Implementing Homeland Security Policy in the U.S. States: 
A Comparative State Study

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Christopher P. Mathias

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Homeland security (HS) is a major public policy issue in the United States. The HS literature is growing but the growth is unbalanced as federal and local perspectives receive the lion’s share of academic inquiry. Addressing the dearth of state level research in HS, this study examines the implementation of HS policy in two U.S. states: Idaho and Massachusetts. Two state studies are not particularly generalizable so dissimilar sampling was used to bookend the range of U.S. states.

This in-depth qualitative analysis is based on semi-structured, open-ended interviews with state officials who work on NIMS compliance, or what academics call “NIMS implementation.” The officials’ statements are proxies for the realities of NIMS compliance. Guided by fourteen factors derived from the Sabatier-Mazmanian model of subnational implementation, the interviewees answered questions and discussed their experiences implementing the NIMS. Their interviews were transcribed, coded, organized into emergent themes, and then compared across states. Overall, NIMS compliance in the two states is quite similar. Eleven similar themes emerged, but so too did a few differences. Though much more research is needed, these collective findings have both procedural and substantive implications for HS policy and research in the U.S. states.

First, although initially assumed, the sampling criteria used to select Idaho and Massachusetts are not equal: geography and population seem to influence state level NIMS compliance more than governance structure and political culture. Second, short of mandatory participation for public officials, researchers in this area can anticipate small sample sizes. Also, future examinations of the media’s influence on NIMS compliance should pay particular attention to the perspectives of public information officers.
Substantively, the internet seems like a primary tool in state NIMS compliance and deserves much more research. Current state level disparities in internet infrastructure deserve attention from policymakers. Second, to supplement existing research dedicated to funding-allocation procedures, more research should examine how states spend their funding; indeed, informative spending differences arose across the two states. This conclusion led to another: state agencies could seemingly benefit from increased autonomy in decision making. Lastly, increased involvement by inactive public officials and the largely uninformed public could bolster NIMS policy.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 2

Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................................... 5

Table of Contents .......................................................................................................................... 7

List of Figures and Tables .............................................................................................................. 9

Chapter 1: Introduction ................................................................................................................. 10
  Roadmap ..................................................................................................................................... 11
  A Brief History of the Modern Homeland Security Era ......................................................... 12
  Homeland Security in the U.S. States ....................................................................................... 14
  Implementing Homeland Security Policy ................................................................................. 15

Chapter 2: Literature Review ....................................................................................................... 18
  Fundamental, Theoretical Pillars of Homeland Security .................................................... 18
  State Level Studies .................................................................................................................. 21
  Conclusions from the Extant Literature ................................................................................... 34

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework ............................................................................................... 38
  Guiding Hypotheses .................................................................................................................. 43

Chapter 4: Research Method ........................................................................................................ 51
  Case Selection .......................................................................................................................... 51
  The Interviews .......................................................................................................................... 57
  Within Case Analytic Design .................................................................................................... 58
  Cross Case Analytic Design ...................................................................................................... 59

Chapter 5: Idaho Case Study Report ............................................................................................ 61
  Idaho .......................................................................................................................................... 61
  Homeland Security in Idaho ..................................................................................................... 62
  Emergent Themes about the NIMS’ Implementation ............................................................... 63

Chapter 6: Massachusetts Case Study Report .............................................................................. 98
  Massachusetts ........................................................................................................................... 98
  Homeland Security in Massachusetts ..................................................................................... 99
  Emergent Themes about the NIMS’ Implementation ............................................................... 99

Chapter 7: Comparative Analysis ................................................................................................ 131
  Cross-State Similarities ............................................................................................................ 131
  Cross-State Differences .......................................................................................................... 137
  Summary of the Comparative Findings .................................................................................... 147
LIST OF FIGURE AND TABLES

Figure One: Visual schematic of the Sabatier-Mazmanian model of implementation……39

