

LEGISLATIVE CAREERISM, INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES, AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFLUENCE OVER LEGISLATIVE POLICY MAKING IN THE AMERICAN STATES

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This article augments previous findings regarding the impact of legislative professionalization on oversight of state agencies. We examine how the twin processes of institutional professionalization and legislative careerism condition the power relationship between state legislatures and bureaucracies by utilizing individual-level data provided by legislators themselves. Our findings suggest that such influence is more nuanced than previously believed. The relationship between careerism and bureaucratic power over legislative policy making is curvilinear, with administrative power varying by the level of professionalism in state houses, and the influence of careerism conditioned by the level of professionalization.

Democratically elected legislators are afforded the primary responsibility of overseeing the actions of administrative agencies. As this authority has remained constant, many state legislatures have become more professionalized over the past four decades to bolster oversight capacity of

the bureaucracy (King 2000; Squire 1992). The added resources—better pay, benefits, and job prestige—make legislative service more attractive and, as a result, enhance legislative careerism (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 2000; Rosenthal 1996; Squire 2007). Scholars have found that while an increase in institutional resources stemming from institutional professionalization enhances legislative influence over agencies, careerism may lessen such influence because the personal incentive for oversight wanes with a constant focus on reelection (Rosenthal 1981; Woods and Baranowski 2006).

Prior research on the power relationship between legislative principals and administrative agents has generally operationalized influence through surveys of administrative personnel, such as the American State Administrators Project, that ask administrators how much influence they perceive legislators to possess over administrative policy making (Dometrius, Burke, and Wright 2008; Wright and Cho 2001). These research designs implicitly argue that professionalization enhances legislative influence that naturally results in lessened agency influence (Reenock and Poggione 2004; Woods and Baranowski 2006). Studies have generally overlooked how professionalization affects the capacity of administrative agencies to influence legislative policy making. By analyzing the interactive relationship between institutional and individual-level changes brought about by professionalization on administrative influence over legislative policy making, this article expands on previous findings that higher degrees of institutional-level professionalization result in legislators believing that bureaucrats have less influence over legislative policy making.

Professionalization and Power

Since the legislative-reform movement of the 1960s, state legislatures have generally experienced an enhanced level of professionalism (King 2000). Reformers called for increasing the ability of legislators to manage budgetary responsibilities, a complex policy environment, and the ever-growing demands of citizens. The result was increased staff resources, longer sessions, and better pay and benefits for legislators who engendered higher levels of legislative careerism (Squire 2007). Professionalization thus occurred at two levels: at the institutional level in the form of greater institutional resources, session lengths, and staff, and at the individual level in the form of enhanced legislative careerism (Rosenthal 1996).

The impact of increased professionalism on state legislatures has been profound. Scholars have noted its effects in a variety of areas. For example, Fiorina (1997) and Dometrius and Ozymy (2006) have demonstrated its effect on the partisan distribution of state legislatures. Connections have also been drawn between increased professionalism and legislative efficiency (Thompson 1986), divided government (Fiorina 1994), increased careerism

(Squire 1988), and public opinion monitoring and policy responsiveness (Maestas 2000; 2003).

One important expectation of combining full-time service with enhanced legislative resources was an increased capacity to engage in administrative oversight (Dometrius, Burke, and Wright 2008; Gerber, Maestas, and Dometrius 2005; Reenock and Poggione 2004). Greater service commitments provide additional opportunities to monitor agency actions. Enhanced institutional resources, such as more funds for legislative and policy staff, enable legislators to engage in more stringent oversight. The higher pay, benefits, and prestige of service in professional legislatures tends to broaden the candidate pool to include more highly educated individuals (Squire 2007). These variables provide professional legislators a distinct advantage regarding their ability to oversee and influence agency behavior.

Research on how professionalization influences the power relationship between state legislatures and administrative agencies tends to focus on whether added institutional resources and other variables empower legislators (Baranowski 2001; Gerber, Maestas, and Dometrius 2005; Ogul 1976). Little attention is paid to how legislative professionalization affects administrative influence over state legislatures. These studies generally assume a zero-sum game between actors. Analysis confirming that professionalization tilts the balance of power in favor of legislators naturally assumes it comes at the expense of agencies. It follows that, holding other variables constant, administrative agencies should enhance their ability to influence legislative policy making as professionalism wanes.

