majority, the sheer number of minorities in

these positions renders the question of how race shapes the organization-environment

relationship an important one.

I expect environmental support to have a differential effect in districts led by

minority superintendents. Because the literature suggests difference, rather than

magnitude or direction of disparity, I hypothesize dissimilar outcomes for environmental

support, contingent on the race of the manager[10].

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[7] Previous scholars utilizing this data performed this method to ensure the validity and reliability of data obtained from the Texas Education Agency. This "check" was not conducted for every minority-led district.

[8] Although the data are available for Asian and Native American superintendents, these groups are not included in the analysis (see Appendix D).

[9] In 1995, only 6 Texas superintendents were African American, while 55 were Hispanic. Seven years later, this number swelled dramatically by 383%, resulting in 29 African American superintendents. Hispanics increased, but at a steadier rate, increasing by about 40%, resulting in 70 Hispanic superintendents (see Appendix D).

[10] Predicted signs for the race of the superintendent are ambiguous, depending on whether a district sees it as an advantage (or value-added) to hire and retain a superintendent of a particular demographic.

Environmental Forces: Resources and Constraints

Public organizations exist in unpredictable environments. On a daily basis, superintendents face challenges to their ability to effectively manage (Goerdel 2005). Literature in education policy and public school management provides guidance on how to assess challenges to superintendents that come in the form of environmental constraints as well as opportunities (Hedges and Greenwald 1996; Meier and O'Toole 2001).

Racial inequalities and income disparities are negatively correlated with educational performance, particularly when focusing on standardized testing (Jencks and Phillips 2008). Scholarly evidence like this compels researchers to include indicators of race and poverty when assessing educational performance. Taking this scholarship into account, I include three measures for race and poverty, namely, the percentages of African American, Latino, and poor students in a given school district. It is expected that these variables will be negatively related to organizational performance in all districts – with no differential expectation for minority versus non-minority managed districts.

Constraints present an undeniable problem for superintendents; however, the amount of resources a district possesses might circumvent some of these issues. Following the basic tenet that schools with more resources generally perform better (Wenglinsky 1997), I employ three measures of resources in this analysis. Total instructional expenditures and average teacher salary to capture the effects of financial

as well as human capital for the district. Resources are expected to be positively associated with school district performance no matter the race of the superintendent.

Dependent Variables

Organizational Performance

To empirically test the theory that environmental support and the race of the public manager matter for organizational performance, I use three indicators of school district performance[11]. Following the proposed arguments, chosen measures must be such that support from parents, the community, and the school board would be theoretically meaningful. Passage rates on state-mandated testing, passage rates on college preparatory exams, and attendance rates are all examples of performance that have the potential to be mitigated by support from actors outside the organization, contingent on the race of the superintendent.

To test the effects of support and race on state-mandated testing, I utilize overall passage rates on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, or TAKS, exam. The test is measured as the percentage of overall students who pass all parts of the statewide standardized test each year. Students in grades three through eight and eleven are evaluated in the areas of mathematics, writing, and reading. As a high-stakes test for the state, the results consistently receive media attention and are politically salient for all actors involved. Almost all members of the district – both internal and external – have a stake in how well students perform on these tests.

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[11] Other indicators are also utilized to test these claims. There is no "one" or "best" way to measure agency performance. Using more than one measure is an effort to test the tractability of my theory in a holistic manner across the host of criteria that school districts must satisfy.

Stakeholders such as parents, the community, and school board each have a vested interest in the performance of students on the TAKS. Parents, for instance, are interested in the adequate education of their children. The school board, however, plays a somewhat different role than other members that lie on the periphery of the district. As the political oversight mechanism of the district, (most often) elected members of the school board actively support and monitor mechanisms for evaluating student achievement. Although the mechanism driving their support, as well as its demonstration, might differ from the other actors discussed here, the fact remains that school board members work with the superintendent to promote student performance.

For the minority superintendent, it is likely the case that stakeholders belonging to the same racial group might expect particularized strategies related to targeted groups of students. For instance, it is not illogical to assume that the Hispanic community in El Paso, Texas, might expect their (Hispanic) superintendent to advocate for Latino-specific issues (i.e., policies on bilingual education and dual language learners) of student performance. In this case, for example, support might work collectively with the race of the superintendent in order to affect organizational outcomes.

Another indicator in which the environment is likely to have a stake is the amount of students who pass college preparatory exams. Measured as the percentage of students who score above 1110 on the SAT or its ACT equivalent (24), the overall perception is that students are being prepared for college. For parents, the community, and the school board, higher levels indicate that the district is not only doing its job in

the current time period, but also for future time periods as it prepares students for higher education.

The minority superintendent, like her Anglo counterpart, might find it imperative to ensure college readiness for all students. The difference, however, is that minority superintendents are likely to endure an expectation that they should "fix" the achievement gap among minorities and white students. The likelihood that they will be held personally responsible, and that this might be reflected in levels of support, is great.

