PROFESSIONALISM AND CAREERISM IN U.S. STATE LEGISLATURES

by

DUNCAN PATRICK MCCASKILL

(Under the Direction of Scott Ainsworth)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the relationship between professionalism and careerism in U.S. state legislatures. It challenges the conventional wisdom that professionalism causes careerism in state legislatures, and uses Christopher Mooney's 1995 ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model, with a new careerism variable, to assess this challenge. Results from this model fail to indicate that careerism has a causal effect on professionalism. Rather, the results show that there is a strong positive correlation between professionalism and careerism. These results also hint that the relationship between careerism and professionalism is more complex than previous research has concluded and that the relationship requires additional research, especially using methods such as two-stage least squares (2SLS).

INDEX WORDS: Legislative Careerism, Legislative Professionalism, U.S. State Legislatures

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DUNCAN PATRICK MCCASKILL

B.A., The University of Virginia, 1996

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2003

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DUNCAN PATRICK MCCASKILL

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|---|---|
| Major Professor: | Dr. Scott Ainsworth |
| Committee: | Dr. Charles Bullock<br>Dr. Paul Gurian |

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2003

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF TABLES

Page

## LIST OF FIGURES

Page

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Research on legislative professionalism and legislative careerism in U.S. state legislatures has been confusing at best and contradictory at worst. Morris Fiorina in his 1994 work on divided government uses the terms professionalism and careerism interchangeably. Christopher Mooney (1995) states that as more career-oriented members occupy a legislature, the more likely they are to try to turn it into an efficient, full-time operation, but he then promptly ignores the possible effects of careerism on professionalism by leaving a careerism variable out of his model. Only Peverill Squire hints that careerism may have an effect on professionalism. Squire (1988a and 1992b) argues that legislative professionalism is a function of membership career goals, and that legislative professionalism produces career legislators. However, he does not examine careerism's influence on professionalism; instead, he examines membership stability (1988a) and membership diversity (1992b). Despite the confusion and despite anecdotal evidence that careerism influences professionalism, the conventional wisdom (if we can call it that) holds that legislative professionalism causes legislative careerism.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to present an alternative to the conventional wisdom that legislative professionalism causes legislative careerism. I argue that legislative careerism has a direct, positive causal influence on legislative professionalism. In other words, I believe that careerism helps explain cross-state differences in professionalism.

The logic is sound; increased legislative professionalism is not merely a response to external demands but a concerted effort of legislators themselves to professionalize.

The legislators often push their institutions toward full time status. They provide additional resources to allow them to perform the tasks they have laid out for themselves (Hirsch NCSL 1996). In short, legislators play a role in professionalizing their own chambers.

I examine this relationship between careerism and professionalism in four chapters. This introductory chapter provides an overview of the study. Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the extant literature on legislative professionalism and legislative careerism, examines how to measure these concepts, and reviews Mooney's 1995 professionalism model. In Chapter 3, I develop an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model to assess the influence of careerism on professionalism; specifically, I update Mooney's 1995 professionalism model and include a new careerism variable. Also in Chapter 3, I analyze and interpret the results of the OLS model, and argue that these limited results require future analysis to employ such methods as Two-stage least squares (2SLS) to disentangle the relationship between careerism and professionalism. Finally, in Chapter 4, I draw conclusions based on this research and suggest possible directions for future inquiry.

**How This Study is Original**

This study is original because it presents an alternative to the conventional wisdom that legislative professionalism leads to legislative careerism. Instead, the study reverses the causal arrows, arguing that legislative careerism causes legislative professionalism. I use the concepts in an already powerful model (Mooney 1995) and I make that model even more powerful by including careerism as an explanatory variable.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review comprises three parts. The first part discusses the literature on legislative professionalism and legislative careerism. The second part investigates how scholars have measured these two concepts. The third part examines Mooney's 1995 professionalism model, the basis for the model I present in Chapter 3.

### Literature on Professionalism and Careerism

Before I proceed, definitions of professionalism and careerism are necessary. While it has numerous meanings, professionalism is a measure of the attributes of the legislative chamber. A professional legislature is one that meets in unlimited session, pays its members a salary competitive with other professions in the state, and provides adequate staff resources (Squire 1992a). State legislative professionalism refers to the current capacity of the legislature to perform its role in the policy-making process with an expertise, seriousness, and effort comparable to that of other actors in the process (Mooney 1994). In this study, professionalism is synonymous with professionalization.

Some researchers have used professionalism and careerism interchangeably (Eliassen and Pedersen 1978; Fiorina 1994). However, careerism is theoretically distinct from professionalism. Careerism is not a trait of the legislature as a whole, but is rather a trait of the individual legislators. A careerist legislature is one in which legislators view their occupation as legislator, or one in which legislators remain in office for extended periods of time; in short, careerism is the degree to which legislators consider lawmaking their career (Hirsch NCSL 1996).

With professionalism and careerism defined, the obvious question arises: is professionalism the same thing as institutionalization? Nelson Polsby (1968) states that an institutionalized legislature is characterized by well-defined boundaries, the growth of internal complexity, and the adoption of universalistic criteria and automated methods for internal decision-making. Given the definition of professionalism above, it seems that the two concepts are, despite Squire's (1992) assertions to the contrary, essentially the same. Chaffey (1970), Jewell (1972), and Eliassen and Pedersen (1978) concur; indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a professional legislature that is not institutionalized, and vice versa. However, professionalism is concerned with the current capacity of legislature to perform its functions (Mooney 1995), while institutionalization is the process by which a legislature develops into a permanent, distinct organization with rules and procedures (Polsby 1968). Squire (1992) is correct that the concepts, which closely related, are distinct.

The study of legislator's careers has a long history. Studies at the beginning of the 20th century showed that the most common careers were lawyer and farmer. More recently, studies in 1976 and 1986 revealed a significant decline in lawyers and farmers and an increase in career legislators (Bazar 1987). In 1996, the National Conference of State Legislatures published an update to the 1986 study. The new data indicated that the proportion of members claiming full-time legislator as their job continued to increase. It is safe to say that there are probably far more full-time legislators who do not choose to self identify themselves as such because of the negative image associated with being a full time politician (Hirsch NCSL 1996).

