

**The Pennsylvania State University**  
**The Graduate School**  
**Department of Education Policy Studies**

**THE POLITICS OF HIGH SCHOOL EQUALIZATION**  
**POLICY-MAKING IN A KOREAN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**A Thesis in**  
**Educational Leadership**

**by**

**June Hee Lim**

**© 2005 June Hee Lim**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment**  
**of the Requirements**  
**for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**December 2005**

The thesis of June Hee Lim was reviewed and approved\* by the following:

William L. Boyd  
Batschelet Chair Professor of Education  
Thesis Advisor  
Chair of Committee

John W. Tippeconnic  
Professor of Education

Roger C. Shouse  
Associate Professor of Education

Bernard J. Badiali  
Associate Professor of Education

Nona A. Prestine  
Professor of Education  
In Charge of Graduate Programs in Educational Leadership

\*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

## ABSTRACT

School choice is a worldwide education issue. In Korea, education stakeholders have been facing political conflicts surrounding the High School Equalization Policy (HSEP), an anti-choice policy, since 1974. This study assumed that educational policy is the outcome of political struggles among education stakeholders. In particular, government officials like superintendents are involved in the political game in order to advance their values or interests. Thus, to investigate the political dynamics among stakeholders surrounding the HSEP, this study had five research questions: 1) Who were the proponents and opponents of the High School Equalization Policy? 2) Why did they take sides, pro or con? 3) How was the superintendent of the provincial school district, as a final decision-maker, involved with this issue? 4) What political tactics did each coalition use to achieve its policy goals? 5) How effective did major stakeholders think that the strategies were?

Considering the main purpose and research questions of the study, this study used qualitative research methods. As qualitative research, a case study was used to explain political dynamics happening within a school district. The researcher employed interviews as the main method and document analysis and observation as complementary methods. A total of 32 participants were interviewed in a Korean school district, and a number of government documents, minutes of school board meetings, news articles, and other written materials were analyzed. Observation of a study committee meeting also was conducted.

This study confirmed that educational policy-making was a product of political conflicts among political interest groups. The overall results of this study show that interest group politics played a key role in the equalization policy-making process. Moreover, most stakeholders took sides in either the pro-coalition or anti-coalition in order to accomplish their practical interests. The pro-equalization group took the initiative in the political game to challenge the established power structure in the community. In response, the opponents of the equalization movement launched an anti-coalition in connection with school district officials and school board members. This study found that the wealthy, well-organized patron's role and the entrepreneurial leadership were important for the initiation and maintenance of educational interest groups. Without the support of a progressive teachers union, the advocate group could not have championed the equalization movement for such a long time. Likewise, without the support of the Harbor High School Alumni Association, the superintendent could not have defended his policy preference so well against the attacks from the advocates.

The government officials also participated in the political game, not as neutral arbitrators, but as major stakeholders. Whereas the pro-coalition employed massive rallies, the anti-coalition resorted to the passive, defensive, and small-scale persuasion or the formal and informal connection to decision-making authorities. There were conflicting views among stakeholders about the effectiveness of various political activities. While some stakeholders evaluated the anti-choice movement as a success, others argued that the movement's political activities did not influence the superintendent much on acceptance of their policy demand.

However, this study has limitations coming from the researcher. His affiliations with the Korean government and his educational background might have influenced the collection and analysis of data. Because this study involved only a single case study and selected key interview participants through a purposeful sampling method, not a randomized sampling method, the findings, although suggestive of broader patterns, cannot be generalized.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
LIST OF TABLES .....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	x
Chapter I: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Problem Statement and Research Questions .....	4
Background of the Study .....	7
Conceptual Framework .....	17
Significance of the Study.....	21
Chapter II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	24
School Choice and Politics.....	24
Korean High School Equalization Policy.....	29
Political Interest Groups .....	35
Chapter III: DESIGN AND METHOD OF THE STUDY .....	46
Logic and Rationale for Qualitative Research.....	46
The Researcher's Background for Conducting the Study.....	48
Research Design .....	50
Location and Sample Selection .....	51
Research Strategies and Instrumentation.....	53
Data Collection.....	54
Data Analysis.....	58
Validity, Reliability, and External Generalization .....	60

Chapter IV: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND STUDY FINDINGS .....	63
Policy Preferences and Coalitions .....	63
Policy Values and Political Interests .....	71
Political Status of Government Officials.....	83
Political Tactics of Each Coalition.....	87
Effectiveness of Political Activities .....	95
Summary of Findings .....	101
Chapter V: SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	105
Summary of the Study .....	105
Major Findings and Discussions .....	107
Conclusions and Implications.....	126
Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study.....	130
References.....	133
APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS.....	147
APPENDIX B: APPROVAL LETTER (English, Korean) .....	148
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (English, Korean).....	150
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL .....	154

**LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1 The Educational Policy-Making System in Korea	16
1.2 Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith's Advocacy Coalition Framework	19
1.3 The Modified Advocacy Coalition Framework	21
5.1 The Combination of Professional Competence (PC) and Politics (PT) in Educational Decision-Making	119



**LIST OF TABLES**

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1 The Number of Cities Implementing the High School Equalization Policy	10
4.1 Policy Preferences of Education Stakeholders	66
4.2 Political Interests and Policy Values of Education Stakeholders	79
4.3 Political Activities of Government Officials	87
4.4 Political Tactics of Pro-Equalization Coalition	93
4.5 Political Tactics of Anti-Equalization Coalition	95

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Korean poet sings, “To make a blossom of a mum open, a Chinese scops owl has been singing continuously since spring.” Likewise, a number of professors, colleagues, friends, and family members supported my study in the United States. This dissertation is absolutely the outcome of their efforts. Therefore, I wish to thank them who helped and encouraged me to complete my study.

First, I extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. William L. Boyd, for serving as my academic advisor and chair of my thesis committee. I have two kinds of fathers: biological and academic. Whenever my family and I were confronted with hardships during my studies, Dr. Boyd did his best to take care of my family with encouragement, support, and guidance. His concern and favors worked as impetus for my study. I would also like to deliver my appreciation to my doctoral committee, Drs. John W. Tippeconnic, Roger C. Shouse, Edgar P. Yoder, and Bernard J. Badiali, whose advice helped greatly improve my dissertation. Many thanks should also go to the faculty of the Department of Education Policy Studies at the Pennsylvania State University. With their excellent teachings, I was able to acquire many ideas to improve Korean education both theoretically and practically.

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Jung-Ho Lim, and my late mother, Sung-Hee Kim, who passed away during the time of my study abroad. Without their devotion to their children’s education, I could never complete my doctorate work. Also, I would like to thank my parents-in-law, my brothers and sisters, and my brothers- and sisters-in-law. They showed me what a love of family really is.

Additionally, there are many people who deserve my thanks, such as classmates, advisors, and colleagues; Jillian Reese, Michael Panek, Todd Hosterman, Michael McConnell, Joe Polizzi, Charlotte Zmyslo, Becky Contestabile, Dr. Kristine Otto, SangHoon Bae, Moon-Taeg Kim, Dr. Ki-Bong Lee, Dr. Deok-Ho Jang, Dong-Ho Lee, Jin-Su Kim, Je-Ik Cho, and Gyung-Nyun Kim. They imbued many insights to me. In particular, I love Becky' loud and merry voice. She was a reliable supporter for me as an administrator and friend. My sincere gratitude is extended to Drs. Hyung-Haeng Lee, Il-Hwan Chung, Zoon-Sang Han, Ki-Oh Jung, and a former Vice Prime Minister of Education and Human Resources Development, Byung-Young Ahn. They made great efforts to assist me.

I would like to express special thanks to the Korean government (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and Lake Province School District) for its financial support. Therefore, I extend my special appreciation to the superintendent, school board members, and other government officials of the Lake Province School District as well as the interview participants of the Harbor School District. They all helped me to complete my dissertation successfully with frankness and directness.

Last, I am grateful to my wife, Sook-Yeon Lee, and two sons, Doo-Young and Jae-Woo. They shared joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure with me during my study with patience and love. I hope my children learned a meaningful lesson from watching my studying.

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most controversial education issues worldwide is parental choice of schools. Although the modern, universal public education system, which assigns students to their neighborhood public schools, has contributed to all children having a shared sense of community, it is also true that because of economic, cultural, and societal differences among school districts where children live, public education has never been common to all children. Tremendous evidence shows that “school systems based on compulsion are neither fair nor equitable” (Merrifield, 2001, p.124). Thus, a “one size-fits-all” public school system has been challenged worldwide by parents, national policy-makers, scholars, and businessmen with arguments of national economic competitiveness, democratic decentralization, or freedom of choice (Ladd & Fiske, 2003; Gauri, 1998; Glenn, 1990).<sup>1)</sup>

Since Milton Friedman (1955, 1962) proposed universal choice of schools through vouchers, some states and school districts of the United States have implemented various types of school choice policy such as vouchers, charter schools, tax credits and deductions, open enrollment, and magnet schools. According to Godwin and Kemerer (2002), types of school choice are spread along a continuum, that is, from the option with the least choice ---“a policy where families choose a public school by taking up residence in its attendance zone,” to schools-within-a-school, magnet schools, statewide open enrollment, charter schools, and state-funded

---

<sup>1)</sup> Glenn notes that the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Canada promote parental choice of school. Recently, Ladd & Fiske argued that New Zealand’s competition policy among schools generated negative effects on the quality of student learning.

voucher programs (p. 6). Of them, the most controversial school choice program in the United States is the voucher idea, which is a grant to pay for a child's education expenses, usually from public funds but sometimes from private funds, given to a parent or an institution on a parent's behalf (Clearinghouse on Educational Policy and Management [CEPM], 2002).

In general, advocates of school choice believe that parent choice facilitates competition for getting students to attend schools and, then, it consequently fosters school improvement and raises student achievement (Tooley, Dixon, & Stanfield, 2003; Boyd & Walberg, 1990; Finn, 1990). They argue that school choice rids public schools of the monopolistic status, and market forces drive up educational standards through competitiveness (Merrifield, 2002; Chubb & Moe, 1990). On the other hand, critics of school choice have predicted a growth in social stratification among schools as a result of increased market forces in school placement (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1992; Moore & Davenport, 1990). They worry that "it exacerbates inequity" (Boyd & Walberg, 1990, p. x) and that competition among schools negatively affects student learning and teacher job satisfaction (Ladd & Fiske, 2003). In particular, it is argued that a public-funded voucher moves the money that is necessary to operate certain public schools to private schools and, as a result, makes the poor achieving public schools worse. Also, with respect to the United States' voucher initiatives, there is the potential argument that vouchers allowing public tax monies to go to religious schools might violate the separation between church and state under the United States Constitution (Fuller & Elmore, 1996; Pearson, 1993). The 2002 decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* provides a way around this problem, but the hazards and risks still exist.

Even though Korea definitely has a different context of culture and education practice from that of the United States or other western countries, school choice is really one of the

most controversial policy issues among education stakeholders in recent decades because their participation in educational policy-making has grown larger. Presently, all Korean students in elementary and middle schools are assigned to their school on the basis of their residence. However, there are two types of attendance policies for Korean high school students.<sup>2)</sup> While some graduates of middle schools, most of whom are living in rural districts or small cities, are allowed to choose a high school that they want to attend, the other graduates of middle schools, most of whom are living in metropolitan or large city school districts, are assigned to one of the high schools within their attendance area, where the allocation of students to a school is basically based on a neighborhood system.<sup>3)</sup> This “no choice” and “no competition” attendance system is called the “High School Equalization Policy” (*Go-gyo-pyung-joon-hwa-jeong-chaek*, hereafter HSEP) in Korea. Its purpose is to promote the growth of whole person at the middle school level based upon the national curriculum, to abolish the social discrimination between citizens by the reputation of their graduating high schools, and to reduce the excessive expenditure of parents for shadow education.<sup>4)</sup> Thus, the policy focuses on eliminating the excessively competitive high school entrance examination and equalizing the reputation among high schools through the randomized assignment of applicants for high

---

<sup>2)</sup> In Korea, high schools are classified into three types: general, vocational, and other high schools. Only applicants for general (academic) high schools are included in this study because the other students who want to attend vocational or other high schools have the opportunity to select their schools according to a selection examination or achievement in middle school (MOE, 2004a).

<sup>3)</sup> In order to get final admission into a high school, all applicants have to take a kind of entrance examination based on meritocracy. Consequently, their choice does not always guarantee their admission.

<sup>4)</sup> The Korean government concluded at the time of the initial implementation of equalization policy that the competitive high school entrance examination forced middle schools not to normally follow the national curriculum of middle school. So, it has been concluded that middle schools would not have needed to deviate from the national standard curriculum if the competitive examination had been abolished.

school education to high schools within a school district (Park et al, 2002; Kim, Kim, Lee, & Choi, 1995).

In Korea, in the same manner as in the United States, there are similar arguments for and against school choice, and political power is divided among education stakeholders surrounding the school choice policy agenda. Essentially, whether or not a school district implements a policy of school choice depends upon a superintendent's value orientation, parents' preferences, community public opinion, teachers union's influence, and other factors.

### *Problem Statement and Research Questions*

Since the implementation of the equalization policy in 1974, there have been debates on its effects on student achievement and its political significance in Korea. Social equity-oriented people welcomed the equalization policy, but those who prized freedom of choice or national competitiveness opposed it. The advocates argued that the equalization policy succeeded in reducing educational and social disparities and liberated middle school students from desperate competition for prestigious high schools. The critics, however, worried about the "downward leveling" of academic standards (Chung, 1998, p. 8) and the promotion of private tutoring due to the policy (Park et al, 2002; Kim et al, 1995). After 1990, when the Korean central government began to pay much attention to the voice of local constituents under the name of local autonomy or democratization, political conflicts surrounding the equalization policy occurred in local districts and were becoming worse (Park et al, 2002; Chung, 1998). Education stakeholders support or oppose the equalization policy with different values and political interests. Thus, political conflicts in educational policy-making can be understood through the investigation of how the HSEP is related to different policy values and political groups. To make relevant

decisions on education in the complicated context, the policy makers need to realize the political interaction of stakeholders in the education community.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the political dynamics in the process of anti-school choice policy-making among major education stakeholders within a Korean school district (Harbor School District),<sup>5)</sup> which is referred to as the “High School Equalization Policy (HSEP)” in Korea. It is common in the educational policy domain for there to be support for and opposition against school choice, as with other reform initiatives such as class size reduction and sex education, which have confronted similar debate patterns among education stakeholders. In such a conflict context, politics may play the main role in the educational policy-making process and education stakeholders participate in the political game for the protection or achievement of their political interests or values.

To understand how education stakeholders compete or collaborate with each other for a policy, this study investigated the political dynamics of the Korean anti-school choice initiative. The central questions guiding this research were as follows:

1. Who were the proponents and opponents of the High School Equalization Policy?
2. Why did they take sides, pro or con?
3. How was the superintendent of the provincial school district, as a final decision-maker, involved with this issue?
4. What political tactics did each coalition use to achieve its policy goals?
5. How effective did major stakeholders think that the strategies were?

---

<sup>5)</sup> The name of school district studied was changed to conceal its identity in this study.



The main argument of this study is that the equalization (anti-school choice) policy is the outcome of political stakeholders' (interest groups') power struggle, although the policy initiative is supported by formal causes like legality, equity, efficiency, excellence, and/or the quality of learning. In particular, the government, represented by the superintendent, as one of the major stakeholders, also participates in political struggles. Thus, the government officials (including the superintendent) should be considered as an active subject, not a passive actor who is just responsive to the external political pressure of educational interest groups. In fact, one of the superintendent's major concerns must be re-election<sup>6)</sup> and maintenance of his political power. Because the other stakeholders know the superintendent's main concerns, they try to mobilize the most effective political measures useful to address him. However, his concerns are not limited to political pressure from outside. He may be willing to attain his educational ideals and political preferences through political savvy and/or compromise if necessary. Thus, he becomes a key player in this tough political game.

In order to understand the political interactions surrounding the HSEP, the advocacy coalition framework of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) is very useful. They argue that policy change and learning can be best understood as the product of political interaction among multiple interest groups. Their model of interest group interaction states that coalitions of policy actors learn the skills of playing the political game to achieve their policy objectives. Advocates and opponents mobilize a variety of strategies and establish policy coalitions to support their argument and consequently try to be winners in the political game.

---

<sup>6)</sup> In 2002, re-election was a very important factor influencing his attitude toward the equalization movement. Since his re-election in 2002, however, he has been freed from the re-election issue because he could no longer be elected to the superintendent position by law.

Education stakeholders of the Harbor School District of Korea, on which this study focused, also participated in the political game and exercised their political strategies to push the superintendent to implement their preferred policy. There might be formation of political coalitions, persuasion between interest groups, sit-in demonstrations at the school district office, and even hunger strikes (starvation demonstrations). To study the stakeholders' political activities, government documents and other written materials were analyzed carefully. Moreover, major stakeholders such as superintendents, government officials, principals, classroom teachers, teachers unions, parents, and high school alumni needed to be interviewed in depth and detail.

### *Background of the Study*

In education, the choice issue is raised from two perspectives: supply and demand (Elmore, 1990). The latter is how students or parents as consumers play a key role in deciding to get educational services, whereas the former is about whether the providers of education as suppliers are given the discretion of judgment about what services they provide to consumers in regard to their needs. However, this study investigated just choice with regard to demand because it focused on the political interaction of policy actors concerning the HSEP.

### Historical Background of the High School Equalization Policy in Korea

In 1971, every rural and urban Korean middle school was open to all applicants, and all prospective middle school students were assigned to one of the middle schools within each school district by a lottery system, without parental choice. To meet the increasing demand for middle schooling, the Korean government had greatly raised the seating capacity by constructing new school buildings and recruiting new teachers. Before 1971, some applicants were not allowed to

attend middle schools because school buildings and teaching staff were insufficient to accommodate all applicants (MOE, 2004b).

In only 3 years,<sup>7)</sup> the mass education policy of middle schools resulted in an explosive increase of middle school graduates and created a steep increase in the demand for high schooling. However, because high schools did not have the capacity to accommodate all applicants, entrance to high schools became highly competitive. In particular, admission into a few high schools, which became famous for guaranteeing graduates entry into top colleges, was extremely competitive.

Thus, it was acceptable among parents that middle school education focused only on the preparation for high school entrance examinations. Moreover, parents were willing to pay a great deal of money for the after-school tutoring of their children in order to pass the highly competitive entrance examination to get into the top high schools. For admission into the so-called highest standing high schools, rural middle school students even transferred to urban middle schools. The influx of middle school students was one of the social factors that caused the urban population to increase. The number of students who failed the high school entrance examination and who wanted to retest increased from year to year. As a consequence, the parents' financial burden for their children was growing because they had to send them to private academies focusing on the high school entrance examination. Furthermore, every high school received its ranking according to the freshman entrance examination scores.<sup>8)</sup> To make matters

---

<sup>7)</sup> All Korean middle schools consist of grades 7, 8, and 9, students of ages 13, 14, and 15.

<sup>8)</sup> For instance, the top-ranking high school receives only applicants whose test scores are over 90 points, the second ranking school can admit only students getting 80 points to 90 points, and the third ranking school can accept only freshmen with scores from 70 points to 80 points. It is generally recognized that all students attending the first ranking school are superior to other schools' students.

worse, the students who failed the high school entrance examination were irreparably branded as a social failure.

To solve these social, political, and educational problems, the Korean government introduced a revolutionary policy, the HSEP, which primarily focused on the policy intention of eliminating the prestige discrepancy among high schools. The policy was accompanied by allocating all applicants through a lottery system to urban academic high schools (including urban private schools and excluding rural small schools and vocational schools), equalizing tuition between public and private schools, providing financial aid for private schools, and improving school facilities.<sup>9)</sup> On the other hand, students and parents lost the freedom of school choice. During the past three decades, 27 of 81 cities in Korea adopted the HSEP by their own choice or by national law.<sup>10)</sup> The number of cities implementing the HSEP as of 2005 appears in Table 1.1 below.

As a result of the policy, the best students are evenly dispersed to all qualified academic high schools. In other words, any high school governed by this policy should accommodate some high-achieving and motivated students as well as some low-achieving students. College-preparatory high schools within the same school districts were normalized, at least, in light of the quality of incoming students. Thus, the freshmen population of top ranking colleges consists of the graduates from many high schools, not just from a limited number of high schools.

---

<sup>9)</sup> Some researchers like Kim & Byun (2003) and Chung (1998) call this policy the High School Normalizing (or Leveling) Policy because the policy's basic objective was to normalize high schools' educational resources, such as the quality of teachers and facilities, the amount of tuition, and the variance of student achievement. It has taken a long time to provide financial aid for private schools and to equalize the condition of school facilities between private and public schools (Park, 2002).

<sup>10)</sup> Large cities such as Seoul and Bu-san were mainly forced to implement the HSEP by the government, but some middle-size cities like Go-yang and Ik-san voluntarily decided to implement the HSEP (Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development Executive Order No. 852, 2005).

**Table 1.1 The Number of Cities Implementing the High School Equalization Policy**

Metropolitan City and Province	Total	HSEP Cities	No HSEP Cities
Seoul, Bu-san, Dae-gu, In-cheon, Dae-jeon, Kwang-ju, Ul-san Metro-city	7	7	0
Gyeong-ki Province	25	8 (Su-won, Seong-nam, An-yang, Bu-cheon, Go-yang, Gun-po, Gwa-cheon, Ui-wang)	17
Kang-won Province	7	0	7
Choong-nam Province	6	0	6
Choong-buk Province	3	1 (Cheong-ju)	2
Jeon-nam Province	5	3 (Mok-po, Yeo-su, Sun-cheon)	2
Jeon-buk Province	6	3 (Jeon-ju, Ik-san, Goon-san)	3
Gyeong-nam Province	10	4 (Chang-won, Ma-san, Jin-ju, Gim-hae)	6
Gyeong-buk Province	10	0	10
Che-ju Province	2	1 (Je-ju)	1
Total	81	27	54

On the other hand, at the cost of losing the rights of school choice, parents take a small chance that their children may enter prestigious schools via a lottery system, even though they do not obtain good test scores.<sup>11)</sup> Teachers, one of the most potent stakeholders, complained that their teaching burden increased because of the heterogeneous grouping of students who varied in achievement. Furthermore, the lottery system under the HSEP caused students to have to go to schools of a different religion from the one they belonged to because all religion-related private

---

<sup>11)</sup> Vocational high schools and some professional schools such as schools for art education, athletic education, and science education, however, were excluded from this policy.

schools were also forced to adopt the equalization policy.<sup>12)</sup> Likewise, private schools could not maintain their identification as being private (Kim & Chung, 2003; Gahng, 2002; Kwak, Kim, Park, Yang, & et al, 2000; Kim et al, 1995).

### The political conflict setting

The Harbor School District is located in the south of Korea and is a subordinate district of a provincial school district. The Harbor School District has 27 high schools composed of 18 college-preparatory and 9 vocational schools. Harbor City was a small fishing community before a motor company was established there more than 30 years ago. As the company expanded investment in the plant and equipment for production, it also created greater job opportunities, and the city changed from a small township to a big industrial city.<sup>13)</sup> The city grew in population<sup>14)</sup> and new school buildings to accommodate newcomers' children were required. The income of the residents also increased. Now, the Harbor School District has the largest population and the largest number of students among the subordinate school districts of the province. Moreover, as the city became larger, the constituents' participation in social issues also increased. Citizen organizations and the local mass media emerged. The teachers' union is remarkable as one of the most aggressive actors locally as well as nationally in political activities.

With its social and economic background, the Harbor School District, on which this study focused, was in a political conflict over implementing the HSEP (anti-school choice). Although the teachers union and some critical community leaders with progressive perspectives initially

---

<sup>12)</sup> Accordingly, in reality the schools are entangled in a lawsuit with students (or parents) according to the intensity of the school's religion policy that students should follow.

<sup>13)</sup> The number of employees steeply increased until the 1990s, from a few hundred in the 1960s to around 24,000 in the 1990s.

raised the issue of opposing school choice in the school district, more recently the movement for implementing the HSEP has been supported by a unitary organization called the Coalition of Citizens for Harbor High School Equalization (Joint Association of Citizens for High School Equalization, 2003). It has been led by the Harbor Teachers Union (an affiliate of the National Teachers Union), the YMCA, the Association of Democratic Citizens, the Association of School Parents for Good Education, and the Democratic Labor Union.

This issue (anti-choice) has had a long history of about 30 years since the Korean government implemented the High School Equalization Policy in 1974.<sup>14)</sup> Until 1990, the Ministry of Education had maintained a top-down decision making system on whether or not a school district should enact the HSEP. The Korean government, at first, implemented the HSEP in the two biggest metropolitan cities (*Seoul* and *Bu-san*) in 1974. The next year three other major cities were forced to accept the new policy by the central government. Although some scholars and parents voiced concern about some weaknesses of the HSEP, the central government steadily spread the policy to other school districts until 1981 (MOE, 2004b; Kim, et al, 1995). However, as political democratization made great progress in the mid- and late-1980s, the value emphasis on policy moved from effectiveness to democracy. Moreover, rural towns and small cities, which have just one or two academic high schools, were not expected to get many benefits from the policy. Consequently, the cities had less social, educational, and political needs for the HSEP. Thus, the central government changed its basic policy from compulsory to elective HSEP. Local

---

<sup>14)</sup> The population of Harbor City was around 70,000 in the 1960s when the company was established. As of 2001, the population had increased up to more than a half million.

<sup>15)</sup> Despite many affiliated characters, the most prevailing feature of the HSEP is whether or not parents and students choose their preferred high school. Thus, the HSEP is characterized as “anti-school choice” in this study.

constituents wanted to decentralize policy-making power, and the central government respected their policy preference (MOE, 2004b).

Since 1990, in practice the equalization policy-making authority has been given to local school districts by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE). This means that although the central government (MOE) still holds the legal authority of final decision-making, in most cases it simply accepts the local districts' decision. However, the central government did not delegate its whole authority over school equalization decision making because it does not want large school districts to reject the HSEP. The central government still supports the HSEP because some research and opinion polls found that it has contributed to equal opportunity of education, national integration through the elimination of school prestige discrepancy, and national competitiveness in international achievement tests like "Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)" (MOE, 2004b; Park, 2004; Park, 2002; Kim et al, 1995).

Despite the delegation of power to local school districts, as of 2005, the Harbor School District's students and parents still enjoyed the right of choosing their preferred high school because of the non-implementation of the HSEP. However, a strong demand for anti-choice was coming from the community. Some progressive and socialism-oriented groups were seeking to randomly assign all eligible applicants to each high school. To make matters more controversial, the superintendent, who was re-elected in 2002, promised during his election campaign that he



would commit himself to implement the new policy of anti-choice, on the condition that there was a general agreement about the implementation of the HSEP among the constituents.<sup>16)</sup>

The political voice of advocates for equalization (anti-choice supporters) became more powerful and unanimous than that of their opponents (choice supporters). This issue was too prominent to be ignored by the school board and the superintendent. Accordingly, the superintendent was forced to look into the conflicts. He paid a great deal of attention to the organized community demand as part of his election campaign agenda in 2002. After his re-election, advocates for equalization strongly banded together and pushed the superintendent toward equalization. Thus, huge political struggles occurred among education stakeholders in the community from 2002 to 2004. The superintendent finally directed in 2003 that a special research project for the implementation of equalization policy in Harbor City be conducted. In the next year, the research project team finally released its study results with an ambiguous policy recommendation; it is desirable to implement the HSEP in the Harbor School District, but first of all, the school district should equalize education conditions such as school facilities and teachers. With the political campaigns of the pro-equalization group and the policy recommendations of the research project team, the education stakeholders finally reached an agreement for the establishment of a “Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization,” which consisted of 20 representatives of every social standing including proponents and opponents (Lake Province Office of Education, 2004b).<sup>17)</sup> As of 2005, the study committee continues to discuss how to

---

<sup>16)</sup> In Korea, all members of school councils, which consist of principals, teachers, parents, and community leaders, elect the superintendent of provinces and metropolitan cities. Every province and metropolitan city has subordinate school districts, translated literally as a “local school district.” The province or metropolitan city’s superintendent appoints the heads of office of subordinate school districts.

<sup>17)</sup> The names of this province and city were changed to conceal their identities in this study.

reduce the differences of current educational conditions among high schools and how to solve the potential problems that might be caused by the implementation of the equalization policy.