Previous research demonstrates that increased institutional professionalization weakens agency influence over legislative policy making (Carey et al. 2006). Theoretically, this result occurs because added institutional resources foster a greater legislative ability to hire staff, develop expertise, and oversee agency actions that enhances legislative influence at the expense of agencies. This work does not go far enough, however, as the impact of institutional resources is ultimately conditioned by how legislators use these resources.

Legislators do not always possess the appropriate incentives to use resources for oversight. Rosenthal (1981) says legislators are likely to spend their time on the job choosing activities that accrue credit with their constituents and bolster their chances of reelection. Engaging in higher levels of casework, constituency service, and campaigning becomes even more important as careerism increases and so does the subsequent need for constant reelection. Administrative oversight garners little attention from the press or constituents. Woods and Baranowski (2006) argue that the low visibility of administrative oversight creates a strategic disincentive for legislators with career ambitions to engage in the oversight of state agencies. They state that “career-oriented legislators tend to be far more

focused on electoral concerns and career advancement than on oversight, which is largely ignored by the electorate” (Woods and Baranowski 2006, 590). In their view, even if institutional professionalization brings a greater capacity to engage in agency oversight, careerists may simply deploy those resources accordingly. “Although the resources necessary to engage in active bureaucratic oversight improve with professionalization,” they note, “these resources may increasingly be employed for other purposes” (Woods and Baranowski 2006, 591).

Studies suggest that how legislators divide their time on the job is a combination of their incentive structure and the institutional resources available to them (Maestas 2003). When resources are constrained, legislators must make strategic choices about how to allocate their time and energy. Careerist legislators will no doubt prioritize activities that bolster their chances of reelection. We believe the careerism/oversight trade-off should occur only when institutional constraints force legislators to make such hard choices. Once institutional resources rise to a certain point, legislators should not be forced to make such extreme trade-offs.

High levels of institutional resources, such as policy and administrative staff, should allow legislators to balance their career aspirations with other less publicly salient activities like administrative oversight. Engaging in oversight should lead to greater legislative influence over agencies, and increased institutional resources should further reinforce this relationship, as long as adequate resources exist to accommodate the electioneering needs of careerist legislators. As Squire (2007, 214) notes, “A greater number of staff members leads to better-informed legislators, allowing members to have greater influence in the policymaking process. . . . A larger staff base likely improves re-election prospects by enhancing legislators’ ability to provide constituent services.”

A marginal increase in resources in amateur legislatures makes little difference to oversight because it is insufficient to reach the minimum threshold needed for legislative autonomy. Likewise, a marginal increase in resources in highly professional legislatures makes little difference because they are already well resourced to compensate for the effects of careerism. The largest effect of resources should occur in mid-range professional bodies, which contain higher levels of careerism but lack adequate resources for taking advantage of greater careerism. Therefore, we expect the effects of careerism on administrative power over state legislatures’ policy making to be strongest in moderately professional state houses.

Data

Individual-level data are derived from a survey of state legislators (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1995). The survey was conducted by mail

and administered to state legislators in all 50 states during the spring of 1995. Former legislators who served in 1993 or 1994 were also surveyed. All members of the upper legislative chambers were surveyed (including Nebraska's unicameral chamber), along with three-quarters of the members of the lower house. The survey yielded a response rate of 47% and 3,542 cases. All states are represented in the survey.¹

Measuring Influence

It has become common practice to measure the power relationship between state agencies and the legislative and executive branches with surveys that ask state administrators to rate the influence of these actors on agency discretion. The long-standing American State Administrator's Project (ASAP) is widely used (Dometrius 2002; 2008; Gerber, Maestas, and Dometrius 2005; Wright and Cho 2001), but other similar surveys have also been implemented (Reenock and Poggione 2004; Woods and Baranowski 2006). These studies link individual-level data with data on gubernatorial approval ratings (Dometrius 2002), formal legislative powers (Gerber, Maestas, and Dometrius 2005), and other variables to assess their impact on agency discretion.