There has also been substantial research on careerism in national legislatures, namely the U.S. House of Representatives. Bullock (1972) found that the proportion of representatives having won ten or more elections to the House had risen significantly, and the majority of these careerists came from the South. King made similar discoveries when he investigated the rise of the career politician in Britain. Since World War II, an increasing number of senior government officials in Britain have been career politicians (King 1981). Kernell (1977) examined 19th century congressional careers, and found that the growing career stability in the House of Representatives stemmed from decreasing competition, the waning of local rotation customs, and structural changes in the electoral system such as the 1896 alignment, the Australian ballot, and the direct primary (Kernell 1977). However, his findings suggest that the primary factor in explaining growing career stability was found in the men who ran for the House (Kernell 1977).

Hibbing (1991) took a longitudinal approach in examining the typical post World War II congressional career. He found that congressional careers are getting longer and that over the course of a congressional career, electoral support improved, legislative activity, specialization and efficiency increase, and attention to district affairs diminished (Hibbing 1991).

One comparative study by Epstein, et al., (1997) found that when members of a national legislature saw their service as a career, they instituted a regularized system of career advancement. They found that the form that system takes depends on the larger political environment. In the U.S., a separation of powers system, alternating party control, and single-member districts led to committee-based seniority system. This

institutionalized committee power and relegated parties to a coordinating role. In Japan's parliamentary system, single party control and multi-member districts produced a two-tiered structure combining both seniority and expertise (Epstein, et al., 1997).

Nine years earlier, Squire (1988b) investigated seniority systems in state legislatures. He hypothesized that legislative organization reflects the career needs of legislators. He found that the means of internal organization in legislatures attracts members whose career goals are consistent with it. Despite this apparent contradiction, he found that in the case of a career-oriented legislature like New York, this meant a seniority system. For a non-career-oriented legislature like Connecticut, this meant the absence of a seniority system (Squire 1988b).

Fiorina (1994) hypothesized that the professionalization of state legislatures makes legislative service more attractive to Democratic candidates and less attractive to Republican candidates, because full-time legislative service is incompatible with another career, and Democrats, on average, have less lucrative career opportunities that Republicans (Fiorina 1994). He found a statistically significant relationship between increasing legislative compensation (his measure for professionalism) and increasing Democratic Party representation in state legislatures.

Squire (1997) contested Fiorina's conclusions, and in his work on professionalism and divided government, he finds a positive, but "unimpressive" relationship between increasing levels of professionalism and incidence of divided government. He claims that the results are muddled because some states with professionalized legislatures enjoy

unified government, while other states with unprofessionalized legislatures have divided government (Squire 1997).

In tandem with this research on legislative careerism and professionalism has been speculation about its effects on institutions and policy. As early as 1972, Bullock suggested that senior congressmen could derive personal rewards by affecting policy as well as by controlling the committee environment in which they function (Bullock 1972). The NCSL (Hirsch NCSL 1996) speculated that the increased number of full-time legislators might have dramatic effects on the role of legislators as well as the norms and productivity of legislatures. As legislators begin to think of themselves as full time, careerism develops, and legislating moves from an avocation to a vocation (Hirsch NCSL 1996). A "careerist" orientation affects legislative behavior. When individuals begin to think of their legislative service as a career, they may begin to change their goals; re-election may become a dominant concern. Constituency service as a re-election tool becomes more important, potentially taking away from other legislative priorities (Hirsch NCSL 1996).

Despite the varied, and often conflicting, nature of the literature, one thing is clear: professionalism and careerism are both increasing. Legislatures are becoming more professional every year, and legislative careers are getting longer.

**Concept Measurement**

Literature on the measurement of legislative careerism is sparse; there are essentially two ways to measure careerism. The first is to use survey data in which legislators themselves identify their career as full-time legislator. The National

Conference of State Legislatures has published several studies in which they gather precisely this sort of data (Bazar 1987; Hirsch NCSL 1996).

The other means of measuring careerism is to calculate value for mean years of legislative service. Most scholars have avoided this approach because of the sheer magnitude of the task. Calculating the value requires accurate length of service data for all legislators in each state. At last count, this amounted to over 7,000 individual legislators in the 50 states.

Unlike careerism, one of the most debated issues in research on professionalism has been how to measure it (Mooney 1994). Specifically, there are three trends in professionalism measurement research: categorical measurement, single variable proxies, and multivariate indices. This section examines the strengths and weaknesses of these three measurement trends.

The first trend in measuring professionalism is to categorize state legislatures into groups with different levels of professionalism. Mooney (1994) argues that there is an appeal in classifying state legislatures into categories of high, medium, or low professionalism, but that these categories are flawed because the concept underlying legislative professionalism is continuous, not categorical. He argues that since there is no clear distinction between a low and a medium level of professionalism, any placement of states into these categories is arbitrary (Mooney 1994). For example, the most professional state legislature in a low category and the least professional state legislature in the medium category are probably much more similar in the professionalism than the most and least professional legislatures in the medium category (Mooney 1994).

However, there is nothing that can lead one to conclude that a categorical measure is inferior to a continuous measure just because it is continuous.

The second trend in measuring professionalism has been to use a single variable as a surrogate for the concept. Those surrogates that have been used tend to be easily accessible expenditure measures, such as total expenditures on the legislature or legislative salary. These single variable surrogates have the advantage of being easy to develop and are readily available and comparable over time, but they may seriously under-represent the multidimensional nature of professionalism. This problem can be mitigated, but not eliminated, by achieving corroborating results with more than one surrogate (Mooney 1994).

The third trend in measuring professionalism is to create multidimensional professionalism indices. In his 1994 article, Christopher Mooney examines five multidimensional state legislative professionalism indices developed by Grumm (1971), Morehouse (1983), the Citizen's Conference on State Legislatures (1971), Bowman and Kearney (1988), and Squire (1992a).