Although this issue is presently affiliated only with a subordinate school district (Harbor School District) of a provincial school district, it focuses on the provincial superintendent, not the head of office of the Harbor School District, because he (the provincial superintendent) has the legal authority of decision-making concerning the high school entrance policy.<sup>18)</sup>

#### Overview of Korean education system

Traditionally the central government dominated all policy-making powers in most fields of society as well as in education. In fact, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE) still controls local education through national curriculum, finance allocation, partial management of the organization and personnel, national standards of teacher certificates, nationalized payroll system for government officials (including teachers), and even audit and inspection of the local educational administration, although the central government has tried to delegate many aspects of decision-making to local governments.

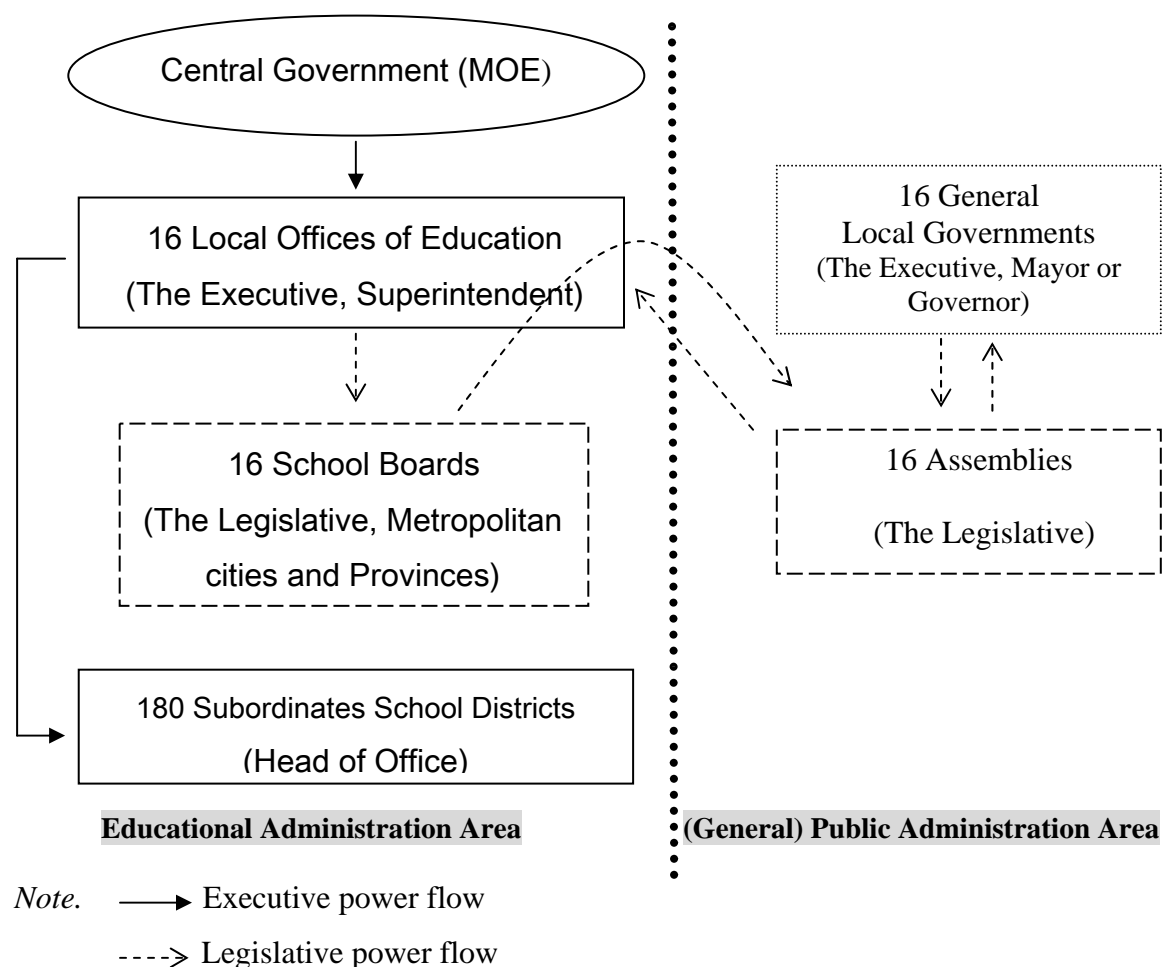
Under the broad supervision of the MOE, 16 local offices of education manage all primary and secondary education and each local office of education has a superintendent to represent its executive body (MOE, 2004a). As a legislative body, at the local (metropolitan cities and provinces) level, school boards review and determine policy drafts of education, science, and art independently of local general governing bodies. However, all the drafts of city or province ordinance and the budget drafts should be reviewed and passed not only by school boards but also by metropolitan city and province assemblies. In other words, after getting preliminary approval

---

<sup>18)</sup> Every subordinate school district of metropolitan cities and provinces in Korea has a head of office, which is

from the school board, the budget draft related to local education must pass the final review and investigation at the assembly through the Executive (the superintendent). On the other hand, the head of office in the subordinate school districts is simply the executive agent to support the superintendent of metropolitan cities or provinces under the supervision of the local office of education. The overall picture of educational policy-making system in Korea is shown in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1 The Educational Policy-Making System in Korea**



appointed by the province or metropolitan city's superintendent, in charge of elementary and middle schools.

On the other hand, despite its reputation of high student achievement in international tests like TIMSS or PISA,<sup>19)</sup> Korean education does not satisfy Korean parents, students, and business leaders. Parents with an ardent zeal for their child's education still complain about the poor quality of Korean education: large class size,<sup>20)</sup> the extremely competitive college entrance examination, the big financial burden of shadow education (after-school learning), teachers' corruption,<sup>21)</sup> teachers' low competence and commitment to education, little choice of subjects due to the national curriculum system, and other education problems. Consequently, since the late 1990s, a new social problem (called *Gi-Reo-Gi-Ga-Jok* or "Wild Goose Family") has appeared: Some parents make a decision to educate their children abroad in order to look for more chances of success, with even less competition. Thus, the "Wild Goose Family" generates serious social and educational problems like financial burdens and fractured families.<sup>22)</sup>

### *Conceptual Framework*

The rationale for doing this study includes the perception that school choice represents a popular and serious challenge for the current governance structure in Korea as well as in the United States. The educational administration has been traditionally regarded as a domain in which the legacy of separating schools from politics dominates. Thus, "the principles of neutral

---

<sup>19)</sup> Korean students were ranked second to fourth in the comparative evaluations of student achievement in mathematics and science (Park, 2004; [www.timss.bc.edu](http://www.timss.bc.edu) and [www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org)).

<sup>20)</sup> As of 2004, the average class size of a Korean elementary school is about 33, and that of middle school is 35 ([www.moe.go.kr](http://www.moe.go.kr)).

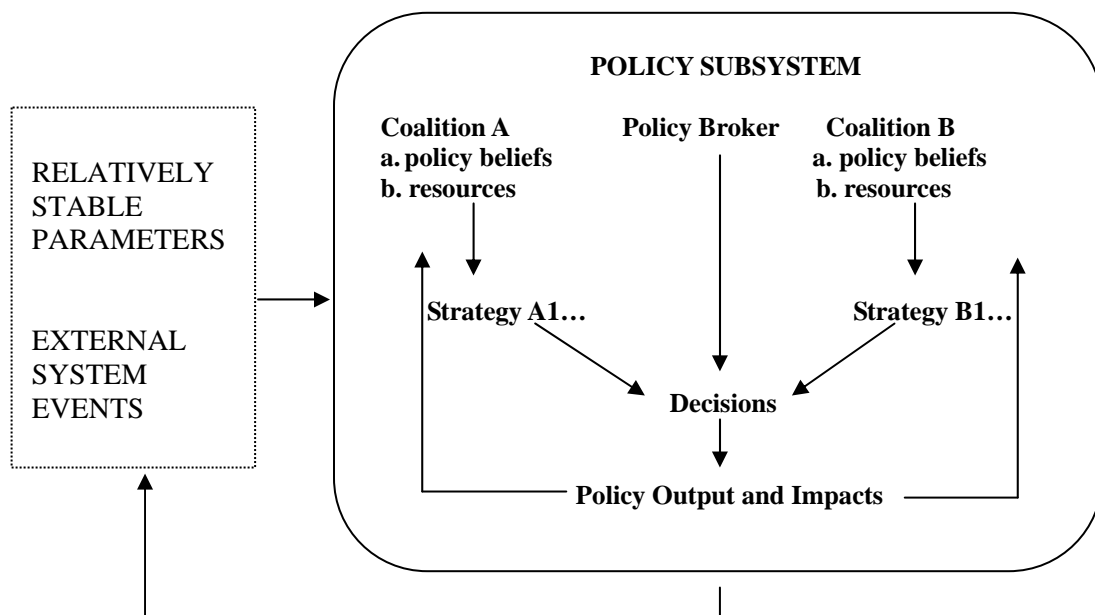
<sup>21)</sup> In ancient Korea, parents gave their child's teacher something as a token of their gratitude. Recently parents offer a kind of bribe (money or other valuable things) to the teacher, expecting him or her to pay special attention to their child at school. In some cases, teachers even ask parents to give some kind of gifts to him or her.

<sup>22)</sup> A "fractured family" is when a mother stays with her children in English speaking countries and a father who works and finances their living costs abroad is left behind in Korea (Ly, 2005; Park, 2005; [http://www.worldcongress.org/WCFUpdate/Archive03/wcf\\_update\\_325.htm](http://www.worldcongress.org/WCFUpdate/Archive03/wcf_update_325.htm)).

competence and executive leadership have been peculiarly strong in school government and the profession of educational administration” (Boyd, 1975, p.106). The values of professionalism, efficiency, and effectiveness are especially acceptable among education stakeholders. However, “according to allocation theory, on the other hand, the relationships of actors are dominated by conflict and attempts to influence the decisions made by the authoritative policy-making body” (Scribner & Englert, 1977, p. 28). Moreover, according to interest group theory, school choice as a policy change can be understood as the product of political dynamics among education stakeholders (Fusarelli, 2003). The discipline of the “politics of education” emerged in order to investigate the “interactions surrounding the authoritative allocation of values in education, especially insofar as the concepts of government, power, conflict and policy are concerned” (Scribner & Englert, 1977, p. 28). Although some voucher plans provide public money for children from low-income families, the effects of such policies on social equity and desegregation are complicated because competition, liberty, or excellence are considered to be competing values with social equity (Wolfe, 2003; Boyd, 2002).

In their widely cited book, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) proposed a model of interest group interaction they called the “advocacy coalition framework.” They argue that there are “relatively stable parameters” and “external system events” which function as constraints and resources of subsystem actors. Within the subsystem, actors are aggregated into a number of advocacy coalitions, and each coalition adopts a strategy that will further its policy objectives. Conflicting strategies from various coalitions are normally mediated by a third group of actors, “policy brokers” (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p.18). Figure 1.2 is an illustration of the advocacy coalition framework that focuses on the policy subsystem.

**Figure 1.2 Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith's Advocacy Coalition Framework**



*Note.* This figure was modified slightly to focus on the policy subsystem.

However, this coalition framework has a significant flaw; it pays too much attention to interest groups' political influence on the policy-making process. The role of policy-makers is underestimated or at the very least, they are considered to be passive actors. Government bureaucracy, in particular, became important as a target of interest groups and a determinant of their success in countries having a political environment with a long history of government centralization like France or Japan (Thomas, 2004). Walker (1983) contends that "a pressure model of the policy making process in which an essentially passive legislature responds to petitions from groups of citizens . . . must yield to a model in which influences for change come as much from inside the government as from beyond its institutional boundaries" (p.403). In his widely cited book, Kingdon (1995) also writes "many issues simply do not arise from interest

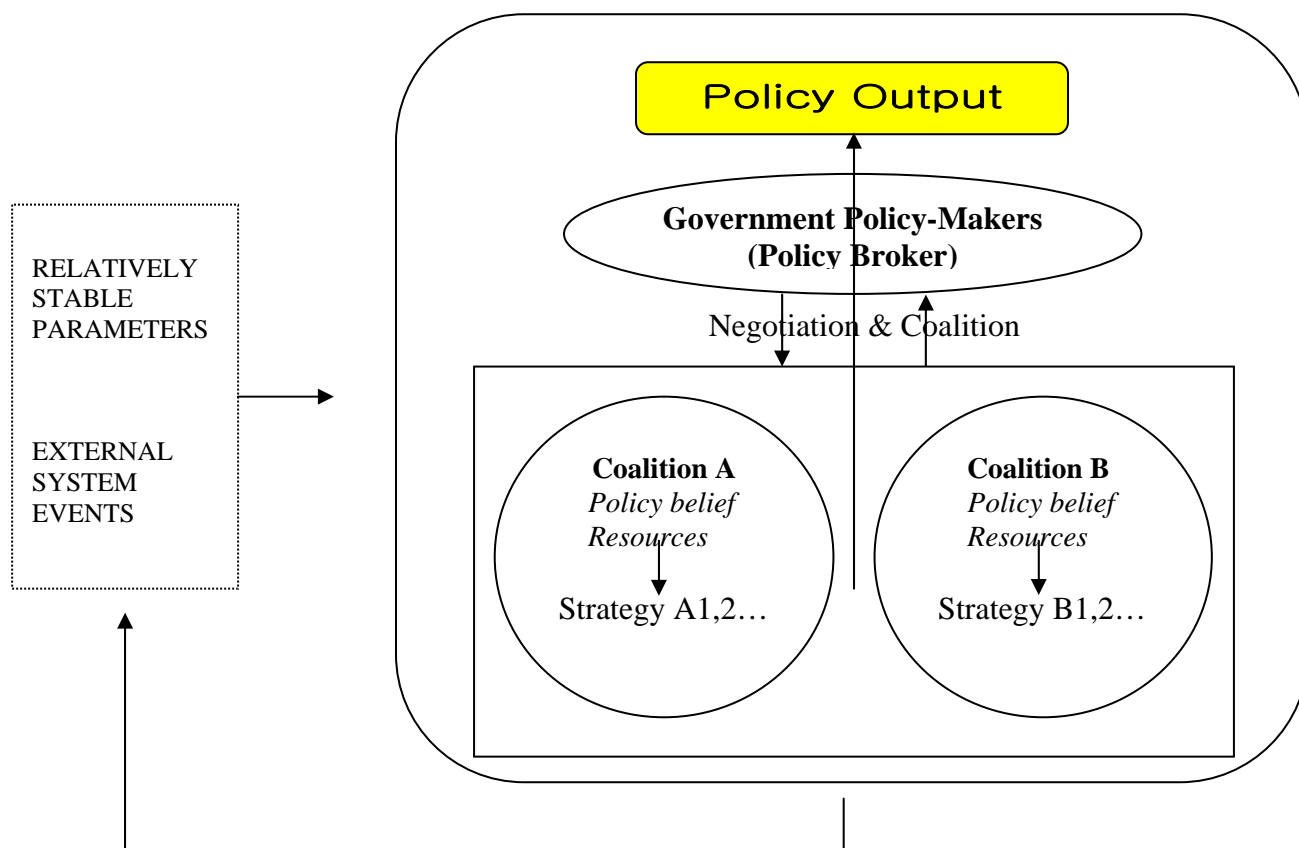
group pressure. . . . Governmental attention . . . is not well understood in terms of an interest group model” (p. 50).

Similarly, concerning the Korean equalization movement, government agencies such as the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development or the superintendents of metropolitan city school districts or provincial school districts play a critical role. Traditionally, their voice has been much stronger than that of interest groups. In this way, traditional interest group theory, in the context of the Korean equalization initiative, needs to be modified.

As seen in Figure 1.3, government actors holding formal policy-making authority play as important a role as do interest groups. In many cases their influence has been much greater than that of interest groups. They appear as though they are “policy entrepreneurs,” which Kingdon (1995) described as “advocates who are willing to invest their resources—time, energy, reputation, money—to promote a position in return for anticipated future gain in the form of material, purposive, or solidary benefits” (p.179) if they lead policy changes. As Mintrom (2000) argues in his book *Policy Entrepreneurs and School Choice*, the existence of “policy entrepreneurs” facilitates the likelihood of policy change (p. 45). If the term “policy entrepreneurs” is applicable not only for policy change but also for policy defense like the equalization (anti-school choice) movement of the Harbor School District --- in other words, just for emphasizing a critical individual policy actor’s role, the framework of stakeholders’ interaction and coalition can be modified as in Figure 1.3. Not only do government agencies establish game rules, mediate political struggles, and coordinate different interests as a neutral arbitrator, but also they participate in the political game, negotiate with other interest groups as a party, and employ a variety of political tactics as one of the education stakeholders. Consequently,

they become active players in the political arena. Figure 1.3 illustrates this active version of the framework.

**Figure 1.3 The Modified Advocacy Coalition Framework**



### *Significance of the Study*

Although school choice has become popular during the past few decades, it is not something novel in the viewpoint of providing educational options for families. Actually these days, the school choice debate is about what kind of choice (where, what type of schooling, and to what degree to choose), not about whether or not to have a choice (Hess, 2003; National Working Commission in Choice, 2003). As a complex and broad topic in educational policy discussions, research on school choice is not scarce even in the United States, and data on the issue are



produced from various sources such as effectiveness studies like student achievement, sociological studies, legal analyses, political perspective, and media coverage. Objective, collaborative, multiyear and large-scale research studies on school choice, however, are still strongly needed on the basis of methodologies accepted by advocates and opponents because the previous research is disputable (CEPM, 2002).

In particular, there are many characteristics in the Korean equalization (anti-choice) movement that are different from or similar to the school choice discussion of developed countries like the United States. In general, Korean macro-political dynamics surrounding anti-school choice do not seem to differ greatly from those of the United States, but Korean stakeholders' micro-politics are quite different from their counterparts in the United States. For instance, because Korea has virtually the same policy between public and private schools, and because private schools are understood as public institutes (not-for-profit), there is little room for legal dispute about school choice.<sup>23)</sup> Although there have been several policy studies in Korea on whether constituents of certain school districts want the implementation of the HSEP on the basis of opinion polls and on how the HSEP affects student achievement (Lee & Lee, 2004; Han, 2003; Park et al., 2002; Sung, 2001; Kwak et al., 2000; Kim et al., 1995), few empirical research studies on the political process of the implementation of the HSEP have been conducted. Whereas scholars and the public accept that Korean educational policies are strongly influenced by political struggles between interest groups, there are a few studies or findings about how

---

<sup>23)</sup> In 1995, the Korean Constitution Supreme Court ruled that the equalization policy is constitutional (Kang, 2002). In 2004, a student who was assigned to a sectarian private school refused to follow his school's religion policy, which forced him to attend chapel regardless of his faith. The Seoul Local Court ruled that the high school should not compel him to do things against his faith because he did not have the right of school choice (Retrieved January 21, 2005, from the *Yonhapnews* Website <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr>).

education stakeholders, including superintendents, interact and coalesce and about what kinds of political strategies they employ.

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the actual political dynamics among education stakeholders dealing with the Korean High School Equalization Policy (anti-school choice). This research topic focused on how a number of political interests were conflicting and how political strategies were working among stakeholders. Presently, the political games among education stakeholders in a number of school districts, including the Harbor School District, are not over. No one has a clear expectation of the final policy outcome. Despite the fact that the policy making process is still continuing, this study should contribute to an in-depth explanation for the political actions of major education stakeholders about anti-school choice policy, which were not easily revealed without in-depth, qualitative interviews. An in-depth case study that investigated political actions surrounding implementation of the HSEP in Korea through the lens of micro-politics might increase the likelihood of understanding the educational politics phenomena.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study investigated how education stakeholders act to achieve their political goals in regard to high school equalization in a Korean school district. While this study focuses on a case analysis of the Korean High School Equalization Policy, the relevant literature includes the politics surrounding the school choice initiatives in the United States. Accordingly, the literature on school choice is first reviewed from the perspective of politics, because the topic of the High School Equalization Policy can be characterized as an anti-choice issue, and because its policy-making process is closely related to political struggles among education stakeholders. In addition, studies on political interest groups need to be reviewed because the political actions of education stakeholders surrounding the implementation of the Korean High School Equalization Policy can be understood well via the lens of interest group politics.

#### *School Choice and Politics*

School choice is a controversial topic internationally. The debates about school choice in the United States touch on many of the topics that are at issue in Korea. The concept of school choice has long existed in the United States and abroad, although it is often thought as something new in the public education system (Kafer, 2004; National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education, 2003). Certainly school choice is not only a worldwide issue, but also a broad term ranging from magnet schools or intra-district choice, which are usually not very controversial, to publicly funded vouchers, which tend to be quite controversial.

Since the economist Milton Friedman advocated vouchers in his article *The Role of Government in Education* (1955) and his famous book *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), few parental choices were initiated in reality in the United States until the 1980s (Kafer, 2004). In the 1980s and 1990s, with the growth of state involvement, excellence to support economic growth became the main education policy theme in education reform (Kafer, 2004; Weil, 2002; Karper & Boyd, 1988). As a result of little evidence of success in traditional education reform and the reduction of the achievement gap, calls mounted to implement a variety of school choice reforms like charter schools, vouchers, home schooling, or contracting out educational services (Fusarelli, 2003). Chubb and Moe (1988, 1990) presented evidence that private schools exceed public school counterparts on academic grounds, and argued that market forces or school choice is a panacea to solve complicated and chronic public school problems. In terms of actual school choice policy-making, Minnesota began to implement statewide inter-district open enrollment in 1988 (Kafer, 2004). In 1991, Minnesota also enacted the nation's first charter school legislation (Patrick & Harris, 2002).

By the late 1990s, the school choice movement had become a diverse and dynamic movement including public school open enrollment, charter schools, home schooling, virtual schools, tax deductions and credits, magnet schools, and in a few places, vouchers (Kafer, 2004). Presently, publicly funded voucher programs operate in Milwaukee and Cleveland. Remarkably, Florida operates a statewide voucher plan that is linked to the state's accountability system. In 2002, the federal government guaranteed school choice by law under certain conditions. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (2002), the landmark reform of the Bush Administration, requires states to offer supplemental services or school choice for eligible students attending failing schools.

Many researchers have studied the impact of both privately and publicly funded vouchers. Despite its increasing importance in the field of educational policy, debate on school choice is still sharply divided, depending on the lens employed by researchers. Proponents of school choice focus on market efficiency, freedom, and their version of social equity. They believe school choice creates school improvement through increased competition for educating resources among schools. They also see school choice as a mechanism for improving educational opportunities for underprivileged children who attend failing schools (Viteritti, 2003, Caire, 2002; Bulman & Kirp, 1999; Nathan, 1989). The Wisconsin voucher program was designed to target low-income students in Milwaukee.

However, critics argue that if choice proposals allow children to leave their public schools for more competitive private schools, the students still attending and struggling in the public schools may be those who are from disadvantaged classes, which are not able to exercise their choices because of many social, economic, or geographical limits (McDonald, 2002; Schneider, Teske, & Marschall, 2000). There is empirical evidence to show that middle-class parents are more aggressive in, more capable of, and more concerned with providing their children with better education (Fiske & Ladd, 2000; Wells, 1996; Witte, 1996; Henig, 1994). There is a controversy about the so-called skimming problem or segregation (Viteritti, 2003). Public charter schools taking students on a “first come, first served” basis or a lottery system represent the population of their district’s students very well. On the other hand, private voucher programs show that when parents are responsible for part of the tuition, the students from the poorest families are excluded from application, and the parents of students participating in the program are likely to be better educated than those of the non-participating children.

Despite many government constraints on the education market, some empirical studies support the view that competition causes some school improvement (Belfield, 2003; Merrifield, 2001; Teske & Schneider, 2001; Hoxby, 2000; Rosegrant, 1999). However, according to worldwide studies, choice programs, without adequate safeguards, exacerbated the skimming or segregation effect by income or ethnicity (Godwin & Kemerer, 2002; Hoxby, 2000).

From the perspective of politics, school choice is certainly an interesting research theme. The Wisconsin voucher program was supported by a large political coalition consisting of African American activists, business leaders, free market advocates, a Republican governor, and a Democratic mayor. Voucher bills in Ohio and Florida were converted into laws with the support of a type of alliance similar to Wisconsin (Kafer, 2004; Fusarelli, 2003; Rosegrant, 1999). One of the most notable studies on the politics of school choice was a case study on the Minnesota policy-making processes through which school choice initiatives were enacted (Mazzoni, 1993). The study focused on six topics: softening up the policy community, getting ready for a tough fight against invested interests and ideals, combining inside power and dealing with outside pressure, protecting the policy breakthrough from likely counterattack, negotiating hard in existing or new areas for incremental extensions, and encouraging their political champions to work on their policy systems.

Another prominent study is *The Political Dynamic of School Choice* written by Lance Fusarelli (2003). The author explored political culture and language, the role of interest groups and advocacy coalitions, institutional structure, and organizational learning surrounding the policy-making process of the school choice reform movement. The policy makers succeeded in shaping the policy process and outcomes by an expansion of the scope of rhetorical conflict. Additionally, institutional context promoted the passage of less controversial initiatives like

charter school programs while making the passage of radical policy such as vouchers difficult. Moreover, the author presents that in the politics of school choice in Texas the “legislature’s adoption of charter schools and rejection of vouchers was the product of competition among advocacy coalitions” (Fusarelli, 2003, p. 93). Since nearly all members of the major anti-voucher coalition as well as the pro-voucher coalition supported charter schools as a “safe choice,” charter schools won legislature proposal. It was found that “state legislatures tend to respond to pressure from interest groups or policy entrepreneurs, with less attention to issues of organizational learning” (Fusarelli, 2003, p.137).

According to Godwin and Kemerer (2002), while there are many obstacles in the process of state policy-making for proponents to overcome, organized interests, in general, can more easily defeat policy proposals. The most powerful interest groups against school choice initiatives are teacher organizations such as the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Education (AFT), and their state affiliates. While the NEA opposed charters early, the AFT initially welcomed charters with the expectation of teachers getting more discretion and defeating more risky vouchers or tax credits. However, the AFT’s requirements to charters were unattainable. For instance, charter schools should not take money from the other public schools. In practice, both the NEA and the AFT finally opposed charter schools. Other opponents against school choice were the PTA, associations of school administrators, labor unions, the American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, the Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Contrary to anti-groups that oppose new proposals, proponents of school choice need to offer reasonable alternatives in order to persuade legislators to support the new initiatives. They have built coalitions among some minority leaders, some Democrats, libertarians, the Christian Right, and

middle class suburbanites. Thus, equity and accountability are useful means to achieve a coalition. The authors also pointed out the proponents' small chance of winning the voucher referenda. As observed in California, Oregon, Michigan, and Colorado, opponents succeeded in defeating voucher initiatives by creating "the necessary level of fear and confusion" (Godwin & Kemerer, 2002, p. 233). Moreover, they suggested four conditions for legislative approval: "political entrepreneurs" investing their energy in the fight, "a leading elected politician" like a governor, "some Democrats and minorities" signing on initial policy proposals in order to legitimize equity, and a political "event" invoking public awareness of existing public school problems (Godwin & Kemerer, 2002, p. 233).

Consequently, the success or failure of school choice initiatives depends on whether they provide new opportunities for the disadvantaged, whether the amount of the vouchers fully covers the cost of tuition at private schools, whether they maximize options (even though this does not guarantee a completely competitive market) that consumers exercise, whether they require accountability, and how skillfully they achieve an advocacy coalition and overcome political obstacles (Vitteriti, 2003; Godwin & Kemerer, 2002; Mintrom, 2000).

### *Korean High School Equalization Policy*

Concerning the High School Equalization Policy (HSEP) adapted in Korea in 1974, there are three types of research studies: research for policy recommendations, policy analysis studies, and studies of the effects of the policy on student achievement. Most of the research for policy recommendations focused on a fact-finding project based on opinion surveys and descriptive statistics (Kim & Chung, 2003; Kim et al., 2003; Yang, 2002; Kwak et al., 2000; Baek, Choi, & Sung, 1999; Kim et al., 1995). The research attempted to find positive and negative effects of the



HSEP on the teaching burdens of teachers, private schools, socioeconomic class, social stratification, and expense of private tutoring, and also to suggest possible alternatives for a better implementation process for individual school districts. Thus, overall, the research compares the advantages and disadvantages of the HSEP. The existing research provides important data and materials for studying the equalization policy.