One section of the survey asks legislators to report the relative influence of a variety of actors on the legislative process. Included in this module is a question measuring the *influence of state agencies*: "What do you think is the relative influence of the following actors in determining legislative outcomes in your chamber?" [Bureaucrats/Civil Servants].² This variable is coded on a scale ranging from 1 to 7 where 1 = "no influence" and 7 = "dictates policy." We use this variable to measure the balance of power between legislators and state agencies (Carey et al. 2006; Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1998). Six percent of respondents report that agencies have "no influence," less than 1% respond "dictates policy," 14% answer "5", and 22% answer "2."

We recognize the cross-level inference problem posed by testing institutional-level theoretical constructs with individual-level indicators. Although legislators' perceptions of bureaucratic influence is an imperfect measure of bureaucratic influence over the legislature as a whole, in this context it is impossible to create a proper measure of influence at the institutional level without relying on the evaluations of individual-level actors. Studies examining formal characteristics of state political institutions, such as executive power (Holbrook 1993) and legislative power over administrative-agency rulemaking authority (Gerber, Maestas, and Dometrius 2005), can measure these institutional-level constructs with institutional-level variables. In the case of more subjective measures, such as political corruption or interest group influence in state houses, studies

turn to individual-level data derived from state house reporters (Boylan and Long 2003) or state legislators (Ozmy 2010) that can best gauge such constructs. Our variable for bureaucratic influence falls within these same parameters, and we believe that measuring bureaucratic influence over legislative policy making as a whole can be adequately represented by those who witness this influence first-hand. Moreover, careerism is best measured at the individual level, and querying these same individuals about their career aspirations and perceptions of administrative influence best captures this critical relationship.

Careerism and Resources

As prescribed by Rosenthal (1996) and Woods and Baranowski (2006), legislative professionalism is divided into careerism and institutional resources. Rosenthal (1996) notes that it is difficult to measure the concept of careerism unambiguously, for it is highly multi-faceted. He suggests that it should include more direct measures, such as self-identification by legislators, as well as indirect measures, such as salary (Rosenthal 1996, 176).

Our data include a question that allows legislators to self-identify as careerists, which is our primary indicator of *careerism*. It asks respondents: “Do you think of politics and public office as a career?” This variable is coded as a dummy. Given negative public perceptions about careerism in politics (as evidenced by the fact that term limits were about to be instituted in many states shortly after the survey was completed), respondents may be less than forthcoming about identifying themselves as careerists. We try to control for this factor with a measure of *legislative tenure* capturing the number of terms served in both upper and lower chambers. Legislative salary is included as an indirect measure of careerism. We utilize a measure of *total compensation* (in dollars) that takes into account both salary (in dollars) and per diem payments because most state legislators receive some or most of their pay from the latter (Dometrius and Ozmy 2006; Fiorina 1999).

Institutional resources are measured by legislative spending, staff resources, and session lengths. Total legislative expenditures (in dollars) for 1992 were determined by the survey administrators according to data derived from *The Book of the States*. Staff resources are measured by the total number of permanent legislative staff available to each legislature in 1996. The staffing variable is taken from data on total permanent legislative staff in 1996 gathered by the National Conference of State Legislatures (2004), with the exception of Massachusetts where a trend estimate over time was used because data were unavailable for 1996. Permanent staff ranged from 18 in Wyoming to 3,580 in New York. Session length (measured by total days in session) is also taken from NCSL (2004).

Additional Contributing Factors

Careerism is expected to shift the legislative focus toward electioneering activities (Rosenthal 1981). The survey includes questions on the amount of time legislators spend *campaigning*, *engaging in casework*, and *keeping in touch with constituents*. These questions are derived from a module that asks respondents: “How much time do you actually spend on each of the following activities?” [Campaigning/fundraising, helping constituents with problems with government, keeping up with constituents]. The variable is coded on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 where 1 = “hardly any” and 5 = “a great deal.” Most legislators claimed they spent little time campaigning (modal response = 2), but claimed they spent “a great deal” of time on casework and keeping up with constituents. Question responses may be less than candid and possibly represent a positive response bias. Caution should be used when interpreting results.