Grumm (1971) developed the first widely used measure of legislative professionalism, rating state legislatures for the years 1963-1965. Grumm developed his index by beginning with four variables that he considered to be most obviously connected with professionalism: legislators' pay, session length, expenditure on legislative operations, and legislative staff services. Grumm then included in the index the number of bills introduced in both houses.

Sarah Morehouse (1983) replicated Grumm's procedures almost exactly for the years 1970-71, the only difference being that she substituted the average population per house seat in 1970 for his number of bills per session variable.

These two indices have three strong points. The first advantage is that they treat legislative professionalism as a continuous rather that a categorical variable. The second is that they recognize the multidimensional aspect of professionalism, including the key variables widely regarded as strong indicators of underlying concept: legislative pay, staff, and session length. The third advantage of this approach to measuring professionalism is that most of the data they use are readily available.

However, there are also several drawbacks to these indicators. First, the inclusion of the fifth variable is not theoretically justified. For example, Grumm's fifth variable, the number of bills introduced in a session, could more reasonably be seen as an output variable rather than a measure of legislative capacity (Mooney 1994).

The second problem here is that the use of standardized variables makes these indices problematic to compare over time. A given state's measure becomes highly dependent on the values of other states on each variable relative to the measured state. This means that even if a state's absolute value on professionalism stayed the same between the two periods, its index score could change if all other states changed their professionalism (Mooney 1994).

The CCSL developed another widely used index of state legislative professionalism in conjunction with its efforts at advocating reform in these bodies (1971). The CCSL gathered its data through personal interviews in every state capitol

with between 8 and 20 political insiders. These data were reduced to five categories relevant to legislative capacity on which all states were ranked: functionality, accountability, informedness, independence, and representativeness. These rankings were then combined in an unweighted fashion to yield an overall ranking of state legislative professionalism (Mooney 1994).

Bowman and Kearney (1988) incorporate many of the organizational variables that the CCSL considered into their measure of legislative professionalism, but they concentrate on those that can be most objectively measured, such as the number of committee assignments per member and the size of the legislature. They also include the typical resource variables that Grumm and Morehouse considered. Bowman and Kearney identify four separate dimension of professionalism: staffing and spending, legislative specialization, accountability, and functionality.

The index of professionalism constructed in this way from the work of Bowman and Kearney has the benefit of capturing some of the complexity of the CCSL measure and probably with more reliability than the CCSL's interview-based approach. Its disadvantages become apparent when one considers replicating the index for other time periods.

Squire (1992a) developed an index with three basic resource variables-- legislator pay, staff per legislator, and total days in session. However, instead of assessing these variables relative to other states for a given year, Squire compares each state's values on these to similar scores of the U.S. Congress (Mooney 1994).

Squire's index has the advantage that its scores are easily interpretable--state legislative resources measured standardized to congressional resources. Another advantage is that cross year comparisons are facilitated by the fact that these ratings are based on a common standard. A state's score on this index is dependent only on the level on these variables as compared to Congress, and the level of variability of other states on them has no influence on its score. Further, the index is based on only three variables, enhancing its ease of replication. The fact that Squire only uses three variables is also the major drawback of this index, however (Mooney 1994). By only considering legislative resources, the organizational traits used by the CCSL and Bowman and Kearney are ignored, perhaps reducing the validity of the index (Mooney 1994).

Each index is an attempt to tap into the concept of professionalism, and an examination of their pair-wise correlations reveals something about their validity. Mooney found the pair-wise correlation coefficients between the Grumm, Morehouse, Bowman and Kearney, and Squire indices to be quite high, indicating that each is tapping into a common underlying variable and that the relative positions of the states on legislative professionalism has not changed greatly over thirty years.

The CCSL index fares less well, however. Though the relationship between this index and the other indices is statistically significant in the expected direction, the strength of these correlations is markedly less than for any of the other relationships between the other indices.

On the criterion of practicality, each of these indices is a convenient measure of professionalism for the particular time period over which its constituent data were

collected. Students of professionalism are therefore confronted with a range of potential operationalizations of this crucial variable, each with its advantages and disadvantages.

**Mooney's Model**

Mooney identifies three general types of influence on a state's policy have been investigated and debated at length in the state policy literature: the economic and social characteristics of its citizens, the institutional structure of the state political system, and the policies of peer states. There are reasons to believe that state legislative professionalism is affected by each of these.

Three characteristics of a state population are particularly likely to affect legislative professionalism: level, heterogeneity, and gross state product per capita. First, because many aspects of legislative professionalism require funds (e.g. for legislative salaries, staff, and office space), a state with more resources can be expected to professionalize more easily than one with fewer resources. A state's population is probably the most important factor affecting the level of resources it has at its disposal. The greater the population, the greater the total personal and business income, and the greater the volume of economic activity. Gross state product per capita is a measure of the average level of economic productivity of a state's population, and as such is an indicator of a state's wealth that is independent of population level.

The value of legislative professionalism may vary systematically from state to state with a state's population level and heterogeneity. These factors influence the need for efficient and effective public decision making. For example, the more people that live in a state, the more public problems there are likely to be. The heterogeneity of a state's

population can also influence the number of tractability of a state's public problems. Differences in tastes, values, and problem solving styles may cause more intractable and frequent public problems in heterogeneous populations, thereby increasing the value of a professional, efficient, and authoritative public decision-making body.

Mooney examines four institutional variables: legal restrictions on session length, opportunities for members of the legislature to advance politically, formal powers of the governor's office, and bureaucracy size.

An aspect of the political system that may influence legislative professionalism is whether or not a state has constitutional or statutory restrictions on session length. If a state legislature controls its own session length, it will more likely meet longer than if it does not control it, and having adequate time to deliberate is an important aspect of legislative professionalism. Constitutional amendment requires a referendum in almost all states, and statutory change requires the approval of the governor. While other aspects of legislative control over professionalism may also be important, the high visibility and substantive importance of session length restrictions likely make them an important influence on professionalism.