Additionally, I assess how support and strategy relate to the percentage of students that attend school on a daily basis. Students must learn and retain necessary material in order to pass high stakes testing (state-mandated or college preparatory). This transmission of information from teacher to student cannot take place if the students are not physically there. It is likely that the district that possesses high levels of absenteeism is also low-performing on more difficult measures of district performance.

Every superintendent faces challenges in an effort to ensure optimal levels of performance on multiple indicators. These challenges, I argue, are exacerbated for the minority administrator that must assuage external pressures as well as contend with difficulties internal to the district. I utilize Ordinary Least Squares Regression to test the proposed relationships among environmental support, superintendent race, and organizational performance. Due to the panel design of the data, I model the effects using panel-corrected standard errors (Beck and Katz 1995).

Findings and Discussion

Before investigating how environmental support and race interact to affect organizational outcomes, it is first appropriate to highlight whether differences exist among minority and non-minority superintendents. In order to address this inquiry, I conduct multiple difference of means tests for levels of support perceived from stakeholders as well as strategies employed with respect to the external environment.

Results suggest only modest differences between Anglo, African American, and Hispanic superintendents in levels of support from parents, the community, and school board. The distribution of this variable, shown in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, evinces that patterns of support among superintendents are quite similar, regardless of race.

Figure 4.1
Environmental Support in Districts with Minority Superintendents
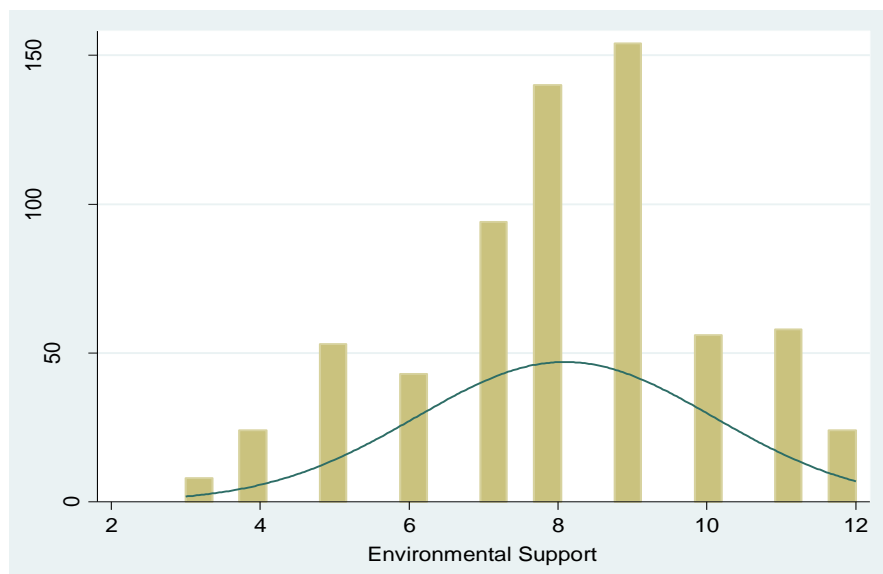
Figure 4.2
Environmental Support in Districts with Non-Minority Superintendents
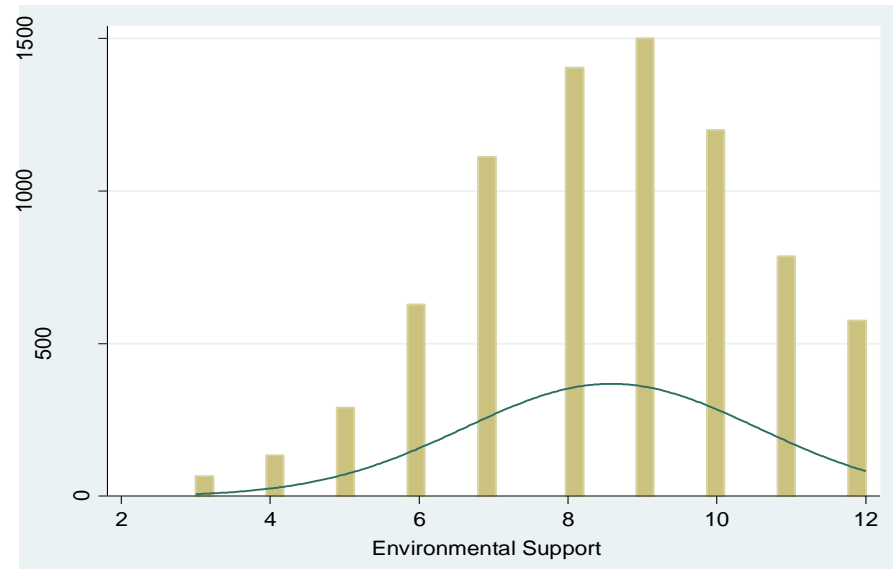
Table 4.1
 Difference of Means Test

	Minority Superintendents	Non-Minority Superintendents	t	H_a: diff != 0 Pr(|T| > |t|)
How would you rate the following in your district: (parental involvement, community support, school board support)? (Additive Index)	8.09	8.58	6.05	0.00
Managerial Strategy				
I strive to control those factors outside the school district that could have an effect on my organization.	3.09	3.08	-.26	0.79