Table One: Content Summary Table of the emergent themes in Idaho………………………64

Table Two: Content Summary Table of the emergent themes in Massachusetts…………100
CHAPTER ONE - Introduction

On September 11, 2001 (9/11), the modern concept of homeland security (HS) began its rapid ascent of the U.S. public policy agenda. And yet despite billions of dollars in government expenditures, much remains unknown about this major public policy area. Indeed, policymakers continue to struggle addressing HS challenges. The purpose of this study is to provide a greater understanding of HS policy. This research was motivated by curiosities such as:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of current HS efforts?
What HS capabilities do governments and their officials have?
What reforms could benefit HS policy?

The specific purpose of this study is to develop our academic understanding of how the U.S. states implement HS policy. This qualitative, in-depth analysis examines how two states have implemented a nationalized HS program called the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Guided by a framework for implementation analysis developed by Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian (1980), this study is based on open-ended, semi-structured interviews with state officials who have experience working on NIMS implementation or, what they call, “NIMS compliance.” In this study, their collective experiences are a proxy for how HS policy is implemented at the state level. This research examined NIMS compliance in Idaho - an expansive, sparsely populated, western border state - and Massachusetts, a small, densely populated, eastern coastal state. Across the two states, this study found that NIMS compliance is characterized by very similar themes, and a few noteworthy differences.
In addition to its academic contribution, this study may provide value to those working on NIMS compliance in other U.S. states. With the particular help of Chapters Seven and Eight, implementing officials in the other states will hopefully be able to apply these findings and conclusions directly to their own compliance efforts.

Roadmap

Chapter One introduces the phenomenon of interest, the state level implementation of the NIMS. The introduction begins with a brief history of modern HS policy and an overview of the implementation environment. Chapter Two reviews the literature. It first examines three theoretical pillars fundamental to all HS research: federalism, intergovernmental relations (IGR), and interdisciplinary process. It then closely reviews the state level HS research. The chapter finally delineates conclusions from the extant literature.

Chapter Three outlines the conceptual framework and how the NIMS was used here to operationalize ‘homeland security policy.’ This includes overviewing the Sabatier-Mazmanian model of implementation analysis and the fourteen factors around which this study is built.

Chapter Four details the qualitative research design and the method employed. This includes discussion of the multistage sampling technique used to select the states or ‘cases’ and to select state officials for interview. Then data collection, within case analysis, and cross case analysis are discussed.

Chapters Five and Six discuss the findings from the Idaho and Massachusetts case studies, respectively. These chapters provide the data that is analyzed in later chapters. Chapters Five and Six are descriptive ‘case study reports;’ they outline and discuss the
major themes that emerged in the interviews. Chapter Seven compares these emergent themes across the two states. After outlining the cross-state compliance similarities, the differences and their possible explanations are discussed. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the cross-state findings. Chapter Eight distills the findings into conclusions and discusses their implications for policy and research. Finally, this study’s weaknesses are discussed followed by the conclusion.

**A Brief History of the Modern Homeland Security Era**

The modern notion of HS is new having rapidly integrated into the public lexicon after 9/11. However, HS is an old practice and “not a new problem” (D. F. Kettl, 2003). Public officials have been addressing perceived security threats for Centuries. For example, in the late 18th Century, Governor Bowdoin of Massachusetts became increasingly concerned about the security threat posed by Shays’ Rebellion. Concerns about the Rebellion grew so severe that General George Washington unretired to advocate for a stronger national government (Richards, 2002). American history contains countless other examples of U.S. states effectuating what we today call: homeland security (HS). This suggests HS policy is “a matter of doing new things, doing many old things much better, and doing some old things differently” (D. F. Kettl, 2003).