Legislative power over agencies can be greatly affected by the amount of formal oversight powers possessed by a legislature. We utilize the Legislative Administrative Rules Review Indicator (LARRI) developed by Gerber, Maestas, and Dometrius (2005) to control for this factor. This index takes into account the ability of each state legislature to review the rules of state agencies. States are coded 0 = “no legislative rule review authority,” 1 = “advisory authority only,” and 2 = “sanctioning power to change rules.” Most states have at least advisory authority, with the modal response being “sanctioning power.” The executive branch can also play a considerable role in organizing and influencing bureaucratic behavior (Sigelman and Dometrius 1988). To control for this factor, we include Holbrook’s (1993) measure of gubernatorial power, which captures the appointive, organizational, and budgetary powers of the executive branch in each state. This index varies in value from the most powerful executive office in Alaska (6.70) to the weakest in South Carolina (-7.91). Additionally, we use data provided by the survey administrators to control for the average amount of legislative turnover from 1992 and 1994, the size of the state’s population, and the gender, race, and family income of each legislator. The summary statistics for the variables are reported in Table A1 in the Appendix.

Results

To test our hypotheses, we model the relationship between professionalism and administrative influence across all state legislatures to demonstrate the interactive relationship with institutional resources and careerism. We then provide additional analysis by modeling this same relationship across highly professional, moderately professional, and amateur legislatures exclusively. We use a three-part scale constructed by

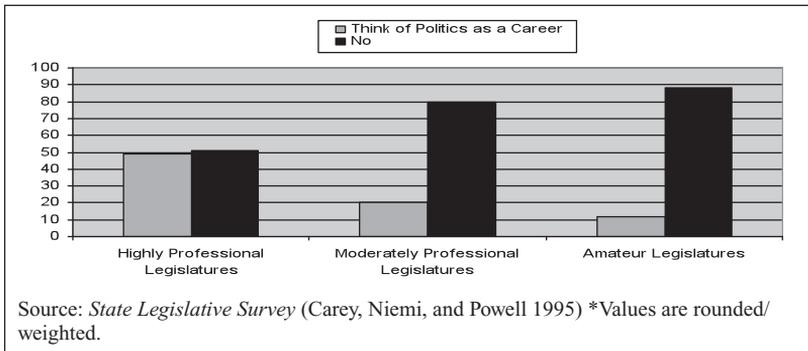
the NCSL that proves fruitful for this purpose because it takes into account legislative compensation, staff resources, and time spent on the job as measures of professionalism. This scale yields a three-fold categorization of highly professional (Red states), moderately professional (White states), and amateur legislatures (Blue states).

According to the NCSL, in 2008 average legislators in Red states spent 80% of their job time engaged in activities related to legislative service, they were compensated at an average pay of \$68,599, and they retained an average staff size of 8.9 individuals per member. Legislators in White states spent an average of 70% of their time on the job, received an average pay of \$35,326, and had an average of 3.1 staff members. Blue states are part-time legislatures (54% of the time spent on the job), with low pay (\$15,984), and minimal staff (1.2).

Before moving on to hypothesis testing, we consider two important assumptions about legislative behavior in this context. Namely, that professionalization engenders higher levels of careerism and that careerist legislators are likely to spend more time on reelection-oriented activities than are non-careerists. We find both these theoretical assumptions to be empirically supported by the data.

Figure 1 below compares the level of legislative careerism with legislative professionalism, using the careerism self-identification indicator and the three-group NCSL categorization for professionalism. The data suggest that across the states, legislators are generally more likely to be non-careerists than careerists. There does appear, however, to be a marked trend toward careerism that increases with professionalization. In amateur legislatures 12% of respondents view legislative service as a “career,” compared with 20% of respondents in moderately professional legislatures and 49% in highly professional legislatures.