Table 4.1 continued

	Minority Superintendents	Non-Minority Superintendents	t	H_a: diff != 0 Pr(|T| > |t|)
I always try to limit the influence of external events of principals and teachers.	3.23	3.23	-.05	0.96
Our district is always among the first to adopt new ideas and practices.	2.83	2.69	-2.40	0.02
We continually search for new opportunities to provide services to our community.	3.34	3.08	-2.71	0.01
Networking (Factor Score)	.15	.00	-2.18	0.03
Superintendent Characteristics				
Highest Degree Received	4.49	4.18	-3.26	0.00
How long have you been superintendent in this district?	4.07	5.93	5.42	0.00
How long have you been superintendent in any district?	5.65	8.08	4.70	0.00

Probability values shown in Table 4.1 indicate that the mean difference in environmental

support across the race of the superintendent is statistically different from zero. The

interpretation is that there is a difference (when comparing average levels of support),

however, such disparities are small in magnitude.

Working under the assumption that amounts of environmental support are relatively the same for minority and non-minority superintendents, one might conclude that this sets the stage for assessing whether race is a determinative factor for organizational outcomes. In other words, if superintendents, regardless of race, are receiving comparable levels of backing from their environments, what, if anything, might drive disparities in their performance? It further substantiates the idea that potentially the "face" of the agency affects how well the organization does.

To push the logic a bit further, subsequent tests demonstrate that both minority and non-minority managers employ strategies at the same rate. Whether evaluating superintendents on their frequency of warding off the external environment, facilitating relationships with the outside, and time spent networking, minorities and non-minorities strategize in similar ways. This further substantiates that similar behaviors occur among superintendents, regardless of race[12].

The Collective Influences of Race and Support

Before assessing whether environmental support and race combine to influence organizational performance, the current research begs an exploration into whether the presence of a minority superintendent affects the ability of school districts to accomplish established goals. The dependent variables selected span the range of possible

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[12] Other factors determine the strategies managers employ and therefore I conduct a comparison of minority and non-minority superintendents' levels of education and experience. The plurality of respondents (across races) held master's degrees or superintendent certifications. Superintendent tenure (time within their current district) was comparable across Anglo, African American, and Hispanics with minority superintendents lagging behind only about one and a half years. The largest gap was found in levels of overall experience as a superintendent. Anglos have held these positions longer, on average. More specifically, minorities have about five and one half years experience, compared to an Anglo level of eight years. Although some contrasts are apparent, for the most part, there are no glaring points of dissimilarity that might disadvantage minorities in managing the district (See Table 4.2).

managerial concerns. An examination of the part minority superintendents play for these factors sheds light upon the importance of race in public organizations.

Across both low and high end indicators, the results in Table 4.2 tell a bleak story. All things being equal, the presence of a minority superintendent depresses a school district's ability to perform. This suggests that the "face" of the organization alone negatively influences organizational effectiveness. Race matters for the organization overall; moreover, top-level administrators are susceptible to the effects of the politicization of race. While the precise functions the minority manager performs are not tested here, it is evident the stigmas and stereotypes associated with the relegation of African Americans and Latinos to subordinate status is at work in public organizations.

Table 4.2
The Effects of Race on Organizational Performance

	Overall Pass Rates	SAT/ACT 1110+	Attendance	SAT Average	ACT Average	Graduation Rates
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Environmental Support	.620***	.746***	.015***	6.221***	.187***	.193***
	(.049)	(.063)	(.003)	(1.176)	(.026)	(.052)
Minority Superintendent	**-3.306***	**-4.806***	**-.138**	**-12.892**	**-.833***	**-3.143***
	(.348)	**(.447)**	**(.022)**	**(12.193)**	**(.187)**	**(.384)**
% African American Students	-.071***	.011	-.001	1.067***	.001	-.034***
	(.010)	(.012)	(.001)	(.311)	(.005)	(.010)
% Latino Students	-.018***	.008	-.002**	.877***	.009***	-.022***
	(.006)	(.008)	(.001)	(.214)	(.003)	(.006)
% Low Income Students	-.108***	-.207***	-.182***	-2.366***	-.043***	-.046***
	(.009)	(.012)	(.053)	(.299)	(.004)	(.009)
Teacher Salary	.079***	-.715***	.128	-.499	.216	.007
	(.017)	(.170)	(.109)	(.306)	(.172)	(.102)