While many underlying practices like law enforcement and emergency management are old, modern HS is a new concept. No President before George W. Bush ever used the term to refer to the U.S. during crisis (Kaplan, 2003). The federal government never used the word until 1977 when it…

got into the homeland act. In the Quadrennial Defense Review mandated by Congress, a defense panel was set up to rethink military strategy up to 2020. The panel foresaw a need to counter potential terrorism and other transnational threats to the sovereign territory of the nation. Its
recommendation of an ‘increased emphasis on homeland defense’ did not get much attention (Safire, 2002).

After 9/11, and almost overnight, HS became a household term (Friedmann, 2007; Kaplan, 2003; Safire, 2002). In hindsight, comparatively smaller terrorism-incidents like the 1993 bombing at the World Trade Center, the 1995 bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, and the 2000 al-Qaeda attack on the U.S.S. Cole had less effect on policymakers and the public. In contrast, 9/11 was a large scale focusing event with a major impact on American emergency and disaster policy (Scavo, Kearney, & Richard Kilroy, 2007). Today, myriad domestic challenges ranging from commercial jet bombs to flooding to drug trafficking all conceivably fall under the domain of HS.

The 9/11 attacks led directly to the enactment of major laws like the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001, a.k.a., USA PATRIOT Act, and, relevant here, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HSA). The HS concept was formalized when the U.S. Congress passed and President George W. Bush signed the HSA. The HSA…

created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) setting forth its general structure, authorities and responsibilities. The enactment of the legislation represented the largest overhaul of the federal government in more than 50 years (Dillman, 2008).

The sheer size of the DHS is impressive – with over 200,000 employees it is one of the three largest federal departments, a reorganization of the federal government unmatched since the creation of the Department of Defense in 1947 (Moynihan, 2005).

One of the HSAs many legal provisions creates authority for the President to issue Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPD). HSPD#5 led to the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This study examines the NIMS’ state level implementation.
**Homeland Security in the U.S. States**

The fifty states are the most powerful subnational governments in the United States. Unlike the other tens of thousands of subnational governments, the U.S. states are the primary sovereigns in the American constitutional structure and the primary source of the nation’s sovereignty. The Constitution is a grant of limited powers by the states to a federal government while leaving the states with their underlying sovereignty. The Tenth Amendment holds that powers not Constitutionally-delegated to the federal government, and not prohibited to the States, “are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” Although the Tenth Amendment has lost some prestige among Constitutional observers, it nonetheless “ensures a state role” in HS (Lansford, Pauly, & Covarrubias, 2006). Indeed, as implied under the Tenth Amendment, responsibility for emergency preparedness is relegated to the states (Edwards, 2007). This was not lost on state Governors who, after 9/11, “lobbied the president and Congress long and hard for a key role in HS” (Caruson, MacManus, Kohen, & Watson, 2005).

A brief note about the constitutional relationship between states and their local governments is also insightful and relevant. For over a Century, the U.S. Supreme Court has held that sub-state governments are “political subdivisions” of the U.S. state in which they are located. See *Hunter v. City of Pittsburg*, 207 U.S. 161 (1907). Thus, all sub-state governments are creatures of the state with only and precisely those powers delegated to them by the state.

Despite the importance of states in the HS ecosystem, there have been few studies and little academic discourse about their essential roles (Dillman, 2008; Kincaid & Cole, 2002; Walters, 2001). Indeed, the role of the states in HS remains relatively unclear.
(Beaumont & McDowell, 2006). The States should be examined for reasons beyond academic neglect. Clovis (2006) persuasively argues that there are HS practices in the states that scholars should explore. He suggests greater focus on the role of states in HS will assist in “as-is” assessments of intergovernmental capabilities (Clovis, 2006). Also, pointing to federally administered HS grant programs as evidence that more research about the states is needed, he suggests the requirements for acceptable compliance in these programs indicates a complete lack of awareness of and sensitivity to the operational activities of state governments. Some argue that research should inquire into how states can bridge the many gaps that exist among the diverse interests of various local, state, and federal agencies involved in implementing HS initiatives (Hughes, 2003). In short, greater research of HS at the state level is important and the aim of this study.