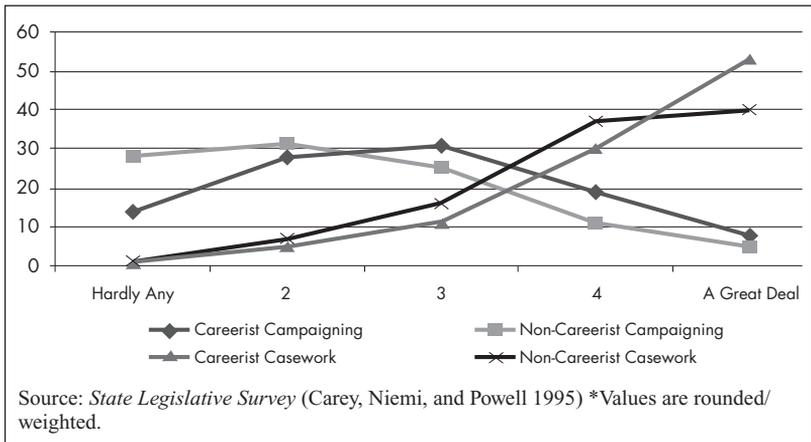
Figure 1
Legislative Careerism versus Legislative Professionalism
in American State Legislatures.



We now demonstrate that there are appreciable differences in the amount of time that careerists and non-careerists dedicate to electioneering activities. Figure 2 compares legislators in the sample who self-identify as careerists (versus those who do not) with the amount of casework and campaigning/fundraising undertaken while in office. Table A2 in the Appendix provides fuller analysis of these behavioral differences. The values range on a five-point scale from legislators who report engaging in “hardly any” to “a great deal” of such activities. Careerists are likely to spend much time on casework (53%) and keeping up with constituents (49%). A mere 14% report that they spend hardly any time fundraising. Fewer careerists also report spending a “great deal” of time or close to it studying legislation (28%) and writing new legislation (23%). By contrast, non-careerists report spending much less time on these activities, with 40% spending a great deal of time on casework, 39% keeping in touch with constituents, and 19% seeking pork barrel projects (as opposed to 28% of careerists). Twice as many non-careerists as careerists engage in campaigning/fundraising (28% versus 14%).

The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 1 below as a set of four models. Ordered-logit models are chosen in recognition of the ordinally measured dependent variables. Model 1 includes respondents from all legislatures and a variable to account for the interactive relationship between legislative resources and careerism. Model 2 comprises only legislators from amateur legislatures (Blue states). Model 3 comprises legislators from moderately professional legislatures (White states). Model 4 comprises legislators from highly professional legislatures (Red states).

Figure 2
Casework and Campaigning Differences Between Careerist and Non-Careerist State Legislators.



Model 1 contains three variables that demonstrate a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable. Two indicators for careerism (legislative tenure and total compensation) are not statistically significant. Our primary measure of careerism (self-identification) is positively related to the dependent variable. As expected, the finding suggests that higher levels of careerism result in an increase in administrative influence over the legislative process in the states. Moreover, an interactive relationship is also present between careerism and institutional resources. The combined impact of careerism and resources has a negative impact on the dependent variable, suggesting that enough resources may override the influence of careerism.

The added effect of careerism and institutional resources thus appears to bolster administrative influence over state legislatures. Resources may therefore condition the impact of careerism. Increased executive power apparently enhances administrative influence over the legislative process. In an effort to refine the analysis further, we turn to the three additional models that divide the analysis into amateur, moderate, and highly professional legislatures. Here we are looking more for the significance of the careerism indicators than for the variables for resources. Although legislatures do vary in resources within these models, we can better examine resource differences (and their interaction with careerism) across models.

The second model for amateur legislatures is quite weak and the model itself is not statistically significant. The main indicators of interest for careerism and institutional resources are not significant either. Only casework and constituent service influence the dependent variable. This result is neither surprising nor unexpected since institutional resources do not vary greatly in this sample of legislatures and careerism is much more prevalent in more professional legislatures, where the incentive for career service is greater.