Many policy analysis studies have been conducted as graduate students' dissertations and researchers' journal articles. Graduate students analyzed the HSEP using conceptual models of public policy making. Lee (1985) analyzed the policy in light of the levels of democracy, validity, stability, and efficiency. Chung (1986) and Huh (1989) evaluated the policy in terms of the value of equality and fairness with respect to Rawls' concept of justice. Chang (1991) suggested an evaluation model for the equalization policy along with a detailed and extensive chronology of the policy. Jeong (1991) elaborated the concept of policy evaluation models by combining the cognitive aspects of the policy process. Some scholars conducted descriptive and evaluative studies on the equalization policy, adding the viewpoint of politics and policy analysis. Cho (1999) analyzed a case of *Chun-cheon* in terms of policy evaluation, which experienced the implementation and turnover of the equalization policy. In the case of *Jeon-buk* Province, Shin and Kwon (2000) evaluated the outcomes of the HSEP and analyzed the policy demands of education stakeholders on the equalization policy. Other significant studies include the constitutionality of the equalization policy (Kang, 2002) and the relationship between private schools and the equalization policy (Lee, 2003). The last two studies argue that private schools have few distinctions from public schools and the equalization policy should be revised because it infringes on the parents' right of school choice too broadly.

Several graduate students and scholars with viewpoints from sociology or the politics of education interpreted the HSEP focusing on class interests and the nature of the state. Park (1988), investigating the birth and shift of the policy, argued that the military regime introduced the policy in order to create legitimacy, and the change of major political powers resulted in the shift of the policy value from equality to autonomy and excellence. After analyzing the equalization policy, Jeong (1992) concluded that the educational expansion of Korea was the result of strong state involvement with its interaction with the economic constraints and weak class forces. Seo (1995) interpreted the conflicts of ideologies and interests surrounding the HSEP between statism and anti-statism. Based on an historical study, Chung (1998) investigated why the HSEP was implemented by the Korean central government and how the Ministry of Education interacted with other policy actors. He argued that the implementation of the HSEP was an expression of the Ministry of Education's strong desire to intervene in the distribution of educational opportunities to solve socioeconomic and educational inequalities, but the Ministry of Education faced limits to achieve its goals due to counter influences from other political actors. Kim and Byun (2003) and Byun and Kim (2004) found that student achievement is closely associated with the opposing attitude of parents toward the equalization policy in Seoul. They supported Viteritti's (1999) argument that suburban parents who are satisfied with the public schools that their children attend are less in support of school choice.

Other research studies on the equalization policy have concerns with how the policy affects student achievement. Overall, education-affiliated researchers argue that there is no significant difference in student achievement between the two groups of students, the school choice group and the equalization group (Sung, 2004; Sung, 2002; Sung, 1999; Kim et al., 1995; Kim et al., 1978, 1979). In the pioneering studies on whether the HSEP affects student

achievement, Kim et al. (1978, 1979) found that in *Seoul* and *Bu-san*, there was no significant difference in the “Test Scores for College Entrance Examination” between students attending high schools in 1973, before the implementation of the HSEP, and students attending high schools in 1974, the first year after the implementation of the HSEP, and that there was also no difference in the admission results into four major national universities between the two regions, such as the equalized school districts and the non-equalized school districts. Kim et al. (1995) also found no differences in the degree of change of students’ test scores for two years (from 10<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) between the two types of school districts. Sung (1999) also found that the students of the equalized school districts achieved a little more than their counterparts of the school choice districts between the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. However, the excellent students (M+2s) of the school choice districts outperformed their counterparts of the equalized districts, whereas the other students of choice districts obtained lower scores than their counterparts of the equalized districts. His other studies (2002, 2004) also supported the result of his previous study that the HSEP is not significantly associated with student achievement. Gahng and Sung (2001) found that the homogeneity of class grouping in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade did not affect the level of student achievement in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade significantly, although the more heterogeneous groups had a small possibility of getting lower scores in two years than the more homogeneous groups.

On the other hand, a group of scholars argue that the HSEP decreases student achievement and, as a result, lowers national competitiveness in the global trade war. They are mainly economists and economy- or private school-affiliated scholars. They support the argument against the equalization policy (Kim, Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2004; Lee, 2002; Kim, 2002; Park, 2002). Kim (2002) argues that in order to pursue excellence in education, the government’s restrictions of school management coming from the equalization policy should be reduced, and private schools,

at least, should be given the discretion of choosing students suitable to their founding ideas such as religious beliefs. Likewise, Kim et al. (2004) refuted the previous pro-equalization arguments that the equalization policy does not affect students' achievement significantly. Their research was based on different data sources from the previous studies. They used the national database of student achievement compiled by the Korean Curriculum and Evaluation Institution. After selecting 72 middle size cities, they compared the student achievement of the equalized districts with that of the non-equalized districts. They concluded that the achievement level of the students of the non-equalized districts was considerably higher than that of students attending the equalized districts and, more importantly, all levels of students of the non-equalized districts outperformed those of the equalized districts. Their study is remarkable because of its rejection of the previous arguments supporting the equalization policy.

Another interesting aspect of the studies concerning the equalization policy is who likes or dislikes the policy. In 1995, 20 years since the first implementation of the equalization policy, Kim et al. (1995) found through an opinion poll on the equalization policy that 57% of the respondents supported the policy. Different opinion polls (Kim, 2002; Park et al., 2002) also presented a similar response pattern, as in Kim's study. Of the respondents, a majority of parents and classroom teachers were in favor of the equalization policy, but a majority of the education-affiliated groups like administrators, school board members, and college professors supported school choice. In contrast to classroom teachers, school administrators such as principals and assistant principals were equally balanced in policy preference by 46.2% to 46.2%. Among parents, the rate of support varied by their socioeconomic status. Just 52% of the high-income parents supported the equalization policy, but at the low-income level 74% of parents responded that they wanted the equalization policy.

Except for the general opinion polls of education stakeholders, there was little research that systematically studied which stakeholders were supporters or opponents for what political interests. Previous research has shown that stakeholders' responses are based on various issues such as student achievement, social segregation, connections based on alumni organization, teachers' teaching burden, middle school students' learning burden for the high school entrance examination, traditions of top school prestige, entrance of high school graduates to top colleges, private tutoring costs, private schools' autonomy, and exodus of excellent students from an equalized district to other non-equalized districts (Kim, Jeon, & Han, 2004; Kim et al., 2003; Yang, 2002; Kwak et al., 2000; Baek et al., 1999; Kim et al., 1995). Of them, the college entrance examination system directly affects the rate of support for the equalization policy (Park, 2002; Kwak et al., 2000; Baek et al., 1999; Cho, 1999). Two school districts of *Cheon-buk* Province are very interesting because their policy preferences changed three times; the districts enacted the equalization policy in 1980, came back to the original choice policy in 1990 and 1991, but finally went back to the equalization policy in 2000 (Shin & Kwon, 2000). The decision of 2000 was mainly supported by a change in the college entrance examination system (Kwak et al., 2000; Shin & Kwon, 2000). The reason that students want to attend the top high schools is that they provide more opportunities to enter the top colleges. If the college entrance examination system is reformed to emphasize high school grade point average (GPA) and to give less weight to nationwide achievement test scores (similar to the Scholastic Attitude Test in the United States), parents might support the heterogeneous grouping of achievement by the Equalization Policy, because they can take advantage of a good GPA and get admission into top colleges. On the other hand, in the case of *Chun-cheon* School District, the group interest of the top high school's

alumni played a critical role in the return to school choice from the equalization policy (Kwak et al., 2000; Cho, 1999).

### *Political Interest Groups*

Political interest group theories are useful to understand the politics of education stakeholders on the decision-making process of the High School Equalization Policy. Scholars and politicians, in general, seem to accept the idea that “interest groups are natural phenomena in a democratic regime—that is, individuals will band together to protect their interests” (Cigler & Loomis, 1998, p.2), although the tradition of political thought supposes individuals to be usual starting points of analysis, individuals who are treated as “a self-acting, autonomous, decisional unit” (Monypenny, 1967, p. 2). According to Olsen (1971), traditional views of groups can be explained in two ways. In casual form, “private organizations or groups are ubiquitous and their ubiquity is due to a fundamental human propensity to form and join associations” (p.17). This is regarded as the instinct of humans as political animals. James Madison wrote in *The Federalist Papers No. 10*, “the latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man” (Fairfield, 1966, p.18). On the other hand, the formal variant of the traditional view attempts to explain the association and group affiliations as “an aspect of the evolution of modern, industrial societies out of primitive societies” (Olsen, 1971, p.17). Olsen argues that there is a function that large groups can perform. In modern societies, there must be something that small primary groups cannot perform (or at least, so well). So, it is broadly accepted that organizations or associations exist to achieve the interests of their members.

The term “interest group”<sup>24)</sup> can be defined in various ways, ranging from the narrow to the broad and also scholars often interchangeably use a variety of different terms like “factions,” “groups,” “professional associations,” “pressure groups,” “organized interests,” “interest organizations,” “special interests,” “lobbying,” and other terms related to political interests (Lowery & Brasher, 2004; Schlozman & Tierney, 1986; Mahood, 1967; Fairfield, 1966; Truman, 1951). Truman’s widely used definition of “interest group” is “any group that, on the basis of one or more shared attitudes, makes certain claims upon other groups in the society for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes” (1951, p.33). Clive S. Thomas (2004) presents the following definition of “interest group,” which covers many types of interest group activity in different political systems: “An interest group is an association of individuals or organizations or a public or private institution that, on the basis of one or more shared concerns, attempts to influence public policy in its favor” (p. 4). In essence, interest groups represent someone’s or some organizations’ common economic or social interests in the public policy-making process. It is reasonable that the definition of interest group is flexibly adjustable to a study’s purpose or focus.

On the other hand, “education stakeholders” is a key term in this study. The term refers to people who are affiliated with an educational policy with any kind of interest. They expect to get benefits or burdens from changes in educational policy or to play a role in decision-making. Thus, educational interest groups and education stakeholders are distinguishable in this study, but have little difference: The former refers to non-officials related to the educational policy-making

---

<sup>24)</sup> Although the definition of terms is really important to make sense of social phenomena, this study uses the more commonly accepted term *interest groups* because this study’s focus is on broad interactions of the key

process, excluding formal decision-making agents like the superintendent, but on the other hand, the latter includes all groups or individuals who attempt to affect educational policy-making.

Whichever term is used, there are controversies about whether interest groups affect politics positively or negatively and why individuals organize political interest groups. Some scholars like Arthur F. Bentley (1908) and David B. Truman (1951) have viewed interest groups more positively: As individuals express their political opinion, groups of individuals become also natural phenomena and facilitators for participation in politics in pluralist societies. They argue from the pluralist state perspective that competition of various interests will produce responsive policies to the public and that no single faction will dominate public policies. Democratic government has to play a role in balancing the competing interests of society.

However, others like Hugo Black expressed hostility toward interest groups, saying, “contrary to tradition, against the public morals, and hostile to good government, the lobby has reached such a position of power that it threatens government itself” (as cited in Cigler & Loomis, 1998, p.3). Madison was also concerned about “the mischiefs of faction” and paid much attention to the protection of the public (Fairfield, 1966, p.17). Interest groups might push the government to enact specific policies only for small groups who have a strong voice against the general public’s benefits. Political action committees (PACs) could harm political justice (Berry, 1997). The critics argue that some interest groups with more resources usually win, but others with fewer assets habitually lose in the policy competition.

Despite considerable worry about the negative effects of interest groups, they are likely to be a crucial political component in a complex, large, and increasingly specialized governmental

---

players surrounding a Korean education policy, and so the accurate definition of terms is of little importance for



system. They seem to be regarded as a “necessary evil” in democratic politics. James Madison also argued that factions emerge naturally, so it is necessary to control their effects (Fairfield, 1966).

Then, how do individuals join certain interest groups and how do interest groups form, survive, and act? Clive C. Thomas (2004) states that there are two broad categories of focus in interest group studies: “groups as organizations and their internal dynamics,” and “interest group activity in the public policy process” (p.16). However, since the two types of studies basically overlap, three broad theoretical approaches of interest group activities, discussed by Lowery and Brasher (2004), are reviewed in this study: the pluralist perspective, transaction approach, and neopluralist perspective.

The pluralist perspective sees interest groups as “an essential part of the machinery of democracy” (Lowery & Brasher, 2004, p. 20). Pluralists conclude that interest groups (organizations or associations) exist to achieve the interests of their members. In terms of the origin and maintenance of interest groups, Truman (1951) contends that spontaneous generation of groups is based on the notion of the pluralist state; that is, interest groups emerge spontaneously in response to feelings of common interests among individuals. Group formation is the natural reaction of people with shared interests banding together to protect their interests. When people feel threatened by problems amenable to governmental solution, they form a group with others who have common interests to seek benefits.

In general, there are two types of organizations to organize individuals’ policy needs and deliver them to the government: political parties and interest groups. Political parties are official,

formal, and public entities that are open to the public. In some cases, they could be government-funded institutions. In reality, although political parties primarily function to meet citizens' political needs, the political voting system is a very incomplete instrument to meet their preferences because it does not provide enough political choices (mostly only two choices, as in the American presidential election) compared to multiple kinds of interests that people pursue.

Therefore, interest groups provide complementary solutions. People express their comprehensive, primary preference through political parties, and at the same time, they can further their specific interests through special interest groups. All interests in society can be represented with the community of interest organizations. This community would probably reflect real concerns arising from social and economic disturbances. Interest groups, however, can produce only a limited but crucial effect on policy makers. The activities of interest groups, as Truman (1951) observed, imply struggle and conflict to achieve their purposes, which are considered the essence of politics.

The second approach is the transaction perspective, which politics borrowed from the economics' concept of transaction. The focus of transaction scholars is on the exchanges between interest groups and government officials, as well as between interest groups and their members. From the economists' perspective, Mancur Olsen (1971), in his popular book *The Logic of Collective Action*, challenged Truman's demand-side theory of interest groups. His argument was that if individuals act on the basis of rationality, they would not spontaneously join certain groups that serve their interests because they can be "free riders." Applying the logic of free access to the collective interests as public goods produced by interest groups, Olsen argued that interest groups confront a significant difficulty in organizing. As a result, in order to mobilize

successfully certain organizations, the interest groups should be able to employ coercion like mandatory membership or the provision of selective incentives available only to their members.

Moreover, transaction theorists assume that interest groups can influence the preferences of the public and the actions of government officials. Through lobbying, groups that have a small number of members, but are strongly united, are likely to get more social or economic benefits, but those that consist of a large number of members who are loosely united would obtain fewer benefits. This model implies that “legislation and regulation are sold to the highest bidder in political markets, just as other goods and services are sold in more familiar commercial markets” (McChesney, 1997, p.1).

The neopluralist perspective is based on both the pluralist and transaction approaches. Under specific contexts, the politics of interest groups has different appearances and sometimes goes beyond a simple combination of the two perspectives. Lowery and Brasher (2004) present two key concepts: variation and contingency. “The world is neither black nor white” and “influence is conditional on circumstances” (p.23). The neopluralists focus on the specific conditions that influence interest groups’ actions and successful emergence and survival. Although they do not reject Olsen’s basic framework of the collective action problem, they argue that obstacles to group formation can be overcome through other motivations or incentives. Salisbury (1969) emphasized the importance of entrepreneurial leadership in the process of group development. Group leaders (organizers) are key players in order to create the group’s incentive structure and to overcome barriers to collective action. Moreover, through analyzing voluntary associations, Walker (1983) contends that “patrons of political action play a crucial role in the initiation and maintenance of interest groups” (p. 402). It is not the ability to attract individual members, but the ability to procure patron supporters that is necessary for certain groups to come

into existence. It might be wealthy patrons, governments, private foundations, corporations or other interest groups. They look for a group entrepreneur and give him or her “seed money.”

On the other hand, in terms of interest group activity in the public policy process, interest groups are regarded as one line of so-called subgovernment, networks of policy making, or iron triangles, which consist of legislative committee members, program administrators, and interest group representatives (Freeman, 1965; Cater, 1964). Each triangle is successful because either conflict or cooperation within it sorts out an agreeable solution. Iron triangles resolve their difference by themselves and make policy decisions that benefit all three members, often at the expense of the public (McConnell, 1966; Jones, 1961). They can exercise “considerable autonomy in the special policy areas” (Freeman, 1965, p.120). However, the triangle theory is criticized as too simple an explanation of complex political reality and one that ignored many other players in modern politics (Thomas, 2004; Berry, 1997). The niche theory may offer a more realistic explanation of politics (Lowery & Brasher, 2004; Gray & Lowery, 1996). As a species resolves competition with other species through “partitioning,” interest groups also survive in a competitive and uncertain world with limited resources by using niche strategies. Interest groups do not need to compete for resources with other similar groups through partitioning of resources if they find niche places, issues, members, or money sources.

In addition to the above broad review of interest group research, two subjects related to this study need to be reviewed: the advocacy coalition or issue network, and government actions in the policy-making process when interest groups attempt to influence public policy. First, how do interest groups maximize their political power and resources of all sorts, like money, information, and votes, by forming large coalitions of like-minded organizations? According to Riker (1962), groups will try to minimize their size necessary for victory since under the situation

of a zero-sum “winner-take-all” game, they, as rational beings, want to maximize their share of the prize. However, by Olsen’s logic of collective action (1971), in certain conditions interest groups try to maximize collective goods by forming large coalitions, though there could be barriers to coalition formation under the situation in which interest groups seek collective goods. “When there is organized or coordinated effort in an inclusive group, as many as can be persuaded to help will be included in that effort” (Olsen, 1965, p.40).

From the pluralist perspective, furthermore, interest groups coalesce commonly to achieve their shared goals as individuals join groups for furtherance of their interest (Truman, 1951). Salisbury’s entrepreneur theory (1969) also suggests that group leaders can overcome obstacles in group coalitions. Lowery and Brasher (2004) discuss the gains of joining group coalitions: shared cost or resources, greater influence, stronger legitimacy, and increased clouts. However, sometimes groups will avoid coalitions because they want to specialize in a policy niche or there is a possibility of losing important side-interests through the negotiation of joining coalitions. With regard to the coalition behavior of organizations, several factors affect their behaviors. They may be the level of opposition, number of issue-related government institutions, previous alliance experience, and intensity of competition for members or resources among similar organizations (Gray & Lowery, 1998; Hojnacki, 1997).

In order to explain government involvement as well as the coalition behavior of interest groups, Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) proposed an advocacy coalition framework (ACF) in their widely cited book which investigated how one can understand the complex process of policy change over time in the air pollution control issue. The framework consists of interest group interactions within a policy subsystem and of external variables affecting the constraints and opportunities of subsystem actors (Sabatier, 1988). It is built on four basic assumptions: 1) the

understanding of the process of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning is based on a time concept, 2) “policy subsystems” is the most useful way to understand the interaction of multiple actors who attempt to influence government decision-making, 3) the subsystems involve an intergovernmental dimension, and 4) the public policies can be conceptualized in the same way as belief systems.

Outside the policy subsystem there are two kinds of external variables (stable and more dynamic) that affect the constraints and opportunities of subsystem players. Within the subsystem, people establish a number of advocacy coalitions that share policy beliefs and act in concert. Each coalition employs various strategies to accomplish its objectives. Conflicts among plural coalitions are compromised by so-called “policy brokers.” Then, the policy outputs result from mediation between policy coalitions, and accordingly the outputs result in policy impacts. Finally each coalition might revise its beliefs or alter its strategies through policy-oriented learning, policy impacts, new information, and other external changes over time, including policy changes that may take place over time. Consequently, they concluded that advocacy coalitions are most useful to understand policy change over fairly long periods of time, and that in most cases the number of significant advocacy coalitions may be quite small.

However, not everyone belongs to a certain advocacy coalition. They can become policy brokers, including researchers, elected officials, bureaucrats with neutral competence, high civil servants, and other actors (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Knott & Miller, 1987; Meltsner, 1976; Dogan, 1975). In reality, the distinction between advocate and broker may be unclear. “While civil servants may be brokers, they are also often policy advocates—particularly when their agency has a clearly defined mission” (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p.27). Their argument has something in common with Walker’s contention (1983) in terms of emphasis on

government active intervention in interest groups' politics. Kingdon (1995) also emphasized that many issues can arise from government policy initiatives, not simply from pressure groups.

Despite the above long-standing and rich research on interest groups, there is less empirical research on education interest groups' politics. Education interest groups are very active at all levels of government in the United States because of the decentralization system of educational policy-making. At the national level, a small number of theoretical studies have been conducted to explain educational policy-making through interest groups. Summerfield (1974) and Thomas (1975) found that there are distinct policy communities in each level of education and that major initiatives of policy change come from outsiders like the president or academics. In particular, presidential initiatives were investigated as major impacts on governmental education policy (Radin & Hawley, 1988; Brademas, 1987), but professional associations passively responded to external policy initiatives rather than being the sources of pressure for change (Summerfield, 1974; Thomas, 1975). Yet, Smith (1984) and Spring (1988) noted that the creation of the U.S. Department of Education, in part, was the result of National Education Association's lobbying. Also, there are some scholars who have categorized educational interest groups in several types such as umbrella organizations, institutional associations, teachers' unions, administrators and boards, and other groups (Cook, 1998; Bloland, 1985; Bailey, 1975).

At the state level, on the other hand, scholars find that state teachers associations are the most influential interest groups (Thomas & Hrebener, 1999; Rosenthal, 1993; Karper & Boyd, 1988; Hrebener & Thomas, 1987, 1993a, 1993b). They report that professional, labor, and administrative associations are powerful in state and local politics because of the size of their membership and the ability to gather large funds. In particular, Karper and Boyd (1988) revealed that although the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) enjoyed a dominant status in

the 1970s, its influence was decreasing and instead, the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers (PFT), its rival organization, became more active in the 1980s. Moreover, interest groups formed a large coalition to present a unified position on school funding to a strong governor.

On the other hand, there are several studies that support advocacy coalition theory. After analyzing Minnesota's educational policy-making process, Mazzoni (1993) concluded that the advocacy coalition of innovators strongly drove the educational reform movement and consequently, succeeded in enacting the nation's first charter school law in 1991. It was similar to the result of Feir's (1994) study of Pennsylvania educational policy-making. Even though traditional interest groups like the PSEA played a minor role in the 1980s' school reforms, education reformers could achieve their reform goals through the formation of an advocacy coalition consisting of the governor, business leaders, media, and chief state education executives. Fusarelli (2003) examined interest group dynamics and the advocacy coalition surrounding charter school reform and the voucher plan in Texas. Furthermore, he compared these school choice issues among several states. His conclusion was that the present school choice policy is a product of political struggle between advocacy groups and that "the unity and strength of these advocacy coalitions play a crucial role in determining the outcome of choice initiatives" (p.111).



## Chapter III

### DESIGN AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

This study's focus was on a specific school district and the political dynamics of education stakeholders involved with the issue of whether to implement the Korean High School Equalization Policy or anti-school choice policy. The primary concerns of this study were policy preference, political values, and political actions and tactics of the education stakeholders. In particular, one of them was the involvement of government officials (including the superintendent) in the political game. Therefore, the leading research questions were:

1. Who were the proponents and opponents of the High School Equalization Policy?
2. Why did they take sides, pro or con?
3. How was the superintendent of the provincial school district, as a final decision-maker, involved with this issue?
4. What political tactics did each coalition use to achieve its policy goals?
5. How effective did major stakeholders think that the strategies were?

#### *Logic and Rationale for Qualitative Research*

The research questions addressed in this study were primarily stated as *why*, *what* and *how* questions and, accordingly, this study demanded a holistic, descriptive, and explanatory approach. The intent of this research was to make a thick, rich description of the context of stakeholders' politics surrounding an anti-choice policy movement. Considering the main purpose of the study, the context and complexity of the events investigated, and the nature of the research questions, a qualitative case study design was the most appropriate approach for this study. Also, following

Yin's (1994, p. 6) three research conditions, including as the form of research questions, the extent of control over actual events, and the degree of focus on contemporary incidences, the best research strategy of this study was a case study.

“Qualitative and quantitative methods are not simply different ways of doing the same thing” (Maxwell, 1996, p.17). Differences between qualitative and quantitative researchers are often discussed in term of differences in the basic assumptions. As Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) write, “these assumption are related to the views they hold concerning the nature of reality, the relationship of the researcher to that which he or she is studying, the role of values in a study, and the process of research itself” (p.432). While quantitative research is related to the philosophy of positivism and “the belief that facts and feelings can be separated, that the world is a single reality made up of facts that can be discovered,” qualitative research, on the other hand, assumes that “the world is made up of multiple realities, socially constructed by different individual views of the same situation” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p.16).

Thus, if a researcher takes one research approach over another, he or she reveals an individual interpretation of reality. Qualitative researchers “are more concerned with understanding situations and events from the viewpoint of the participants,” “have a much greater flexibility in both the strategies and techniques they use and the overall research process itself,” and “tend to become immersed in the situations in which they do research” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p.16).

The purpose of this study was to understand how education stakeholders act politically to achieve their objectives. It was associated with “how people make sense out of their lives” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003, p. 432). As Joseph A. Maxwell (1996) presents, understanding the meaning of events and activities is central to what is known as the interpretive approach. Thus,

this study was concerned with policy process, policy context, inductive analysis, and naturalistic inquiry. The researcher's observations and insights played a crucial role in this study. As a result, the interpretation of major participants' political actions was the main data source and, then, the qualitative approach was relevant to investigate the subjective views of political actions.

Qualitative research is very useful for exploratory studies. According to Maxwell (1996), the qualitative approach is especially suited for "identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, and generating new grounded theories. Qualitative research has long been used for this purpose by survey and experimental researchers, who often conduct exploratory qualitative studies" (p. 19). Interview methods as a qualitative research approach provided meaningful and large amounts of data on the factors affecting the political power mapping within a local school district.

#### *The Researcher's Background for Conducting the Study*

This study was based on both the career experience and schooling experience of the researcher. The researcher was born in a rural community. After graduating from a rural middle school, the researcher passed the entrance examination to a top high school in his school district. He was admitted due to his high scores in 1979. The next year after he entered high school, his school district was forced to enact the High School Equalization Policy (anti-school choice) mandated by the Ministry of Education. The year when he entered college, his high school had the highest entrance rate to prestigious colleges in its previous thirty-year record. However, in the next school year, only a few of the graduates of his high school were admitted to top-ranking colleges. In about 10 years since the HSEP was applied to his school district, the community

wanted to get parental school choice back, and finally parents and students of the school district redeemed their right of school choice in 1990.

After graduation from college, he passed the high civil service examination, which aims at recruiting assistant directors to work for the central government, and he has worked for the MOE as an assistant director, and for a province school district as a director. At the central government, the researcher was in charge of the vocational education policy, the local education budget and finance, the academic affairs of colleges, the coordination of education policy planning, and audit and inspection. At the local government level, he also worked as a director of the school board. He spent about 15 months at a national university in charge of teaching and instruction support, college registration, and university development planning.<sup>25)</sup> What the researcher realized during his central government service was that most Korean education problems are closely related to the HSEP and college entrance policy. Economy-affiliated ministries frequently attacked the MOE, claiming that low national economic competitiveness results from the HSEP. They argued that the HSEP was a failed educational policy (Park, 2002). One interesting fact is that although the central government, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, practically delegated policy-making power of the HSEP to metropolitan city and province school districts in 1990, some of them were reluctant to abolish the HSEP. Rather, they newly stretched the implementation of the HSEP to other school districts within their metropolitan city or province district with their community support as shown in Table 1.1.<sup>26)</sup>

---

<sup>25)</sup> Most national universities' administrators are governmental employees in Korea.

<sup>26)</sup> Four local school districts in *Gyeong-ki* Province newly implemented the HSEP in 2002. *Ik-san* and *Goon-san* of *Jeon-buk* Province discarded the policy in 1990 and 1991, but finally re-implemented it in 2000.

