Blue Ribbon Initiative

Memphis City School's Level of Civic Capacity

Division of Administrative and Instructional Leadership

Of

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Chapter I

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to analyze the Memphis City School District's implementation the Blue Ribbon Initiative (BRI). The BRI is a behavior initiative implemented by the school's superintendent and board of education to create a uniformed set of discipline standards and increase academic achievement in the Memphis City Schools.

Statement of Problem

In 2004 the Superintendent of the Memphis City Schools saw a need to re-evaluate the school systems discipline practices. The superintendent attempted to consolidate the large number of separate and uncoordinated discipline programs. It was determined that there needed to be a uniformed way to address discipline issues in the schools. Up until this point each school handled things differently and as a result there were discrepancies as to how discipline was handled. The BRI was born out of this need to have a common set of rules for the schools. BRI was set forth as an efficiency solution (D. Stone) to the schools discipline problem.

The purpose of BRI was to create a coherent discipline system for the schools. Patrice Robinson states that some of the expected goals were;

- Increased student achievement
- Increased student attendance
- Increased teacher satisfaction
- Increased positive school climates
- Increased student leadership/empowerment.

Robinson goes on to state that "we expected decreases in suspensions… drop outs and zero tolerance offenses". BRI was a plan that would grow and evolve over several years; this was derailed very early on.

At the same time that the BRI was put into action the long standing practice of corporal punishment was abolished by the board of education. This action became a large distraction for BRI and its supporters. BRI's failure was linked to the abolishment of corporal punishment and became a political hotbed for the school system.

Context of the Study

The Memphis City School District is in an urban school setting. According to online data the schools are 86% African American, 8% White and 6% listed as other. The school system educates approximately 116,000 students grades k-12. Discipline issues in the school are seen as a hindrance to academic achievement. The BRI was enacted to reduce discipline issues and thereby increasing academic achievement.

Shortly after BRI was put into place the plan came under heavy criticism from many groups. Dakarai Aarons writes that the teachers are complaining about the amount of paper work the BRI requires for discipline action to take place. This becomes an efficiency issue (D. Stone) for the teachers. Aarons goes on to say that while many behaviors seem to be down in the schools violent incidents in and around the schools demand a quick change to BRI. Nona Allen, a teacher in the Memphis city schools, has stated that "before Blue Ribbon, there was a sense of respect for the teacher, after Blue Ribbon students have been known to say: 'You can't do anything to me'."

School Board member Kenneth T. Whalum is a strong advocate for the reinstatement of corporal punishment. His campaign for the school board was based on such a reinstatement. Whalum has been one of the biggest voices to change the original focus of BRI, and promote the perceived failure of the plan.

Research Questions

This research will be based on two main questions pertaining to BRI;

1) What voices are heard regarding Policy Paradox with the goals, problems, and solutions of the Blue Ribbon Initiative?

2) What is the nature of civic capacity in Memphis? In relation to the Blue Ribbon Initiative.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is to determine what factors led to how a major school initiative can succeed or fail. Looking at the factors that determine the success rate of the BRI will help other schools when implementing a policy that may shift from long held practices. This study will show the elements of civic capacity (C. Stone) needed for major change to take place and be sustained. The study will also use Deborah Stone's Policy Paradox set of goals, problems and solutions to analyze BRI's proponents and opponents.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be defined; goals, problems, solutions and civic capacity. These terms will be defined using Deborah Stone and Clarence Stone's work.

Goals- A new policy with be thrust forward by its goals. Equity can be seen as; who gets what, when and how. In the Stone text slices of a cake are used as a metaphor to explain equity. An equal slice of cake does not mean equity for all. Efficiency, as defined by Stone, is a ratio of input vs. output resulting in the best benefit for the least cost. Efficient choices are seen as those that produce the greatest benefit for the least cost. In discussing security Stone states "The quest for security-whether economic, physical, psychological or military-brings a sense of urgency to politics and is one of the enduring sources of passion in policy controversies." Goals have a paradoxical nature, we may all believe in efficiency but we do not define it the same way.

Problems- The BRI has an identity problem. The problems associated with the BRI depend on who you reading or listening to, whose strategic representation is being put forth? When dealing with symbols of the BRI, the meaning of the symbols depends on how people interpret it and respond to it. Symbols are the crux of problem definition, because of their inherent ambiguity. Symbols are used to define an argument. Numbers are often used to define problems, to measure them. In the BRI the numbers of suspensions were counted and used by proponents and opponents. Stone says that "numbers are like poetry" open to interpretation. A simple definition of Causes is the "Why" of something. In politics we look for causes to assign responsibility. To identify causes in the polis is to place burdens on one set of people instead of another.

Solutions- Deborah Stone speaks of solutions in terms of Inducements, rules and facts. Inducements are best described as being positive or negative. Positive inducements are incentives or rewards while negative inducements are penalties and sanctions. Stone states that "Inducements work not by direct force, but by getting people to change their minds" (p266); buying into your strategic representation of an issue. Stone's notion of rules can be seen

throughout the BRI debate. According to Stone rules do not make sure that incidents are handled

the same no matter the people involved or where it takes place. This was an issue in Memphis;

school discipline was being handed out unequally. A rule will allow people to know if their

behavior is within the rule or outside the rule. Facts in BRI, as defined by Stone, are used to

convince people that the problem has been solved or is getting better. Facts are used to put forth

a strategic representation of an issue.