A legislator's opportunity to advance in political office is another facet of a state's political structure that could influence a legislature's professionalism (Squire 1988). The greater the possibility of advancement from a state legislature, the more likely career-oriented politicians will be attracted to the legislature. And as more career-oriented members occupy a legislature, the more likely they are to try to turn it into an efficient, full-time operation. While the opportunities for advancement from the legislature are

partially a function of a state's population (since U.S. House seats are apportioned on that basis), there is a good deal of variation in the number of statewide elected executive and judicial posts available. It may then be possible to determine whether or not the opportunity for advancement has a positive influence on legislative professionalism, independent of the size of a state's population.

Two other aspects of a state's political structure that may influence legislative professionalism are the governor and the bureaucracy. A legislature faced with a strong executive branch will be motivated to increase its own capacity in order to maintain its influence over the state policy making. In a state with a weak governor and bureaucracy, this influence can be had without expending extra resources required to develop a professional legislature. A governor's formal institutional strength can be conceived of as a combination of the office's veto, appointment, and budget-making powers, and the governor's tenure potential (Schlesinger 1965). A useful indicator of the strength of a state's bureaucracy is its relative size, measured as the number of state employees per 100,000 residents. There is enough theoretical reason to believe that a causal relationship is at work here to include these variables in my model. Further, I try to account for potential spurious relationships by using measured variables with the proper temporal ordering, and by controlling for two key demographic factors (population level and heterogeneity) that could cause increased demand for services.

However, despite Mooney's and Schelsinger's assertion that a governor and/or bureaucracy and a legislature grow weak and strong in unison, it seems equally plausible to hypothesize that the relationship between the strength of the legislature and the strength of the governor and/or bureaucracy could be inverse. That is, a governor may be

strong because the legislature has been kept weak. Or a strong legislature could maintain hegemony over a weak bureaucracy. Mooney realized this problem, but left its solution to future research. Because I am trying to isolate the possible effect of careerism on professionalism, and gubernatorial power and bureaucratic power are control variables, I shall also leave this solution to future research.

The third general category of influence on legislative professionalism is the policies of certain other states on this issue. States often emulate their peers when developing policy (Mooney 1994; Berry and Berry 1990; Gray 1973; Walker 1969). When a policy has been adopted by other states, the costs of adopting the policy serve as a test project for other states in similar situations. The policy can then be tailored for adoption elsewhere, reducing the risk of bad side effects or ineffective policies. Also, it is politically easier to follow the leader with a policy than it is to be the leader. If a state with which a state's citizens and policy makers identify has adopted a policy, it is more marketable than if the policy is totally foreign.

Assuming that states look to their peers, co-regional states would be in closest proximity to a given state, and perhaps be seen by policy makers and citizens as being most comparable. If this were the case, we would expect the average level of legislative professionalism found in the states within a state's region to have a positive effect on the level of professionalism adopted by that state (Mooney 1995).

## CHAPTER 3: MODELS and ANALYSIS

I begin this chapter with an explanation of the variables to be included in the model. I then develop hypotheses for these variables, and test these hypotheses using an OLS regression model. After running the model, I present the results and analyze them. I follow with examination of several problems with the model.

### Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regression Model

Table 1: Variables identifies, based on Mooney's analysis, those variables that help explain cross-state differences in legislative professionalism. The table lists the name of the variable, the acronym I used to identify the variable within SPSS, the variable type, the operationalization of the variable, and the source of data. Data come from all 50 states (N=50).

As mentioned earlier, the key question this study addresses concerns the role of careerism (POCLE93) in explaining cross-state differences in legislative professionalism. I hypothesize (H1) that careerism leads to greater professionalism in state legislatures. I propose a null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant association between a state's level of careerism and its level of professionalism. The logic of causation is key here. By using 1993 careerism values to explain professionalism values in 1995, I specify, explicitly, the arrows of causation. Logically, something in 1995 cannot travel back in time and cause something in 1993.

In addition to this hypothesis, I propose eight additional hypotheses. The hypotheses are as follows: (H2) larger population leads to greater professionalism in state legislatures; (H3) greater population heterogeneity leads to greater professionalism in

state legislatures; (H4) greater gross state product per capita leads to greater professionalism in state legislatures; (H5) states with restrictions on session length have less professional legislatures; (H6) more opportunities to advance lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures; (H7) larger bureaucracies lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures; (H8) greater gubernatorial power leads to greater professionalism in state legislatures; (H9) states in a region with high average professionalism have more professional legislatures.

Table 2: Hypotheses and Expectations lists these hypotheses as well as the hypotheses' corresponding null hypothesis, denoted $Hx_0$.

I use multiple OLS regression analysis for this study because the data are continuous, the relationship is roughly linear, and in the absence of any evidence of interaction variables, and following the precedent of previous research, I treat the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable as additive. The data for the main variables are continuous; professionalism is operationalized as dollars, a continuous measure, and careerism is measured as a percentage, another continuous measure. Examining the scatterplot of the main independent variable, careerism, and the dependent variable, professionalism in Figure 1, located in Appendix B, shows a roughly linear relationship.

Using the information found in Table 2, I can create the following regression equation where $\alpha$ is the intercept, $\beta_j$ is the slope parameter estimate for variable j, and $\varepsilon$ is the error term.

**Equation 1: Regression Equation**

Professionalism = $\alpha + \beta1$(Careerism 1993) + $\beta2$(Average Professionalism in Region) + $\beta3$(Bureaucracy Size) + $\beta4$(Gross State Product per capita) + $\beta5$(Governor's Power) + $\beta6$(Population) + $\beta7$(Legislative Session Length) + $\beta8$(Opportunity to Advance) + $\beta9$(Population Heterogeneity) + $\varepsilon$

Keep in mind, however, that using regression analysis requires making the assumptions listed in Table 3. Violation of any of these assumptions will create problems (of varying severity) for the model.