Table 1
Careerism, Legislative Professionalism, and Administrative Influence over
Legislative Policy Making in American State Houses

Careerism	All Legislatures	Amateur Legislatures	Moderately Professional Legislatures	Highly Professional Legislatures
Self-identification	.35** (.11)	.16 (.17)	.28** (.13)	.01 (.15)
Lower terms	.01 (.01)	.00 (.02)	.03* (.02)	-.05 (.03)
Higher terms	.00 (.01)	.01 (.02)	.00 (.01)	-.02 (.02)
Total comp.	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	.00001* (.00006)	.00 (.00)
Institutional Resources				
Session length	.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.01** (.00)
Permanent staff	-.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.001** (.00)	-.00 (.00)
Expenditures	.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00001* (.00001)	.00 (.00)
Constituent Service				
Campaigning	.02 (.03)	.04 (.05)	.04 (.04)	.03 (.07)
In touch with constituents	-.05 (.05)	-.14* (.07)	.18** (.08)	-.30** (.14)
Casework	.05 (.05)	.12* (.07)	-.05 (.08)	.20 (.13)
Controls				
Legislative rule review powers	-.06 (.04)	.07 (.13)	-.06 (.06)	-.26* (.16)
Executive power	.05** (.02)	.06 (.04)	-.05 (.04)	-.01 (.06)
Turnover	-.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.02* (.01)	.05* (.03)
Population	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.0001** (.00005)	-.00008* (.00004)
Gender	-.14* (.08)	-.13 (.13)	-.20 (.13)	-.12 (.18)
Race	.04 (.03)	.02 (.07)	.01 (.05)	.14* (.07)
Income	-.02 (.03)	.03 (.05)	-.09** (.05)	.03 (.07)
Expenditures *Career	-.000003** (.000001)	-	-	-

Source: *State Legislative Survey* (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1995). Model 1 N = 2,876, Model 2 N = 1,114, Model 3 N = 1,166, Model 4 N = 596 ** p< .05 *p< .1 Data are weighted. Model 1 $\chi^2=34.34$, sig. = .01, Model 3 $\chi^2=42.57$, sig. = .001, Model 4 $\chi^2=26.84$, sig. = .0. We record Model 2 here as a placeholder; it has no statistical significance $\chi^2=18.18$, sig. = .3777

The third and fourth models consider the impact of resources and careerism in moderately and highly professional legislatures. These function specifically to test our hypothesis that careerism's impact on agency influence over legislatures should be greatest when institutional resources are modest. The models confirm this expectation. We find that the careerism effect is actually occurring disproportionately in moderately professional legislatures. It is absent in highly professional legislatures. This pattern is demonstrated with three of our four indicators of careerism, including our direct measure of self-identification and two indirect measures (lower terms served in office and total compensation). All these variables demonstrate a positive relationship with the dependent variable. This result suggests that careerism enhances agency influence over the policy-making process in moderately professional state legislatures, where higher levels of careerism exist, as opposed to more amateur state legislatures; but resources are too modest to compensate for the careerism effect, as in highly professional legislatures.

Although not as important for hypothesis testing as the effects of careerism, the actual indicators of institutional resources do affect influence in these models. The number of permanent staff has a positive relationship with administrative influence, and expenditures reduce influence in moderately professional legislatures. Expenditures and staff are not statistically significant in the fourth model, but session length does affect the dependent variable. While resources influence the dependent variable in both models, they cannot be interpreted by their coefficients alone. Resources do not vary to a high enough degree in many respects because the models restrict the cases to legislators in similarly situated legislatures. It is more fruitful to compare the impact of careerism across legislative types, of which the analysis demonstrates that its effect wanes in highly professional legislatures, as expected.

The logit coefficients in Table 1 do not have a direct, interpretable meaning in relation to the magnitude of change they cause in the dependent variable. One way of considering the magnitude of the effect that logit coefficients have on the dependent variable is to use the standard deviation (SD) of the independent variables to estimate the odds that a one-SD increase or decrease in the value of the standardized independent variable would increase or decrease the value of the dependent variable by one unit of measurement.

We use the *SPost*, post-estimation module (Long and Freese 2005) in Stata to create a standardization of the coefficient. Table 2 shows changes in the odds. The first model considers these effects within the full sample of legislatures. The results suggest that one standard deviation change in careerism causes a 15% change in the odds that bureaucratic influence would increase. A standard deviation increase in executive power increases the odds of bureaucratic influence increasing by 14%.