Civic Capacity- Clarence Stone defines civic capacity as a concerted effort to address a

major community problem. Civic capacity is the government and private sector working

together to bring change.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by the lack of true firsthand knowledge of the issues surrounding

BRI. All of the research is based on material gathered from secondary sources from the internet.

To make an analogy, the research was done through a telescope and not so much hands on. The

study would be stronger if the researchers were able to interview the participants and do a follow

up as to the present state of the Memphis City Schools.

Chapter II

Literature Review

For the purposes of this study we will review Deborah Stone's Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making (2002) as well as Clarence Stone's Civic Capacity. Deborah Stone will be used as a framework to analyze the data collected. Clarence Stone's work will be reviewed to ascertain the level of civic capacity in Memphis, relating to BRI.

Deborah Stone discusses the theory of politics and the concepts of society. Stone does this through the use of the market model and the polis model. The Market model is beneficial to the individual. The polis model is based on a community perspective. Stone states that in the polis there is a concern for public interest and government control. Figure 1 shows Stone's concepts of society.

The polis is paradoxical by nature. Based on Stone's framework goals and solutions can shift based on who is presenting them; she calls this a strategic representation. Based on the theory of strategic representation the question of 'What is the goal of BRI?' cannot be answered without first stating, the goal according to whom. Whalum's view will be different from that of the School Board and Superintendent.

Stone's Concepts of Society

		Market Model	Polis Model
1.	Unit of Analysis	individual	community
2.	Motivations	self-interest	public interest (as well as self-interest)
3.	Chief conflict	self-interest vs. self-interest	self-interest vs. public interest (common problem)
4.	Source of peoples ideas and references	self-generation within the individual	influence from outside
5.	Nature of collective activity	competition	cooperation and competition
6.	Criteria for individual decision-making	maximizing self-interest minimizing cost	loyalty (to people, places, organizations, products) maximize self-interest, promote public interest
7.	Building blocks of social action	individuals	groups and organizations
8.	Nature of information	accurate, complete, fully available	ambiguous, interpretive, incomplete, strategically manipulated
9.	How things work	laws of matter (eg., material resources are finite and diminish with use)	laws of passion (eg., human resources are renewable and expand with use)
10.	Sources of change	material exchange	ideas, persuasion, alliances
		quest to maximize own welfare	pursuit of power, pursuit of own welfare, pursuit of public interest

(p.33)   Figure 1

Memphis has trouble agreeing on what is best for its schools. This is represented in the polis, politics by its very nature involves parties arguing over public interests and putting forth their own strategic representation of the issues. Throughout the discourse of BRI several of Stones goals have been represented; these goals have been represented differently by each voice in the polis.

Security is a goal that has been brought forward by the teachers. The teachers feel that since the implementation of BRI the students have acted more violent towards them and

more disrespectful. Superintendent Jones' initial goal of BRI was efficiency. Jones saw a need

for uniformed policies across the district. The teachers see BRI as inefficient. The efficiency

goal is a good example the paradox that can exist when discussing issues in the polis. Figure 2

represents the paradoxical nature of the polis in relation to strategic representation (SR), goals,

problems and solutions.

Paradoxical Nature of the Polis

POLIS

Goals:
Equity
Efficiency
Liberty
Security

POLIS

SR   SR

Solutions:
Inducements
Rules
Facts
Rights
Powers

SR

Problems:
Symbols
Numbers
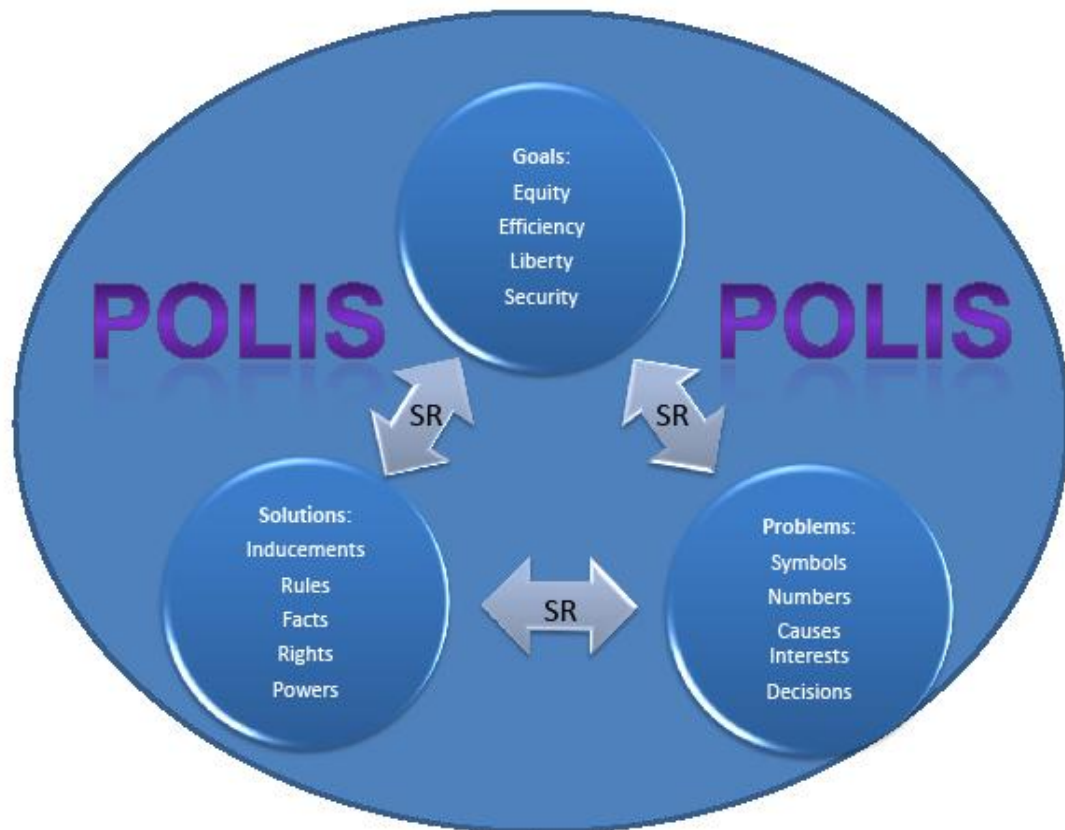Causes
Interests
Decisions