**Implementing Homeland Security Policy**

Implementation is the carrying out of a basic policy decision (Ryan, 1995). It is a series of subnational decisions and actions aimed at putting a prior authoritative decision into effect (Hill & Hupe, 2002; J. P. Lester & Goggin, 1998). Policy implementation can be studied at least two ways. Policymakers are naturally curious to determine whether implementation has been successful or not. However, this study rejects this simple dichotomization of implementation as either success or failure (Hill & Hupe, 2002; J. P. Lester & Goggin, 1998) and focuses on process evaluation. In this study, the essential implementation characteristic studied was the performance of certain necessary tasks (Hill & Hupe, 2002). Thus, rather than examining policy outcomes, this qualitative implementation study examines the efforts or “policy outputs” of implementing state officials. To this end, rather than statistics or survey outcomes, the collective statements of
state officials serve as proxies for state level implementation. This approach was motivated by questions such as:

*How do state officials implement HS?*

*What are the particularly influences on their implementation efforts?*

*Overall, what do their individual experiences suggest about the nature of HS implementation in the U.S. states?*

The HS literature is void of in-depth implementation studies at the state level. According to Dillman (2008), state studies have been limited to measurements of state officials’ opinions concerning coordination and collaboration; examinations of the status of particular states’ preparedness; and surveys of state HS directors. This evidence based implementation study aims to refine HS policies and programs by identifying more realistic goals for state governments and providing guidance on areas of reform.

As discussed in detail in Chapter Two, HS policy is implemented in a complex policy environment. In their classic work, Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) examined the implementation of the Economic Development Administration’s business loans program in Oakland, California, which they found to be a failure. They concluded that implementation was characterized by contradictory criteria, antagonistic relationships among participants, and a high level of uncertainty about the possibilities of success. In exploring the “complexity of joint action” they were surprised anything was implemented (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Given some of the intergovernmental parallels in HS policy, HS research may also unveil a complexity of joint action between involved parties. More HS policy research should be dedicated to understanding implementation complexities.
In short, although HS and HS research are relatively young, state level research has largely been neglected. In-depth implementation studies are nonexistent. This study aims to remedy both these shortcomings by studying the implementation of the NIMS in both Idaho and Massachusetts.
CHAPTER TWO – Literature Review

As discussed in Chapter One, 9/11 was a major focusing event in American government. It also focused academic research and “gave rise” to an explicit HS literature (Friedmann, 2007). There are now numerous HS publications and three peer reviewed journals, including Homeland Security Affairs, the Journal of Homeland Security, and the Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Additionally, scholars in various disciplines use the term to place their relevant studies. This interdisciplinary literature review does three things. First, this literature review examines three theoretical pillars underlying HS research. It then narrows the focus to state level research and the major focus areas in said research. Finally, this review discusses conclusions from the extant literature.

Fundamental, Theoretical Pillars of Homeland Security

The HS policy environment is inherently complex. Indeed, the HS ‘ecosystem’ is a complicated policy arena consisting of almost 90,000 governments, countless private sector organizations, and a range of professional disciplines. Thus, prerequisite to understanding HS and its underlying issues is a basic understanding of federalism, intergovernmental relations (IGR), and interdisciplinary process. We explore each in turn. Federalism

A strong foundation in federalism is fundamental to any discussion of HS (Clovis, 2006). Indeed, many HS debates surround “classic questions of federalism” (Dillman, 2008). The American founders adopted federalism to promote democracy and protect against the over accumulation of power in any one level of government. Federalism is… a system of government in which there is a division and sharing of powers between the national government and sub-national governments. In effect,
government power is a complex series of relationships with centralized and decentralized authority. It stands in direct contrast to a unitary system in which power is centralized in a national government. In federalism, sovereignty is constitutionally split between at least two territorial levels so that units at each level have final authority and can act independently of the others in some areas (Dillman, 2008).