Table 2			
Change in Odds for Standard Deviation Increase in Influence of Administrative Agencies on Legislative Policy Making in U.S. State Houses			
Careerism	All Legislatures	Moderately Professional Legislatures	Highly Professional Legislatures
Career	1.15 (.42)	1.11 (.40)	
Lower terms		1.10 (2.94)	
Total compensation		1.26 (17,732.71)	
Institutional Resources			
Session length			1.36 (34.69)
Permanent staff		1.54 (361.95)	
Expenditures		.81 (26,631.94)	
Constituent Service			
In touch with constituents		1.16 (.83)	.79 (.76)
Controls			
Legislative rule review powers			.81 (.80)
Power of executive	1.14 (2.56)		
Turnover		.90 (6.26)	1.36 (6.29)
Population		.71 (3255.89)	.61 (6367.99)
Gender	.94 (.42)		
Race			1.16 (1.06)
Income		.90 (1.19)	
Expenditures *Career	1.00 (59267.39)		
Source: <i>State Legislative Survey</i> (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1995). Only independent effects with at least $p < .1$ are reported. Data are weighted. Left number represents change in odds, and right number is standard deviation. Cells in italics represent negative directional relationships. Model 2 is dropped as the model Chi-Square was statistically insignificant.			

Model 2 reports changes in odds for the statistically significant independent variables in moderately professional legislatures. Here the analysis shows that a standard deviation increase in careerism causes an 11% increase in bureaucratic influence. The indirect measure of careerism (previous terms in office) produces a similar result, with a standard deviation increase causing a 10% increase in bureaucratic influence. Resources also produce significant impacts in the model, with a standard deviation increase in compensation causing a 26% increase in influence.

Taken together, the analysis provides important insights into the relationship between legislative professionalism, careerism, and administrative influence over policy making by state legislatures. Careerism appears in the first model in Table 1 to reduce legislative influence over agencies. This finding is, however, only part of the story. Further analysis actually reveals that the impact of careerism is felt mostly in moderately professional legislatures, as we expected. It is generally absent from both amateur and highly professional legislatures. This pattern can be attributed in large measure to the prevalence of careerism in moderately and highly professional legislatures and to a concomitant lack of resources to pursue both the constant reelection type of behaviors required of careerism and unrelated activities, such as administrative oversight in moderately professional legislatures. This finding is partially obscured in the first model. These findings advance our understanding of how the institutional- and individual-level changes that have accompanied legislative professionalization influence the power relationship between state agencies and their legislative principals.

Discussion

This article seeks to provide a better understanding of how legislative professionalization affects the power relationship between state legislatures and administrative agencies. Specifically, we focus on how the interaction between legislator careerism and institutional resources affects administrative influence over state legislatures. Our findings suggest that such influence appears more nuanced than previously believed.

Past research has found that the effects of careerism may mitigate those of enhanced legislative resources where administrative oversight is concerned. Woods and Baranowski (2006) have argued that careerism tempers professionalization in state legislators when it comes to providing oversight because ambitious politicians are more likely to engage in behaviors—such as casework and campaigning—that better serve their interests. Thus, as professionalization within legislatures increases, so do

careerism and the need to commit resources toward more fruitful activities. Yet such findings and their implications have never been applied to administrative influence over state legislatures.

Because it utilizes individual-level data provided by state legislators themselves, this research is able to measure careerism among respondents directly as well as indirectly, thereby providing a better model of careerism and explaining its effects on agencies in a way that past research has not appreciated. As stated above, we find a curvilinear relationship between careerism and bureaucratic power over legislative policy making. In moderately professional legislatures, as in the full model, the effects of careerism are such that they actually increase administrative power.

Our findings suggest indirectly that the effects of careerism are most likely to temper oversight when institutional resources are sufficient enough to matter but not excessive. The capacity for stringent oversight in amateur legislatures, for instance, is virtually nonexistent because of the lack of institutional resources. The incentives for careerism are also small. Similarly, within highly professional legislatures we also see that careerism likely has no significant effects on a legislator's capacity to provide oversight. In these legislatures institutional resources are so abundant that the ambitions of legislators do not lessen bureaucratic oversight, even though legislators may strategically target some activities over others. The abundance of resources essentially negates the narrowing of focus on electoral concerns and career advancement. Resources thus have the effect of lessening administrative power in the legislative process.