Figure 2

As illustrated in figure 2 the polis allows for several strategic representations of the same issue, none being right or wrong and all of them being part of the polis.

The second piece of literature that will be reviewed is Clarence Stone's Civic Capacity. When a community attempts to address a problem that affects many aspects of society there are several factors that can lead to the success and sustainability of their actions. One factor that can lead to the success and sustainability is the level of civic capacity. Clarence Stone defines civic capacity as "a concerted effort to address a major community problem". Civic capacity is government and the private sector working together to bring about change. Stone goes on to state "civic, refers to actions built around the idea of furthering the well being of the whole community, not that of a particular segment of group". What Stone is saying is that people need to put their own agendas, strategic representations, aside for the greater good.

In Civic Capacity- What, Why, and Whence (2003) Stone profiles four cities and their ability to handle community problems. Stone relates each city's success or failure to their abundance or lack of civic capacity. The four cities that Stone profiles are Kent, Maryland, El Paso, Texas, Boston, Massachusetts and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Community leaders in El Paso Texas recognized that there was a decline in the economy, coupled with a change in demographics and low achieving schools. Several of the key stakeholders in the city came together to address the issues; they were the University and several local entities. El Paso, Texas' stakeholders had a unified vision and strong leaders. El Paso exhibited a high level of civic capacity. As a result, the community was able to come together and address the city's needs.

The case of Boston's civic capacity is less like the organic version of El Paso's and more like force feeding an infant. Boston's reform can be traced to Judge W. Arthur Garrity's decree that Boston Public schools would desegregate. While a controversial decision at the time, and for many years after, the desegregation was the spark that brought the community together. Boston was able to secure outside funding for some of their initiatives. Boston had a mayor who took the pressure off the school board. Mayor Thomas put himself as the central figure for Boston's education reform. Boston had a medium level of civic capacity and struggled through a quarter of a century of reform and political battles.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, exhibited a low level of civic capacity. Their leadership was weak to nonexistent. Their teachers union was resistant to change and became a major road block. Philadelphia lacked a thorough plan and a shared vision. These factors led to their change imitative failing.

Figure 3 shows the 19 essential elements of civic capacity. El Paso, Texas, high level of civic capacity and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a low level of civic capacity.

Clarence Stone's Characteristics of Civic Capacity

1.Somebody with a vision of the bigger picture steps forward to say we have a problem	
2.Skillfully frame the problem with a sense of urgency	

3.Recognition that Inequalities represent more than individual efforts	
4.Enlist star power (individual leader) to lead the systematic reform	
5. Engaging the central pillars of institutional powers. Recruiting actors with high civic standing.	
6.Carefully orchestrated implementation of detailed plan out-of-the-ordinary process	
7.Engage schools, parents, community in multi-sector coalition of collaborative uncommon efforts	
8. Uses of multiple indicators to track progress	
9. Decentralize control/distribute leadership with new people who are valuable team members	
10. Engage frontline educators and an ethos of professional pride	
11. Seek and apply special funds, extra	

resources in a focused manner	
12. Emphasize relationship building and shared understanding	
13. Maintain continuous engagement and sustained momentum	
14. Nurture parental engagement and citizen development	
15. Link in to neighborhood centers	
16. Find a way to influence/shape that peer group	
17. There needs to be a connection to everyday life	
18. Establish accountability through credibility	
19. Create an intermediary organization as an anchor	