Table 4.2 continued

	Overall Pass Rates	SAT/ACT 1110+	Attendance	SAT Average	ACT Average	Graduation Rates
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Class Size	-.154**	.259***	-.019***	18.264***	.131***	-1.150***
	(.072)	(.093)	(.005)	(2.689)	(.037)	(.085)
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	.079	-.007	-.017**	-.016***	.377***	-.379***
	(.134)	(.018)	(.008)	(.005)	(.081)	(.140)
Lagged Performance	.597***	.394***	.836***	.165***	.430***	.484***
	(.011)	(.012)	(.008)	(.011)	(.012)	(.012)
Intercept	26.672***	14.257***	15.834***	312.261***	11.801***	58.021***
	(1.385)	(1.820)	(.817)	(52.508)	(.754)	(1.897)
N	3502	3946	3907	4097	3843	4376
R^2	.52	.49	.71	.46	.31	.39
F	963.48	587.23	609.28	487.83	186.12	378.06
Standard Error	9.46	12.27	.58	229.53	3.62	7.08

Ordinary Least Squares Regression; Panel-Corrected Standard Errors
$p<.10$*; $p<.05$**; $p<.01$***, one-tailed test

The aforementioned literature makes clear; however, that the "race" of the public manager is likely an umbrella (or catch-all) term for other environmental machinations linked to role, identity perception, patterns of behavior, and context. It might be the case that the specific mechanism of environmental support might offer clarity with respect to how the environment responds to minority top-level administrators.

Public managers are most interested with the performance of their agencies. Race does not eradicate this reality. Instead, as Table 4.3 illustrates, the existence of a minority in upper levels of management complicates this task. Results from Ordinary Least Squares Regression models suggest that across types of performance, support from members of the external environment is integral. When coupled with a minority

superintendent, however, this relationship is attenuated, lending justification for the expectation that districts led by African American and Hispanic superintendents fare differently as a result of the politicization of race in the outside.

Effects shown across indicators suggest that support from parents, the community, and school board remain a consistent and significant predictor of increased performance. This corroborates the research completed in earlier chapters that argued for the importance of environmental support as a driver of managerial strategy and organizational outcomes. Of particular interest in the current analysis are the striking findings that having a minority superintendent, coupled with support, proves detrimental to the performance of educational systems on both low and high end measures of achievement.

Table 4.3
The Contingent Effects of Environmental Support and Race on Organizational Performance

	Overall Pass Rates	SAT/ACT 1110+	Attendance	SAT Average	ACT Average	Graduation Rates
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Environmental Support	.513***	.143***	.017***	6.464***	.152***	.159***
	(.055)	(.066)	(.033)	(2.219)	(.030)	(.062)
Environmental Support* Race of the Superintendent	**-.083***	**-.199*****	**-.007****	**-3.085***	**-.106*****	**-.129****
	(.049)	**(.060)**	**(.003)**	**(1.981)**	**(.027)**	**(.057)**
% African American Students	-.071***	.011	-.001	2.405***	.002	-.079
	(.010)	(.012)	(.001)	(.386)	(.005)	(.011)
% Latino Students	-.019***	.008	.001	1.529***	.018***	-.049***
	(.006)	(.008)	(.378)	(.259)	(.003)	(.007)
% Low Income Students	-.108***	-.207***	-.182***	-4.928***	-.077***	-.091***
	(.009)	(.012)	(.053)	(.359)	(.005)	(.010)
Teacher Salary	-.072***	-.715***	.328***	-.207***	.265***	.007
	(.017)	(.170)	(.109)	(.038)	(.061)	(.102)

Table 4.3 continued

	Overall Pass Rates	SAT/ACT 1110+	Attendance	SAT Average	ACT Average	Graduation Rates
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Class Size	-.157**	.259***	-.019***	45.988***	-.244***	-1.150***
	(.072)	(.093)	(.005)	(3.231)	(.042)	(.085)
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	.077***	-.007	-.017**	-.038***	.377***	-.662***
	(.135)	(.018)	(.008)	(.007)	(.081)	(.163)
Lagged Performance	.597***	.394***	.042*	.837***	-.007	-.097
	(.010)	(.012)	(.024)	(.008)	(.015)	(.250)
Intercept	28.229***	14.096***	15.834***	653.511***	20.502***	111.342***
	(1.723)	(1.824)	(.817)	(63.385)	(.807)	(1.643)
N	3816	2654	3907	2338	2960	3289
R^2	.60	.44	.75	.24	.15	.19
F	1091.59	518.98	1608.28	213.88	135.12	156.25
Standard Error	7.85	9.11	.43	290.56	4.13	8.25

Ordinary Least Squares Regression; Panel-Corrected Standard Errors
$p<.10$*; $p<.05$**; $p<.01$***, one-tailed test

Environmental support in districts managed by minority superintendents depresses performance on state-mandated testing, exams for college preparation, and simply getting students to school on a daily basis. In like manner, the average SAT and ACT scores of the district as well as the number of students that graduate is negatively affected by support in minority-managed districts. Across estimates shown in Table 4.3 the large t-statistics convey that one can reject the null hypothesis that the contingent effects are not significantly related to the district.