The American HS policy environment is a complex ecosystem consisting of one federal government and over 85,000 subnational governments. This includes fifty state governments, approximately 19,000 municipal governments, 3,000 county governments, and thousands of quasi-governmental units and special districts.

Consequently, HS challenges American federalism (Eisinger, 2006) by placing many new demands on our federalist system (Caruson, et al., 2005). Understanding federalism helps explain many of these fundamental tensions. Perhaps the commonest federalist tension is that subnational officials often argue for flexibility and resources to act while others argue for a top down, centralized approach (D. Kettl, 2004). Immediately after 9/11,…

the federal government was a crossroads. Homeland security seemed to demand a strong, central guiding and supportive presence, but Washington had long since eschewed such a role in favor of devolution. Local and states governments, more and more on their own fiscally, were reluctant partners in the implementation of federal standards (Eisinger, 2006).

Thus, citing Beaumont and McDowell (2006), Dillman (2008) suggests that while a federalist approach to government may promote American democracy, it simultaneously complicates and is complicated by HS, writing:

Homeland security is a challenging endeavor due to the centralized nature of the policy issues coupled with the fact…our system of federalism does not offer a traditional hierarchical fit with clear lines of policymaking, accountability, rewards, and punishments. American democracy is rooted in the precepts of federalism where state governments share powers with
federal institutions. Existing structures of overlapping federal, state, and local governance provide challenges to homeland security efforts.

To summarize, HS policy exists in a federalist environment; an ecosystem consisting of almost 90,000 governments, each with a vested interest in HS and an inability to alone achieve the myriad tasks HS demands. To achieve these tasks, HS relies upon a complex and vital system of intergovernmental relations (IGR) to manage environmental and institutional complexity (Caruson, et al., 2005). For these reasons, HS provides a “key testing ground” for federalist principles.

Intergovernmental Relations

Intergovernmental relations (IGR) occur within the federalist context discussed above (Caruson, et al., 2005; Wright, 1974). IGR is distinguished from federalism in that federalism deals with the anatomy of the policy environment while IGR deals with its physiology (Wright 1974). Here, it is a distinct and significant dimension of governmental activities centrally concerned with HS policy and programs (Caruson, et al., 2005; Wright, 1974). Although intergovernmental coordination for HS is not federalism’s strong suit (Dillman, 2008 citing Kettle, 2003), the implementation of HS policy is nonetheless contingent upon a system of IGR (Caruson, et al., 2005). Thus, fundamental to any discussion of HS should be a minimal understanding of interagency activities between federal, state, and local governments and within governments (Newmann, 2002).

Homeland security has no doubt tested the American intergovernmental system (Beaumont & McDowell, 2006). Some compare government responses to 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina to a cardiac stress test for the American intergovernmental system (D. F. Kettl, 2006). Others suggest that the 9/11 Commission Report was a partial audit of the pre-9/11 intergovernmental system (Caruson, et al., 2005). The intergovernmental
cooperation that is necessary for HS programs to be successful does not come easily to officials who are typically wary of ceding power to people outside their jurisdictions and who often feel success is measured only by their constituents’ level of satisfaction (Scavo, et al., 2007).

In short, HS is a “complex intergovernmental policy arena” (Caruson & MacManus, 2005). HS officials employ IGR to navigate the American federalism system which is a large and complex policy ecosystem.

Interdisciplinary Process

The field of HS is “highly interdisciplinary” (Eisinger, 2006; Friedmann, 2007). 9/11 ushered in new recognition that HS is built upon an “interdisciplinary basis” (C. R. Wise & Nader, 2002). Practitioners have come to realize that HS is “heavily grounded in a variety of disciplines” such as police and criminal justice, fire and emergency response, economics, and biochemistry, to name a few (Nicholson, 2005). Therefore, it is critical for HS organizations to nurture their capacity to work collaboratively (C. Wise, 2002). Additionally, because HS “reaches across boundaries of method and theory” (Lansford, et al., 2006), interdisciplinary process brings a more fully representative perspective to bear on policymaking (Stockton, 2009).