Figure 3

The amount of the elements of civic capacity that a city shows directly correlates to the city's level of civic capacity, whether it be high, low or nearly nonexistent. Figure 4 shows the how the level of civic capacity is defined in the polis.
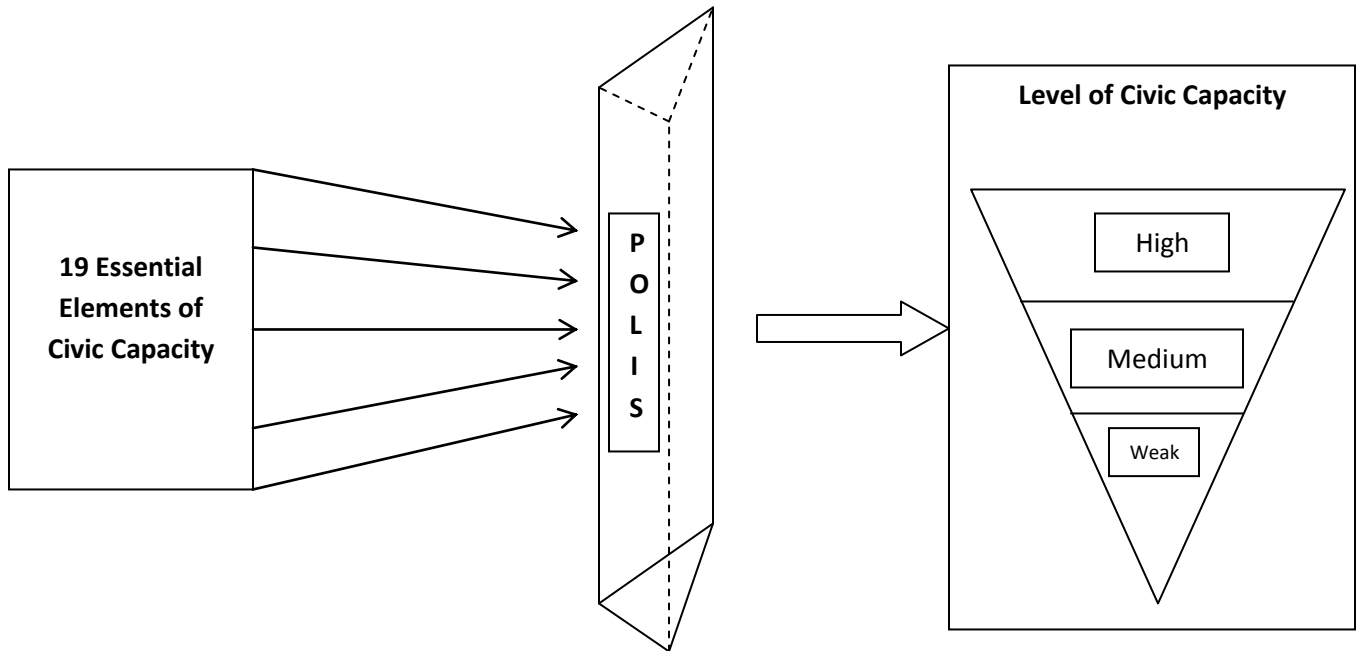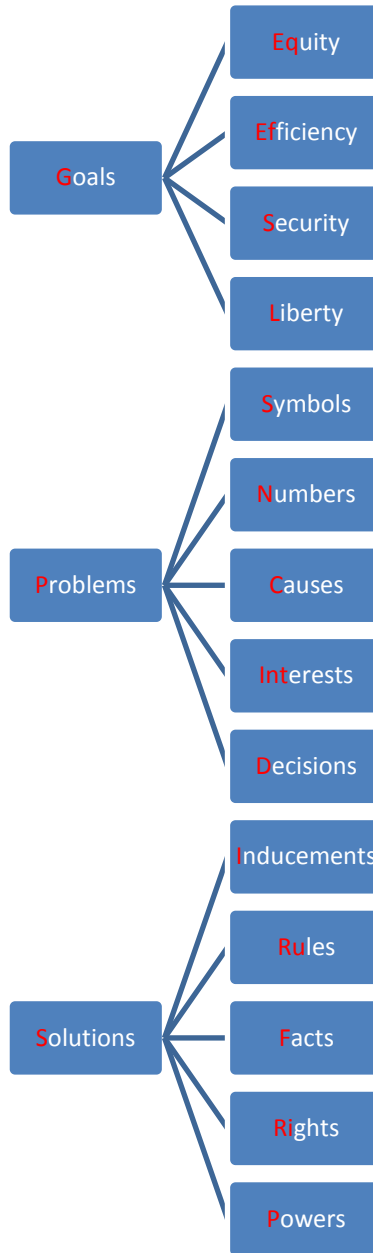

Figure 4

Chapter III

Methodology

The purpose of this study, as noted in Chapter I, is to explore and examine 2 central questions:

1. What voices are heard regarding Policy Paradox in the goals, problems, and solutions of the Blue Ribbon Initiative?

2. What is the nature of Memphis' civic capacity in relation to the Blue Ribbon Initiative?

Using the coding system below, concepts presented in the literature review can be categorized to reveal the many voices heard in the BRI. The categories presented in the chart represent the framework of Deborah Stone's goals, problems, and solutions.

Equity

Efficiency

Security

Liberty

Goals

Symbols

Numbers

Causes

Interests

Decisions

Problems

Inducements

Rules

Facts

Rights

Powers

Solutions

To better organize and analyze the concepts presented in the literature review, bins were created to arrange the information presented in each article. Using the abbreviations noted above, the voices heard in each article were put into these bins.

Article	Voice	Unit	Value	Bin

To analyze the level of civic capacity, the literature will be dissected and inserted into Clarence

Stone's 19 essential elements of Civic Capacity. The information will be compared to two other

cities, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and El Paso, Texas in order to determine what essential

elements exist and which elements are needed for BRI's successful implementation.