On one hand, a consistency of results across types of performance lends an element of validity to the theoretical argument presented here. Yet, at the same time, the picture painted by these findings is a daunting one. The stability of the effect sheds light on the reality that environmental support works differently in organizations led by minorities. The negative sign of the corresponding betas points to a larger phenomenon,

one that relates back to the arguments stated earlier. Minority top-level administrators are affected by race in public organizations and the external environment is a reinforcement of such stigmas. It was not until race was coupled with support that levels of performance were depressed while the estimations shown in Table 4.3 convey that race *is* the driving mechanism of such consequences. Further research about how the presence of a minority administrator alters an otherwise positive relationship between the environment and organization is critical. Quite frankly, the simple, physical presence of a minority leader is likely not the problem. The story lies in the larger phenomenon – that is, the differential interactions between minority and non-minority leaders with those on the periphery of their districts. The environment is responding distinctively to African American and Hispanic superintendents. What exactly is causing divergent responses is an area ripe for additional exploration.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to assess whether environmental support from the political environment worked differently in districts led by minority top-level administrators. Despite receiving similar amounts of support from the outside, implementing managerial strategies at the same rate, and possessing comparable job-related attributes, organizations led by minorities are plagued with declining performance. The methods used to test this contingent theory demonstrate that an accounting of the race of the public manager changes the previous narratives of organization-environment relations. A critical next step is to understand why African American and Latino superintendents experience depressed performance while Anglo

superintendents do not. It is not just performance that is likely to suffer – the overall experience of minority public managers in the political environment is simply a different one (when compared to Anglos).

This chapter approximates reality as public organizations are becoming increasingly diverse. Scholarship lags behind in assessment of the minority experience in organizations, especially at the managerial level. Additional research is needed to isolate the factors that contribute to the politicization of race in the environment of public agencies. Moreover, this is an excellent opportunity for scholarship to meet practice as this undertaking will likely require the observation and interviewing of minority managers. In-depth evaluation of what is actually taking place external to the organization is necessary to form accurate theory to explain the minority manager experience, but also his behavior. Not only is there a politics to management, it is evident there exist under-researched machinations resulting in the politics of *race* and public management.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The political environment is cited as one of the major distinctions between public and private organizations. Not only are public organizations the embodiment of the policy process, but by nature they are susceptible to the whimsical nature of the environment. Public agency dependence on the environment as a source of legitimacy, resources, and as a precursor to decisions on management and structure theoretically explains why agencies pay attention to the outside. The set of empirical studies in this analysis provide substantiation for these claims and add to the literature in clear ways. The efforts enclosed advance scholarship on the broader role of the external environment, decision-making of public managers, and determinants of agency performance.

This dissertation represents more than a single step in the appropriate direction for scholars to observe the organization-environment relationship. Instead, my intention was to encourage scholars to rethink prior conceptualizations of the "outside". Including environmental support is one way to assess how the periphery infiltrates the organization in a significant manner. The collection of findings presented in this project provokes researchers to reconsider external factors in both a theoretical and empirical fashion.

A Case for Education

To empirically assess my claims, I utilize pooled time series data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and original management surveys. These annual data include

over one thousand school districts as well as multiple measures relating to the composition of the district including indicators relating to size, teacher-student ratio, performance, and program expenditures.

School districts are the most common type of U.S. public bureaucracy, employing more individuals than any other type of government organization. Texas school districts are highly diverse, as one might expect, considering the heterogeneous nature of the state. Districts in the data set span the gamut of urban to rural, rich to poor, monoracial to multiracial.

Most important is the theoretical justification for utilizing systems of education. Successful policy implementation requires school districts to work with members of the environment to foster educational success and solve educational problems (Meier and O'Toole 2003; Wirt and Kirst 2005). Superintendents manage their districts within a broader constellation of other actors, who may be important sources of funds, staff, ideas, guidance, and additional resources. Cooperation is needed in any policy environment by its actors to ensure successful implementation; the educational arena relies on supportive relationships to ensure optimal performance. Additionally, the data afford an opportunity to examine the organization-environment relationship – more specifically, how the external influences the internal happenings of an organization.

Review of Key Contributions

The dissertation project progresses in a logical fashion. Although each study has been written to stand on its own, one might best summarize these works as an exploration into the role of environmental support for public organizations - each

analysis from the perspective of the individual manager, but also from the viewpoint of the agency as it relates to organizational outcomes. A recurring theme is that support external to the unit matters, yet caveats are uncovered upon careful investigation. A lack of scholarly attention to the phenomenon has not diluted the reality that the outside is important for managers and their organizations.

Chapter I provides an extensive review of the relevant literature that considers the importance of the political environment. It is evident that scholarship has concentrated on the environment, but lacked empirical analyses to narrow down its effects. It is further apparent that the concept of support, with regard to the external setting, lacks theoretical justification as a causal mechanism. The current treatment on the topic of support leaves the field with great gaps as it has most often paid attention to private agencies as well as internal derivations. Moreover, the introductory chapter serves as a roadmap for the project and paints an overall picture of the relevant scholarship in moving forward.