To summarize, HS observers should have some awareness of three fundamental aspects of HS. HS relies on intergovernmental relations and coordination which occurs within the American style of federalist government. Lastly, HS relies upon practitioners and academics to work within and across the many disciplines that underlie HS.

State Level Studies
Modern HS “involves substantial new roles for subnational governments” (Eisinger, 2006). Recognizing the importance of subnational governments to HS policy, scholars have increasingly examined the roles of local government (Caruson & MacManus, 2005; Caruson, et al., 2005; Clarke & Chenoweth, 2006; Kemp, 2004; McCauley, 2011; Thatcher, 2005), local law enforcement (Burruss, Giblin, & Schafer, 2010; Donnermeyer, 2002; Eack, 2008; Henry, 2002; Pelfrey, 2007; Simeone, 2008; Thatcher, 2005; Waxman, 2009), airports (DeDomenica, 2003), and emergency planners (Eisinger, 2006; McCauley, 2011; Nicholson, 2007; Tierney, 2005).

Although the amount of HS research examining subnational governments is growing, the growth has not been equitable. Compared to their federal and local counterparts, the HS activities of U.S. state governments have been neglected. While scholarship recognizes the importance of state government to HS, the U.S. states receive little academic attention (Dillman, 2008; Kincaid & Cole, 2002; Walters, 2001). Consequently, the HS literature does not contain many studies that actually describe state policy behavior (Dillman, 2008). Therefore, there are policies and practices in the U.S. states that ought to be studied (Clovis, 2006). By examining the implementation of HS policy in Idaho and Massachusetts this study aims to help fill the literature’s state level void.

This literature review outlines trends in state level research to illustrate major focus areas. More importantly, this section aims to identify and understand the factors that influence the HS activities of U.S. states. This literature review is organized around what seem to be the two most overarching themes in the state literature: matters of IGR and matters of funding. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of HS, its intergovernmental
dynamic, and the rapidly increasing scope of HS research, this literature review is limited to highly relevant studies. For the purpose of this literature review, highly relevant studies are those where the research lens is focused primarily or exclusively on U.S. state government and the use of state-level data predominates. Studies outside this purview with relevant content are referenced throughout but for brevity’s sake such studies are omitted here.

**Intergovernmental Relations**

The literature reflects tremendous interest in how the U.S. states lubricate their governmental machines for IGR. This interest is not surprising since HS is a “complex intergovernmental policy arena” (Caruson & MacManus, 2005). Studies often examine how states organize themselves for HS, how well they cooperate, and what influences their HS capabilities and efforts.

One group of state level case studies, commissioned by the Century Foundation, provides initial insight into state responses to 9/11. Specifically, they examine how four states attempted to respond to the challenges of the new HS era. The four states examined in these studies are Pennsylvania (Comfort, 2003), Texas (Robinson, McEntire, & Weber, 2003), Washington (Stehr, 2003) and Wisconsin (Dresang, 2003).

One influence on IGR is how states internally organize themselves. One element of internal organization is how power is shared between state and local governments. In Pennsylvania, Comfort (2003) cites “home rule traditions” and “municipal rivalries” as challenges to coordinating state HS activities. Similarly, in Wisconsin, the “myriad local governments” have protection from state intervention through traditions favoring local prerogatives (Dresang 2003). These studies suggest that the ability of states to coordinate
is influenced by the historical nature of local government chartering and administration by the state. Some U.S. states have responded to these challenges differently.