Clarence Stone's Characteristics of Civic Capacity

	Elements of Civic Capacity	Memphis	El Paso	Philadelphia
1.	Somebody with a vision of the bigger picture steps forward to say we have a problem		Sister Maribeth, Dr. Natalicio, Dr. Navarro	
2.	Skillfully frame the problem with a sense of urgency		Primary: Declining economy - Change in demographics Secondary: low academic achievement	Lacked a thorough plan focusing on a shared vision - Perception - Focused on finances as opposed to the low academic achievement
3.	Recognition that Inequalities represent more than individual efforts			
4.	Enlist star power (individual leader) to lead the systematic reform		Leaders and Organizers: Sister Maribeth, Dr. Natalicio, Dr. Navarro (Initiators)	Hornbeck - Strong but not effective
5.	Engaging the central pillars of institutional powers. Recruiting actors with high civic standing.		Key players all on board - High Civic Standing (Superintendents, Mayor, Sister Maribeth, Navarro, Natalicio)	Business Sector backing them in the beginning, soon eroded
6.	Carefully orchestrated implementation of detailed plan out-of-the-ordinary process			
7.	Engage schools, parents, community in multi-sector		El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence (Collaborative) (Univ.	Some members of the community were active

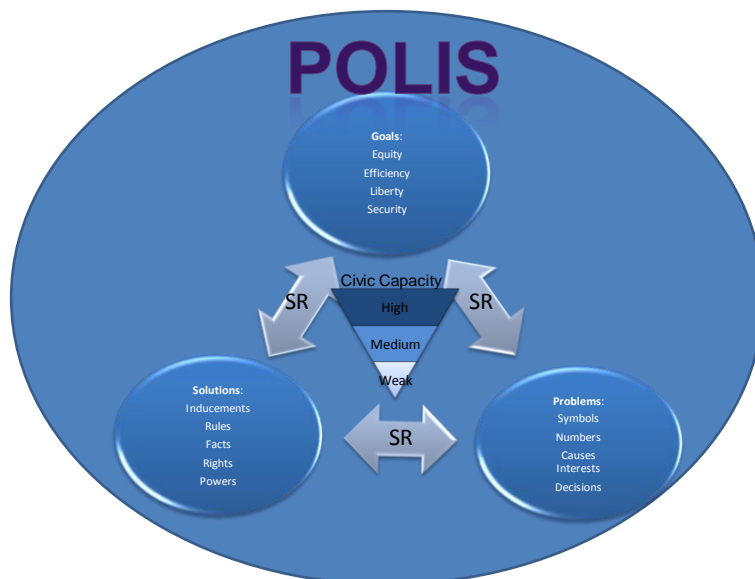|			
	coalition of collaborative uncommon efforts		Texas El Paso) ELPISO - Community based organization Dr. Susanna N. (Ongoing)	(some businesses, some parents)
8.	Uses of multiple indicators to track progress			
9.	Decentralize control/distribute leadership with new people who are valuable team members			
10.	Engage frontline educators and an ethos of professional pride			(Absence of Professional Pride)
11.	Seek and apply special funds, extra resources in a focused manner		Corporate and Foundation support, grants	Annenberg Grant, Raised funds through businesses, foundations, and federal grants
12.	Emphasize relationship building and shared understanding		Team Leadership Institute (teachers, principals)	As the plan unfolded, teachers' and building principals' resistance hardened
13.	Maintain continuous engagement and sustained momentum		3 School Superintendents on board, Education Summit - bring whole thing together - key players	(Absence of Sustainable Leadership) At Business, City, State, and School levels
14.	Nurture parental engagement and citizen development		Center for Civic Engagement, Parent Engagement Network	Some parental involvement: Family Resource Network, Full Day K, didn't last - went unfunded
15.	Link in to neighborhood centers			
16.	Find a way to influence/shape that peer group			
17.	There needs to be a connection to everyday life			
18.	Establish accountability through credibility		Joined the National Network for Educational Renewal	Lasted approx. five years
19.	Create an intermediary organization as an anchor		El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence (Collaborative)	

Setting

To better understand the information presented in the literature review and how it relates to our two questions, it is necessary to understand where and when BRI takes place. In addition, it is crucial to know who the major players are before discussing their voices and how they directly impact, negatively or positively, the successful implementation of the BRI.

Memphis, Tennessee in 2004 was filled with poverty, violence, and turmoil. It is a district with 209 schools, more than 6,000 full-time teachers, approximately 116,000 students K-12, of which eighty-six percent were African-American, eight percent White, and six percent other races and nationalities. Violence was high both in the schools as well as on the streets. According to data from the Memphis City Police Department and the Memphis School District, violence was an issue. The district and the police dealt with issues like, drug and substance abuse, gang related incidents, threats and assaults to students and staff, robberies, carjacking, felony weapons violations and misdemeanor weapon law violations. With all of this turmoil happening, the district looked for alternatives to create a safe learning environment for everyone. Corporal punishment was abolished in Memphis City School district in November of 2004 when the Board of Education voted 5-4 to remove it from the schools. In May of 2005 Superintendent Carol Johnson presented the Blue Ribbon Initiative to the Board of Education. In June she then presented the detailed framework outlining the training and implementation of the initiative. This initiative was presented in two phases: Planning & District Support and Changes to Plan & Training. Three Committees were created (Community Advisory Committee, District Discipline Oversight Committee, and Staff Committee). These committees were designed to foster a change in implementing this initiative district-wide.

During this time there were several key players involved in the BRI. Aside from Superintendent Carol Johnson, Board President Patrice Robinson and Board member Kenneth Whalum expressed their viewpoints and opinions in public and in the media. Teachers James Pinkney, Nona Allen, Lea Leet, Kay Russel, and Heather Limbaugh expressed their frustrations with the BRI, while parents Dona White and Shep Fargostein added their feelings as well. These key players found ways to present their thoughts, feelings, and frustrations in a way that drew the focus away from the underlying focus of helping to create a safe learning environment in the Memphis City Schools, where academic achievement could flourish.