**Analysis**

Running the Mooney model with updated data yielded the results listed in Table 4 under Mooney Model. Four of the eight variables show up as statistically significant and the signs point in the directions expected. The updated model explains nearly 73% of the cross-state variance in legislative professionalism ($AdjR^2 = 0.726$). While it is impossible to compare two models that use different operationalizations of the dependent variable, this result is theoretically consistent with Mooney's analysis.

When I run the McCaskill Model with the careerism variable included, the amount of variance explained increases 8.1% to almost 82% ($AdjR^2 = 0.818$). Moreover, the careerism variable becomes the most influential explanatory variable ($t = 4.861$, $B = 448.755$, and $Beta = 0.561$).

This significance indicates that careerism has a strong role in explaining cross-state differences in legislative professionalism. Consequently, I can reject the null hypothesis ($H1_0$) that the relationship between careerism and professionalism is not significantly different than zero, and accept my hypothesis that the relationship is statistically different from zero (H1).

Nevertheless, detailed analysis of these results indicates six problems with the model. The first problem concerns operationalization of the professionalism and careerism variables. The second problem is multicollinearity. The third problem is heteroskedasticity. The fourth problem is misspecification. The fifth and last problem is substantive significance. The sixth problem concerns causation and correlation.

I operationalized state legislative professionalism (**COMP95**) as average legislator compensation, in dollars, over both legislative chambers in a state in 1995. As mentioned above in the literature review, many scholars argue that compensation alone cannot serve as a viable indicator of professionalism. However, there are several reasons why legislator compensation can serve as a viable indicator of professionalism. First, research on professionalism has concluded that legislator compensation is an integral part of legislative professionalism. All indices developed as measures of professionalism include legislator compensation. Second, compensation in dollars is easily interpretable. Third, legislator compensation is easily compared over time. Fourth, compensation is easily obtained and is readily available for multiple periods of time. Last, it follows the scholarly precedent of using the simplest indicator for a concept.

Still, these reasons may not be enough to convince some researchers as to the validity of compensation as an indicator of professionalism. As a test of compensation's validity, one can follow Mooney's (1994) lead by examining the bivariate correlations of compensation with other measures of legislative professionalism. As Table 5 below indicates, compensation is highly correlated with each of the major indices of legislative professionalism. This indicates that compensation taps into essentially the same underlying concept as the other measures (Mooney 1994).

I operationalized legislative careerism (**POCLE93**) as the percentage of a state's legislators who identify their career as legislator. This measure suffers from the problem that it may under-represent the actual number of career legislators. Members of a state legislature may face such a political environment that identifying their occupation as "legislator" may be hazardous to that very occupation (Hirsch NCSL 1996).

Some might make the criticism that listing one's occupation as legislator does not necessarily imply that that individual's career is legislator. One could alleviate this problem by looking at how long members of a particular state legislature remain in office. So, while other measures such as average tenure of office for the legislature would be preferable to self-identification, gathering information on 99 chambers and the 7,400 legislators who serve in them is a monumental task to say the least. In short, the data for careerism is used because it is readily available.

Multicollinearity is correlation among independent variables; it affects OLS results by making parameter estimates unreliable. It produces wide variances for the slope estimates and consequently large standard errors. Larger standard errors in turn make it more difficult for a variable to achieve statistical significance.

A simple examination of the bivariate correlations of careerism with each independent variable shows that multicollinearity is a problem with four variables. The cut off level at which one decides multicollinearity is or is not a problem varies, but is commonly taken to be $r = 0.7$. This fact makes the examination of bivariate correlations inadequate to address the problem of multicollinearity. A more rigorous diagnostic test is

to regress each control variable on careerism. This test produced an $R^2$ of 0.724, which is at the problematic level.

So, critics would be correct in their statements that problematic multicollinearity exists in this model. But the existence of multicollinearity in and of itself does not give one an idea of how much of a problem it is. In other words, does the level of multicollinearity affect the purpose of this study? That is, does the multicollinearity make the parameter estimate of careerism so unreliable so as to invalidate this analysis? In order to address this question, one can run the model repeatedly, each time dropping a variable. For instance, one could run the model without the population level variable, and then run the model again, reinserting the population level variable and excluding a different variable. What one is looking for is the presence of wide fluctuations in the parameter estimates for careerism. If the estimates fluctuate wildly, then the multicollinearity problem is quite severe. If the estimates for careerism are stable, then one can conclude that the existence of multicollinearity is not problematic.

The $R^2$ test results in $R^2 = 0.742$ (ADJ $R^2$=0.692), indicating strong multicollinearity among the independent variables. Examinations of bivariate correlations in Table 6 show that careerism is multicollinear (r = 0.5 or higher) with the average compensation (r = 0.694), population level (r = 0.547), session length (r = -0.677), and population heterogeneity (r = 0.596) variables.

Next I analyzed the effect of multicollinearity on the careerism parameter estimate by systematically dropping variables from the analysis. Using this test in tandem with confidence interval serves as an indicator of the reliability of the careerism

parameter estimates. Table 7: Collinearity Tests shows that even at it lowest value, when the next most significant variable, opportunity to advance, is deleted from the analysis, the careerism variable shows up as highly significant (t = 3.443). Confidence intervals for this particular model show that one can be 99% confident that the careerism variable is not zero. So, despite problems with multicollinearity, careerism still has a significantly positive influence on legislative professionalism. In each case, dropping variables does not affect the stability of the careerism parameter estimate. Indeed, the careerism variable remains significant at the 0.01 level regardless of which variable is dropped. As on can see from Table 7, the parameter estimates for Careerism are quite stable, never falling below significance at the .01 level.

The third problem with the model stems from heteroskedasticity. Heteroskedasticity occurs when, contrary to Assumption 3, the error term in a regression model does not have constant variance (Berry and Feldman 1985). Figure 2 below shows that the variance of the error term gets smaller as the value of careerism increases.