The evidence presented here shows that the relationship between careerism and legislative professionalization is more complex than previously thought. The capacity for administrative oversight varies by the level of professionalization in state houses, and the influence of careerism on such oversight is likewise affected by levels of professionalization. Our research suggests at least indirectly that, given enough resources, career-minded legislators will provide bureaucratic oversight, even though they prefer to engage in more self-serving legislative activities. Yet institutional resources must be high enough to combat careerism if legislators seek to reduce the power of state agencies over legislative policy making.

Appendix

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mode
Careerism self-identifier	.23	.43	0
Lower terms served	4.13	2.88	6
Higher terms served	6.37	3.54	9
Total compensation (\$)	49,108.19	35,609.23	200
Session length	85.75	40.83	90
Permanent staff	565.06	773.34	139
Legislative expenditures (\$)	57,938	70,489	15,956
Time campaigning	2.5	1.17	2
Keep in touch with constituents	4.13	.91	5
Casework	4.15	.93	5
Rule review authority	1.25	.8	2
Executive power	-.003	2.58	-1.27
Legislative turnover	26.33	7.82	28
Population	5044.2	5162.5	125
Gender	1.76	.43	2
Race	5.73	1.02	6
Income	3.5	1.22	3
Dependent variable	3	1	3

Source: *State Legislative Survey* (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1995); Gerber, Maestas, and Dometrius (2005); Holbrook (1993); NCSL (2004).

Table A2
How Careerists and Non-Careerists Spend their Time in Office.

	Frequency %					
Careerist Activity	<i>Hardly Any</i>				<i>A Great Deal</i>	<i>N</i>
Studying legislation	1	7	28	36	28	768
Developing new legislation	2	9	32	34	23	771
Building within party coalitions	5	16	36	31	12	765
Campaigning and fundraising	14	28	31	19	8	767
Keep in touch with constituents	.3	3	15	33	49	771
Casework	1	5	11	30	53	770
Securing pork	6	10	25	31	28	767
	Frequency %					
	<i>Hardly Any</i>				<i>A Great Deal</i>	<i>N</i>
Non-Careerist Activity						
Studying legislation	1	6	24	38	31	2,479
Developing new legislation	4	15	32	32	18	2,479
Building within party coalitions	9	18	34	29	10	2,471
Campaigning and fundraising	28	31	25	11	5	2,468
Keep in touch with constituents	1	6	19	35	39	2,483
Casework	1	7	16	37	40	2,483
Securing pork	11	16	29	25	19	2,478

Source: *State Legislative Survey* (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1995)

*Values are rounded/weighted

Notes

1 Legislators were sampled in proportion to the state’s population. The minimum sample size for each chamber is 70. For chambers with fewer than 70 legislators, all legislators from that chamber were sampled. The survey contains a weight that corrects for response biases. When weighted the survey is “representative of the population of all state legislators, where each legislator is counted equally” (Carey, Niemi, and Powell 1995). All states are represented in the survey. The largest representation is New Hampshire at 6.8% (242 cases), and the smallest is Nevada at 0.6% (21 cases), with most states constituting between 1% and 3% of the overall sample (approximately 40–100 cases each). The response totals for each state in the survey are as follows: AK (27), AL (73), AR (59), AZ (40), CA (70), CO (45), CT (75), DE (27), FL (69), GA (97), HI (31), IA (87), ID (50), IL (69), IN (72), KS (85), KY (66), LA

(39), MA (91), MD (94), ME (110), MI (77), MN (80), MO (80), MS (59), MT (98), NC (115), ND (71), NE (26), NH (242), NJ (46), NM (32), NV (21), NY (119), OH (63), OK (63), OR (43), PA (103), RI (58), SC (86), SD (52), TN (42), TX (88), UT (54), VA (83), VT (89), WA (81), WI (83), WV (64), and WY (44).

2 Even though the survey question asks legislators how much influence they think bureaucrats have on legislative outcomes, an inference can be made that the degree of bureaucratic influence directly relates to the amount of control legislators have over executive agencies. A large portion of the literature in this area features research designs that implicitly argue that influence is a zero-sum game, with greater legislative influence naturally resulting in less state agency influence.

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