Comfort (2003) found that, after 9/11, Pennsylvania adopted a regional risk management model so the state and its cities and counties could “share resources and develop common training programs.” Under this model, the sixty-seven counties are divided into nine management regions. Similar approaches were adopted in Washington (Stehr, 2003) and Wisconsin (Dresang, 2003). Interestingly, in Wisconsin, the seventy-two counties were grouped into regions based on issues like hazmat, health, and trauma rather than purely by geography (Dresang, 2003). Related research suggests regional modeling aims to “overcome a fragmented federal grant system and local jurisdictional barriers to assess needs, fill gaps, and plan for effective prevention and emergency response” (Caruson, et al., 2005). Thus, regional management models provide internal factors that influence the intergovernmental aspects of state HS activity.

Studies subsequent to the Century Foundation studies have further developed our understanding of how states have adjusted for IGR in the modern HS era. Caruson and MacManus (2005) sought to examine how mandates from federal and state government impact HS management activities. They used Florida to “test the impact of intergovernmental mandates” (Caruson & MacManus, 2005). Using surveys to measure the opinions of county and city officials, they found that the biggest impact state and federal mandates have on sub-state officials is financial and administrative. They found that “mandates from higher levels of government, especially with a short timeline for implementation, put tremendous pressure on the finances of local governments and dictate intensified administrative oversight” (Caruson & MacManus, 2005). In other words, in
Florida, HS activities between different levels of government are substantially influenced by the financial and administrative obligations of sub-state officials.

In August 2004, the National Governor’s Association (NGA) mailed surveys to HS leaders in every state. The NGA was hoping to learn more about progress in the areas of coordination, structure, strategy and governance, preparedness, communication, and information and intelligence (NationalGovernorsAssociation, 2005). The study, administered by the NGA’s Center for Best Practices (CBP), found substantial challenges to IGR among the thirty-eight states that responded to the survey. The findings identified the need to achieve interoperability; the ability for HS actors to communicate with one another and the need to enhance the ability to collect, analyze and disseminate information among state governments as priorities for future IGR work. In other words, the NGA study suggests that the capacity to both communicate and share information effects HS activities.

Immediately following the publication of the NGA’s 2005 study, Hurricane Katrina struck and revealed continued shortcomings in IGR. Shortly thereafter, the NGA commissioned another study in which they examined HS performance in the U.S. states. The CBP surveyed state HS directors about statewide performance in the area of governance, coordination, and operations. The study concluded that state HS governance structures are still in their infancy and that even the oldest and most consolidated HS structures rarely predate the year 2000 (NationalGovernorsAssociation, 2006). In short, state HS governance structures are young and not entrenched.

In his “state level case study” of South Carolina, Pelfrey (2007) sought predictors of explanations for variations in terrorism preparedness. Using the South Carolina Law Enforcement Census, a semi-annual survey given to fielded sworn officers in all statewide
law enforcement agencies, Pelfrey found that terrorism preparedness levels are “significantly related” to the size of an agency, namely the number of sworn officers (based on an analysis of the variance, or ANOVA test) (Pelfrey, 2007). He suggests that larger agencies seemed more prepared which may be a function of the fact that larger agencies are more likely to have received federal or state funding and are therefore further along the road to preparedness (Pelfrey, 2007). This suggests the size of statewide agencies (and by extension the amount of resources larger agencies have access to) influences state HS activity.

The Century Foundation studies suggested a primary influence on IGR is how states structure their internal HS management systems. Dillman’s (2008) dissertation advances our understanding of this notion by examining what he calls HS governance structures - offices in state government where HS functions are assigned. Among the fifty states, Dillman identifies four distinct models of HS governance: the Governor’s Office model, where HS is conducted through the state’s chief executive office (employed in thirteen states); the Adjutant General model where a military approach is employed and the state Adjutant General is the chief HS advisor (twelve states); the New Agency model, where new state agencies were created, post-9/11, to handle HS duties (ten states); and the Existing Agency model, where HS functions are placed with traditional, pre-existing bureaucracies outside the Governor or Adjutant General’s offices (fifteen states).