The question of how backing from the environment influences managerial strategies and organizational performance is addressed in Chapter II. The extant literature maintains that external support should matter for agency outcomes. I agree with this argument, but contend that the relationship scholars discuss may not be direct. In other words, what is the process of translation from support to agency outcomes? Is it the case that support "makes" organizations perform well or poorly? Of course not. Support is an influence from the exterior with the potential to shape internal as well as external actors and processes. As an external influence, support might be powerful and

indicative of the perception of the organization, but how that support ultimately affects the agency is a decision left to the unit itself. Whether the manager seeks to engage the environment or to ward it off as a result of environmental support is the more appropriate approach to assessing this reality. I investigate the intermediary function of the public manager, arguing that he acts as a filter by which support from the environment (and its effects) affect the organization. When managers perceive feedback from the outside - positive or negative - it is their decision to strategize utilizing such information or choosing to neglect it.

The findings in Chapter II point out that support from the external is integral to school district performance. Under conditions of support from parents, the community, and the school board, school districts perform better. The models further suggest that support adds the most explanatory power to explaining the variance of multiple district indicators such as state-mandated testing, college readiness, and attendance rates.

In order to assess the contingency theory of support and strategy on performance, I include multiplicative interaction terms. The results contradict my expectations, but illuminate a very interesting phenomenon. As an individual predictor, managerial choice to defend versus prospect the environment has mixed effects for organizational outcomes. When coupled with environmental support, it becomes apparent that the contingent relationship does not exist. The effect of environmental support remains highly significant, while the findings demonstrate that support exceeds any impact the superintendent generates in either shielding from or facilitating relationships with the outside. In other words, the political environment trumps any effect superintendent's

efforts have on achievement. The politics of the outside matter more than any strategy the manager takes (with respect to the external).

Discouraging – and somewhat implausible – is the result that the environment and strategy did not have a contingent effect on organizations. How support could affect performance, but not do so through the leader of the unit was quite baffling and actually reinforced the necessity of a deeper investigation into managerial strategy. Chapter III probes how the outside determines what leadership styles managers choose to employ. I include an additional element of the environment by probing this inquiry during times of turbulence. Put another way, when superintendents perceive that their environments undergo frequent change, how does environmental support affect their choice to engage the environment, ward off the external, or network with actors extrinsic to the district? The purpose of this chapter is to not only address qualms put forth by the previous study, but to examine what elements constitute the decision-making processes of top-level administrators upon their considerations of environmental support.

The findings highlight that environmental support increases superintendents' employing of defender, prospector, or networking strategies. Put simpler, a relationship with the external environment is increasingly pursued when managers experience backing from stakeholders. Additionally, turbulent organizational environments lead the superintendent, in all of the tested relationships except one, to implement alternative strategies when compared to non-turbulent ones. Managers, therefore, are paying attention to the environmental changes they observe. They internalize such alternations and determine, at least in part, their choices with respect to leadership style and

practices. Because the superintendent does behave according to levels of support, the translation of such strategies into performance requires additional investigation before concluding that the contingent relationship is not meaningful.

At this point, the undertaking contributes some interesting conclusions as it approximates the organization-environment relationship. The current line of inquiry is extended; however, to further explore the proposed causal connections by including another element: the race of the superintendent. The incorporation of this variable is logical given the saliency of race in the United States' political context. If race matters in the environment, is it not likely to matter for the organization? If race, as earlier works have demonstrated, drives clientele as well as superior-subordinate relationships, would we not expect it also to matter for how the outside responds to the organization? I examine these queries using top-level administrators of color. I question whether the race of the agency leader somehow alters the causal story told in previous chapters. Although some literature maintains that race matters in and for organizations, we have yet to understand how it would matter for the uppermost levels of management. Chapter IV is an effort to rectify this gap in the literature.

It is critical to note that the "face" of the organization is an important one. Whether that face is one of a traditional managerial role, one of a minority representative, or some combination, stakeholders in the organizational environment focus their attention on the agency leader. She sets the tone for both the internal and external workings of the organization. The manager plans the direction the organization should take and methods to get there. In instances of success and failure, the "face" of

the organization is recalled while this person is held accountable when attempts go awry. This is no different for a public manager of color, yet his relationship to the outside is exacerbated due to the politicization of race. Issues of superiority and racial minority status have long been ingrained into the fabric of the United States' political structure. What would drive conclusions that such issues do not flow into public administration? As institutions of our democracy, public service agencies (and therefore public managers) are not immune to stigmas associated with racial identity. The environment is likely, therefore, to respond to a minority manager differently than it would to her Anglo counterpart.

Recall that I predict no particular direction as it pertains to how the environment will perceive minority versus non-minority agency heads. Instead, my theory puts forth that managerial experiences will vary across races resulting in divergent outcomes for districts led by minority superintendents. The findings convey that this is exactly the case. Although the data suggest that the job-related attributes of African American, Hispanic, and Anglo superintendents are quite similar, their districts fare very differently upon considerations of environmental support. I had no theoretical reason to believe that support would change in significance or direction, yet when placed into an interactive term, the contingent effects demonstrate that race and support negatively affect district performance, across multiple indicators that capture the multifaceted nature of district tasks. The consistent negative and significant coefficients substantiate the claims that the minority manager's experience is differential and lead to the question of why? Though some scholars have settled upon reasons, a great deal must be done to isolate the

minority manager experience. Critical to this enterprise is to assess why it seems that being a minority trumps performance as a manager.