Thus, the schooling and career background of the researcher helped him understand and address the political dynamics of this issue in several ways. First, he has worked for the Ministry of Education, which initially led the equalization initiative and is still supporting the HSEP. Second, he is a graduate of a highly prestigious high school, which has a great reputation and a well-established alumni association (although his high school lost its prestige for 10 years, 1980-1989). A third reason is that he has been affiliated with a provincial school district, which is struggling to solve the political conflict between pro- and anti-equalization groups. In other words, his personal school life and his formal job careers were relevant and useful for this qualitative study of anti-school choice. At the same time, the researcher's background introduced elements of bias which he attempted to guard against.

### *Research Design*

The research design selected for this study was qualitative research with descriptive and policy analysis dimensions. As qualitative research, this study used a case study to explain the political dynamics that occurred within a school district. In general, according to Yin (1994), each research strategy can be used for all three purposes: exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. The appropriateness of case studies involves the type of research questions, the extent of controlling events, and the degree of focus on contemporary events (Wellington, 2000; Yin, 1994). Typical research questions of case studies are usually related to how and why things happen. Case studies are preferred for examining contemporary social phenomena and when relevant events cannot be affected. They depict events, processes, and perspectives in a real life context. Description illustrates different perspectives or opinions of participants. As Rossman and Rallis (2003) state:

Case studies are in-depth and detailed explorations of single examples (an event, process, organization, group, or individual) that are “an instance drawn from a class” of similar phenomena. They seek to understand the larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case and therefore focus on the particular . . . . Case studies are complex and multilayered. They are particularly useful for their rich description and heuristic value. (p.104)

Therefore, case studies, as Rossman and Rallis (2003) note, use a variety of techniques for data gathering like questionnaires, archival records, interviewing, observing, and analyzing documents. They are methodologically eclectic. As Stake (2000) writes, “case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” (p.435).

#### *Location and Sample Selection*

Researchers need to select the most appropriate location and sample. As a case study design, this study focused on a Korean local school district (the Harbor School District) struggling with politics surrounding whether to implement the HSEP. There were several rationales for the selection of this school district. First, the researcher was familiar with the school district context and also had easy access to the informants associated with the politics of the HSEP. Second, the school district was and is one of the school districts with the most conflict surrounding the anti-school choice issue in Korea. In other words, the school district was a good site appropriate to investigate the political dynamics of education stakeholders. Third, the school choice issue in the school district was in the stage of a “political stream,” according to Kingdon (1995), in which policy windows could be opened (p. 203). Certainly visible participants were affecting the agenda

setting, and various interest groups were pressing their demands on the government in the school district.

With respect to sample selection, this study employed a purposeful sampling method because the researcher felt that the sample selected might yield the best understanding of the political dynamics of the anti-school choice movement. Of the many types of purposeful sampling, this study chose a “stratified purposeful sampling” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 223). The stratified purposeful sample included several major stakeholders at defined points of variation in terms of political actors. Key actors in each category were invited to be interview participants. Basically, key actors could be identified through personal contacts, media coverage, and document analysis. From the researcher’s administrative experiences, those who needed to be interviewed included some of the government officials affiliated with decision-making authority within the provincial school district, such as the superintendent who exercised the final decision-making authority, the director of the secondary education department who was a middle decision-maker in implementing the policy, and the executive staff who was in charge of preparing a draft of the equalization policy. Also, the school board members needed to be interviewed because the school board held final authority in passing the policy initiative into action policy. Furthermore, the presidents or directors of the teachers unions, who were visible and aggressive participants, needed to be invited to this study for interviews. The interview sample had eight major strata, and the typical and representative persons of each major stakeholder group were also asked for interviews. The initial intention for the interviews was to interview a total of 26 participants, but the number of actual interviewees was 32 (see Appendix A).

*Research Strategies and Instrumentation*

Gaining access to the site or individuals is very important for collecting plentiful quality data, but it is, in fact, not easy. “Access typically begins with gatekeepers,” who may lead to other crucial informants (Creswell, 1998, p. 117). Moreover, establishing rapport between the researcher and the participants is essential. It is also important for all participants to clearly know the purpose and extent of the research, the expected demands and benefits, and how the results will be reported. The design, planning, sampling and carrying out of educational research depends on getting access to needed participants.

The researcher first obtained the superintendent’s approval to conduct the interviews within his school district (see Appendix B). However, because this study involved interviews of salient political actors like the superintendent, school board members, or presidents of teachers unions in the school district, in some cases there was little access to them. With personal human relationships, sharing a common sense of importance of the HSEP, and significant contacts, most of the key players surrounding the anti-school choice movement allowed the researcher to interview them. Before asking to interview them, the researcher had a chance to explain the outline and significance of this study by personal letters or in-person contacts. Because the researcher had acquaintances with government officials and school board members, there were few problems interviewing them. On the other hand, in order to get permission to interview other participants, including presidents of teachers unions, the researcher utilized peer administrators or teachers as introducers. In the Korean culture, informal relationships are usually more useful to gain access to someone than formal contacts, like an introductory letter.

Media documents and minutes of the school board necessary for document analysis were accessible. However, the researcher might not have easily had access to the government



documents related to the HSEP, which current officials are holding, because they are still not open to the public. With significant politics and confidentiality, the researcher's official position of being affiliated with the provincial school district helped gain access to valuable government documents to some extent, but not freely. As the researcher asked for some government documents, the staff made copies of them after reviewing their confidentiality.

### *Data Collection*

Collecting research data is a process of discovery. In qualitative research, according to Rossman and Rallis (2003), there are three main ways to discover and learn in the field: interviewing, observing, and studying material culture. Interviewing entails talking with participants both formally and informally. Observing entails formal, structured noting of events, activities, and speech and participant observation. Studying material culture refers to artifacts and written materials that may be available about the setting or individual. These could be official documents, minutes of meetings, newspaper articles, clothing, diaries, personal objects, and decorations.

What is important when a researcher chooses data-gathering methods depends on three major areas: depth or breadth, prefigurement or open-endedness, and what combinations of techniques are used (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). As a result, it is about practicality; that is, how appropriate and practical certain techniques are to achieve the purpose of the study. It might be a significant advantage of case studies to use multiple data sources in order to investigate political phenomena.

Thus, to begin with, this study did document analysis. There were a variety of documents useful for this study. They were journals, diaries, minutes of school board meetings, policy

suggestions, government documents, newspaper articles, announcements, and other studies. The researcher successfully gained access to government documents with the cooperation of government staff, newspaper articles, minutes of school board, research reports, and artifacts and written materials that the pro-equalization coalition produced through its political struggles. It was remarkable that the pro-equalization coalition positively provided a variety of its materials for the researcher.

After, or simultaneously with, document analysis, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews of participants. The interviews ensured that the researcher understood individual perspectives, obtained rich, descriptive data, gathered insights into participants' thinking, and learned more about the context (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Therefore, interviews were the main method of this study to obtain a deeper understanding. Through the dialogue of in-depth interviews, this study could explicate what was happening at the site and how participants viewed their world.

According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), there are four types of interviews: informal interviews, guided interviews, standardized interviews, and dialogic interviews. Of them, this study comprehensively used informal interviews and guided interviews. Informal interviews were appropriate to understand the overall picture and to enter more formal interviews. As the most appropriate interviewing method, a guided interview approach was applied for this study. This study relied heavily on this technique to elicit the stakeholders' thoughts, perspectives, values, and other specifics associated with their political actions. The researcher basically identified some categories or topics to explore, but remained open to additional dialogue that interview participants wanted to add for elaboration. Based upon the interview protocols (for the interview protocol, see Appendix D), this study succeeded in eliciting candid stories from major

stakeholders. There were many incidences in which interview participants used expressions like “frankly speaking,” “to be honest,” or “even though I am not sure if it is OK to reveal these kinds of secrets,” which would have been hard to elicit through different methods. This interview method also helped to enhance the validity of the study.

The main interviews were conducted between April 6 and April 26, 2005 in Korea by the researcher himself visiting the school district. Before the interviews, eight major categories of stakeholders (school district administrators, school board members, parents, principals, teachers, teachers unions, alumni, and community leaders) were identified through document analysis and previous studies. Using an interview protocol designed to probe the study’s research questions (see Appendix D), informants from each major stakeholder group were interviewed in a face-to-face manner for twenty minutes to an hour-and-a-half. Whereas most of participants were asked to participate in the interviews only one time, a participant (an active player of the pro-equalization coalition) had two sessions of interviews because the researcher found additional interview questions for him after the first interview was completed. Although, as seen in Appendix A, at least 26 participants were expected to be interviewed at the beginning of the study in order to keep well balanced among the stakeholder strata, a total of 32 informants finally participated in the interviews. During the interviews, in particular, two participants of the other category were additionally interviewed.

Interview participants were identified in a two-step process. First, three leading groups were outstanding in the policy-making process of the High School Equalization, supporting or opposing the policy initiatives. The active leaders or representatives of all three leading groups were invited and accepted the interviews. Second, the other interviewees were asked through personal contacts. For example, the teachers and principals interviewed were recommended to

participate in the interviews by peer teachers or principals with whom the researcher had been acquainted. However, the interviewed parents were selected through classroom teachers' recommendations because it was necessary to interview an equal number of parents according to the level of their child's academic achievement. Through the review of previous literature, it was known that children's academic achievement was one of the most important factors to determine policy preferences of education stakeholders (Kim & Byun, 2003).

All stakeholders with whom the researcher initially requested interviews accepted, except for two informants: a principal and a community leader. Regardless of the assurance of anonymity, the principal, who had taken sides with the equalization movement, did not want to reveal his frankness, and the community leader courteously refused an interview due to his affiliation with a private school foundation.<sup>27)</sup> However, their refusals of interviews did not affect the results of this study because another principal situated similarly as the initial principal was interviewed<sup>28)</sup> and the community member did not play a crucial role in this equalization policy movement. Besides, two participants were additionally invited for interviews. One was a former Minister of Education, who was serving as Minister of Education for the central government in 2004. The other was the leader of the research project team for Harbor Area High School Equalization in 2004. They were interviewed as extra participants, not major stakeholders. Thus, the analysis of their interviews was limited to directly related themes.

---

<sup>27)</sup> Despite the case of implementing the Equalization Policy, the private high school that he is affiliated with can select eligible students for the school's requirement of admission as an independent school.

<sup>28)</sup> A private school foundation that operates two high schools was very well known as a key supporter for the equalization movement. Although a principal of the foundation refused to be interviewed, the other agreed to be interviewed.

To enhance the quality of interviews, the researcher explained the purpose and significance of the research before the interviews. Also, all participants were requested to write their signature on an “informed consent” form, noting that they could participate in the interview voluntarily and stop their participation freely anytime, and that the researcher guaranteed them confidentiality. After their signature, they were given a copy of the consent form (see Appendix C).

With participant permission, these interviews were audio-taped. Then through a time-consuming process, they were transcribed in Korean for the data analysis. The transcription of interviews helped the researcher find meaningful information and draw a holistic picture of politics in the school district. The transcription was essential for thick and detailed description in the form of quotes derived from the interviews. The quotes from their interviews in Korean were translated and written into English via peer reviews to check the correctness of translations.

Fortunately, during the interviews at the Harbor School District, the researcher had a chance to observe a meeting of the Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization. After getting information about the meeting, the researcher expressed his hope to observe the meeting to executive staff, a member of the pro-equalization coalition, and a member of the anti-equalization coalition. Finally, the researcher was allowed to attend the meeting as an observer because no one opposed his attendance. The observation of the study committee meeting was very helpful to understand the holistic picture of the political conflicts among education stakeholders.

### *Data Analysis*

According to Maxwell (1996), “data analysis is probably the aspect of qualitative research that most clearly distinguishes it from experimental and survey research” (p. 78). Data analysis is

the process of transforming data to findings. “Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data is the process of deep immersion” in the materials collected (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 270).

According to Yin (1994), in order to maximize quality data analysis, the researcher needs to include all data addressing the significant aspects of the case study collected through various instruments, rival interpretations, and the researcher’s prior and expert experience.

The first step of data analysis was reading the documents and the interview transcripts that had been collected. The data analysis process is an ongoing, reflexive job throughout a study: reflecting about the data, asking analytic questions, and writing descriptive and analytic memos. Maxwell (1996) presents three options for qualitative data analysis: memos, categorizing strategies, and contextualizing strategies. They were, of course, combined for this study. While reading transcripts or documents, the researcher regularly wrote memos, which helped to capture analytic thinking or to stimulate analytic insights. On the other hand, because this study included a great deal of data produced by guided (semi-opened) interviews, it was necessary to reduce the “noise” of data by sorting.

Then, coding documents and interview data were used in order to organize data into appropriate categories related to issues, themes, or questions guiding the study throughout the collection process. The categorizing strategies put emphasis on identifying similarities and differences between education stakeholders. Therefore, all themes addressed in the research questions functioned as primary codes to analyze the collected data: policy preferences, competing values and interests, political status of the superintendent, political strategies, and effectiveness of the strategies. The clarity of the research questions and the conceptual framework in this study helped the researcher focus on the purpose of the study throughout the collection of data and the analysis of data. In addition, as a case study, this study used contextualizing (holistic)

strategies in order to describe connections among data in the actual context. Because this study also focused on the description of a school district's holistic politics on the anti-school choice movement, it conducted a contextualized analysis. Through the analysis strategies mentioned above, this study sorted, explained, and presented the collected data with "thick description," which "makes analysis and interpretation possible" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 274).

### *Validity, Reliability, and External Generalization*

As all interview studies face, this study also had the problems of potential bias coming from both respondents and the researcher. The bias involves validity and reliability. Validity refers to the appropriateness or correctness of description, explanation, and interpretation that a study makes from the collected data, while reliability refers to the consistency of the inferences over time, location, and contexts (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Maxwell, 1996). In qualitative research, it might not be a primary concern to eliminate variance between researchers in the values and expectations, but rather to understand how a particular researcher's values influence the conduct and conclusions of the study (Maxwell, 1996). However, it is, at least, desirable and required for improving the quality of collected data and the accuracy of a researcher's interpretation that a study reduces the threats to validity and reliability.

Accordingly, in order to reduce bias and maximize credibility, this study applied several techniques. First, the researcher interviewed plural participants of each category. The responses of different group members and the results of the document analysis were triangulated for validity and relevance. Despite the efforts made to control potential bias, there might still be problems of subjectivity and bias because it was impossible to completely eliminate the problems through interviews.

Another method of reducing such bias was recording the interviews with the agreement of all participants and making interview transcriptions. The written transcriptions of interviews and audio recordings helped the researcher to compare participants' thoughts with each other and to catch the real context of interviews and the live feelings of participants.

As noted, this study applied triangulation of data, which refers to crosschecking information from multiple sources and using a variety of methods. Triangulation, in general, produces three potential outcomes: convergence, inconsistency, and contradiction. In this case study, triangulation came from the use of multiple sources (including participants) and methods.

Peer consultation was inevitable in this study. The researcher reviewed his interpretations with those who had different preferences. A qualitative researcher should be open and fair in regard to conducting interviews and interpreting their responses. In a qualitative study, researchers primarily focus on the understanding of the meaning of participants' events or actions, and the understanding rests heavily on their identity and previous experiences. It is never possible without any bias. However, a researcher's tendency to limit openness to interviewees' responses or to bias the interpretation of their responses may be a serious problem. To increase objectivity, the researcher assumed a critical attitude towards interviews and interpretation; that is, the non-dominance by his experience and the use of his subjectivity as part of inquiry process (Maxwell, 1996). Furthermore, a written interview protocol also helped to be fair and consistent in the interview process.

In addition, external generalization might not be a crucial issue for qualitative research like this study. "Indeed, the value of a qualitative study may depend on its lack of external generalizability, in the sense of being representative of a larger population" (Maxwell, 1996, p.97). However, as Yin (1994) argued, this case study's findings could be "generalizable to



theoretical propositions” (p.10). In terms of the similarity of political dynamics surrounding the Korean anti-school choice issue in other school districts, to some extent, it might be plausible to generalize the findings of this case study to other Korean school districts.

## Chapter IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND STUDY FINDINGS

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the political dynamics among education stakeholders surrounding a controversial education policy initiative, the Harbor High School Equalization. The primary concerns of this study were policy preferences and policy coalitions, policy values and political interests, political tactics of education stakeholders, the superintendent's involvement in the movement, and effectiveness of political activities. In order to examine the political dynamics in a Korean school district, this study was mainly based upon data gathered through interviews with 32 participants, document analysis, and observation. This chapter reports the summary of the data collected and major findings of the analysis.

#### *Policy Preferences and Coalitions: Proponents and Opponents*

The first theme of this study was determining who the proponents and opponents of the equalization policy initiative were. As of 2005, the students attending the Harbor School District have been under the free competition entrance examination system (school choice with meritocracy). Thus, the implementation of the High School Equalization Policy means that parents and students have no choice of high schools, but are given equal chances of being assigned to top- or low-rank high schools by a lottery system. Although they are currently able to get admission to prestigious high schools with their academic excellence, excellent students cannot be guaranteed admission into top-rank schools if the school district makes a decision to implement the equalization policy. On the other hand, even non-excellent students, who cannot

attend top-rank high schools through competitive entrance examinations, would have a chance to be assigned to such schools.

As of April 2005 when the interviews were conducted, however, no final decision had been made about whether the equalization policy would be implemented. What the superintendent decided was to establish a “Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization.” The superintendent held a press conference in August 2004 and reluctantly granted a concession by establishing the study committee. The pro-equalization camp welcomed this, but the anti-equalization camp reluctantly accepted his decision to establish the study committee, whose charge was to discuss how to meet the essential prerequisites necessary to implement the equalization policy in the school district. They were how to equalize the conditions of education facilities and the quality of teachers among schools, how many attendance areas the school district is divided into, and how to assign applicants to schools in order to reduce the dissatisfaction of parents and students (Lake Province Office of Education, 2004a, 2004b).<sup>29)</sup> However, the education stakeholders interpreted his decision quite differently. Most proponents regarded his decision as the significant signal to implement the equalization policy in the near future, but most opponents argued that his action was just a political gesture to avoid political attacks from the pro-equalization camp.

Several findings emerged from the interviews and the document analysis. First, as expected, policy preferences varied according to the political interests and values that education stakeholders held. The result of the interviews, as shown in Table 4.2, shows that the education

---

<sup>29)</sup> According to Kim, Jeon, & Han (2004), the disparity of school facilities and teachers' competence among high schools was regarded as a major hindrance to the implementation of equalization policy. Also, the method

stakeholders split into two groups broadly: proponents (the advocates, reformers) and opponents (the defenders, preservers). Of the total 31 interview participants,<sup>30)</sup> there were 11 proponents and 19 opponents. One interviewee refused to reveal his preference and responded as neutral. The proponents of equalization (anti-choice) were leaders of the progressive teachers union (*Chunkyojo*), parents of low achieving students, non-top rank schools' teachers, some community leaders, some middle school teachers, alumni of low-rank schools,<sup>31)</sup> and a former Minister of Education. On the other hand, supporters of competition and choice included government officials of the school district, school board members, parents of excellent students, teachers of top-rank schools, all principals (regardless of their school's status), the leader of the conservative teachers' association (*Kyochong*), some middle school teachers, alumni of top-rank schools, and some community leaders.

All officials of the school district, except for one staff member who refused to reveal his preference because of his belief that government employees should stay neutral, were in favor of the competitive entrance examination. Likewise, all school board members interviewed opposed the equalization policy. An interviewee from the school board said, "Judging from their political attitudes, we can expect that only 10% to 20% of school board members probably support the equalization policy." His statement could mean that only one of nine school board members prefers the equalization policy, because the member is closely affiliated with a private high school foundation.

---

of applicant assignment and the zoning of school attendance were expected to cause serious resistance to the equalization policy from citizens.

<sup>30)</sup> The researcher interviewed 32, but one participant was not counted for this analysis because he was not asked to answer whether he supported or opposed the equalization policy.

<sup>31)</sup> A graduate of low-rank schools responded with neutral status at the beginning of the interview, but he confessed he was involved with the pro-equalization movement later (see the discuss section).

**Table 4.1 Policy Preferences of Education Stakeholders**

Major Stakeholder		Coded Name	Policy Preference		
			Pro-equalization	Anti-equalization	Neutral
Officials of Province School District		OSD1		✓	
		OSD2		✓	
		OSD3			✓
School Board Members		SBM1		✓	
		SBM2		✓	
Parents	Excellent students	EPT1		✓	
		EPT2		✓	
	Non-excellent students	LPT1	✓		
		LPT2	✓		
Teachers	Top-rank high schools	EHT1		✓	
		EHT2		✓	
	Low-rank high schools	LHT1	✓		
		LHT2	✓		
	Middle schools	MST1	✓		
		MST2		✓	
Principals	Top-rank high schools	EPR1		✓	
		EPR2		✓	
	Low-rank high schools	LPR1		✓	
		LPR2		✓	
		LPR3		✓	
Leaders of Teacher Unions		LTU1	✓		
		LTU2	✓		
		LTU3		✓	
Alumni	Top-rank high schools	EAL1		✓	
		EAL2		✓	
	Low-rank high schools	LAL1	✓		
		LAL2	✓		
Community Leaders		CML1		✓	
		CML2	✓		
		CML3		✓	
Others		OTH1	✓		
Total		31	11	19	1

All the principals interviewed, including two private school principals, opposed the equalization policy. The two principals of low-rank, private high schools disclosed their frank thoughts, in their interviews, that the equalization movement was not quite consistent with their basic educational beliefs, although their schools might share in the benefits of high school equalization. Consequently, they assumed a “wait-and-see” attitude toward the movement, not joining into either camp. This was an unexpected result because, in general, it was well known through the other participants’ interviews that most private schools (most of them are low-ranked) supported the equalization policy in Harbor City. Document analysis also revealed that at least two principals of private academic high schools<sup>32)</sup> joined the equalization camp. Thus, considering comprehensively the results of interviews and documents analysis, it was a conclusive finding that some principals of low-rank high schools personally preferred the competition and choice policy to the equalization policy, although their schools might benefit by obtaining excellent students through the equalization policy.

Parents, classroom teachers, and alumni were divided into two groups based upon the reputation of their schools and the achievement level of their children. Parents whose children achieve grades excellent enough to pass competitive entrance examination to top-rank high schools wanted to hold on to anti-equalization. However, parents with low-achieving students supported the equalization movement and participated in the political struggle more actively than those with excellent students.

In the same pattern, classroom teachers and alumni of top-rank high schools preferred the choice policy to the equalization system. Those in low-rank high schools wanted to break the

---

<sup>32)</sup> Although one of the two principals was asked for an interview, he refused. He did not want to give his frank

competitive entrance system and to implement the equalization policy. Alumni of top-rank schools were regarded as the group most disadvantaged by the implementation of equalization policy.

As expected, both the equalization camp and the anti-equalization camp formed a policy coalition. The pro-equalization coalition led by a teachers' union (National Teachers Union, *Chunkyojo*) was much bigger and more powerful and aggressive in political action than the anti-equalization coalition. The equalization coalition consisted of twenty-one social organizations, including political parties, labor unions, and religion organizations. Of them, three stakeholder groups played a key role in the equalization movement: the National Teachers Union (*Chunkyojo*), a progressive parents association (*Chamhak*), and progressive low-rank high school teachers. Thoughtful leading personnel established the pro-equalization coalition with a carefully thought-out plan. In order to show that it was representative of all citizens, the coalition tried to include as many social groups of the community as possible. Furthermore, the pro-coalition appointed ten co-presidents, and they represented the pro-equalization coalition. All activities were announced in the name of the co-presidents, although a few key actors took the lead in the equalization movement in practice. Its shared leadership system was also useful to show that the coalition fought for the public interests against the monopolistic status of the invested class (top-rank high schools' alumni). When they invited participants in the pro-camp, key actors paid much attention to their common policy values (equality and equity). Also, they purposely brought religious leaders like a Catholic priest, a Buddhist monk, and a Christian pastor around to the camp. The reason was to secure ethical legitimacy for their argument.

---

opinion to the public, despite the promise of anonymity.

In general, because the equalization policy movement meant a turning over of the presently ruling policy, the proponents assumed the offensive against the existing competitive entrance system. To break the ruling system of the community, the equalization camp needed to be closely banded together among its members and to tenaciously campaign for the implementation of the equalization policy. A key player's statement below revealed how the equalization coalition was established.

Frankly speaking, even though I hesitate to say this, the National Teachers Union contributed most to the movement, and the second involved were a variety of social organizations. However, there were honestly some organizations listed to the coalition only in name. Just one or two members of them were involved in the coalition, but their voice was very influential on public opinion whereas they did not participate in real political actions. (LHT1: 20)

On the other hand, the coalition of the anti-equalization camp was loosely coupled and weak in the aspect of organizational consolidation and political activities. Because the teachers teaching in the top-rank high schools, parents with excellent students, and top-rank schools' alumni were the stakeholders to be potentially disadvantaged, they might have felt the necessity to form an anti-equalization coalition to some extent. However, the anti-equalization group did not succeed in bringing most opponents over to the anti-coalition camp. Its coalition was improvised in order to stand against the equalization movement. There was neither systematic organization nor organized activities. Even though the alumni of a top-rank high school led the anti-equalization coalition with its well-organized, financed alumni association, its activities were sporadic, not very active, and temporary. A leader of the anti-equalization coalition admitted that



its activities were not successful in attracting citizens over to its camp. Moreover, a leader of the pro-equalization camp confessed to leaving the anti-equalization group out of consideration. What the equalization coalition focused on during its political movement was how to make the officials of the school district, like a superintendent, accept the policy initiative, not the political activities of the anti-equalization coalition. Some proponents stated:

There were actually no people working for the anti-equalization camp although money and organization were ready for their actions. There were only the president and vice presidents of the alumni association. No one there. . . . We never felt any serious threat from the anti-coalition. (LPT1: 20)

Certainly speaking again, the coalition of equalization has fought only against the Office of Education, but never took consideration of the anti-equalization group. We never felt any need to pay attention to the anti-coalition. (LAL2: 14)

Another notable finding is that the officials of the school district did not join the anti-coalition officially, even though they personally preferred the anti-equalization policy. They recognized that they had to keep neutral in the conflictual policy situation. Although they must have their own policy values, they did their activities personally, confidentially, informally, and tacitly. However, because the political game surrounding the equalization movement continued for a very long time, the proponents and the opponents knew each official's preference very well. It could be that officials did not openly state their preferences but practically communicated and channeled in mind and idea with the anti-coalition.

An interesting aspect of coalition setup and maintenance is how to finance its organization. A top-rank school alumni association mainly supported the anti-equalization

coalition in the aspects of finance and organization. The alumni association provided the anti-coalition with finance and membership. However, because the equalization camp confederated with twenty-one citizen groups, it had no unique and stable sponsor for its political activities. At the outset of the movement, leading organizations like *Chunkyojo* had born the majority of the expenses of activities. It had to collect money from its members or to find other sources of finance. Its major route of raising money was fundraising from contributors. Whenever the coalition operated demonstrations, it simultaneously collected donations from participants or supporters. Once it threw a one-day fundraising beer party and succeeded in raising a huge amount of money. The difference in financing methods between the two coalitions comes from the character of movements. The equalization coalition started from one of the citizen movements to accomplish social equity value, but the anti-equalization coalition was primarily led by a top-rank school's alumni association in order to maintain their vested interests in the community.

An additional finding is that a majority of interview participants opposed the equalization policy. According to the data above, 61.3 % of respondents preferred the competitive entrance examination system, but only 35.5% supported the equalization movement. This result was completely different from a survey poll that was obtained by using randomized sampling methods (Joint Association of Citizens for High School Equalization, 2003).<sup>33)</sup>

### *Policy Values and Political Interests*

The second theme was why education stakeholders took sides, pro or con, and what policy values and political interests they expected to advance from the policy movement. In brief, they

---

<sup>33)</sup> *Han-Gil* Research found that 76.7% of Harbor citizens supported the equalization policy initiative in 2002.

supported or opposed the equalization policy to secure political interests or to accomplish their policy values. The educational policy-making process was a political process.