In an attempt to merge Deborah Stone's Policy Paradox and Clarence Stone's Essential Elements of Civic Capacity, the BRI will be examined and using a visual representation of these two frameworks will be critiqued.

Paradoxical Nature of the Polis

Chapter IV

Findings

Summary of Responses to Research Questions

1. What voices are heard regarding Policy's Paradox's in the goals, problems, and

    solutions of the Blue Ribbon Initiative?

Within the Memphis community, there are several voices, some stronger than others, regarding

goals, problems, and solutions of the BRI. When discussing the voices, we are looking at the

polis definitions of goals, problems and solutions as outlined by Stone. The prominent voices

are those of Board President Patrice Robinson (Rob), Kenneth Whalum (Whal), and Aarons

(Aar). Other voices from the staff and the parents can be found in the letters to the editor (Edit).

Figure 4-1

Source	Voice	Unit	Value	Bin	Source	Voice	Unit	Value	Bin
A	Whal	1	-	PC	D	Edit	1	-	SP
A	Whal	2	+	SF	D	Edit	2	-	GEf
A	Whal	3	+	GS	D	Edit	3	-	GS
A	Whal	4	-	PC	D	Edit	4	+	PN
A	Whal	5	+	SI	D	Edit	5	-	PN
A	Whal	6	-	PS	D	Edit	6	-	GEq

A	Whal	7	-	PD	D	Edit	7	-	PS
B	Rob	1	+	PC	D	Edit	8	-	GEq
B	Rob	2	+	PD	D	Edit	9	-	PN
B	Rob	3	-	GEq	D	Edit	10	-	PS
B	Rob	4	-	GS	E	MCS	1	+	SF
C	Aar	1	-	GEf	E	MCS	2	-	SF
C	Aar	2	-	GS	E	MCS	3	+	SF
C	Aar	3	-	GEf	E	MCS	4	-	SF
C	Aar	4	+	SF	E	MCS	5	+	SF
C	Aar	5	+	PN	E	MCS	6	-	SF
C	Aar	6	-	PN	E	MPD	7	-	SF
C	Aar	7	-	GEf	F	Leet	1	+	PC
C	Aar	8	-	PN	F	Leet	2	-	PC
C	Aar	9	-	GEq	F	Russ	3	-	SF
C	Aar	10	+	SI	F	Lim	4	-	SRi
C	Aar	11	+	GEf	F	Farg	5	-	GS

C	Aar	12	-	GEq	F	Farg	6	-	PC
C	Aar	13	-	SRi	G	Turn	1	+	GEq
C	Aar	14	-	GS	G	Fari	2	+	PI
C	Aar	15	-	SP	G	Mudd	3	+	PI
C	Aar	16	+	GEf	G	Mudd	4	+	SP

Robinson speaks to the problem at hand and the districts number one goal: academic achievement. She talks about how the goals are not being met, yet she speaks to the problems with a positive connotation knowing that the BRI is being developed to address them. Starting with the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support Program in 2004, called the BRI, Memphis City Schools planned on increasing student achievement, attendance, teacher satisfaction, positive school climates, and student leadership/empowerment (Robinson). Knowing that this change takes time, Robinson believes that with the proper support for students, staff and parents they are well on their way to a plan that works (Robinson).

Whalum takes on the role of the naysayer. Whalum believes that no one is listening to the teachers, students, and general public about what is happening as a result of the BRI. Whalum connects the lack of discipline in public schools to poverty. People, students, are not able to act in a controlled or calm manner during difficult or stressful times. He focuses most of his opinions to the problems in the district and the holes with the BRI and believes the only solution to the districts problems is to revert back to corporal punishment (Whalum)

Some teachers had the courage to speak out as well. They are frustrated and concerned that BRI

is not working. In a survey conducted by the Memphis Education Association, more than eighty

percent of those surveyed said, consequences are not being enforced consistently throughout the

district. Students are empowered and teachers cannot "do" anything to them. With more

paperwork and steps taken to enforce discipline upon students, teachers report that their teaching

effectiveness is suffering (Aarons). Not all teachers state that the BRI was to blame for the lack

of discipline control. Lea Leet, a first grade teacher, believed it was time to make the parents

more accountable. Putting all of the BRI committees together to focus on the common goal does

not sound impossible to her. Kay Russell and Heather Limbaugh share similar concerns about

the need for immediate consequences and immediate improvement in behavior. The lack of

immediacy and stringency are the primary reasons they believe it is not effective.

2. What is the nature of Civic Capacity in Memphis, Tennessee?

When discussing the level of civic capacity in the Memphis City School District, it is necessary

to compare it to two cities studied by Clarence Stone; El Paso, Texas and Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania. As noted in the chart below, some elements were present, some were inconsistent,

and some were absent from the introduction and implementation of the BRI (see Figure 4-2)

Figure 4-2

Elements of Civic Capacity	Memphis	El Paso	Philadelphia

1. Somebody with a vision of the bigger picture steps forward to say we have a problem	Superintendent Carol Johnson	Sister Maribeth, Dr. Natalicio, Dr. Navarro	
2. Skillfully frame the problem with a sense of urgency		Primary: Declining economy - Change in demographics Secondary: low academic achievement	Lacked a thorough plan focusing on a shared vision - Perception - Focused on finances as opposed to the low academic achievement
3. Recognition that Inequalities represent more than individual efforts			
4. Enlist star power (individual leader) to lead the systematic reform		Leaders and Organizers: Sister Maribeth, Dr. Natalicio, Dr. Navarro (Initiators)	Hornbeck - Strong but not effective