Improvements and Extensions

This dissertation affords some interesting conclusions related to conceptualizing the complexity of the organization-environment. It does so from the managerial and agency perspective while attempting to include points of contingency. Despite the best of efforts, this work remains limited. These limitations provide the foundation for a discussion below on how the research might be improved and extended upon in the future.

Environmental Support

The current measure of environmental support is based on perception – that is, superintendents observe backing from their environments and rate their observations accordingly. Although perception is likely to reflect actual events, it is also the case that such perceptions are a result of wanting to "feel" or experience increased levels of support rather than actually doing so. A series of elite interviews with superintendents shed light upon the realities the public manager perceives. Interviews that ranged from thirty-eight minutes to over two hours illustrate that superintendents evaluate a range of behaviors. For instance, when asked to describe support, superintendents listed the following: parental contact of the superintendent, donations of time and finances from the community, school board members' visiting of school campuses, voter turnout on bond and referenda issues, and the use of community buildings for school district purposes. These are just a few, but they evince the totality of activities superintendents

observe. This method not only moves beyond the discrete nature of the survey instrument, but also assists in shaping theoretical frameworks for assessing precisely what external support looks like.

The analyses and elite interviews point out that objective measures might be of even greater use. Finding alternative measures of these activities through observation might more accurately test the propositions that environmental support is meaningful for individual managers and their agencies. With available resources, a survey of the same cohort of superintendents over time might help me to gain considerable leverage on pre and post determinants and effects of support on managerial activities.

When considering race, it is quite possible that the metric of support should change. Minority communities are more susceptible to issues of poverty (e.g., unemployment, minimum wage, and blue collar positions) and family structure (e.g., single-parent households). Additional time is not readily available to complete such activities like contacting the superintendent or attending school board meetings. What should support look like for these groups? Does racial minority status imply that the conceptualization of backing from the environment should be altered? These are ideas to be explored – ideas that have the potential to better capture the racialized notion of the political setting.

More than Education

This work has theoretical and prescriptive use in policy areas beyond education. Although supportive relationships are necessary to solve education problems, it is also the case that health and criminal justice policy might serve as ample testing grounds to

identify the importance of support from the environment. In the latter, for instance, the solving of crimes often involves community involvement while police departments are assisted in the prevention of crime by neighborhood watch groups and community organizations. These policy areas represent examples of how multiple actors make policy "work". They also substantiate the notion that other types of bureaucracy are affected by actors outside the walls of the organization.

Education systems, though useful for these purposes, are not the only bureaucratic agencies capable of being motivated to action by their political settings. Administrators and other members of school districts represent actors within only one policy arena situated at the intersection of politics and bureaucracy. With this in mind, it is also reasonable to conclude that the definition of support might require a broader operationalization.

The Minority Manager

A bit of discussion is warranted as it relates to the minority public manager. The top-level administrator in any bureaucratic agency must contend with demands, pressures, and perceptions from above (oversight body), within (subordinates/lower-level administrators), and the outside (stakeholders). What this means is that the effects of race in an agency neither begin nor end with one individual. In places where minorities are the majority of the population, it is likely African Americans and Hispanics are in positions of power, albeit lower than the agency head. These positions serve not only as organizational support systems (internal to the agency), but the

minorities represented in them likely buffer the manager from demands and pressures external to the organization.

Addressing questions of race in public management also present the query of whether a Latino administrator might have a divergent effect than an African American. This is an argument for contextualizing the individual in a manner that requires additional information. Such data would be likely gathered using an elite interviewing method that taps directly into the particular machinations of districts led by these individuals. Probing superintendents with regard to specific policies that affect racial groups might be one way to get at this while an alternative means might include observing the practices across types and making comparisons. Also, if it is the case that African Americans align with Anglos in school district governance (Rocha 2006), what becomes of the Latino superintendent that seeks to serve his district? With whom does he build coalitions? Furthermore, is this an opportunity to measure cooperation among minority groups or all racial groups more generally?

An interesting extension that lies beyond the range of the current studies is the possibility of examining minority managers of public service agencies in a comparative context. Not only is race and ethnicity conceptualized contrastingly when compared to the United States' case, but the delivery of essential goods and services is also dissimilar. Defining "minority" for the manager might require some additional efforts, yet the politicization of an identity classified as "other than" the dominant group is likely to be found in Latin American and African countries, for example. Evidence of this

phenomenon abroad would speak to the viability of this work across contexts, peoples, and bureaucratic structures.

Finally, a departure from conceptualizing the term "minority" in broader terms than racial or ethnic identity might also prove useful. Theorizing about how other categories are relegated to minority status in the political environment is key. For instance, Lewis and Pitts (2011) consider the role of sexual identity in the bureaucracy in their investigation of whether homosexuals face internal discrimination. Considering other minorities is possible, yet the United States' structure, both political and social, allows for a host of groups to be analyzed on common cleavages other than race and ethnicity.