This negative correlation creates a positive bias in the standard error that makes confidence intervals too wide, makes significance tests too hard to pass, and makes the OLS slope coefficient estimator to appear to be less precise than it actually is. However, as one can see from data presented above, the careerism variable has no trouble passing significance tests. Heteroskedasticity is also a sign that of a possible missing interaction variable (Berry and Feldman 1985). Theory does not help to identify this possible missing interaction variable, so I leave that identification to future research. Whatever the case, the presence of heteroskedasticity means that the parameter estimates herein are

no longer BLUE, and that the model requires another statistical technique such as Generalized Least Squares (GLS) or Weighted Least Squares (WLS). Still, given Bohrnstedt and Carter's (1971) conclusion that significance tests are unaffected unless heteroskedasticity is marked and given my concern about the significance of careerism, I conclude that heteroskedasticity, while present in my model, does not pose a serious problem.

The fourth criticism holds that because the direction of causation is misspecified, this study does nothing to disprove the conventional wisdom that professionalism causes careerism in state legislatures. Indeed it does not disprove the conventional wisdom because that is not its purpose. This study presents an alternative to the conventional wisdom and suggests that the relationship between careerism and professionalism is more complex than past research has found. Had I used 1995 data for both careerism and professionalism, then causal and statistical problems would abound. Same year data make it very difficult to specify the direction of causation, especially when one seeks to reverse the direction of the conventional arrows. Yet, as mentioned above, I used 1993 data for careerism and 1995 data for professionalism, thereby specifying, explicitly, the causal order. With the causal arrows reversed, one can hypothesize a feedback loop for future research.

Assuming a feedback loop in same year data, like supply and demand in econometric models, does exist, using OLS regression (for same year data) creates several problems. The feedback relationship from the dependent variable professionalism (1995) and the independent variable careerism (1995) produces

correlations between the error term and careerism, leading to biased parameter estimates. The problem can only be addressed by using Two-Stage Least Squares (2SLS).

In short, by using careerism data two years earlier than professionalism data, I am able to show that the alternative to conventional wisdom is viable. But the results presented and analyzed here are limited to only one part of a probable feedback loop. To combat this criticism of causation and to account for the feedback loop relationship between careerism and professionalism requires a 2SLS model, discussed, but not executed, in the next section.

Another misspecification criticism concerns the legislative session length control variable. I hypothesized that states with restriction on legislative sessions have less professional legislatures. An alternative, or rather an additional, hypothesis is that states with restricted sessions have less careerist legislatures. In other words, session length could influence both professionalism and careerism; bivariate correlations of session length and professionalism (r=-0.626) and careerism (r=-0.677) indicate a strong relationship. The logic is that those states that have full time legislatures (no restrictions on session length) are more likely to be ones in which a member responds that his or her career is "legislator." If this speculation is accurate, and I cannot rule it out, then a more complex model that captures this relationship is needed. For now I can only acknowledge this possibility and continue with my analysis.

The last criticism to be examined here is that the magnitude of the influence of careerism on professionalism is not great enough to matter. This gets right to the heart of questions concerning substantive significance. The model shows that for each one

percent increase in the level of careerism, there is a corresponding 450-dollar increase in the level of compensation. Is almost five hundred dollars enough to really make a difference? Probably not. But when one looks at the range of careerism across states, with Pennsylvania approaching 80% careerism and its neighbor West Virginia supporting 0% careerism, then the dollars add up (80 x 450 = 36000).

The sixth criticism, and by far the most important one, concerns causation and correlation. On the surface, the McCaskill Model would seem to prove that careerism causes professionalism. However, given that the relationship between the concepts is non-recursive, and that the time lag between careerism (1993) and professionalism (1995) is only two years, it is impossible to conclude that careerism causes professionalism. Recall the $R^2$ test for multi-collinearity on page twenty-three. That test used all the control variables as independent variables, and used careerism as the dependent variable. The results ($R^2$=0.724) indicate that the control variables also explain almost 75% of the variance in careerism. In short, I can conclude that there is a strong positive relationship between careerism and professionalism, and that claims of causation are not borne out by the evidence.

**Two Stage Least Squares (2SLS) Regression**

Two stage least squares (2SLS) is a regression technique appropriate for models, such as the 1995 McCaskill model, in which a feedback relationship exists. Put in statistical terms, the feedback relationship is one where one or more of the predictor variables are theoretically correlated with the error term. In this case, the endogenous predictor variable careerism 1995 is correlated with the theoretical error terms for the

model explaining the dependent variable professionalism 1995. The strategy is to replace the endogenous variable careerism 1995 with a variable, known as an instrumental variable, that is almost as good as careerism 1995 in predicting professionalism 1995, and is not correlated with the theoretical error term in the prediction of the endogenous dependent variable professionalism 1995.

## CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

Based on the criticisms above, one can go in two directions. One can conclude that careerism influences and is correlated with professionalism, but does not cause it. Or one can undertake more rigorous examinations of the relationship. Future research should try different operationalizations of the main variables, professionalism and careerism. It should also undertake examination of the relationship over time. One could hypothesize that the relationship is mutually reinforcing over time. In other words, professionalism at one time has an effect on the future level of careerism, and careerism, in turn causes more professionalism: a classic feedback relationship. Researchers should also use statistical methods such as 2SLS to investigate this feedback relationship. Such a relationship falls in line with Polsby's idea of legislative institutionalization. Whatever the case, debates concerning the relationship between careerism and professionalism are far from settled.