5. Engaging the central pillars of institutional powers. Recruiting actors with high civic standing.		Key players all on board High Civic Standing (Superintendents, Mayor, Sister Maribeth, Navarro, Natalicio)	Business Sector backing them in the beginning, soon eroded
6. Carefully orchestrated implementation of detailed plan out-of-the-ordinary process			
7. Engage schools, parents, community in multi-sector coalition of collaborative uncommon efforts	Community Advisory Committee District Discipline Oversight Committee Staff Committee	El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence (Collaborative) (Univ. Texas El Paso) ELPISO - Community based organization Dr. Susanna N. (Ongoing)	Some members of the community were active (some businesses, some parents)

8. Uses of multiple indicators to track progress	Referral forms, MPD Crime Reports, Blue Ribbon Discipline Committee(BRDC)		
9. Decentralize control/distribute leadership with new people who are valuable team members	Blue Ribbon Discipline Committees (within each school)		
10. Engage frontline educators and an ethos of professional pride			(Absence of Professional Pride)
11. Seek and apply special funds, extra resources in a focused manner		Corporate and Foundation support, grants	Annenberg Grant, Raised funds through businesses, foundations, and federal grants
12. Emphasize		Team Leadership Institute	As the plan unfolded,

relationship building and shared understanding		(teachers, principals)	teachers' and building principals' resistance hardened
13. Maintain continuous engagement and sustained momentum		3 School Superintendents on board, Education Summit - bring whole thing together - key players	(Absence of Sustainable Leadership) At Business, City, State, and School levels
14. Nurture parental engagement and citizen development		Center for Civic Engagement, Parent Engagement Network	Some parental involvement: Family Resource Network, Full Day K, didn't last - went unfunded
15. Link in to neighborhood centers			
16. Find a way to influence/shape that peer group			
17. There needs to be a connection			

to everyday life			
18. Establish accountability through credibility		Joined the National Network for Educational Renewal	Lasted approx. five years
19. Create an intermediary organization as an anchor		El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence (Collaborative)	

To measure the nature and level of civic capacity with regards to the BRI, it is important to note that not all of the essential elements have to be present. Certain elements carry more weight than others and allow for significant gains and sustainability when carrying out such a major initiative. Superintendent, Carol Johnson had a vision for bringing safety and security to the MCSD. She recognized the need for a common and consistent means of bringing order back into the classroom so that teachers could focus on improving academic achievement. Similar to the Collaborative carried out in El Paso, BRI used Referral forms, MPD Crime Reports, and the Blue Ribbon Discipline Committee (BRDC) to track the progress of the initiative. Utilizing the BRDC allowed for decentralization of leadership and a brought a sense of ownership and responsibility to each school building and learning community. BRI also attempted to engage parents, and community members with the creation of three committees: the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), the District Discipline Oversight Committee (DDOC), and the Staff

Committee (SC). While these committees were beneficial on paper and in presentations made at board meetings, parents and teachers did not feel as though the BRI was effective at all.

After careful review of the data presented in the three cities, successful implementation of the Collaborative for Academic Excellence in El Paso was possible due in part to the acquisition of funds through corporations, foundations and grants. Not only did this provide a solid financial foundation, it drew the community together and provided for security in sustaining the program. The BRI lacked a connection to the community centers and it was isolated. Students did not gain real life connections. Students are only in school for a portion of their day. Once students leave school, the Memphis City Police Department still reports that crime in the community was an issue. Within the first one hundred days of school, the MCPD reported 598 offenses which included aggravated assaults, simple assaults, robberies and weapon law violations.

The Collaborative exhibited a shared vision by many leaders who were held in high civic standing. Even though Johnson presented her vision and a plan was put in place to implement it, there were opposing voices. Whalum was a strong voice in favor of bringing back corporal punishment. Parents were struggling with this change as well. In addition, staff was not truly sold on the idea and did not have a vested interest in BRI due to the high demands and inconvenience of increased paperwork to create referrals and the necessary paper trail for administration to handle disciplinary situations. Without a shared vision by powerful leaders within the community and a sense of urgency, ownership, and accountability, BRI did not have a firm foundation to build upon.

The implementation of the BRI lacked the engagement of frontline educators and a an emphasis on shared understanding and relationship building. Throughout the literature, it

seemed as if most of the staff and parents were looking for consistency across the district. Johnson's plan had the groundwork for this consistency; however it was not implemented is such a manner that it could be sustained.

In looking at the literature and framing it within the guidelines of Clarence Stone's Civic Capacity along with Deborah Stone's political framework, Memphis could look to the fine example of El Paso to restructure and possibly come to an understanding of what is needed to create a safe and effective learning environment for the students in the Memphis City Schools.

Chapter V

Conclusion I

In a time where violence, poverty and turmoil filled the city and schools of Memphis, Superintendent Carol Johnson wanted to provide a safe and effective learning environment. She knew disciplinary procedures needed to be restored in a more consistent and equitable way. The implementation of the BRI was creative, intuitive and something that could prove to be an effective change within the school system. There were, however, too many holes in the process. The BRI lacked the crucial elements of civic capacity. In addition, the simultaneous decision to remove corporal punishment by the Board of Education created a breakdown in the focus of goals and solutions to the problems Memphis was facing.