In general, education stakeholders joined the anti-equalization coalition or the pro-equalization coalition, based on their political interests and policy values. All participants agreed that people who expected potential benefits tended to support the policy initiative, but the stakeholders who worried about losing their interests opposed it. In this study, it was found that the stakeholders who expected to benefit from the new policy movement led the pro-equalization movement. The high schools with low reputations (most of them are private schools) supported the equalization policy in order to draw some excellent students or to secure their survival by the randomized assignment of applicants for high school education. Under the present entrance system of competitive examination, the low-rank high schools have very little chance of attracting high achieving students. Because a few top-rank high schools make a clear sweep of talented students, the other schools cannot gain the good reputation obtained when their graduates get admitted to prestigious colleges. Moreover, school-aged children are recently decreasing in the city. Thus, a school's survival itself loomed up in front of low-rank high schools as the most pressing concern. Last year, a high school failed to fill its enrollment capacity. The school attracted only about 60% of its full capacity. Some interviewees commented on the crisis that low-rank private schools faced.

My school might recruit some excellent students through the equalization policy.

However, if the equalization policy is not implemented in my school district, it is almost impossible for private schools like my school to attract them. (LPR1: 1)

In particular, there are a few schools that students abhor to attend. Even the teachers teaching at the schools may feel stressed because their employment is involved in how many new students register. (MST1: 10)

You could not understand this kind of happening. I myself use many kinds of methods like personal relationships to take chances of talking with middle school teachers or visiting middle school teachers' home without permission in order to ask him/her to make his/her middle school students apply to his high school . . . . There are some negative aspects occurring from this kind of system due to the fixed high school ranking. (LHT2: 2)

Interestingly, despite the official statement of the Secondary Private Schools' Association that the private schools should urge the government to abolish the equalization policy, the private schools of the Harbor School District supported the implementation of the policy. A leading proponent stated that the private schools are the most interested stakeholders in the equalization policy in practice.

You can ask if private schools want to be freed from government involvement. Ask if they want the government to switch the equalization policy to the competitive entrance system in Seoul. Their official statement is to erase the equalization policy . . . . However, if they are asked, "Do you really want it?" all private schools may say "Nope" while throwing up their hands. Those most benefited by the equalization policy must be private schools. (LHT1: 11)

Another political interest that many stakeholders pursue is closely related with "excellence." The teachers who work at the excellent high schools or who have excellent children,

the parents whose children are high achievers, the alumni who graduated from top-rank high schools, and the school board members and officials of the school district who achieved success in life with excellence, broadly speaking, oppose the equalization policy. Teachers and parents whose children have shown high academic achievement supported homogenous grouping of students out of fear of their children being disadvantaged by losing the chance to attend top-rank schools or by experiencing decreasing academic achievement due to their peers' discouragement. Many parents were more likely to oppose the equalization policy, but there was a remarkable tendency that parents with a "non-excellent child"<sup>34)</sup> (even though they were classroom teachers, school administrators, or just parents) wanted the implementation of equalization policy. Most of the interview participants, regardless of their stakes (categories), acknowledged this tendency. For instance, two participants stated the following:

Among our teachers as parents, the teachers who have excellent children in general oppose the equalization policy, but the teachers who have a child whose school grades are not excellent like middle- or upper-middle-graded supported the equalization policy. (MST2: 2)

In my opinion . . . even as just personal opinion, I think that the parents whose child is low achieving are rather on the support, but the parents of the small elite group of students oppose the policy. It could be common sense, whoever may think. (EPR2: 6)

On the other hand, the group leading the equalization movement consisted of progressive teachers, progressive parents, and progressive social activists. They pushed the movement to

---

<sup>34)</sup> According to the data written by a middle school, about the top 5 (10% to 15%) of a classroom's students can obtain admission to a top-rank high school for boys (Harbor City Academic High School Entrance

advance their political values for “social equity” and “equality of power.” They served the movement with ardent zeal. As social activists, they devoted their valuable time and energy to the social movement to improve undesirable educational practice for the children who were struggling with the competitive entrance examination for prestigious high schools. They believed that the consumptive, useless, and undesirable competition for passing the entrance examination was a key problem that hindered children’s growth in character and high thinking ability. They also thought that the top-rank schools’ alumni, who did not want to lose their monopolistic status of economy and political power in the community, led the anti-equalization group. They believed that the pulling-down of the long lasting, fixed dominance structure of the community was the essential and critical measure to rescue suffering students from the agony of entrance examinations. They thought that the fixed ranking of high schools was the main cause of social inequality and the principal obstacle to community cooperation. They considered the implementation of the equalization policy a key step for social equity. A parent spoke about the bad feelings that middle school students had about the competition examination system and the bad practice of alumni-centered power structure.

So, every year, including 1998 . . . at least one middle school student annually killed himself/herself in despair due to the bad results of examination . . . . Ah, it is not what we want to be. It is really something wrong that a young middle school student committed suicide due to his/her poor grade at school. That’s why we started the equalization policy movement in conjunction with some parents and teachers . . . .

They [alumni of top-rank high schools]<sup>35)</sup> are strongly united in transacting some interests and enjoying inbreeding based on the school clique among them. There is a joke in Harbor City that “he should graduate from the Harbor High School to live even as a baggage carrier in Harbor City, and she should be a graduate of the Harbor Girls’ High School to be a successful coordinator of private mutual financing association.”<sup>36)</sup> (LPT1: 1 & 4)

Also, a teacher expressed her personal experience of how the established school-ranking frustrated low-achieving students:

When I was a high school student, a boy who lived next door apart from parents had difficulty in renting an off-campus room because he attended a lowest ranked high school. The reason that he faced difficulty was only the owner’s policy that a student with poor grades was not eligible for renting her house. It is very serious in Harbor City like this. That’s so serious social problem coming from a kind of discrimination on the basis of the academic achievement . . . . After school he could not wear his school dress because the color of his dress showed which school he attended.

(MST1: 4)

In contrast to the progressive people, the formal decision-making related personnel, like government officials, school board members, and school administrators, were concerned about declining academic achievement and the loss of national competitiveness in the world economy

---

<sup>35)</sup> [ ] was added by the interviewer.

<sup>36)</sup> “A baggage carrier” means an unpopular job, and “a private mutual financing association” (called *Gye* in Korean) is regarded as a very personal funding system based on friendship. This joke emphasizes how important

caused by the equalization policy. They argued that the engine of national development is excellent human resources. Without competition based on school choice and competitive examinations, they thought schools and teachers would not make improvement efforts and accordingly, would fail to educate excellent social leaders. Consequently, the country would lose its competitiveness in the world economy. That was a critical reason why the superintendent has stuck fast to the choice policy (anti-equalization) until now.

The equalization policy is never desirable for the future of our country when we consider the policy in the aspect of educating competitive manpower. As everyone knows, my country has few natural resources. Actually, in reality, my country has only human resources. We should focus on excellent education of human resources to become competitive. It may be true that the equalization policy is an obstacle to excellence education. (OSD1: 1)

I think that it is not good to treat this problem as social conflicts between excellent and non-excellent groups. To feed all people of a nation, it is certainly necessary that the top 5% or 10% of students should improve their ability and contribute to national competitiveness. It is really impossible for every student to be educated to become the excellent manpower that plays a key role of national development. (SBM1: 3)

In addition to the reasons mentioned above, many other interests were found for determining status as proponents or opponents. Teachers had the interests of teaching excellent students and reducing their teaching burdens. Alumni of top-rank high schools



wanted to maintain their schools' reputation. School administrators, in part, supported the anti-equalization policy for his meritocracy that is represented as how many students get admission to top-rank colleges. There were stakeholders who argued in favor of nationwide prestigious schools. They were proud of the fact itself that the schools are located in the city. They wanted to consider the top-rank schools as a source of pride or an attraction of the community. Table 4.2 summarizes the political interests that education stakeholders in Harbor City held as either for or against the equalization movement.

In summary, there were four kinds of conflict between pro- and con-equalization. The first category of conflict was over policy values: democracy (politics) verse professional expertise and social equity verse excellence. The proponents argued that an educational policy should be decided upon democracy (politics). They also paid much attention to the issue of social equity. Because the majority of citizens were asking the government to implement the equalization policy, they thought that the superintendent should simply accept the citizens' demands. The rate of support for the new policy was more than 70% in an opinion poll (Joint Association of Citizens for High School Equalization, 2003).

**Table 4.2 Political Interests and Policy Values of Education Stakeholders**

Pro-equalization group	Anti-equalization group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realization of equal society (equality)</li> <li>• Liberation of students from the hell of entrance examinations (reduction of stress from competitive entrance examinations)</li> <li>• Breaking-down the monopolistic power structure (equal distribution of power)</li> <li>• Reduction of social discrepancy by reputation of high schools between students and parents (social equity)</li> <li>• Stable acquisition of applicants for schools (survival of schools, securing employment)</li> <li>• Reduction of applicants' recruiting burdens</li> <li>• Educating excellent students</li> <li>• Reduction of teaching burdens through no-competition among teachers</li> <li>• Chance of attending top-rank schools</li> <li>• Increase of academic achievement (peer effects)</li> <li>• Increase of school reputation</li> <li>• Worthy feelings of teaching</li> <li>• Community solidarity</li> <li>• Lower cost for private education due to abolishment of competitive entrance examinations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realization of free society (freedom &amp; choice)</li> <li>• Increase of national competitiveness through competitive education</li> <li>• Maintenance of monopolistic power structure</li> <li>• Keeping pride in nation-wide prestigious schools</li> <li>• Growth of alumni association</li> <li>• Not losing excellent students</li> <li>• Reduction of teaching burdens through homogeneous grouping</li> <li>• Increase of academic achievement (competition)</li> <li>• Maintenance of school reputation</li> <li>• Economic growth of the community</li> <li>• Worthy feelings of teaching</li> <li>• Administrative achievement by obtaining admission to top-rank colleges</li> <li>• No loss of excellent students</li> <li>• No political risk of losing leadership due to potential problems</li> <li>• Avoiding burdens from new policy</li> <li>• Lower cost for private education due to guaranteeing the quality of school education</li> </ul>

However, the opponents, including some officials from the school district, many school board members, and school administrators, were very concerned about the political movement that tried to influence the policy-making process because they thought the educational policy should be made based upon professional expertise. They considered education a “farsighted national program (*Baek-nyun-dae-gye*, a hundred-year national project),” which should not be changed by political interests. The leading group of education decision-makers, like government officials, school board members, and school administrators, elite individuals make most of contributions to national development. Thus, some opponents worried that ochlocracy or mob rule (*Tte-bub*)<sup>37)</sup> dominated the policy-making process.

In fact, both some proponents and opponents stated the most important factor of policy-making was the result of professional research. An equalization proponent answered the question of what made the superintendent establish the Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization:

It could be the result of professional research. They as final decision-makers needed a rationale to accept our argument . . . . It helped the superintendent decide to form the committee that the researcher concluded the implementation of equalization policy to the school district was valid theoretically. (LHT1: 20)

A proponent and an opponent expressed the same opinion that the results of the research project critically put political pressure upon the government. This means that when the research findings concluded on the basis of professional competence that the implementation of

---

<sup>37)</sup> It means that aggressive struggles of crowds can do anything they want to do through physical force regardless of its long-term effect on national development.

equalization policy was desirable, the superintendent might have lost his logical ground for adhering to his arguments against the equalization initiative. A proponent said:

The superintendent can ignore the signature demonstration or the opinion poll that we conducted. The government, however, couldn't ignore the result of policy research because he ordered a professional researcher of the Korean Educational Development Institute to conduct the study, I think. (LPT1: 17)

The second conflict driving the movement was over the monopolistic dominance system of the alumni of top-rank schools in the community. The established ranking of high schools caused so many educational and social problems. For example, because low-rank high school teachers had no chance to teach excellent students, it was very stressful for them to spend a lot of time recruiting applicants for their high schools. Moreover, the students who attended non-top-rank schools and their parents often felt like social failures and had sense of inferiority. Parents shared their children's academic status with their children: excellence or inferiority. Extremely competitive entrance examinations to a few prestigious schools (so called "the hell of entrance examinations") were indicated as the principal source of many educational problems by the group leading the equalization movement. However, the alumni of top-rank schools did not like to lose their high status in the community, at least, in the aspect of sentimentalism or alumni-egoism. This specific experience of community members can be generalized as a class struggle between the privileged and the common people.

The third issue was the conflict of political ideology: the conservative verse the progressive, or freedom and competition verse human liberation from social inequality. The stakeholders with the viewpoint of the conservative emphasized freedom of choice and

competition as the engine of individual improvement and national competitiveness, but the progressives believed that choice and competition would make the established social class divisions even deeper.

The fourth conflict came from the regional context of high school education. The school district is mixed with urban and rural and its size is very big. To assign all applicants of high schools to any school by the lottery system, it is expected that some students should commute to their schools for an hour or more.<sup>38)</sup> To make matters worse, academic high schools are one-sidedly located in the northern part of Harbor City. Of the total 18 academic high schools governed by the equalization policy, 13 schools are located in the northern area. Only four schools are public, but the others are private. Some interviewees worried about the fact that there must be a considerable difference in teacher quality and school facilities between public and private schools. When excellent students are assigned by lottery system to private schools that have poorly qualified teachers and poor facilities, it is surely predictable for them to strongly protest their compulsory assignment to the schools. A few years ago, the superintendent of the *Gyeong-Ki* Province had to resign from office because many parents and students protested the equalization policy that assigned some students to high schools that were located far away from their homes or that were in poor condition. In this way, government officials of the school district may not want to take the political risk of getting in trouble by the no-choice policy.

---

<sup>38)</sup> Usually Korean school districts do not provide students with school buses in the city area.

*Political Status of Government Officials (Superintendent): Policy Brokers or Key Players*

The third theme was how government officials (including the superintendent) were involved with this policy initiative. In the political struggle for the equalization policy-making in Harbor City, the government officials like the superintendent or his staff were one of the active players, not merely policy brokers. The superintendent might be involved with the political movements surrounding the HSEP even though he did not officially join any policy coalition. The government officials were key players as well as neutral arbitrators. In the interviews for this study, both the proponents and the opponents admitted that the government bureaucracy was important as a determinant of their success in the equalization policy-making process. It was stated that not only did the government officials have their policy preference, but their personal experiences and policy values were also a critical factor in the policy-making process.

It may depend on his personal experiences. If he were the Minister of Education who graduated from the best college, it would be natural for him not to like the equalization policy. [The superintendent's preference] Absolutely influenced the delay very much. [If I were him,] I would just delay the final decision. [I would use] The "steaming-out" strategy. The procrastinating action means he is an opponent. If he were a proponent, he would immediately have decided to implement the new policy.<sup>39)</sup> (SBM1: 5 & 6)

It is the third year of his second term. Don't you think that if he had had the will of implementing the equalization policy, it would have been made during his first term? I think that he has kept the choice policy until now because he believed that the

---

<sup>39)</sup> [ ] was added by the interviewer

competitive entrance examination is superior to the equalization policy. He will successfully maintain the present entrance system until the end of his second term.

(EPR1: 16)

Judging from the fact that he has procrastinated the final decision of accepting the equalization policy, it seems that if he had thought that the equalization policy was better, he could have already implemented the policy. (LTU3: 10)

Some proponents also stated how influential the government officials were during the decision-making process that is still going on:

The pro-equalization camp complained about the government's negative attitude toward the equalization initiative. The proponent group protested against the government officials who were reluctant to accept its policy proposal. We, proponents, were very concerned with the government officials' resistance to the movement, not with the anti-equalization group's activities. (LAL2: 12)

There are some people who are obstructing our movement. Whose influence is most important is that, uh [hesitation], even though it is known that the superintendent already made a decision, I think, he actually did not yet decide completely. There is still a possibility that he will try to change his mind later. Consequently, his staff and policy advisors could play the most critical role in his final decision, couldn't they? (LHT1: 22)

With frankness and deep thought, an official stated that he was directly or indirectly affiliated with the anti-movement group to accomplish his policy values.

When I met the anti-group visiting my office to deliver their opposing opinion, I said something like this, “The anti-group also must raise its voice. Don’t expect that the superintendent will cover all things . . . . Like the proponent group, you should also be actively engaged in the anti-movement as the opponents, shouldn’t you?” We did talk like that. (OSD1: 5)

Furthermore, the officials supporting the anti-equalization position played a key role in the anti-movement with close connection to the top-high school alumni association and the school board. In the budgeting process, the staff communicated with school board members to cut the budget for an equalization research project. They even collaborated on the anti-equalization movement with the top-rank high school’s alumni association. When they made the main direction of the research project for the equalization policy, they tried to dilute the equalization issue with a broader entrance system issue through inclusion of a part of the whole entrance examination system. A staff member stated:

In this side, it was the Alumni Association of Harbor High School that could lead the opponent group . . . . So, I remember that the alumni association did politically take countermeasures against the equalization movements using my advice several times because we felt afraid that we would have to implement the policy if we left the equalization movement as it is. (OSD2: 14)

Because we thought the equalization was not valid in our region . . . we let the project include not only the equalization issue of Harbor City but also other school districts’ problems. (OSD2: 11)



Also, it was a very savvy method to delay final decision-making that the government established the policy research project team. Even though the research project could have been started at the beginning of 2003, the superintendent chose the chief researcher shortly before the end of the year. Consequently, he did his best to delay the starting point of the research project until the legal deadline. The research team was also regarded to play an umbrella role whether or not the equalization policy was supported by the result of the study. If the study concluded that the equalization policy was not needed, the superintendent could refuse to implement it. In case the research team recommended the implementation of the equalization policy, the superintendent could reduce the political burden he faced from the opponent group. It was certainly a safe method to serve two ends because he was in a political dilemma between both powers.

However, the government officials also tried to maintain a neutral position officially. The superintendent in particular asked his staff to work on strictly neutral ground to run the Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization, which consisted of all representatives of education stakeholders within the Harbor School District, with the same number of proponents and opponents in order to make it an acceptable plan for both sides. Also, a staff member emphasized his neutrality several times, “We cannot oppose officially. It was just my personal opinion.”

In summary, the officials, including the superintendent, really did not play the neutral policy broker, but were deeply involved with the movement. Because most of them opposed the equalization policy, it was concluded that they participated in the anti-equalization coalition. Although they realized that it was desirable to play the role of neutral arbitrators, their policy preference and personal experiences made them take sides with the opposing group. It was the involvement of the government officials that has hindered the implementation of the equalization

policy in Harbor City until now, even though the pro-equalization coalition had driven the movement for more than six years. Without their resistance to the equalization movement, the pro-equalization group could have already succeeded in the political battle. The government officials' activities are summarized in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3 Political Activities of Government Officials**

- The superintendent gave obscure answers to questions asking for his opinion about the equalization policy in the election campaign debate
- Communication with school board members
- Linking to the opposition coalition, which shares political interests with them
- Establishing a policy research team as an umbrella to delay and scatter the decision-making burden
- Avoiding meeting with protesters by making business trips when they visited his office
- Delaying final decision-making under the pretext of careful consideration
- Reducing the amount of the research project budget (because the higher the budget, the more pressure to accept the results)
- Distracting the research focus from equalization to general entrance examination issues

*Political Tactics of Each Coalition*

The fourth theme was what political strategies each coalition pursued to achieve its policy objectives. The favorite political activities of proponents of equalization were outdoor-demonstrations and protest visits with a large number of supporters to the superintendent's office or the government offices. For six years from August 1998 to October 2004, according to its record, policy recommendations, pamphlets and interviews, the pro-coalition had street

demonstrations, mass protest-parades, petition visits,<sup>40)</sup> candle demonstrations, and other forms of political activities more than 10 times.

At the beginning of the equalization movement, the pro-coalition made petitions in the street and participated in TV debates in cooperation with a local broadcasting station. The pro-equalization group asked the superintendent to implement the equalization policy because they had a petition in favor of it. Moreover, the coalition conducted opinion polls of students, teachers, parents, candidates for mayor and congressmen, and school council members. In 2002, a professional survey institution released the results of an opinion poll to reveal that 76.6% of teachers, parents, and students wanted the equalization policy. Local newspapers reported the results with one voice. It might be a better strategy that the proponents used less aggressive, but more effective methods, like TV discussion or a press release of the opinion polls in order to draw public concern.

After the professional survey showing that a majority of education stakeholders wanted the equalization policy, the proponents reestablished the pro-coalition, called the Joint Citizen Committee for Harbor High School Equalization, which consisted of 21 social organizations. The coalition started the movement by street advertisings, telephone opinion surveys, and petitions. On the other hand, the pro-coalition devoted much of its energy to developing theoretical rationales to support its argument and refuting the objections that the opponents raised. This was because it was widely accepted that professional competence and knowledge was more persuasive than political struggles (politics). The pro-coalition realized that theoretical support, as well as physical activities, was very important for their movement

---

<sup>40)</sup> The pro-equalization camp carried on signature-collecting campaigns for the equalization policy from

to win. It offered information to all stakeholders about why the equalization policy was better for students, teachers, parents, and the community than the current anti-equalization policy. The group primarily tried to persuade decision-makers like school board members, officials of the school district, and education committee members of the province assembly. However, after the group knew that the most of school board members and officials of the school district were not likely to support the equalization movement, it concentrated its effort on educating the public, chairmen of school councils, private school principals, and school workers.

As the pro-coalition was confronted with the deadlock of its movement, it tried to find a detour. It was to secure the budget for a research project. The first draft of the 2003 school district budget included the research project to study how valid the implementation of the equalization policy to Harbor City was. However, when the school board reviewed the tentative budget, it erased the research project budget from the draft. Thus, the pro-coalition held a mass rally to denounce the school board's action. At the same time, the leaders of the pro-coalition camp visited a member of the province assembly to ask for his help.<sup>41)</sup> Finally, the research project for the equalization policy was revived dramatically with help from the member of the assembly at the end of 2002. The pro-equalization group wanted to use the budget as a lever for pressing the superintendent, and consequently its tactics proved to be successful in 2004.

---

citizens and teachers and visited the superintendent to ask for the implementation of the policy.

<sup>41)</sup> The school district budget needs two stages of review to be confirmed. After the school board passes the budget, the province or metropolitan city assembly finally confirms the tentative budget (See Figure 1.1).

For a year after the budget struggle, the group activities focused on how the research project was conducted. The group also changed its basic method of political activity from simply asking to strongly urging. It frequently used more aggressive measures like street demonstrations, mass visits, and mass campaigns, instead of persuasion or dialogue. Because the political struggles needed a great deal of money,<sup>42)</sup> the pro-coalition held a fund-raising event, so called a “one-day beer party (*E-Ril-Ho-P*).” A few thousand supporters of the equalization policy initiative attended the party, and the pro-coalition collected about 30 million *won*. The group had enough money to support the equalization movement.

After the research project started, the coalition employed physical demonstrations against the superintendent. The proponents held sit-in demonstrations<sup>43)</sup> in the meeting room of the provincial school district or in front of the superintendent’s office and one-man picket demonstrations<sup>44)</sup> in the entrance of the education office. In the precincts of the Harbor School District, the pro-equalization coalition set up tents and had an all-night sit-in demonstration that lasted more than fifty days.<sup>45)</sup> Furthermore, the proponents held outdoor-night candle demonstrations twice.<sup>46)</sup> The leaders of the pro-coalition intended to show the

---

<sup>42)</sup> To visit the Province Office of Education, people living in the city had to travel at least an hour-and-half. If they visit the superintendent, mass proponents should lease chartered buses.

<sup>43)</sup> A mass of protesters illegally occupies the government buildings or offices by sitting or lying on the floor and disturbs the government officials.

<sup>44)</sup> A protester stands along the road, holding pickets on which his/her demands are written down. This is regarded as a very economical strategy of demonstration.

<sup>45)</sup> During the demonstrations, protesters sing combative songs and shout some slogans simultaneously, so most of demonstrations disturb regular work.

<sup>46)</sup> Candle demonstrations represent people’s resistance against undue power. Right before the candle demonstrations of the pro-equalization group, there were two large-scale candle demonstrations in Korea. One was to memorialize two middle school girls who were killed by a US army tank. The other was to protest the national assembly’s impeachment of President Rho, Moo-hyun.

legitimacy of the equalization movement and to urge the superintendent to accept their policy demand through the candle demonstrations.

In early August of 2004, the research team released its results to the public. The research team recommended that the implementation of the equalization policy was needed, but the school district had to take time to equalize educational conditions among the high schools prior to the implementation. The results of the research supported both sides: the pro-coalition and anti-coalition. There was much room for interpretation, so both camps argued that the research supported them. The pro-coalition felt that the research results found that the implementation of the equalization policy was highly desired in Harbor City. However, the anti-equalization coalition interpreted that the research project's conclusion was that the Harbor School District was not appropriate for the equalization policy because the inequality of the quality of teachers and the school facilities among schools were severe.

As all its political activities produced little effect, the pro-coalition employed an extremely radical method, a "hunger strike,"<sup>47)</sup> as a final, ultimate measure. Four representatives of the proponent camp started to demonstrate their sit-in starvation to death at the porch of the school district building. It drew much concern about their threat of starvation to death from the community.<sup>48)</sup> During the hunger strike, there were many protest visits to the superintendent from the community, mass demonstrations in the Province Office of Education, and press interviews. Finally the superintendent held a news conference and

---

<sup>47)</sup> Some people like politicians, environmentalists, and students in Korea often use a "hunger strike" to express their resolute will to protest unjust actions.

<sup>48)</sup> One of the hunger strikers was hospitalized with exhaustion on the seventh day of the strike.

announced the establishment of a formal committee to make a specific proposal for equalization.

In addition, one of the noteworthy activities that the pro-coalition used was a national policy-network. The pro-coalition was led by the city branch of a nationwide teachers union, *Chunkyojo*. *Chunkyojo* has played a key role in the national movements for the HSEP, so it was easy for the pro-coalition to obtain useful research results and practical cases to support its arguments through the national network of *Chunkyojo*. In addition, the proponent camp joined hands with the largest trade union in Korea and a progressive political party. Even the pro-coalition leaders attended the public hearings held in other cities about the same policy issue. The information they acquired from policy networks contributed to drawing positive public opinion toward the movement in TV debates and to persuading neutral stakeholders to support its main idea.

It is also interesting that the pro-coalition was led by shared leadership. There were ten co-leaders who were appointed to represent many fields of society like religion, school, community, parents, and other social groups. Table 4.4 summarizes the political tactics that the pro-coalition employed.

**Table 4.4 Political Tactics of Pro-Equalization Coalition**

• Conducting opinion polls	• Establishment of political coalition	• Budget struggle for research project
• Visits to school board and superintendent	• Street advertising-Distribution of messages	• One-man picket demonstrations
• Petitions	• Collecting research results and practices	• Sit-down demonstration in school district
• TV debates	• Distribution of arguments and back-up evidences	• Street demonstration
• Advertisement of their opinion in the newspapers	• Cooperation with province assembly members	• Mass protest parades
• Attendance at hearings	• Fund-raising party	• Outdoor-night-candle demonstrations
• Choosing shared leadership	• Policy-networking with national organizations	• Sit-in demonstration in the government offices
• Mailing letters to opinion leaders		• Hunger strike
• Protest-calling to school board members		

By contrast, the anti-equalization coalition did not employ many strategies. There six major strategies of anti-coalition: establishment of the anti-equalization policy coalition, visit and support to the superintendent, participation in TV debates and public hearings, mobilization of parents and alumni in TV debates and public hearings, advertisement of their opinion in the newspapers, and public statement on the policy. First, the opponents established the anti-equalization coalition, called “Pan-Citizen Association for Anti-Equalization.” The anti-coalition mainly consisted of the alumni of top-rank high schools, some cram school (after-school private academy) owners, and some individuals who thought that choice and competition were needed for national competitiveness. The alumni association of a top-rank high school was a leading agency of the anti-coalition. The



advocates for the anti-equalization coalition were excellent students' parents, teachers teaching in top-rank high schools, and some community leaders.

In practice, the anti-group was likely to excessively rely on the superintendent. The most effective method of the anti-group activities was to urge the superintendent to maintain his policy preference. It was well known to the opponents as well as the proponents that the superintendent did not support the equalization policy. A leading proponent stated:

There were key personnel holding good positions in the government and politics because the alumni of top-rank high schools work in powerful positions. Then, the anti-coalition keeps in contact with the important persons like the superintendent. Uh, influential posts, although its number is not large. So it was a considerable hindrance to our movement. (LHT1: 22)

There were several times when TV debates were held in a local broadcasting studio. Although the opponents had a golden opportunity to deliver their arguments to the public, they were not very successful in persuading the public to support their arguments. Many education stakeholders stated that debaters against equalization were not logical and did not have enough information. While the equalization supporters succeeded in explaining the necessity of the equalization policy, the opponent debaters simply stubbornly insisted that their opinion was right without theoretical and practical evidence.