# APPENDIX A: TABLES

## Table 1: Variables

| Variable Name | Variable Acronym | Type | Operationalizations | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professionalism | COMP95 | Dependent | Average legislator compensation, in dollars, over both legislative chambers in a state in 1995 | Council of State Governments |
| Careerism 1993 | POCLE93 | Independent in 1993 OLS | Percentage of legislators in both chambers of a state legislature who identify their career as "legislator" | National Conference of State Legislatures |
| Careerism 1995 | POCLE95 | Independent in 1995 OLS | Percentage of legislators in both chambers of a state legislature who identify their career as "legislator" | National Conference of State Legislatures |
| Average Compensation | AVCOMP93 | Control | Average 1993 value of the dependent variable for all other states in a state's region, using the U.S. Census Bureau's nine standard regions | Council of State Governments; U.S. Census Bureau |
| Bureaucracy Size | BURSIZ92 | Control | Number of state employees per 100,000 in state population | Council of State Governments, 1992 |
| Gross State Product | GSP90 | Control | A state's annual gross state product per capita for 1990 | U.S. Census Bureau |
| Gubernatorial Power | GVPWR93 | Control | A measure ranging from 0 to 5 that combines measures for tenure potential, and veto, appointment, and budget-making power | Beyle's 1994 update of Schlesinger's 1965 index. |
| Population | LNPOP2 | Control | Achieved by dividing a state's population by one million and then taking the natural log of the number (reflects decreasing marginal change) | Council of State Governments; U.S. Census Bureau, 1995 |
| Restriction on Session Length | LSL93 | Control (Dummy) | Value of one (1) indicates that there is a statutory or constitutional limit on session length, while a value of zero (0) indicates that there is no such restriction on session length | Council of State Governments, 1993 |
| Opportunity to Advance | OPADV1 | Control | Number of U.S. House and Senate seats, elected statewide executives, and appellate and supreme court justices, divided by the number of state legislators, in 1994 | Council of State Governments, 1994 |
| Population Heterogeneity | POPHET80 | Control | Morgan and Wilson's 1980 update of the Sullivan index, a measure of diversity in education levels, income, occupation, ethnicity, religion, and home ownership. | Morgan and Wilson, 1980 |

**Table 2: Hypotheses and Expectations**

| Hypothesis Name | Explanation | Statistical Rendering |
|---|---|---|
| H1 | Greater careerism causes greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H1 \neq 0$ |
| $H1_0$ | Greater careerism does not cause greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H1_0 = 0$ |
| H2 | Larger population causes greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H2 \neq 0$ |
| $H2_0$ | Larger population does not cause greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H2_0 = 0$ |
| H3 | Greater population heterogeneity causes greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H3 \neq 0$ |
| $H3_0$ | Greater population heterogeneity does not cause greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H3_0 = 0$ |
| H4 | Greater gross state product per capita causes greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H4 \neq 0$ |
| $H4_0$ | Greater gross state product per capita does not cause greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H4_0 = 0$ |
| H5 | Restrictions on legislative session length do not lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H5 \neq 0$ |
| $H5_0$ | Restrictions on legislative session length lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H5_0 = 0$ |
| H6 | More opportunities to advance lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H6 \neq 0$ |
| $H6_0$ | More opportunities to advance do not lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H6_0 = 0$ |
| H7 | Larger bureaucracies lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H7 \neq 0$ |
| $H7_0$ | Larger bureaucracies do not lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H7_0 = 0$ |
| H8 | Greater gubernatorial powers lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H8 \neq 0$ |
| $H8_0$ | Greater gubernatorial powers do not lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H8_0 = 0$ |
| H9 | Greater regional professionalism leads to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H9 \neq 0$ |
| $H9_0$ | Greater regional professionalism does not lead to greater professionalism in state legislatures | $H9_0 = 0$ |

**Table 3: Regression Assumptions**

| Assumption | Description |
|---|---|
| 1 | All variables must be measured at the interval level and without error |
| 2 | The mean of the error term is 0 |
| 3 | The variance of the error term is constant (homeoskedasticity) |
| 4 | The error terms are uncorrelated |
| 5 | Each independent variable is uncorrelated with the error term |
| 6 | There is no perfect collinearity |
| 7 | The error term must be normally distributed |

**Table 4: Model Results**

| | Mooney Model | | | McCaskill Model | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **B** | **Beta** | **t-score** | **B** | **Beta** | **t-score** |
| Average Compensation | 0.110 | 0.077 | 0.594 | 5.599E-03 | 0.004 | 0.037 |
| Bureaucracy Size | 3.767 | 0.160 | 1.439 | 2.754 | 0.117 | 1.286 |
| Gross State Product | .427 | 0.135 | 1.393 | 0.451 | 0.143 | 1.805* |
| Governor's Power | 6719.677 | 0.177 | 2.079** | 2738.270 | 0.072 | 0.990 |
| Population | 5794.456 | 0.372 | 2.626** | 2334.237 | 0.150 | 1.202 |
| Session Length | (11403.058) | (0.319) | (2.981)*** | (3002.753) | (0.084) | (0.836) |
| Opportunity to Advance | 57112.410 | 0.241 | 2.107** | 82643.066 | 0.348 | 3.636*** |
| Population Heterogeneity | 43097.202 | 0.102 | 1.074 | (29837.447) | (0.071) | (0.825) |
| Careerism 1993 | NA | NA | NA | 448.755 | 0.561 | 4.681*** |
| $R^2$ | 0.771 | | | 0.852 | | |
| Adj $R^2$ | 0.726 | | | 0.818 | | |

N=50
Dependent Variable: Professionalism (COMP95)
*$p \leq 0.10$
**$p \leq 0.05$
***$p \leq 0.01$

**Table 5: Correlations of Professionalism Indices with Legislative Compensation**

| Index | Compensation 1995 (r) |
|---|---|
| Squire 1988 | 0.877* |
| Bowman and Kearney 1985 | 0.856* |
| Grumm 1965 | 0.810* |
| Morehouse 1971 | 0.901* |

*p < .01

**Table 6: Correlations of Independent Variables with Careerism**

| Variable | Pearson (r) Correlation with Careerism |
|---|---|
| Average Compensation | 0.694 |
| Bureaucracy Size | (0.242) |
| Gross State Product | 0.161 |
| Governor Power | 0.363 |
| Population | 0.547 |
| Session Length | (0.677) |
| Opportunity to Advance | 0.409 |
| Population Heterogeneity | 0.596 |