Conclusion

I began this project with intentions of reviving scholarly interest in the relevance of the external environment for public organizations. Understanding how the political atmosphere affects managerial courses of action and agency performance is an intriguing phenomenon. Moreover, conceptualizing the agency head as both bureaucrat and politician is equally exciting in that it approximates the reality that public managers face. The role of the top-level administrator is a challenging one, replete with conflicting demands and expectations further complicated by a volatile atmosphere. Neither organizations nor public managers have control over political forces, yet by design, they must be responsive to the environment, albeit whimsical and unpredictable. What is glaringly apparent is that scholars and practitioners alike must focus their efforts, at least in part, on that which lies beyond the walls of organizations. Focusing entirely on either

internal efforts or external actors paints an incomplete picture for the researcher

assessing the organization or the public manager seeking prescriptive recommendations.

This research sheds considerable light upon the fact that assessments of organizations

necessitate a consideration of drivers both inside and outside. Both contribute to

organizational manifestations, and more generally, to a politics of public management.

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APPENDIX A

Table A-1. Descriptive Statistics | Chapter II: From Politics to Performance

Variable	N	μ	σ	Min	Max
Attendance	9297	95.94	1.33	65.1	100
Lagged Attendance	9204	95.95	1.31	65.1	100
Overall Pass Rates (TAKS)	9311	74.64	12.98	0	100
Lagged Overall Pass Rates (TAKS)	9309	75.60	13.07	0	100
SAT/ACT Above Criterion	8251	20.56	12.18	0	75
Lagged SAT/ACT Above Criterion	8236	20.65	12.20	0	75
Environmental Support	3623	8.68	1.96	3	12
Defender Strategy	1922	3.08	.63	1	4
Prospector Strategy	1919	2.70	.65	1	4
Defender* Support	1912	26.91	8.53	5	48
Prospector* Support	1910	23.67	8.31	4	48
African American Students	9335	8.28	12.56	0	99
Latino Students	9335	31.19	26.99	0	100
Low Income Students	9335	50.76	19.42	0	100
Teacher Salary	9187	47187.2	12632.48	0	135740
Teacher Experience	9334	12.24	2.54	0	22.4
Class Size	8362	12.37	2.44	2.6	40
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	8286	4684.03	1335.92	109	21206

APPENDIX B

Table B-1. Descriptive Statistics | Chapter III: Testing Turbulence

Variable	N	μ	σ	Min	Max
Environmental Support	3829	8.64	1.98	3	12
Defender Strategy	2094	3.08	.64	1	4
Prospector Strategy	2091	2.72	.66	1	4
Networking Strategy	4622	.839	.87	-2.84	3.50
Turbulence	2090	2.66	.80	1	4
Manager-Related Resources					
Superintendent Experience	6224	24.170	8.35	0	48
Superintendent Tenure	6224	6.759	8.08	0	42
Superintendent Education	3204	4.834	1.08	2	8
District-Related Resources					
African American Students	6233	8.06	12.10	0	86.1
Latino Students	6233	29.75	26.78	0	100
Low Income Students	6233	49.35	19.34	0	100
Teacher Salary	9187	47187.2	12632.48	0	135740
Teacher Experience	9334	12.24	2.54	0	22.4
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	8286	4166.22	1214.50	226	29324

APPENDIX C

Table C-1. Descriptive Statistics | Chapter IV: Manager or Minority

Variable	N	μ	σ	Min	Max
Environmental Support	4245	8.49	2.00	3	12
Minority Superintendent	5205	.09	.28	0	1
Interaction	4142	.669	2.227	0	12
Defender Strategy	711	3.03	.65	1	4
Prospector Strategy	711	2.75	.65	1	4
Networking Strategy	1306	-.27	.95	-2.84	2.87
Overall Pass Rates	6034	69.71	18.58	0	100
Attendance Rates	5989	95.36	3.34	50.2	100
SAT/ACT Above Criterion	4710	20.55	12.40	0	83.3
SAT Average	3847	915.93	232.57	0	1267
ACT Average	4508	19.25	3.71	0	26.70
Graduation Rates	5227	84.48	18.14	0	100
Superintendent Experience	1362	7.68	6.53	0	45
Superintendent Tenure	1898	5.66	5.32	0	40
Superintendent Education	1246	4.12	1.16	2	8
African American Students	6098	11.93	19.56	0	100
Latino Students	6098	31.62	28.05	0	100
Low Income Students	6098	51.27	21.51	0	100
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	4891	4185.22	1591.72	0	54244

Table C-2. Demographics of Texas Public School Superintendents

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Δ 95-02
Asian	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5
Native American	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1
African American	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.5	1.6	2.3	2.3	2.7	2.1
Hispanic	5.4	5.0	5.5	5.7	5.7	6.6	6.7	7.1	1.7
White	93.8	94.1	92.8	92.1	92.2	90.6	90.0	89.3	-4.5
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	*na*

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