The only chance when the anti-equalization camp appealed successfully was in the free discussion in public hearings, which the research team held once before the release of its final research results. The key actors leading the anti-coalition planned the attendance of opponents in the public hearing in advance. To show that there were many opponents in

silence in the community, the anti-coalition encouraged the parents and alumni of top-rank high schools to attend the public hearing and to express opposing opinions. As a result, a TV news program reported the number of opponents was equal to that of proponents. Table 4.5 shows the tactics that the anti-coalition used to accomplish its political objectives.

**Table 4.5 Political Tactics of Anti-Equalization Coalition**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the political coalition</li> <li>• Visit to and support for the superintendent</li> <li>• Participation in TV debates</li> <li>• Participation in public hearings</li> <li>• Mobilization of parents and alumni in TV debates and public hearings</li> <li>• Advertisement of their opinion in newspapers</li> <li>• Issuing public statement on the equalization policy</li> </ul> |
|---|

In summary, the two coalitions employed many strategies to accomplish their policy objectives. However, while the pro-equalization coalition as an active actor used various means from simple opinion surveys to extreme starvation demonstration, the political activities of the anti-equalization coalition were mediocre, invisible, and insignificant. Consequently, the decision-makers could not ignore the systematic and intensive activities of the pro-equalization group.

#### *Effectiveness of Political Activities*

Another theme of this study was the effectiveness of the political activities that each coalition undertook. The education stakeholders evaluated the effectiveness of political

activities differently, even though in general, the stronger and more united the activity is, the higher the degree of effectiveness is.

Most education stakeholders agreed that the pro-equalization coalition's activities were more powerful and more effective than the anti-equalization coalition's. They thought that to some extent, the superintendent surrendered to the political pressure of the equalization coalition when he agreed to have a study committee about it. Consequently, it can be concluded that educational policy-making can be influenced by political conflict between political coalitions. Although the superintendent, as a final decision-maker, insisted on his educational beliefs stubbornly, the political pressure of the pro-coalition was strong enough to alter his long-lasting attitude toward the equalization policy initiative. Some stakeholders stated:

It is my personal opinion that presently there is a tendency in our society that the more aggressively a group demonstrates, the more its argument is accepted. (EPR2: 8)

I think that [the political activities are] influencing educational policy-making. It is because, by the way, "Emotion Law [*Jeong-Seo-Bub*]" has priority over the others . . . . If the majority of people don't want something, do feel uncomfortable, or don't like that, it shouldn't . . . . From the viewpoint of public feelings, if people who dislike something become bigger and their voice gets stronger, the people win. When people make noise by struggle, most bills pass in assembly. (EAL2: 9)<sup>49)</sup>

---

<sup>49)</sup> [ ] were added by the researcher.

The proponents have found logical evidence and strength to support their arguments, and at the same time, they continuously ask to implement the equalization policy . . . .

So, presently the implementation of equalization policy might become visible. The superintendent could be pushed, even with reluctance, by the political pressure.

(LTU3: 10)

In conclusion, what strategy was most effective? Education stakeholders in general pointed to three strategies as the most effective methods: the hunger strike, the research project, and the holistic viewpoint. Many stakeholders thought the hunger strike was most powerful and influential with the superintendent. Consequently, the extreme threat of starvation to death made the superintendent hold the news conference and enforced him to establish the Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization. This conclusion is supported because the superintendent made a concession of establishing the study committee during the hunger strike. In summary, the proponents mobilized many political activities to make the superintendent feel political pressure, and the most risky measure of demonstrations, hunger strike, influenced the superintendent.

On the other hand, some people regarded the results of the research project as the critical blow to the superintendent. Some government officials stated that the superintendent could not help taking any political action following the research results because the professional research team recommended the implementation of the equalization policy. They lost some ground opposing the implementation of the equalization policy by virtue of the formal release of the research results. Even in terms of timing, the superintendent announced his decision to establish the study committee shortly after the official release of

the research results. Some proponents also supposed that without the objective rationale that the research project team found, he could not have prevailed over the opponent group to accept the decision of establishing the study committee. In other words, the policy recommendation of the research project served as such a major momentum that the superintendent made a political compromise with the opponent group.

However, considering that he had continuously expressed his opinion opposing the equalization policy initiative, the research results did not change his original belief. If he had had a political willingness to implement the equalization policy at that time, the superintendent should have made a final decision to implement the equalization policy and not to establish the study committee. Thus, the results of research project might only make him change his basic policy of politics from “ignoring and avoiding” to “talking and delaying.” However, it might be certain that the pro-equalization coalition succeeded in establishing a bridgehead for the incoming battle.

Some interviewees argued that all the activities holistically produced the superintendent’s change of attitude. It is so hard to say that any specific activity was the key of making the superintendent accept the establishment of the study committee. Because of many political activities such as physical struggles, logical persuasions, research recommendations and public opinion, the superintendent reluctantly receded by a step from his initial attitude toward the equalization policy movement. Consequently, the establishment of the study committee could be the product of the pro-coalition’s comprehensive efforts for six years.

However, a total of six interview participants, including the superintendent, did not agree that the political pressures put on the superintendent by the pro-equalization camp

would affect his final decision in the future on this issue. They expressed that the proponents' political activities would not have influence upon his official policy-making in practice. They also believed that it might not be desirable for national development that organized forces could put political pressure upon the official decision-making authority. The educational policies should be made considering all people and the whole nation, not just some of the people (not specific interests). In particular, educational policies should be based on long-term effects, not on short-term gain. They thought that if the superintendent had yielded to the pro-equalization coalition in order to find a way out of political troubles, it could have been irresponsible for the whole people. They emphasized that the superintendent had to be based upon his firm philosophy of education and professional competence of expertise. An official stated both points:

Political pressures? Uh, I felt a little pressure in politics from their activities because the pro-coalition was too enormous to ignore. In democratic politics, the majority rule is common sense in general. They asked, "Why didn't you decide to implement the equalization policy despite the majority's demand of citizens?" (OSD1: 6)

I didn't feel much pressure. The equalization proponents tried to do so, but there was nothing they obtained. Is there anything changed in practice? No. (OSD1: 8)

Some other interviewees also expressed their opinions about the political influence of the demonstrations:

Never felt practical burdens. And I sometimes ignored it. I had the inside knowledge of the pro-equalization group. I knew that the pro-camp activities were a political show. (OSD2: 20)

There might be few things that the pro-group obtained, at least, by this time, but it seems that they tried to do that . . . . Probably they could not get any gain anywhere. (SBM1: 5)

On the other hand, most interview participants, regardless of their preferences, agreed that the political activities of the anti-equalization coalition were not effective on public opinion or on the proponent group. Many proponents stated that they did not pay much attention to or worry much about the anti-coalition's activities as a rival. Similarly, the opponents of equalization admitted the ineffectiveness of their activities. Except for the fact that the members of the anti-coalition were remarkable in the community, the anti-camp hardly appealed to the public for its arguments. However, because of their connection with the school district officials, the anti-coalition did not completely lose its political powers on the equalization initiative. In conclusion, the most effective activity of the anti-coalition group was to keep its close connection with the persons holding the official authority of educational policy-making, like the superintendent, government officials, school board members, and other top decision-makers of social institutions.

*Summary of Findings*

This chapter has presented the analysis of the data and the research findings to answer the five research questions presented in Chapter I. The major findings regarding research question one (proponents and opponents) are summarized as follows:

There were two major groups concerning the Korean High School Equalization Policy in the school district: the pro-equalization group and the anti-equalization group. A progressive teachers union, parents with less than excellent students, alumni of low-rank high schools, teachers of low-rank high schools, and some middle school teachers and community leaders supported the equalization policy initiative. Officials of the school district, school board members, parents with excellent students, teachers of top-rank high schools, alumni of top-rank high schools, principals of top-rank and low-rank high schools, a conservative teachers' association, and some middle school teachers and community leaders wanted to keep the competitive entrance examination (anti-equalization policy). A majority of interview participants opposed the equalization policy initiative. The proponents and opponents each established their political coalitions to express their political voice, but there were some stakeholders who did not join the coalitions.

To find what political interests and policy values they sought, some questions focusing on why they supported or opposed the equalization policy initiative were presented to the interviewees. The major findings of research question two are summarized as follows:

Education stakeholders supported or opposed the equalization policy initiative to advance their political interests or policy values or to defend their existing interests. In general, there were four conflicting interests between the pro-and anti-groups: conflict of policy value (democracy verse excellence), dominance struggles through excellence (between parents,



between schools, and between alumni), conflict of political ideology (progressive verse conservative), and differences of educational conditions among schools or regions (well conditioned verse poorly conditioned).<sup>50)</sup> The proponents wanted to achieve political goals such as liberation of students from competitive examinations, breaking-down of the monopolistic power structure, equal allotment of students (in number and quality), equal chance of attending top-rank schools, and elimination of social discrimination by student academic achievement. The opponents' main political interests were the increase of national competitiveness, maintenance of status and power, increasing teaching quality through homogeneous grouping, growth of community economy, and retaining the chance of attending top-rank schools.

The major findings concerning research question three are summarized below. In spite of their official position, government officials of the school district (including the superintendent) were involved in the political struggle in many ways: personal connections with top-rank high schools, establishment of the research team, communication with school board members, ignoring mass demonstrations, and avoiding meetings with protesters when they visited. Proponents and opponents agreed that, to some degree, the superintendent was affiliated with the anti-equalization group and his policy preference played the critical role of hindrance to the equalization movement. Not only were the government officials involved in

---

<sup>50)</sup> The difference of educational conditions mostly comes from the regional context of Harbor City. Public high schools are well conditioned in terms of school facilities and teaching staff as well as prestigious in terms of student achievement, but private schools are poorly conditioned as well as have a low reputation. Moreover, the school district is too big for students to commute and high schools are concentrated into the northern part of the city. Thus, how to divide the school district into attendance zones is a very hot issue in practice. While the proponents argued that the problems could be solved by the special efforts of the school district, the opponents thought that the inequality of conditions was too serious for parents and students to accept or solve.

the movement as neutral brokers, but also they directly influenced the political struggle between the two groups.

The major findings concerning research question four are summarized as follows:

Basically both proponents and opponents established each coalition because they knew political coalitions were necessary to accomplish their political objectives. However, the strategies that the pro-equalization coalition exercised were quite different from those of the anti-equalization coalition. The pro-equalization group employed a variety of political strategies such as petitions, sit-in demonstrations, candle demonstrations, providing knowledge and information for leading groups, hunger strike, and policy networks. On the other hand, the anti-equalization camp responded defensively to the pro-coalition's political attacks with the formation of the anti-equalization coalition, communicating with officials of the school district and school board members, participating in TV debates and public hearings, and advertising its arguments in a local newspaper.

Research question five was the effectiveness of political activities that each coalition used. The major findings are summarized as follows:

Many interview participants stated that the political pressures of the pro-equalization coalition resulted in the superintendent's decision to establish the "Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization." Thus, it was found that, to some extent, the long-lasting movement of the pro-equalization coalition effectively pushed the superintendent to retreat from his initial view, step by step, and to agree to the establishment of the study committee, after all. Some interviewees thought that the pro-group partially won the victory over the political battle. Some people, including the superintendent himself, however, believed that the political activities of the pro-coalition were not effective because the pro-equalization camp

had not yet acquired visible, practical outcomes from him, whereas it spent too much time and energy on obtaining a small and nominal benefit, that is, formal participation in the policy discussion committee.

## Chapter V

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the theoretical and practical implications from the findings of the study. First, however, the chapter presents brief summaries of the purpose, conceptual framework, research questions, data collection, and data analysis. Then, the major findings are discussed with interpretations in light of the findings of the previous studies and the conceptual framework presented in Chapter I. The implications of the study are then delineated for both practical and theoretical purposes. Lastly, this chapter concludes with some limitations of the study and some recommendations for future research.

#### *Summary of the Study*

This study's main concern was to explore the phenomena of educational politics among education stakeholders surrounding a Korean educational policy issue, the question of equalization verse choice. Based on the argument that educational policies are primarily the outcomes of political struggle among education stakeholders, and that the official decision-makers also are involved with the political game in many ways, this study paid much attention to the political dynamics that occurred in a Korean school district. Commonly, there are various competing political actors in the educational policy domain. In such a conflict context of political interests, politics may play the key role in the educational policy-making process. Each stakeholder may play the political game to advance his/her interests. Accordingly, this study attempted to answer five research questions as follows:

1. Who were the proponents and opponents of the High School Equalization Policy?

2. Why did they take sides, pro or con?
3. How was the superintendent of the provincial school district, as a final decision-maker, involved with this issue?
4. What political tactics did each coalition use to achieve its policy goals?
5. How effective did major stakeholders think that the strategies were?

To answer the research questions, this study mainly relied on guided interviews and document analysis. Across eight categories of education stakeholders (officials of the school district, school board members, parents, teachers, principals, teachers unions, alumni, and community leaders), a total of 32 participants were invited to be interviewed. Because it was well known through previous studies that “excellence” was one of the most critical factors to determine the policy preferences of stakeholders in regard to this issue, each of the four categories such as parents, teachers, principals, and alumni were subdivided into two groups respectively: excellent and non-excellent (Kim & Byun, 2003).

The interview participants were identified in a two-step process. First, key actors of pro- or anti-equalization were identified through documents analysis and invited by the researcher. In general, the key players, like the superintendent or presidents of a progressive teachers union, willingly agreed to the interview. Then, the other interviewees were recommended by the key actors or invited through personal contacts. Accordingly, due to the nature of interview studies and the potential for bias on the part of interview participants and researcher, it was necessary to check the validity of the information obtained. To raise the validity and to draw a more complete picture of their political activities and intentions, this study interviewed several participants in each category and triangulated data with document analysis. However, the problems of

subjectivity and bias could not be fully eliminated due to the nature of the interview methods. The analysis of data was conducted using a content analysis considering research themes.

### *Major findings and Discussions*

#### Research Question One

##### *Who were the proponents and opponents of the High School Equalization Policy?*

The first concern of this study was to examine the advocates and opponents of the equalization policy (anti-school choice). The education stakeholders were broadly divided into two groups. Parents with less than excellent students, teachers and alumni of low-rank high schools, some middle school teachers, and some community leaders supported the High School Equalization Policy, but the government officials of the school district, school board members, principals, parents with excellent students, teachers and alumni of top-rank high schools, some middle school teachers, and some community leaders opposed the equalization policy (see Table 4.1). Both proponents and opponents established advocacy coalitions to promote their arguments to the public and the superintendent. Consistently with the interest group theory (Thomas, 2004; Truman, 1951) and the advocacy coalition theory (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993), those who shared common interests, attitudes, or beliefs formed their organizations to achieve their policy objectives. Each coalition sought to promote its power and legitimacy and to gain an advantage in the policy-making process by forming a large coalition with other like-minded organizations or individuals.

Overall, there was a tendency that the more closely education stakeholders were affiliated with official decision-making authority, the more they opposed the equalization policy, but the less they were affiliated, the more they supported it. As found concerning research question two,

the groups leading the educational policy-making were concerned with macro-development at the national level, but the common people focused on the local, immediate interests of students at the school or community level. One example is the fact that all the interviewed principals of private schools opposed the equalization policy, although it could offer some considerable benefits for their schools like obtaining stable teaching resources and some excellent students. The reason that they preferred the competitive entrance examination was their belief, as social leaders, that Korea has few natural resources for national development except for human resources. Their leading concern was education's contribution to national development, not just individual, practical interests of individual schools or persons. An interviewed principal of a private school regarded the participation of some private schools' principals in the equalization movement as pejorative as well as political. He regarded the politics in education as harmful to the common good because it advances special interests of lowly competitive schools. His view was consistent with "the ideology of professional autonomy" (Cibulka, 2001, p. 13). Previous research found a similar result: School administrators' support for the equalization policy is less than classroom teachers' (Kim et al., 1995).

An important finding was that not all proponents or opponents joined the coalitions. Some stakeholders just welcomed or disliked the equalization policy. They did not actively work for their policy preferences. Specifically, even though the government officials of the school district expressed opposition to the equalization initiative, they did not at least officially and overtly join the anti-equalization coalition. However, some evidence revealed that, in fact, they worked in conjunction with the anti-equalization coalition. In the other words, they could not support the anti-equalization coalition formally due to their official status as neutral decision-makers, but they

communicated and cooperated with the opponent group in order to defend against the political attack by the pro-equalization coalition.

The practices of formation and maintenance of the pro-equalization coalition were quite different from the transaction perspective (Olsen, 1971). The pro-equalization coalition did not employ coercion like mandatory membership or the provision of selective incentives. Rather, the key players of the pro-group appealed to shared interests or values and spontaneous participation of its members (Truman, 1951). Because the leading members of the pro-equalization coalition shared common values like equality or equity, the solidarity of the pro-camp was very strong and stable. The main method that the pro-coalition used to finance its costs was voluntary contribution to fund-raising from the public.

However, the formation of the anti-equalization coalition seemed to be very similar to transaction theory because the leading stakeholders of the group were the alumni of a top-rank high school, who had mandatory memberships, and the owners of private academies (*Hakwon*), who expected to be damaged economically. To protect their interests, they established the anti-equalization coalition in response to the rival coalition under the informal guidance of educational administrators who were opposed to the equalization policy.

On the other hand, in light of the neopluralist perspective, the pro-equalization coalition was very consistent with Salisbury's entrepreneurial leadership (1969), but the anti-equalization coalition was formed and maintained by an affluent and well-organized patron, the "Alumni Association of Harbor High School," so that it was supported by Walker's argument (1983). The leaders of a progressive teachers union and a progressive parents' association, who held fast to their educational beliefs for more than six years, led the pro-equalization coalition. Without their entrepreneurial leadership, the pro-coalition could not have survived for such a long time. The



anti-coalition could not be separated from the alumni association, which supported the group with money and organization. The alumni association played a core role in the anti-equalization movement as a patron. Cho's study (1990) was consistent with the results that a top-rank high school alumni association led the anti-equalization coalition in *Chun-cheon*.

According to descriptive statistics, a majority of the interview participants (61.3%) supported the present, competitive entrance examination system (school choice system based on meritocracy). This is a totally different picture from the results of a randomized sampling method. Most opinion polls about the High School Equalization Policy reported that a majority of respondents (about from 65% to 71.2%) voted for the equalization policy.<sup>51)</sup> Furthermore, it was quite different from the result in 2002, when a professional survey institute found that 76.6% of respondents favored the equalization policy in Harbor City. Consequently, the supporting ratio for the equalization policy was higher in the case where parents or students comprised most of the sample pool in number than the case where education stakeholders were selected to the sample pool in the same number among major categories. This means that many ordinary people like parents or students support the equalization policy much more than social leaders or educational administrators. Thus, another educational policy issue may be raised by the conflicting poll results: Whether or not educational policies should be determined by simple majority rule.

---

<sup>51)</sup> Kim et al. (1995) and Park et al. (2002) reported 64.0% and 65.0% of nationwide respondents preferred the equalization policy. Kwak et al. (2001) found that about 70% of respondents in three cities of *Gyeong-gi* Province revealed their support for Equalization Policy, and Choi (2004) stated 68.4% of *Gim-hae*'s stakeholders supported the policy by citation of *Han-Gil* research survey.

### Research Question Two

#### *Why did education stakeholders take sides, pro or con?*

Most education stakeholders took sides, for or against the equalization initiative, to seek to protect or advance their political interests or values. Most of the interview participants agreed with the statement that education stakeholders supported or opposed the equalization policy because of their potential benefits or interests associated with it. Advocates in general pursued the policy values of democracy, equality, and social equity, but opponents preferred the policy values of freedom, choice, excellence, professionalism, and competition. The major interests that proponents wanted to achieve were liberating students from excessive competition for entrance examinations, abolishing social discrimination of students and parents according to students' academic achievement, acquiring students for private schools, educating excellent students, obtaining chances to attend top-rank schools, reducing the burden of recruiting students, and breaking down the monopolistic power structure. Yet, opponents were likely to pursue increase of national competitiveness, increase of academic achievement,<sup>52)</sup> maintenance of the monopolistic power structure and school reputation, growth of the alumni association, and economic growth of the community (see Table 4.2). In general, social leaders like the superintendent, school board members, or principals were very concerned with long-term national competitiveness, but parents and classroom teachers were in favor of the equalization policy owing to practical problems like socially inferior feelings among students or community members, which they faced in daily life. The tendency for principals to be more opposed to the equalization policy than classroom teachers was also supported by the result of a Korean research: Whereas 56.9% of the classroom teachers

surveyed responded in favor of the equalization policy, just 46.2% of school administrators (principals and assistant principals) supported the equalization policy (Kim et al., 1995). Parents with excellent students worried that if their children were assigned to low-rank schools, they would lose the chance of academic development through competition among their peers. On the other hand, parents with low-achieving students wanted to evenly disperse all students to high schools in order for people not to distinguish low achieving students from excellent students in terms of their school title. A lot of Korean research presents the same result concerning supporters and opponents of the equalization policy (Kim, & Byun, 2003; Park et al., 2002; Kwak et al., 2000; Kim et al., 1995).

There were four major conflicts of political interests and values among education stakeholders. First, there was the conflict of policy values between proponents and opponents: democracy verse professionalism and social equity verse excellence. This issue was about whether the educational policy-making should be based on majority rule or neutral professional competence. All interview participants admitted that a majority of stakeholders supported the equalization policy. The fact itself that a majority of stakeholders supported the equalization policy was a strong force for the pro-equalization coalition in a democratic society. The pro-coalition relied on the clear rationale that a majority of citizens wanted the implementation of the equalization policy.

However, most of the opponents argued that all educational policies should not be decided simply by a majority rule. Even though a majority rule is common sense in democracy, there could be some exceptions to the rule. For example, the *Kang-won* Province School District

---

<sup>52)</sup> The proponent group also argued that the equalization policy could increase students' academic achievement,

practically decided to reject the equalization policy initiative for the reason that less than an overwhelming majority of education stakeholders voted for the equalization policy even though a simple majority of them (just 57.2%) wanted it (Go, 2004; Park, 2003). In the same sense, some opponents deplored the reality that the majority rule dominated the policy-making process and called the social phenomena “Emotion Law (*Jeong-Seo-Bub*)” or “Crowd Law (*Tte-Bub*).” They worried about politics that organized interests or organized political activities may have controlled the policy-making process against the public interests. Their argument matches, to considerable degree, Madison’s concern about “the mischiefs of faction” (Fairfield, 1966). It could be desirable in Korea for the government to play the role of fair judge with farseeing intelligence in a neutral position. Even though a minority group cannot win with its weak voice to the government, people expect that the government will take enough consideration of its interests or disadvantages in a long-term perspective.

The second political conflicts occurred between public and private schools, and between excellent and low-achieving students. Most private schools joined the pro-equalization camp, but public schools led the anti-equalization camp. Alumni of private schools welcomed the equalization policy initiative, but alumni of top-rank, public schools were against the equalization in order to preserve their fixed dominance of power. The parents with low achieving students supported the equalization policy initiative with an expectation of getting a small chance of admission to top-rank public schools and eliminating social discrimination against their children, but the parents with excellent students who anticipated attending top-rank schools opposed the

---

but that was not their main argument for their movement.

equalization policy because of fear of losing a fixed chance of admission to top-rank schools and decreasing their academic achievement.

In particular, a significant political conflict emerged from the difference of status between educators. Private school teachers favored the equalization policy because it could guarantee their employment and reduce the recruiting burdens for students at the cost of private school's autonomy (Shin & Kwon, 2000).<sup>53)</sup> On the contrary to the attitude of teachers, all the private school principals interviewed were supportive of the competitive entrance examination, in light of long-term national competitiveness and the private school's autonomy. Although they knew that the equalization policy practically gave their schools many benefits, they worried about the negative effects of the policy on private schools' long-term development and national competitiveness. However, certain principals of private schools were found through document analysis to join the pro-equalization coalition. The three principals interviewed also did not join the anti-equalization coalition despite their support for the competitive entrance system, whereas the interviewed principals of public schools were directly or indirectly involved with the anti-equalization coalition. Consequently, private schools within the local school district did not follow the formal stand of nationwide private school organizations such as the Korean Association of Private School Foundations and the Korean Association of Private School Principals, defending the rights of selecting students (Lee, 2003; Kim, 2002). Actually despite nationwide trends of private schools in setting policy agendas concerning the High School Equalization Policy, like Cibulka's argument (2001), local politics and the micro-political

---

<sup>53)</sup> In their study, an interviewee expressed exactly the same statement to a high school teacher of this study about serious competition for excellent students.

interests of individual private schools dominated the specific implementation or elimination of a policy initiative.

Moreover, the local context is certainly one of the critically important factors that influence the equalization policy-making process and the policy preferences of stakeholders. Some opponents including government officials of the school district worried about practical difficulties in enforcing the equalization policy in the community, but proponents argued that the practical problems could be solved with thoughtful plans and through persuasion to citizens. Opponents expected the emergence of a serious political conflict coming from the randomized assignment of applicants. There was a real episode in a Korean province school district where a superintendent resigned due to practical errors of student assignment to high schools. Accordingly, the superintendent might have been afraid of the political attacks from the anti-equalization coalition that he could have expected to face in the case whereby he accepted the equalization initiative. It could be a minimal condition of his acceptance of the equalization policy initiative that he does not get any political burden by losing his leadership. In the interview, the superintendent stated that his tenure of office would end in only a little more than a year. He made a joke that the successor to his office would probably confront a serious political dilemma in decision-making about equalization.<sup>54)</sup> He expressed his concern that the committee members of the Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization could ultimately fail to produce a reasonable idea of how to enforce the policy in harmony with the city's conditions, because of the complexity of the local educational environment.

---

<sup>54)</sup> The superintendent is allowed to be elected for two terms of four years. Because he was serving a second term, he was no longer concerned about reelection.

### Research Question Three

*How was the superintendent, as a final decision-maker, involved with this issue?*

The government officials of the school district were also deeply involved with the policy movements. Officially they stayed neutral, but practically exercised considerable influence on the political activities of the pro- and anti-equalization coalition. Their activities are listed in Table 4.3 in detail.

The first significant finding was that they were one of the active players in the political game. They did not keep silent, clasping their hands behind their back. This finding is somewhat different from Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's Advocacy Coalition Framework.<sup>55)</sup> According to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's Advocacy Coalition Framework (1993), the government officials who officially hold policy-making authority may primarily exercise their decision-making power in neutrality. The government should mainly play a role of neutral arbitrators or policy brokers among plural policy coalitions. Interest groups try to influence the policy-making process, and the government bureaucracy mediates the political conflicts among them with its neutral competence. However, the government officials of the school district obstinately opposed the implementation of equalization policy, in conflict with pro-equalization camp. Actually, the government officials were critical players in the politics between the two coalitions. Thus, the original Advocacy Coalition Framework presented in Figure 1.2 by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith should be modified to the active version of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. As shown in Figure 1.3, the government agencies established game rules, mediated conflicting interests as a neutral arbitrator,

---

<sup>55)</sup> Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) did not completely deny the possibility of government officials' involvement with advocating groups. Government officials (civil servants) may be policy brokers, and they also take sides with policy advocates, particularly when "their agency has a clearly defined mission" (p. 27).

but also participated in the political game as a party and employed a variety of political tactics as an education stakeholder. To a considerable extent, they seemed to fight against the pro-coalition on behalf of the anti-coalition. Many advocates stated that they would heavily rely on the superintendent to remain in opposition until the end of his tenure. Consequently, the result of this study strongly supports the argument that government officials may become active players in the political arena.