**Table 7: Collinearity Tests**

| Control variable dropped from model | Careerism 1993 values | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Beta | t-score |
| Average Compensation | 449.271 | 0.562 | 4.796*** |
| Bureaucracy Size | 461.211 | 0.577 | 4.797*** |
| Gross State Product | 445.275 | 0.557 | 4.523*** |
| Governor's Power | 477.964 | 0.598 | 5.241*** |
| Population | 492.624 | 0.616 | 5.527*** |
| Session Length | 488.774 | 0.611 | 5.907*** |
| Opportunity to Advance | 365.095 | 0.456 | 3.443*** |
| Population Heterogeneity | 414.684 | 0.518 | 4.812*** |

***$p \leq 0.01$

**Table 8: 1995 OLS Model Results**

| | 1995 OLS Model | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Variable** | **B** | **Beta** | **t-score** |
| Average Compensation | (2.369E-0) | (0.002) | 0.014 |
| Bureaucracy Size | 3.00 | 0.128 | 1.284 |
| Gross State Product | 0.38 | 0.123 | 1.422 |
| Governor's Power | 3838.93 | 0.101 | 1.280 |
| Population | 2268.96 | 0.146 | 1.023 |
| Session Length | (5802.04) | (0.162) | (1.535) |
| Opportunity to Advance | 105335.68 | 0.444 | 3.767*** |
| Population Heterogeneity | (12358.89) | (0.029) | (0.315) |
| Careerism 1995 | 347.21 | 0.427 | 3.420*** |
| $R^2$ | 0.822 | | |
| Adj $R^2$ | 0.782 | | |

N=50
Dependent Variable: Professionalism (COMP95)
*p $\leq$ 0.10
**p $\leq$ 0.05
***p $\leq$ 0.01

## APPENDIX B: FIGURES

**Figure 1: Scatter of Professionalism 1995 and Careerism 1993 Values**

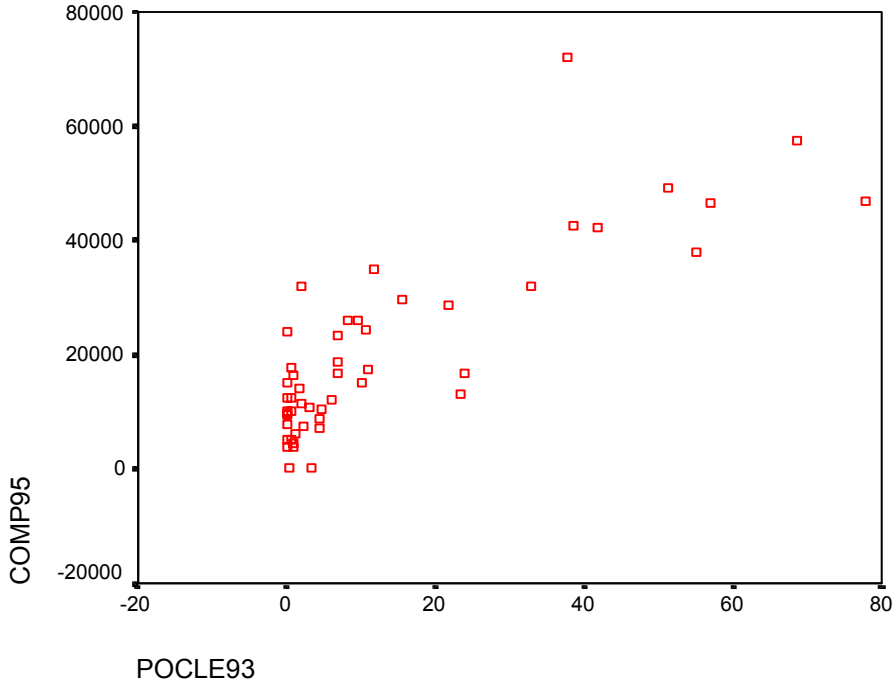
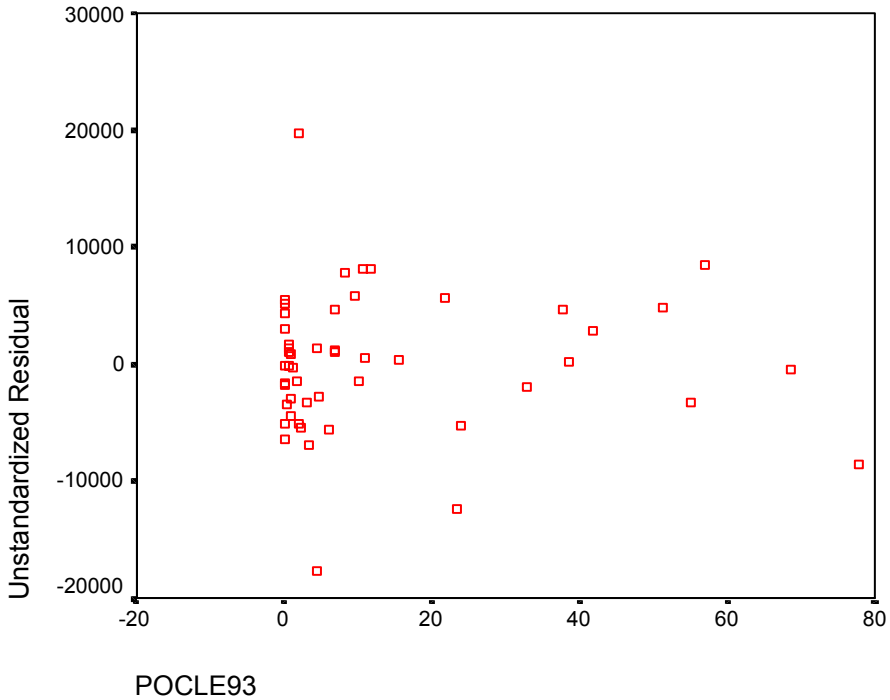



**Figure 2: Scatter of Residual and Careerism 1993 Values**



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