As discussed in Chapter IV, the city of El Paso was able to implement successfully the Collaborative due to the existence of several elements of civic capacity. For this reason, suggestions for improving the BRI and sustaining it in Memphis come from research findings regarding effectiveness. Superintendent Johnson had a vision and a sense of urgency to improve the academic learning environment for all students and increase academic performance similar to Sister Maribeth, Dr. Natalicio and D. Navarro; however Johnson needs to reframe the problem, emphasizing the true sense of urgency (C. Stone). Enlisting star power to lead the systemic reform is crucial to the success of any community change efforts, which would include the BRI. While Board member Whalum had a strong voice, his negativity and skepticism were heard too often and swayed many parents and teachers into not giving the BRI a fair chance.

El Paso was able to show a united front, including all sectors of the community, and they established the Collaborative as an anchor to sustain their change movement. The BRI lacked

this element and therefore several voices in the media and in the district were in conflict. In addition, Memphis lacked the support of the local community centers. Tying in their support would preserve the efforts administration and assist in establishing a carryover of the behavioral expectations set forth in the BRI. One would think Johnson's plan was carefully orchestrated and detailed. The committees that were created, however, did not sustain the momentum of the change effort. Too many individual goals were set and this drew power away from the district's original focus. As portrayed in the strategic representation of the polis described by Deborah Stone, the path to a solution is not a one-way street. Problems are not solved based solely upon the goals that have been set. The goals, problems, and solutions pertaining to the BRI need to constantly be revisited, modified and checked to insure that the desired outcomes set forth by the Memphis City Schools and Superintendent Johnson are obtained (Stone, 33).

Another suggestion to aid in the success of the BRI would be to seek and apply extra funding. This proved to be beneficial to El Paso when they acquired both corporate and foundational support through various grants. Not only does it provide financial support to the efforts, it solidifies the commitment from outside sources and provides the community with a strong, united front. With the extra resources and the support, the BRI might not have appeared as the individual plan of Johnson's but rather the community's plan to foster a safer and more effective learning environment for all of its members.

Students, parents, and the staff of the Memphis City Schools are looking for a way out of the turmoil, poverty, and violence. While the BRI may not be the sole solution to their problems, it shows potential to improve the current state of discourse. With the modifications discussed previously and a cohesive group to forge ahead, the BRI could effective if implemented properly. Keeping the students safety and academic excellence as the core issue, the people of Memphis,

including Superintendent Johnson, have a lot of work to do. Their efforts need to be streamlined and not be in such conflict. They need to rise to the challenge to pave the way for the future leaders of Memphis, the students.

Conclusion II

Superintendent Carol Johnson's bold vision of the Blue Ribbon Incentive was derailed from its onset for a myriad of reasons. Johnson's goal for BRI was to bring efficiency to the Memphis City Schools. The teachers of the Memphis school system saw the BRI as being in-efficient and also created a security concern. Of the many voices in Memphis Kenneth Whalum was the most out spoken opponent of the BRI. Whalum was able to dilute and confuse the argument for BRI by pointing out continued failings of the Memphis schools. Whalum also used the recent, unrelated, banning of corporal punishment as a platform against BRI. The main cause for BRI not experiencing full success is the lack of civic capacity for the initiative.

Chapter IV discusses the elements of civic capacity needed to have an initiative take hold and become successful. El Paso Texas, in implementing their Collaborative, is an extraordinary example of what can be accomplished when the right elements of civic capacity are present. Memphis can look to El Paso's success and use the example set in El Paso to aid in future Memphis initiatives. Memphis can start by looking at element 1: Somebody with a vision. Both Memphis and El Paso have a person/people with a vision; Memphis has Superintendent Johnson, El Paso Sister Maribeth, Dr. Natalicio, and Dr. Navarro. El Paso's visionaries were able to keep the vision focused and not become sidetracked. In Memphis the issue became convoluted through other voices. Superintendent Johnson was not able to keep the issued focused on her goals, which allowed other peoples goals, problems and solutions to overrun her plan.

Another element lacking from Memphis' civic capacity is element 5; engaging the central pillars of institutional powers, recruiting actors with high civic standing. While Memphis schools engaged the parents for BRI they failed to reach out to major community leaders. These community leaders would have added star power and credibility to BRI. El Paso enlisted the support of the mayor and other civic leaders. Engaging the support of the central pillars of power would give the BRI other proponents to speak about and support it. Had the pillars of power been reached out to in Memphis the naysayers, Whalum, would be fighting more than one voice. The opposition would have been met with a unified front of individuals all having the same goal, the success of BRI.

Community involvement in schools is sparse; expecting people to get information from the schools on complex issues is naïve. One element of civic capacity not present in either El Paso or Memphis is a link to neighborhood centers. The fact that El Paso did not a have a direct link to community centers was overcome by other civic capacity elements. Memphis would have benefited greatly from a link to neighborhood centers. This link would have given the proponents of BRI a way to bring their message to the people. Having a link to neighborhood centers coupled with enlisting the central pillars of power would have given the BRI a much stronger chance of succeeding. These two elements of civic capacity would have allowed Superintendent Johnson to put her goals forward with little inference.

The lack of Memphis's civic capacity was not the only detrimental factor leading to the unsuccessful Blue Ribbon Initiative. Superintendant Johnson had to deal with the unexpected abolishment of corporal punishment. The corporal punishment decision gave the BRI opponents fodder to cloud the issue. However, if the BRI had a healthier level of civic capacity

Superintendant Johnson's strategic representation of the issue would have been dominant not

allowing the opponents a foothold.

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