It was significant that the superintendent would rather be a professional expert than a politician, although he was a real politician elected by all members of the school councils. He thought that his duty was to protect authentic public interests from the political pressure of specially organized interests. If he were to submit tamely to the pro-group's political campaign in order to reduce his political troubles, it would be thought that he is not responsible for the silent, general public and national interests. It might be a virtue that the government officials do not seek their personal, political interests, but rather the common good even at the expense of their political advantages. The democratization process in Korea began in 1993 after the termination of a 32-year rule of a series of military regimes. Because this process has been occurring within a society with a strong tradition of hierarchical order and respect for government authority based on "Confucian bureaucratism," as well as rapid modernization led by "well-trained state bureaucrats" (Kim, 1999, p. 18, 25), government officials (education officers) are still generally used to being treated with deference. Although a majority rule should not be ignored, in the field of public education Korean administrators still lean toward the view (which was common among educators in the United States until developments in the 1960s began to politicize American education) that most educational decisions should be made on the basis of professional expertise, rather than by democratic votes by members of the lay public who lack that expertise. They fear that the public

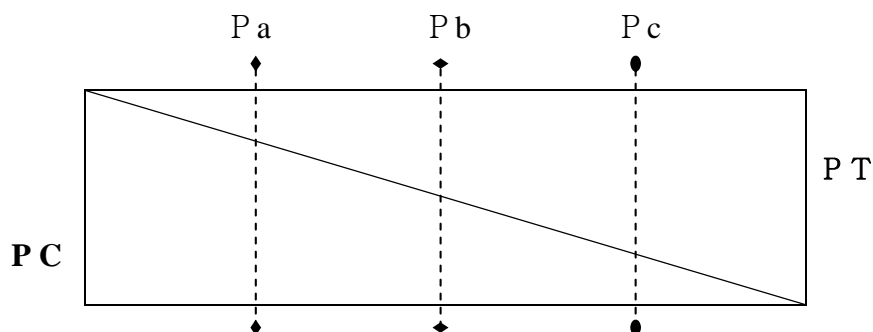


may favor and vote for measures and candidates who might weaken the standards of Korean education. They believe this could endanger Korea's standing in the competitive world economy by weakening the quality of its workforce. Since Korea has limited natural resources, its success in the high technology, information age depends heavily upon having a very highly educated workforce.

Thus, the basic belief of the government officials on the equalization policy-making was based upon professional autonomy, not politics. In other words, they thought that neutral competence and professional autonomy were more dominant values than politics and interest groups. As Cibulka (2001) wrote, "They saw themselves as the embodiment of the public interest, its vigilant protector" (p. 13). The job that the government officials of the school district did in the equalization policy-making process has something in common with politics in countries with a long history of government centralization (Thomas, 2004). The government sector was not only the lobbying target of interest groups to conclude their success or failure, but also its power was much stronger than interest groups.

Accordingly, the interaction of professional autonomy and politics in educational policy-making can be shown in Figure 5.1. According to the nature of policy agenda, the local or national context of educational policy-making, the character of decision-makers and others, the bar can move along the continuum from the left end to the right end in Figure 5.1. In reality, there is probably not any policy initiative that is not influenced by both professional competence and politics. Concerning Policy B (Pb), professional competence (PC) might affect the decision making equal to politics. However, whereas Policy A (Pa) is decided by the influence of professional competence, politics (PT) would have more influence on Policy C (Pc) than Policy A (Pa).

**Figure 5.1 The Combination of Professional Competence (PC) and Politics (PT) in Educational Decision-Making**



However, the government officials were becoming afraid of the criticism that they had not kept neutral as policy-makers. Although they tried to employ their neutral competence and professional knowledge for the general public and national interests, and to keep free from taking political stands, they paradoxically could not be freed from politics in the reality of decision-making. Thus, they procrastinated about the final decision, without a clear schedule, because they did not want to implement the policy. Actually, the establishments of the research project team in 2003 and the Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization in 2004 were savvy politics that they employed to protect their political interests from the pro-coalition's attack. As a consequence, the government officials were implicated in politics with the argument of neutrality and professional expertise. Whereas their thoughts were based upon professional autonomy, their behaviors could be explained by politics.

#### Research Question Four

*What political tactics did each coalition use to achieve its policy goals?*

The pro-equalization coalition used many kinds of political strategies from simple opinion surveys to extreme measures, but in general, the anti-equalization coalition was not noteworthy in its activities. The proponents employed street demonstrations, petition visits,

candle demonstrations, hunger strike, policy networks, and other efforts, but the opponents resorted to several tactics like connections with officials of the school district, participation in TV debates and public hearings, advertisement of their opinion in the newspapers, and other activities (see Table 4.4 and Table 4.5). In conclusion, the pro-equalization group obtained a partial victory through various and skillful campaigns, making potent use of political symbols, issue networking and coalition building, and aggressive grassroots demonstrations for six years.

The first finding concerning political tactics is that there was an imbalance of political activities between the two groups, and that they used very different tactics. Second, in general, the pro-coalition developed more various and more systematic strategies than the anti-coalition. The difference of strategies that each group exercised depended on what grounds their arguments were based upon and on who were on the defensive or the offensive. The advocates wanted to change the existing competitive entrance examination system into a random assignment system for all high schools.

Another interesting point was that the leading proponents used mass media very effectively for delivering their arguments to the public. They employed newspaper advertisements and TV debates. Actually a few TV debates offered efficient venues for proponents to popularize their ideas through the power of language. In contrast, the opponents failed to persuade citizens to support their position in the TV debates. After the third TV debate, public opinion was turned in favor of the pro-coalition. Consequently, the pro-group's attempt in TV debates worked well in drawing public attention to the equalization policy initiative.

Moreover, there is evidence to indicate how thoroughly the pro-coalition prepared for the movement: through a shared leadership. Key actors decided to select a shared leadership

system to secure the legitimacy of their equalization movement. Leaders inevitably function as symbols of group identity and unity (Gardner, 1990). Leadership is important to enhance a group's "social legitimacy" and its "chances of survival" (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995, p. 238). The key members of the pro-coalition were smart to pay attention to the type of leadership. In the context of a loosely coupled organization like schools, the pro-equalization coalition needed a "shared" or "distributive" leadership (Lambert, 2002; Elmore, 2000).

Contrary to the pro-group, the opponents tried to maintain the competitive entrance examination system and were on the defensive against the equalization movement. The proponents as an attacking force used a mass-mobilization strategy, but the opponents used the strategy of focusing on the decision-making personnel. Because the pro-equalization coalition was supported by a majority of education stakeholders, it used the mass activities to show that the coalition was supported by an overwhelming majority of education stakeholders. Consequently, the group successfully attracted the mass media's spotlight and the public's attention to its policy initiative.

On the other hand, the anti-coalition's strategies were totally different from the pro-coalition's. The anti-coalition had fewer supporters in number than the pro-coalition. An opponent stated, "We were alone when we were attacked. There were no friends helping our position." Thus, it was impossible for the anti-group to use mass demonstration because of its small number of opponents. In a democratic society, majority rule is accepted as common sense, but the elite group, which supported the choice policy, was a minority in number. Accordingly, the anti-coalition preferred unexposed tactics to boisterous events.

Another reason that the anti-group could not employ mass demonstration was that many opponents were educational leaders, who were not expected to go out for street

demonstrations or to wear headbands or to shout slogans raising their fists. Regarding the question about why they did not express their political opinions in an aggressive manner, many opponents answered that their official position did not allow them to do so legally and morally.

Their defensive position was also related to their passive activities. To make certain changes from the existing system, the change-oriented group should make more effort, but the defenders are passive and responsive to its attack. In general, change-seekers raise their voice, but the defenders simply respond to their attack. A school board member stated:

It is too early to do something. I have not had a chance to act because the outline of the equalization policy is not yet visible and because the policy proposal has not yet been submitted to the school board to be reviewed. (SBM1: 4)

Concerning the establishment of the policy research team in 2003, both coalitions sought different roles for the research team. It seemed the coalitions were sleeping in one bed, each having its own dreams. The pro-coalition wanted the team to play the role of a lever in pushing the superintendent to accept the equalization initiative, but the anti-group hoped to use the team as an umbrella to delay the superintendent's final decision, or as an excuse to discard the initiative. The pro-group intended to secure theoretical and professional support through the policy research because the government officials procrastinated making the decision for the reason of opposing public opinion and negative effects to student achievement. The anti-group, however, used the research team as a means of procrastinating making the final decision. Moreover, the opponents wanted to use the research project as a

defending shield against political attack from the pro-group when the superintendent might decide to reject the initiative after all.

The strategy of coalition building among educational interest groups or stakeholders sharing a common issue is widely used in Korea as well as the United States (Fusarelli, 2003; Godwin & Kemerer, 2002; Shin & Kwon, 2000; Cho, 1999; Mazzoni, 1993; Karper & Boyd, 1988). Letter writing, phone calls, presentation of data, visits, collective bargaining and strikes, mass demonstrations, and providing useful data and information are common activities of both American and Korean stakeholders. However, the hunger strike is a unique method that Korean interest groups used in order to convey their very strong demands to the government. This extremely dangerous tactic is not unusual in Korea. Sometimes politicians, environmental activists, or religionists use it to obtain some interests. A president of a non-government party employed a hunger strike to protest political persecution when he was detained under house arrest by an authoritarian regime in 1983. A Buddhist monk also protested for environmental protection using a starvation demonstration in 2004. Last year, a high school student employed a hunger strike for freedom of religion in school, which occurred in relationship with the equalization policy issue.

#### Research Question Five

*How effective did major stakeholders think that the strategies were?*

In terms of the effectiveness of political activities that each coalition used, most of the interview participants in general agreed that the pro-equalization coalition considerably influenced the policy-making process but the anti-equalization coalition did not. From the view of interest group theory that the stronger the interest group is, the more chances the group takes to

win, the findings of this study are consistent. There were multiple interest groups competing for a policy. Proponents were closely united, and the pro-group finally gained a partial victory.

However, interview participants responded differently about how effective the political activities of the pro-equalization coalition were. Certain participants remarked that the activities of the pro-coalition were not effective while most of them thought that the pro-coalition finally partially defeated the superintendent and the anti-coalition in the political game. It was a partial victory, not a complete success, because the superintendent did not announce when and how to implement the equalization policy. What he did was to establish the discussion committee on the equalization policy. This theme is closely related to how they evaluated the result of the equalization movement, success or failure. As of April 2005, the superintendent had allowed the establishment of the Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization, and the committee had already met four times to discuss what the problems were and how they should be solved prior to the implementation of the policy. The proponents thought that the committee's mission is to make a specific plan for the implementation of the equalization policy, but the opponents believed that the committee should discuss all possible problems, including whether or not to implement the equalization policy itself, before the school district enforces the equalization policy in the city. From the viewpoint of the pro-coalition, the superintendent had already decided about the implementation of the equalization policy itself. However, the opponents probably believed that the committee could not decide about the implementation because the essential prerequisites would not be met due to the specificity of regional conditions. The superintendent also denied that he had made a decision about the implementation of the equalization policy in the Harbor School District. On the other hand, some negative responses to the effectiveness of the pro-coalition's

activities might come from the confusion between effectiveness and efficiency or their dissatisfaction about the slow progress of the equalization movement.

Through the triangulation of method (document analysis and interviewing) and personnel, it could be a reasonable conclusion that the superintendent partially gave a political concession to the pro-coalition. He was certainly changing his attitudes toward the equalization policy, and despite his denial, the study committee was established with the expectation to implement the policy. Most participants (advocates and opponents) stated that the superintendent took a step backward from his original ground. In particular, some proponents remarked that they had won the game, and an opponent stated the pro-coalition could be in the mood of triumph. The pro-coalition thought that the remainder of work would be when it would be enforced (a matter of timing), not whether or not it would be enforced. However, because the opponents were trying to use the study committee as an umbrella to delay a final decision-making, it is hard to anticipate the final outcome of this political game.

Overall, the activities of the anti-coalition were not effective. The reason could be that the opponents had the passive attitude of a counter-movement and that the anti-coalition was loosely united. Despite its weak and passive activities, its strategy of focusing on key people of school district officials nevertheless was very effective.

It was also significant that both coalitions concentrated their lobbying on the school district officials, like the superintendent, more than on school board members. The reason was that the power of policy-making was mainly given to them, in particular, the superintendent (Shin & Kwon, 2000; Cho, 1999). It is in contrast to many cases of American interest groups' lobbying, which strives to reach the legislators as well as the executive (Fusarelli, 2003; Godwin & Kemerer, 2002; Mazzoni, 1993; Karper & Boyd, 1988). The different political system of Korea



might produce a different lobbying style from America: Even though the Korean school board holds the final authority of equalization policy-making, educational interest groups focus their activities on the superintendent because the school board usually passes policy proposals without the great modification that the superintendent submits to the school board.

### *Conclusions and Implications*

The purpose of this study was to examine how politics worked in the decision-making process of a controversial, anti-choice policy initiative, “Harbor High School Equalization.” Theoretically, the overall results of this study revealed that interest group politics played a key role in the equalization policy-making. In other words, it could be concluded that education policy is the outcome of political struggles among education stakeholders or interest groups (Fusarelli, 2003; Godwin & Kemerer, 2002). The pro-equalization group took the initiative in the political battle to make a change in the established power structure in the community, so the opponents of equalization launched the anti-equalization coalition in informal connection with officials of the school district and school board members. Accordingly, this study indicates that education in Korea is not separate from politics. It was associated with four basic concepts of politics: government, conflict, power, and policy (Scribner & Englert, 1977). Education stakeholders tried to influence the equalization policy-making decision of the superintendent (government) in order to obtain or defend their values or interests. Finally, the more active players (pro-equalization coalition) gained a partial success (the establishment of “Study Committee of Harbor High School Equalization”) in moving the superintendent forward toward the complete implementation of the policy, through their persistent, aggressive political struggles, even though it was not a completely satisfactory victory. The emphasis on the “apolitical myth” (Wirt & Kirst, 1972, p. 5) of education

supported by the educational professionals, having been accepted nation-wide in Korea (Kim, 1982), needs to be shifted in the field of educational administration to that of the “politics of education.”<sup>56)</sup> In terms of politics, consequently, this study provided empirical evidence of political conflicts among competing values, political struggles among education stakeholders, and a variety of political tactics, which help us to understand educational policy-making phenomena.

Second, the results of this study argue that Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith’s advocacy coalition framework (1993) should be supplemented with the idea that government officials are involved with the political process as critical political actors as well as important stakeholders. In Harbor City, they have effectively obstructed the equalization policy initiative through their advantaged position as official decision makers. They thwarted and delayed the initiative by holding on to the policy values of freedom of choice, excellence, professional expertise, and the common good of the general public (not specific interests) for years. In reality, they joined the anti-equalization coalition even though they officially announced their neutrality in the political game. Thus, this study indicates that the modified framework of the advocacy coalition (Figure 1.3) is more valid, at least in a Korean setting.

Furthermore, this study supported Salisbury’s entrepreneurial leadership (1969) and Walker’s patron role (1983) in terms of the formation and maintenance of political coalitions or issue networks. Without *Chunkyojo* (a progressive teachers union), the advocate group could not drive the equalization movement for such a long time. Likewise, without the support of the Alumni Association of Harbor High School, the superintendent could not defend his policy preference so well against the very aggressive attacks from the advocates. This study found that a

---

<sup>56)</sup> In Korea, the research association for study on politics of education was established in 1994.

wealthy, well-organized patron's role is important for the initiation and maintenance of not only voluntary associations but also educational interest groups.

Also, there are tensions among competing values at the bottom of political conflict and the emphasis on core values is shifting over time or according to regions. The value tensions among professional competence, freedom of choice, democratic rule, equity, equality, and quality (excellence) have surrounded the equalization issue in Korea, as in America (Stout, Tallerico, & Scribner, 1995). An interesting thing is that the directions of emphasis on policy values between the two countries are opposite in discussions of school choice and equalization. In America, after the movement of reducing "individual choice in favor of social equity" (Stout, Tallerico, & Scribner, 1995, p. 7), the school choice movement arose to increase parents' rights of choosing schools and student achievement through competition among schools. In Korea, however, the advocates for anti-choice (equity) are driving the equalization movement to increase social equity. Thus, one wonders what made the opposite movement. Probably, Korea's difference of value direction from America arises from its political system and culture, the quality of educational conditions, educational practices like the college entrance system, parents' expectations of their children, its private school system, the teaching job policy, and other social, economic, and educational factors.

Practically, this study suggests some ideas for policy makers or leadership programs in education. First, educational leaders need to be taught in leadership programs how to solve political problems in conflict settings. Education cannot be separate from politics. It is not that politics has been absent in education, but rather that the direct study on politics in education has not been focused on (Stout, Tallerico, & Scribner, 1995). Conflicts among education stakeholders are common in school organizations and government agencies. Accordingly, it is essential to

include the politics of education in educational leader training programs, in particular in Korea where the “apolitical myth” has prevailed until recently.

Education stakeholders may advance their political opinions effectively through well-chosen political activities with effective leadership. One coalition succeeded, even if partially, in the accomplishment of its political objectives, but the other coalition was virtually defeated in the political game. The major reason was that the pro-group successfully delivered its political arguments to the public and the government via many kinds of tactics. The advocates had a good sense of what type of leadership fits their political movement: shared and cooperative leadership. The pro-group exercised a variety of political activities, one by one. After holding evaluation meetings, the advocate group increased its intensity of political struggles from the easy and less aggressive to the powerful and more aggressive. In contrast, the anti-group failed to escape from the image of selfishness. The anti-group should have established a comprehensive coalition consisting of not only invested community members like alumni of top-ranking high schools, but also common people like citizens, parents, and community members.

This study suggests that whether or not interest groups can obtain their objectives depends on the intensity of collaboration, the appropriate leadership style, preparation for tactics in stages, proximity to key decision makers, and other factors that they have and use. The strategies that the pro-group employed were much more numerous and effective than those of the anti-group. Of them, TV debates were excellent to disseminate its main arguments directly to the public and to correct misconceptions, such as the correlation between the equalization policy and student achievement. The establishment of a broadly joined association and the shared leadership helped enhance the legitimacy of its movement in the eyes of the public. On the other hand, the

connection of the anti-equalization group with key decision makers was threatening to the proponent group.

#### *Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study*

This study has attempted to present an impartial and balanced analysis of one of Korea's highly controversial policy issues: the Harbor High School Equalization. It has to be acknowledged, however, that this account is incomplete and biased in some ways. The researcher could not interview all the prominent actors as well as every stakeholder involved in the policy issue, although he succeeded in interviewing the major political actors found through document analysis. Despite his efforts at neutrality in interviews and interpretations, his affiliations with the school district and the MOE as a government official could have influenced the collection and analysis of data. Also, his personal educational background could somewhat be associated with the anti-equalization group. Accordingly, these limitations on the present study might help future research related to this policy issue be designed more validly.

Another limitation of this study comes from the selection method. Although the researcher categorized major stakeholders and selected key interview participants through a purposeful sampling method on the basis of document analysis and reviews of previous studies, the results of this study have a limit on external generalization because it was not a randomized sampling method. In particular, two stakeholders rejected the interviews and one of them was a key actor in the pro-equalization coalition. Yet, their absence should have little influence on the results of this study. Because the policy contexts and political interactions in this study are very similar to other Korean school districts, the results of this study may be somewhat generalizable in other district settings, as other previous studies presented results similar to this study. Cho's study (1999) also

found that a top-high school alumni association played a critical role in the switchover of the equalization policy to anti-equalization in *Chun-cheon*. Shin and Kwon (2000) and Kim (1999) found that political coalitions were established, employed political strategies, and were in conflicts among education stakeholders for competing values in *Jeon-buk* Province.

This study focused on research on political dynamics in terms of several themes like policy preferences and values, formation of coalitions, involvement of government officials, political strategies used by stakeholders, and their effectiveness. A suggestion for future research would be a comparative study on the role of government officials in the advocacy coalition framework between different contexts or policy issues. What makes the difference of involvement to interactions among multiple coalitions: political culture, political system, political power structure, or the character of issues? Although Thomas (2004) found the political environment is critical for the importance of government bureaucracy as targets of interest groups, it is not clear what kinds of factors are associated with the government's involvement in political struggles.

Another concern is about what pushed school choice initiatives in opposite directions in Korea and the United States. In the Korean settings, a majority of education stakeholders are driving the equalization (anti-choice) initiative, but the school choice movement has been mushrooming in the United States. In addition to the opposite policy trends, what the major driving forces are and why they are moving in opposite directions concerning school choice could be significant research topics. In the Korean setting, research by Kim and Byun (2003) found that student achievement has a significant correlation with the degree of parents' opposition to the equalization policy in Seoul. Thus, in the American settings, whether or not parents with excellent students advocate school choice like this study's and Kim and Byun's findings (2003) might be an interesting research topic.

Another research question is to what degree and in what policies and circumstances politics has influence on the decision-making process? The superintendent was being forced to retreat from his initial position because of the political pressure and persuasion from the pro-equalization camp. Even though he kept away from specific interests, he might have been closely associated with politics. It might be true that all education policies are not free from politics as seen in Figure 5.1. Thus, such assumptions can be made for empirical investigation: According to the character of policies, like the level of decision-making (local, intermediate, and national) and the degree to which they are value-laden, there may be differences in the influence of politics on the decision-making.

## References

- Baek, Sung-Joon, Choi, Don-Min, & Sung, Ki-Sun. (1999). *Design of schooling zone and student assignment in the Ul-san Metropolitan City for the equalization policy*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute.
- Bailey, S. K. (1975). *Education interest groups in the nation's capital*. Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education.
- Belfield, C. R. (2003). *The effects of competition on educational outcomes*. ERIC Digest Retrieved May 27, 2004, from ERIC Website <http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests>
- Bentley, A. F. (1908). *The process of government: A study of social pressures*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Berry, J. M. (1997). *The interest group society* (3rd ed.). New York: Longman.
- Bloland, H. G. (1985). *Associations in action: The Washington, D.C. higher education community*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2. Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Higher Education.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, C. (1992). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. London: Sage.
- Boyd, W. L. (Fall 2002). Market forces, globalization and values in public education. *Education Canada*, 42(3), 12-15.
- Boyd, W. L. (1975). School board-administrative staff relationships. In P. J. Cistone (Eds.), *Understanding school boards* (pp.103-129). Massachusetts: Lexington Books.
- Boyd, W. L., & Walberg, H. L. (1990). Introduction and overview. In W. L. Boyd, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Choice in education: Potential and problems* (pp.ix-xiii). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.



- Brademas, J. (1987). *The politics of education: Conflict and consensus on Capitol Hill*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Bulman, R. C., & Kirp, D. L. (1999). The shifting politics of school choice. In S. D. Sugarman, & F. R. Kemerer (Eds.), *School choice and social controversy: Politics, policy, and law* (pp. 36-76). Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Byun, Soo-Yong, & Kim, Kyung-Keun. (2004). Analysis of determinants of parents' attitude toward the High School Leveling Policy: The difference between north and south regions in Seoul. *Korean Journal of Sociology of Education*, 14(2), 81-100.
- Caire, K. M. (2002). The truth about vouchers. *Educational Leadership*, 59(7), 38-42.
- Cater, D. (1964), *Power in Washington: A critical look at today's struggle to govern in the nation's capital*. New York: Random House.
- Chang, Jae-Won. (1991). *A study of the development of the evaluation model of educational policy and an evaluation of the equalization policy of high school*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea.
- Cho, Dong-Sub. (1999). An analytic evaluation on High School Equalization Policy: A case of *Chun-cheon* in Korea. *Research on Human and Social Education*, 3, 71-91.
- Choi, Joon-Yeol. (2004). Demand on improvement of high school entrance examination system in *Gim-hae* area. Retrieved February 17, 2005, from the Korean Educational Development Institute Website <http://www.kedi.re.kr>
- Chubb, J., & Moe, T. (1990). *Politics, markets and America's schools*. Washington D. C.: Brookings Institute.
- Chubb, J., & Moe, T. (1988). Politics, markets, and organization of schools. *American Political Science Review*, 82(4), 1065-1087.
- Chung, Bong-Gun. (1998). *A study of the High School Leveling Policy in the Republic of Korea: Its genesis, implementation and reforms, 1974-1995*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation,

- The University of Hawaii.
- Chung, Byoung-Ryon. (1986). *Analysis of the tendency toward equality in educational policies*. Unpublished master's thesis, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea.
- Cibulka, J. G. (2001). The changing role of interest groups in education: Nationalization and the new politics of education productivity. *Educational Policy*, 15(1), 12-40.
- Cigler, A. J., & Loomis, B. A. (1998). *Interest group politics* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc.
- Clearinghouse on Educational Policy and Management [CEPM]. (2004). *Trends and issues: School choice*. Retrieved October 17, 2004, from Educational Resources Information Center database from <http://uoregon.edu>
- Cook, C. E. (1998). *Lobbying for higher education: How universities and colleges influence federal higher education policy*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Dogan, M. (Eds.), (1975). *The mandarins of Western Europe: The political role of top civil servants*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Elmore, R. (1990). Options for choice in public education. In W. L. Boyd, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Choice in education: Potential and problems* (pp.21-42). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.
- Fairfield, R. P. (Eds.), (1966). *The federalist papers* (2nd ed.). Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Feir, R. E. (1994). *The Politics of education reform in the States: 1983-1987*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park.
- Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N. E. (2003). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

- Freeman, J. L. (1965). *The political process: Executive bureau-committee relations*. New York: Random House.
- Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Friedman, M. (1955). The role of government of in education. In R. A. Solo (Eds.), *Economics and the public interest* (pp.123-144). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Fiske, E. B., & Ladd, H. F. (2000). *When schools compete: A cautionary tale*. Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Fuller, B., & Elmore, R. F. (1996). *Who chooses? Who loses?: Culture, institutions, and the unequal effects of school choice*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
- Fusarelli, L. D. (2003). *The politics dynamics of school choice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gahng, Tae-Joong. (2002). Review of discussion on the High School Equalization Policy. Retrieved October 10, 2003, from the Korean Educational Development Institute Website <http://www.kedi.re.kr>
- Gahng, Tae-Joong, & Sung, Ki-Sun. (2001). Empirical study of relationship between The Equalization Policy and intellectual excellences. Retrieved November 12, 2004, from the Korean Educational Development Institute Website <http://www.kedi.re.kr>
- Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). White Plains: Longman Publishers USA.
- Gardner, J. W. (1990). *On leadership*. New York; Free Press.
- Gauri, V. (1998). *School choice in Chile: Two Decades of educational reform*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Glenn, C. L. (1990). Parent choice in four nations. In W. L. Boyd, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Choice in education: Potential and problems* (pp.63-93). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

- Go, Mee-Hye. (Oct. 11, 2004). National Assembly Committee of Education, discussions on high school competitive entrance system. Retrieved October 11, 2004 from The Yonhapnews Website <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr>
- Godwin, R. K., & Kemerer, F. R. (2002). *School choice tradeoffs: Liberty, equity, and diversity*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Gray, V., & Lowery, D. (1998). To lobby alone or in a flock: Foraging behavior among organized interests. *American Politics Quarterly*, 26(1), 5-34.
- Gray, V., & Lowery, D. (1996). A niche theory of interest representation. *Journal of Politics*, 58(1), 91-111.
- Han, Man-Jung. (2003). *Let's make a solution of high school equalization issue*. Retrieved March 11, 2004, from <http://www.eduhope.net>
- Harbor City Academic High School Entrance Guideline Table. (2005). Unpublished paper.
- Henig, J. R. (1994). *Rethinking school choice: Limits of market metaphor*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Hojnacki, M. (1997). Interest groups' decisions to join alliances or work alone. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(1), 61-87.
- Hoxby, C. M. (2000). Does competition among public schools benefit students and taxpayers? *American Economic Review*, 90(5), 1209-1238.
- Hrebenar, R. J. & Thomas, C. S. (Eds.), (1993a). *Interest group politics in the northeastern states*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Hrebenar, R. J. & Thomas, C. S. (Eds.), (1993b). *Interest group politics in the midwestern states*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Hrebenar, R. J. & Thomas, C. S. (Eds.), (1987). *Interest group politics in the American west*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

- Huh, Byung-Kee. (1989). *An evaluation of fairness in Korean educational policies on the basis of liberal egalitarianism*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea.
- Jeong, In-Sook. (1992). *The state and education: The case of South Korea, 1945-1988*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Florida State University, Tallahassee.
- Jeong, Soo-Young. (1991). *A study of the logic and practical methodology of educational policy evaluation: focused on the evaluation method for policy norm*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea.
- Joint Association of Citizens for High School Equalization. (2003). *The Harbor City's high school equalization: A way for development of Harbor education*. Unpublished paper.
- Jones, C. O. (1961). Representation in Congress: The case of the House Agriculture Committee. *American Political Science Review*, 55(2), 358-367.
- Kafer, K. (2004). *School choice in 2003: An old concept gains new life*. Retrieved October 23, 2004, from <http://www.heritage.org>
- Kang, In-Soo. (2002). A review on the constitutional compatibility of the High School Entrance Examination System in the equalization policy. *The Journal of Educational Administration*, 20(4), 23-54.
- Karper, J. H., & Boyd, W. L. (1988). Interest groups and the changing environment of state educational policymaking: Developments in Pennsylvania. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 24(1), 21-54.
- Kim, Cheon-Gi. (1999). The process and results of High School Equalization's abolition in Jeonbuk area. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 37(2), 303-322.
- Kim, Jong-Cheol. (1982). *Theory and practice of educational administration*. Seoul: Koyyookkwoahaksa.

- Kim, Kyong-Dong. (Eds.), (1999). *Korean society in transition*. Seoul: Institute of Korean Studies, Seoul National University.
- Kim, Kyung-Keun, & Byun, Soo-Yong. (2003). Determinants of parents' attitude toward the High School Leveling Policy. *Korean Journal of Sociology of Education*, 13(2), 21-45.
- Kim, Kyung-Sun, & Chung, Il-Hwan. (2003). The analysis of policy process and outcome of high school equalization. *Korean Policy Sciences Review*, 7(3), 1-20.
- Kim, Tae-Jong, Lee, Myung-Hee, Lee, Young, & Lee, Joo-Ho. (2004). *Empirical study on how the High School Equalization Policy affects student achievement*. Seoul: KDI International Policy Graduate School.
- Kim, Young-Cheol. (2002). *Autonomy of private schools: Improvement of the High School Equalization Policy*. Seoul: National Management Strategy Research Center.
- Kim, Young-Cheol, Jeon, Yong-Whan, & Han, Yu-Kyung. (2004). *Improvement of Gyeong-sang-buk-do high school entrance system: Diagnosis of Gyeong-buk education and improvement of Pohang high school entrance system*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute.
- Kim, Young-Cheol, Kim, Joo-Hun, Lee, In-Hyo, & Choi, Don-Min. (1995). *The study for improvement of the High School Equalization Policy*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute.
- Kim, Young-Cheol, Yoon, Jong-Hyuk, & Cho, Dong-Sup. (2003). *Improvement of Kang-won-do high school entrance system*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute.
- Kim, Yoon-Tae, Jung, Jin-Hwan, Kang, Moo-Sup, & Kwan, Gyun. (1979). *Evaluation study of the High School Equalization Policy: The second year report*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute.

- Kim, Yoon-Tae, Jung, Jin-Hwan, Kang, Moo-Sup, & Kwan, Gyun. (1978). *Evaluation study of the High School Equalization Policy: The first year report*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute.
- Kingdon, J. W. (1995). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.
- Knott, J. H. & Miller, G. J. (1987). *Reforming bureaucracy: The politics of institutional choice*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Kwak, Byung-Sun, Kim, Heung-Joo, Park, Duk-Gyu, Yang, Seung-Sil, Kang, Hye-Young, Kim, An-Na, et al. (2000). *A study for improvement of Gyeong-gi high school entrance examination system*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute.
- Ladd, H. F., & Fiske, E. B. (2003). Does competition improve teaching and learning?: Evidence from New Zealand. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25(1), 97-112.
- Lake Province Office of Education. (2004a). Future plan for Harbor area equalization policy. Unpublished news release.
- Lake Province Office of Education. (2004b). Running plan of the Study Committee for Harbor High School Equalization. Unpublished government paper.
- Lambert, L. (2002). A framework for shared leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 59(8), 37-40.
- Lee, Byoung-Gil. (1985). *A study on the comprehensive evaluation of educational policies*. Unpublished master's thesis, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea.
- Lee, Il-Yong. (2003). High school entrance policy and private schools. *Korean Journal of Educational Research*, 41(4), 131-155.
- Lee, Ju-Ho. (2002). Reforming secondary school equalization policies in Korea. *The Journal of Economic and Finance of Education*, 11(1), 237-269.

- Ly, Phuong. (Feb. 9, 2005). A wrenching choice. Retrieved from February 9, 2005, from the Washington Post Website <http://www.washingtonpost.com>
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mazzoni, T. L. (1993). The changing politics of state education policy making: A 20-year Minnesota perspective, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 15(4), 357-379.
- McChesney, F. S. (1997). *Money for nothing: Politicians, rent extraction, and political extortion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- McConnell, G. (1966). *Private power & American democracy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- McDonald, T. (2002). The false promise of vouchers. *Educational Leadership*, 59(7), 33-37.
- Meltsner, A. J. (1976). *Policy analysts in the bureaucracy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Merrifield, J. (2002). *School choices: True and false*. Oakland, CA: The Independent Institute.
- Merrifield, J. (2001). *The school choice wars*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Republic of Korea [MOE]. (2004a). *Education in Korea 2004~2005*. Seoul, Korea: Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, Republic of Korea [MOE]. (2004b). *The 50 years history of Korean education*. Retrieved October 10, 2004 from Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development Website: <http://www.moe.go.kr>
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development Executive Order No. 852. (2005). Executive Order On The Regions Where In Which Superintendent Administers High School Entrance Examination.



- Mintrom, M. (2000). *Policy entrepreneurs and school choice*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Monypenny, P. R. (1967). Introduction. In H. R. Mahood (Eds.), *Pressure groups in American politics* (pp. 1-14). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Moore, D. R., & Danvenport, S., (1990). School choice: The new improved sorting machine. In W. L. Boyd, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), *Choice in education: Potential and problems* (pp. 187-223). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.
- Nathan, J. (Eds.). (1989). *Public schools by choice: Expanding opportunities for parents, students, and teachers*. St. Paul, Minnesota: The Institute for Learning and Teaching.
- National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education. (2003). *School choice: Doing it right way makes a difference*. Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Olsen, M. (1971). *The logic of collective action: Public goods and the theory of groups*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Park, Bu-Kwon. (2002). *High school lottery assignment system: Issues and answers*. Retrieved March 10, 2004 from <http://www.kedi.re.kr>
- Park, Bu-Kwon. (1988). *The state, class and educational policy: A case study of South Korea's High School Equalization Policy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation thesis, The University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Park, Bu-Kwon, Kim, Yung-In, Kim, Heung-Joo, Seo, Jung-Hwa, Song, Ki-Chang, Sin, Kwang-Young, et al. (2002). *Diagnosis and improvement of the High School Equalization Policy*. Seoul: Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development.
- Park, Joshua. (May 3 & 4, 2005). The lone father goose-a worthy sacrifice or a wild goose chase? (I, II). Retrieved September 25, 2005 from The Korea Times Website <http://times.hankooki.com>

- Park, Jung-Hyun. (Dec. 8, 2004). OECD said that the equalization increased average level of student performance. Retrieved January 10, 2005 from The Chosun Ilbo Website <http://www.chosun.com>
- Park, Sang-Cheol. (Dec. 6, 2003). The ratio of voting for the equalization policy in *Kang-won* Province is below 60%. Retrieved December 6, 2003 from the Yonhapnews Website <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr>
- Patrick, D. P. & Harris, S. (2002). Charter schools. In S. Harris, & S. L. T. Lowery (Eds.), *A school for every child: School choice in America today* (pp. 33-44). Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
- Pearson, J. (1993). *Myths of educational choice*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger
- Radin, B. A., & Hawley, W. D. (1988). *The politics of federal reorganization: Creating U.S. Department of Education*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Riker, W. H. (1962). *The theory of political coalitions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rosegrant, S. (1999). *The Cleveland school voucher program (A) (B): A question of choice*. Retrieved Oct. 10, 2002, from <http://ksgcase.harvard.edu>
- Rosenthal, A. (1993). *The third house: Lobbyists and lobbying in the states*. Washington, D. C.: CQ Press.
- Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2003). *Learning in the field*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication Inc.
- Sabatier, P. A. (1988). An advocacy coalition framework of policy change and the role of policy-oriented learning therein. *Policy Sciences*, 21(2-3), 129-168.
- Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. C. (Eds.), (1993). *Policy change and learning: An advocacy coalition approach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

- Salisbury, R. H. (1969). An exchange theory of interest groups. *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 13(1), 1-32.
- Schlozman, K. L., & Tierney, J. T. (1986). *Organized interests and American Democracy*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Schneider, M., Teske, P., & Marschall, M. (2000). *Choosing schools: Consumer choice and the quality of American schools*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Scribner, J. D., & Englert, R. M. (1977). The politics of education: An introduction. In J. D. Scribner (Eds.), *The Politics of education: The seventy-sixth yearbook of the national society for the study of education, Part II* (pp. 1-29). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Seo, Nam-Soo. (1995). *The relationship between education and state in Korea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Dongguk University, Seoul. Korea.
- Shin, Dong-Ro, & Kwon, In-Tak. (2000). Current arguments and future tasks on the equalization policy in high school entrance examination. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 38(2), 21-39.
- Smith, R. A. (1984). Advocacy, interpretation, and influence in the U.S. Congress. *American Political Science Review*, 78(1), 44-63.
- Spring, J. (1988). *Conflict of interests: The politics of American education*. New York: Longman.
- Stake, R. E. (2000). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp.435-454). Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage.
- Stout, R. T., Tallerico, M. & Scribner, K. P. (1995). Values: The 'What?' of the politics of education. In, J. D. Scribner, & D. H. Layton (Eds.), *The study of educational politics: The 1994 commemorative yearbook of the Politics of Education Association (1969-1994)*. Washington. D.C.; The Falmer Press.

- Summerfield, H. L. (1974). *Power and process: The formulation and limits of federal educational policy*. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing.
- Sung, Ki-Sun. (2004). A hierarchical linear modeling in the effects of High School Equalization Policy on high school students' achievement, *Korean Journal of Sociology of Education*, 14(3), 87-106.
- Sung, Ki-Sun. (2002). The analysis of the relationship between High School Equalization Policy and the general low-achievement phenomenon of the students, *Korean Journal of Sociology of Education*, 12(3), 121-135.
- Sung, Ki-Sun. (2001). *High school equalization: Issue and prospective*. Retrieved March 10, 2004, from <http://www.eduhope.net>
- Sung, Ki-Sun. (1999). Effect analysis of the High School Equalization Policy on student achievement, *The Journal of Korean Education*, 26(2), 149-168.
- Teske, P., & Schneider, M. (2001). What research can tell policymakers about school choice. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 20(4). 609-631.
- The Court ruled “‘Freedom of religion’ the expulsion of Kang, Ui-seok is unconstitutional.” Retrieved January 21, 2005, from The Yonhapnews Website <http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr>
- Thomas, C. S. (Eds.), (2004). *Research guide to U.S. and international interest groups*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Thomas, C. S., & Hrebendar, R. J. (1999). Interest groups in the states. In V. Gray, R. L. Hanson, & H. Jacob (Eds.), *Politics in the American States: A comparative analysis* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- Thomas, N. C. (1975). *Education in national politics*. New York: David McKay Company.
- Tooley, J., Dixon, P., & Stanfield, J. (2003). *Delivering better education: Market solutions for educational improvement*. Retrieved October 24, 2004, from <http://www.adamsmith.org>

- Truman, D. B. (1951). *The governmental process: Political interests and public opinion*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Viteritti, J. P. (2003). Defining equity: Politics, markets, and public policy. In A. Wolfe (Eds.), *School choice: The moral debate* (pp.13-30). Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Viteritti, J. P. (1999). *Choosing equality: School choice, the constitution, and civil society*. Washington D.C.; Brookings Institution Press.
- Walker, J. L. (1983). The origin and maintenance of interest groups in America. *American Political Science Review*, 77(June), 390-406.
- Wellington, J. (2000). *Educational research: Contemporary issues and practical approaches*. New York: Continuum.
- Wells, A. S. (1996). African-American students' view of school choice. In B. Fuller, & R. F. Elmore (Eds.), *Who choose? Who loses?: Culture, institutions, and the unequal effects of school choice* (pp. 25-49). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wirt, F. M., & Kirst, M. W. (1972). *The political web of American schools*. Boston: Little Brown and Co.
- Witte, J. F. (1996). Who benefits from Milwaukee choice program? In B. Fuller, & R. F. Elmore (Eds.), *Who choose? Who loses?: Culture, institutions, and the unequal effects of school choice* (pp. 118-137). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wolfe, A. (Eds.), (2003). *School choice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Yang, Seung-Sil. (2002). *Improvement of Jeon-nam academic high school entrance system*. Seoul: Korean Educational Development Institute.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Category of Major Stakeholder		Interviewee
Officials of school district		3(2)
Parents	Parents of excellent students	2(2)
	Parents of low achieving students	2(2)
Alumni	Alumni of top-rank high schools	2(2)
	Alumni of low-rank high schools	2(2)
Teachers	Teachers of top-rank high schools	2(2)
	Teachers of low-rank high schools	2(2)
	Middle school teachers	2(2)
Principals	Principals of top-rank high schools	2(2)
	Principals of low-rank high schools	3(2)
Leaders of teacher unions		3(2)
School board members		2(2)
Community leaders		3(2)
Others		2(0)
Total		32(26)

\* ( ) indicates the originally expected number of interviewees.

**APPENDIX B**  
**APPROVAL LETTER**

**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Research on Korean School Equalization Policy**  
Approval to Conduct Research

**Investigators:** Graduate Student June Hee Lim, Professor William. L. Boyd

This is to certify that the above-named investigators have permission to conduct research at the Lake Province School District.

The investigation and the part of the teachers selected for interview have been fully explained to me by June Hee Lim and I understand his explanation.

As a superintendent responsible for the above-named school district, I understand that participation of teachers selected for interviewing is strictly voluntary and that the teachers may withdraw their consent and terminate their participation at any time. I also understand that any data or answers teachers may give to questions will remain confidential and will not be personally identifiable.

---

**Superintendent's Signature**

**Date**

I, the undersigned, have defined and fully explained the investigation to the above-named individual.

---

**Investigator's Signature**

**Date**

**Contact persons:**

June Hee Lim  
Graduate Student  
The Pennsylvania State University  
200 Rackley Bldg.  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814)237-1530

Dr. William L. Boyd  
Batschelet Chair Professor  
The Pennsylvania State University  
200 Rackley Bldg.  
University Park, PA 16802  
(814)863-3779

**펜실베니아 주립 대학교**  
**한국의 평준화 정책에 관한 연구 동의서**

**연구자:** 박사과정 임준희    **지도교수:** 윌리엄 보이드(William L. Boyd) 박사

이 동의서는 상기 연구자가 본 교육청에서 연구를 수행함에 동의함을 증명하는 바입니다. 연구와 인터뷰에 참여하는 교원들에 대해 임준희는 충분히 설명하였으며, 본인은 그의 설명을 잘 이해하였습니다. 상기 교육청에 대한 책임있는 교육감으로서 본인은 교원들의 인터뷰 참여는 자발적이며, 그들은 언제든지 동의를 철회할 수 있고 또 참여를 그만둘 수 있음을 알고 있습니다. 또한 교원들로부터 입수하는 관련 정보는 연구자가 안전하게 보관하며 참여자의 익명성을 보장하는 것으로 이해하는 바입니다.

---

**교육감 서명**

**날 짜**

저는 본 연구에 대해 위 분에게 충분히 설명하였음을 확인하는 바입니다.

---

**연구자 서명**

**날 짜**

**연 락 처:**

임 준 희

박사과정

펜실베니아 주립 대학교

200 Rackley Bldg.

University Park, PA 16802

(814)237-1530

Dr. 윌리엄 보이드

석좌교수

펜실베니아 주립 대학교

200 Rackley Bldg.

University Park, PA 16802

(814)863-3779



**APPENDIX C**  
**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

The Pennsylvania State University

**Title of Project:** The Politics of High School Equalization Policy-Making in a Korean Local School District

**Principal Investigator:** June Hee Lim, 200 Rackley Bldg.  
University Park, PA 16802 Phone: (814) 237-1530  
E-mail: [jul146@psu.edu](mailto:jul146@psu.edu)

**Advisor:** William L. Boyd, 200 Rackley Bldg.  
University Park, PA 16802 Phone: (814) 863-3779  
E-mail: [wboyd@psu.edu](mailto:wboyd@psu.edu)

1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore how education stakeholders support or oppose the Korean School Equalization Policy, on what policy value base they make their arguments, and what educational administrators think about their political actions.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be explained the research purpose and research procedure (including the audio recording of interview). You will be asked to sign a consent form and answer 10 - 20 questions in a face-to-face interview. You may be contacted by telephone or by email if there are any questions about the interview later on.
3. **Discomforts and Risks:** There are few risks of participants due to the interviews, but when participants are asked to answer individual thoughts or policy preferences and other personal data they may feel uncomfortable.
4. **Benefits:** The benefits to you include that you might have a better understanding of what implications the High School Equalization Policy has for the school district, the community, and children. Also, the benefits to society include the education stakeholders' clearer understanding of the High School Equalization Policy. The study findings could help administrators improve the policy-making process, and allow the community to deliver its voice more effectively.

5. **Duration/Time:** It will take about one hour to complete the interview. The follow-up call or email may take an additional 15 minutes.
  
6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** The Office for Research Protections and the Social Science Institutional Review Board may review records related to this project. Only the researcher and his committee members know participants' identities. If the research is published, all information that would identify you will be changed into *pseudonyms*. Direct quotes may be used. All tapes that record the interviews will be stored in a locked file cabinet and will be destroyed by the end of 2006. The investigator will be the only person who will have access to the tapes.
  
7. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact June Hee Lim at (1)814-237-1530 with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775 or at [orprotections@psu.edu](mailto:orprotections@psu.edu).
  
8. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. And, if you don't consent to record this interview, you don't need to sign on this form.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form for your records.

Participant Signature	Date
Person Obtaining Consent	Date

연구 참여 동의서  
펜실베니아 주립 대학교

**연구제목:** 한국의 지방 교육청에 있어서 고등학교 평준화 정책 결정의 정치학

**연구자:** 임준희, 200 Rackley Bldg. University Park, PA 16802  
Phone: (814) 237-1530/ E-mail: [jul146@psu.edu](mailto:jul146@psu.edu)

**지도교수:** 윌리엄 보이드 박사 (William L. Boyd),  
200 Rackley Bldg. University Park, PA 16802  
Phone: (814) 863-3777/ E-mail: [wboyd@psu.edu](mailto:wboyd@psu.edu)

1. **연구목적:** 이 연구목적은 교육 관계자들이 어떻게 평준화 정책을 지지하거나 반대하는 지, 어떠한 정책 가치를 주장 하는지, 그리고 교육 행정가들은 그들의 활동에 어떻게 대응하는 지 연구함에 있습니다.
2. **연구절차:** 우선 연구 연구목적과 연구절차에 대해 설명을 듣게 되며, 인터뷰에의 참여 여부와 녹음에 대한 동의 여부에 사인을 하시게 됩니다. 그리고 면대면으로 약 10 개 내지 20 개의 인터뷰 질문에 답하게 됩니다. 만일 인터뷰 후 추가 질문이 있을 시에는 전화나 이메일로 연락을 받게 될 것입니다.
3. **불이익의 고지:** 이 연구의 인터뷰에 응함으로 인한 불이익은 사실상 거의 없습니다. 그러나 개인 생각이나 다른 개인 신상에 관한 질문이 있을 때 아마도 어색감을 가질 수도 있을 것입니다.
4. **연구이익:** 참여자가 평준화 정책이 교육청과 지역사회 그리고 학생들에게 어떤 의미가 있는지를 이해하는데 도움이 될 것입니다. 그리고 사회적으로 교육 관계인들의 평준화에 대한 명확한 이해를 도울 것입니다. 연구결과는 교육행정가에게는 정책결정 과정의 이해를 도와주고 지역사회에는 더 효과적인 의사표현을 할 수 있도록 해 줄 것입니다.
5. **소요시간:** 오늘 인터뷰에 약 1 시간 정도 소요될 것으로 예상합니다. 나중에 추수 인터뷰가 15 분 이내에서 필요할 수도 있습니다.

6. **비밀보호:** 연구보호처와 사회과학검토위원회는 이 연구 관련 기록들을 검토합니다. 연구자와 학위위원회 위원에게만 연구참여자의 정보가 제공됩니다. 인터뷰 내용의 직접 인용도 있을 수 있으나, 이 연구가 출판될 경우 연구 참여자에 관한 모든 정보는 익명성 보장을 위해 가명으로 처리하겠습니다. 그리고 인터뷰 녹음테이프는 시건장치가 된 서류함에 보관되며, 2006 년 말까지 폐기 처리됩니다. 오직 연구자 만이 녹음 테이프를 관리하게 됩니다.

7. **질문할 권리:** 참여자는 언제든지 연구자체에 대해 질문할 수 있습니다. 필요시에는 연구자 임준희 (814-237-1530)에게 연락하시기 바랍니다. 만일 연구 참여자로서의 권리에 관한 사항은 펜실베니아 주립 대학교 연구보호과(814-865-1775, 또는 orprotections@psu.edu)로 연락하시기 바랍니다.

8. **자발적 참여:** 이 연구에의 참여는 자발적으로 이루어집니다. 언제든지 참여를 그만 둘 수 있으며, 또 대답하기를 원하지 않을 시에는 대답을 거부할 수도 있습니다. 만일 인터뷰 녹음에 동의하지 않는다면 이 동의서에 서명하지 않아도 됩니다.

이 연구에의 참여는 18 세 이상자 만이 연구참여에 동의할 수 있습니다. 이 연구 참여에 동의하는 경우에만 서명을 하여 주시기 바랍니다.

인터뷰 참여자에게는 이 동의서가 1 부 배부됩니다.

---

연구참여자 서명

---

날 짜

---

동의확인자 서명

---

날 짜

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### *Statement of purpose and focus*

The information collected from this interview will contribute to an in-depth analysis of the High School Equalization Policy. The study is designed to specifically study education stakeholders' political actions surrounding the implementation of the Korean School Choice Policy. The overall purpose is to understand how educational interests are conflicting and how education stakeholders deal with the issue.

The study is being conducted as a dissertation for completion of a doctorate program at the Pennsylvania State University. Although I am affiliated with the policy to some extent, I am on neutral ground and I will use the findings only for academic purposes.

Additionally, although most of the information obtained from this interview is a matter of public record, all names of participants and districts will be changed for confidentiality.

#### *Questions* (For teachers, parents, principals, leaders of teachers unions)

1. Tell me about your involvement with the High School Equalization Policy.
  - a. What school did you graduate from?
  - b. What interests do you have in the policy?
  - c. How did you get involved with the initiative?
  - d. Do you support or oppose the policy?
  - e. How active are you in your support or opposition?
  - f. How successful is your child in school? (Parents)
  
2. What effects do you believe the High School Equalization Policy will have on schools and the community?

3. What do you think should be the high school's basic objectives?
4. Why do you support or oppose the policy?
  - a. How effective is the policy to address any specific problems like student achievement, equity, freedom of choice, private education cost, teaching burden, students' examination stress, and private schools' identity?
  - b. Are there any negative or positive effects from this policy?
  - c. What do you believe to be the main debates surrounding the implementation of the policy (equity, excellence, freedom of school choice, autonomy of private schools, freedom of religion)?
5. Who do you believe are key players or groups on this issue?
  - a. Who do you think will get advantages or disadvantages from the High School Equalization Policy?
  - b. Who are the most important proponents or opponents? Why?
6. What strategies do you pursue to achieve your policy preference?
  - a. What activities were you involved with to persuade or compromise with the opposing groups?
  - b. How effective do you believe the activities are?
  - c. Who provides the political support for you? Who joined your coalition?
  - d. How strongly are members of the coalitions united?
  - e. What strategies did you exercise to establish your coalition? (For leaders of teachers unions)
7. Overall, what factors or whom do you expect to be most important to the final outcome of the policy?
8. How effective do you think the other stakeholders' activities are? What activities of other stakeholders are/were most seriously against your preference?

9. How do you think the province superintendent should deal with this issue?
10. Is it possible to make a final decision that satisfies all education stakeholders?
11. Will you accept any educational authority's final decision after you make an effort to achieve your objectives?

*Questions* (For superintendent, members of school board)

1. Tell me about your involvement with the High School Equalization Policy.
  - a. What school did you graduate from?
  - b. What interests do you have in the policy?
  - c. How did you get involved with the initiative?
  - d. Do you support or oppose the policy?
  
2. What effects do you believe the High School Equalization Policy will have on your school district?
  
3. What do you think should be the high school's basic objectives?
  
4. Why do you support or oppose the policy?
  - a. How effective is the policy to address any specific problems like student achievement, equity, freedom of choice, private tutoring, teaching burden, students' examination stress, and private schools' identity?
  - b. Are there any negative or positive effects from this policy?
  - c. What do you believe to be the main debates surrounding the implementation of the policy (equity, excellence, freedom of school choice, autonomy of private schools, freedom of religion)?
  - d. As a representative or neutral mediator, do you think that your activities are appropriate? Why?
  
5. Who do you believe are key players or groups on this issue?
  - a. Who do you think will get advantages or disadvantages from the High School Equalization Policy?
  - b. Who are the most important proponents or opponents? Why?
  
6. What strategies do you follow to achieve your policy preference?



- a. What activities were you involved with to persuade or compromise with the opposing groups?
  - b. How effective do you believe the activities are?
  - c. Who provides the political support for you?
  - d. How strongly are members of the coalitions united?
  - e. What did you promise during the election campaign of 2002 and what effort did you make to keep your promise?
7. Overall, what factors or whom do you expect to be most important to the final outcome of the policy?
8. How effective do you think the other stakeholders' activities are? What activities of other stakeholders are/were most seriously against your preference?
9. Is it possible to make a final decision that satisfies all education stakeholders?
10. How will you deal with them if the proponents or opponents do not follow your final decision? (For superintendent)

*Questions* (For alumni, community leaders)

1. Tell me about your involvement with the High School Equalization Policy.
  - a. What school did you graduate from?
  - b. What interests do you have in the policy?
  - c. How did you get involved with the initiative?
  - d. Do you support or oppose the policy?
  - e. How active are you in your support or opposition?
  - f. How successful is your child in school?
  
2. What effects do you believe the High School Equalization Policy will have on schools and the community?
  
3. What do you think should be the high school's basic objectives?
  
4. Why do you support or oppose the policy?
  - a. How effective is the policy to address any specific problems such as student achievement, equity, freedom of choice, private education cost, teaching burden, students' examination stress, and private schools' identity?
  - b. Are there any negative or positive effects from this policy?
  - c. What do you believe to be the main debates surrounding the implementation of the policy (equity, excellence, freedom of school choice, autonomy of private schools, freedom of religion)?
  
5. Who do you believe are key players or groups on this issue?
  - a. Who do you think will get advantages or disadvantages from the High School Equalization Policy?
  - b. Who are the most important proponents or opponents? Why?

6. What strategies do you follow to achieve your policy preference?
  - a. What activities were you involved with to persuade or compromise with the opposing groups?
  - b. How effective do you believe the activities are?
  - c. Who provides the political support for you? Who joined your coalition?
  - d. How strongly are members of the coalitions united?
  
7. Overall, what factors or whom do you expect to be most important to the final outcome of the policy?
  
8. How effective do you think the other stakeholders' activities are? What activities of other stakeholders are/were most seriously against your preference?
  
9. How do you think the province superintendent should deal with this issue?
  
10. Is it possible to make a final decision that satisfies all education stakeholders?
  
11. Will you accept any educational authority's final decision after you make an effort to achieve your objectives?

## VITA

### June Hee Lim

June Hee Lim was born in 1963 in Korea. He is currently a director of Lake Province School District in Korea since 2001. He began his career at the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE) in 1990 and served in several departments at the MOE (Departments of Vocational Education Policy, Local Education Finance, College Academic Policy, Coordination and Planning of Education Policies, Audit and Inspection), a provincial school district, and a national university.

He graduated from *Yon-sei* University in 1986, with a major in Public Administration and with a minor in Education. From 1986 to 1989, he continued his graduate study in the Graduate School of Education at *Yon-sei* University and obtained a Master's Degree in Educational Administration. In 2002, he was awarded a Korean Government Fellowship for overseas study and started to work in the Educational Leadership Program at the Pennsylvania State University as a doctorate student.

He lives in Seoul, Korea with his wife, Sook-Yeon Lee, and two sons, Doo-Young and Jae-Woo. He can be contacted at [jul146@psu.edu](mailto:jul146@psu.edu) or [limjun66@hanmail.net](mailto:limjun66@hanmail.net).