Dillman (2008) examines how these governance models influence state HS activities. Dillman found that a state’s governance structure “strongly affects intrastate policy development and implementation” (2008). Consequently, he suggests, “state institutions can directly structure intrastate intergovernmental relations” (Dillman, 2008).
He also concludes that differences between governance structures or models can reveal unique behavioral patterns which in turn provide an important basis for comparative studies in this area. Thus, Dillman’s research suggests that a state’s HS activity is influenced by the type of governance model it employs.

Durbin (2009) also focuses on internal organization for state HS activity. He sought to examine organizational responses of the U.S. states, post-9/11, the role the DHS had in any internal organization, and a couple of risk factors such as political dominance and international borders. Overall, Durbin identifies substantial changes in how states organized for HS after 9/11. Not surprisingly, he found that…

Pre-9/11 there were no stand-alone HS organizations in the U.S. states reporting directly to the governors, nor were there any hybrid organizations….Post-9/11 eleven (11) states established a stand-alone HS organization reporting to their governors and five (5) states…created a hybrid organization with HS reporting to their governors (Durbin, 2009).

He found that the availability of public funding “significantly” influenced these reorganizations. Post-9/11 organizational responses…

seem to indicate that developments at the federal level may have had some influence over developments at the state level. And when the DHS funding at the time of change in organizational structure is compared to change in that structure a statistically significant relationship is found p>0.011 (Durbin, 2009).

Since these reorganizations required legislative action, Durbin (2009) examined “the influence of the political make-up of the state legislatures.” He found political party was a minimal influence on HS reorganization post-9/11. Rather than politics, he suggests “by far, the rhetoric most frequently used by the states [to justify reorganization] was to address terrorism” (Durbin, 2009).
Durbin also examines other risk factors to explain post-9/11 reorganization among U.S. states. Primary among the risk factors was whether a state was a “border state” or an “ocean state.” Among the latter, many HS “functions were moved to newly established HS or hybrid organizations” (Durbin, 2009). However, in the border-states he found tremendous inactivity in post-9/11 reorganization. This inactivity was largely found in the many Canadian-border states, only eighteen percent of whom changed their organizational structures after 9/11. In contrast, three of the four Mexican-border states changed theirs.

To summarize the relevant findings from Durbin (2009), how states organize for *intra-* and, consequently, *inter-*governmental affairs is noticeably influenced by whether the federal government makes funds available and whether a state touches the ocean or another country (a few do both). A minor influence was found to be the dominant political party in the legislature.

The above studies explore various elements of HS’ intergovernmental nature at the state level. These studies suggest state HS activities are influenced by a variety of factors with important implications for IGR. One major theme in this area focused on the internal HS structuring of state government. Relevant matters of internal structuring can be both a dependent and independent variable. These matters are dependent where one seeks to understand influences on the HS structures employed. For example, the role of the DHS in post-9/11 state level HS structuring (Durbin, 2009); how state and federal mandates oblige sub-state officials (Caruson & MacManus, 2005); and why larger agencies may be more prepared for terrorism (Pelfrey, 2007). It is also an independent variable with measurable influence on HS outcomes in the U.S. states (see the Century Foundation studies; Dillman, 2008; Durbin 2009; National Governor’s Association, 2005).
Funding

The nature of how state HS activities are funded is, not surprisingly, another major focus area. Even a textbook picture of American government suggests money is a critical resource for U.S. state governments and their policy implementation activities. There has been a historical understanding that money is a vital interest to the U.S. states. For example, Alexander Hamilton spotlighted the importance of money to U.S. states when he tried to convince the citizens of New York state that their (then very valuable statewide currency) would not be threatened by ratifying the Constitution which proposed a third, undemocratic judicial branch. Hamilton wrote:

the judiciary, from the nature of its functions, will always be the least dangerous branch to the political rights of the constitution; because it will be the least in a capacity to annoy or injure” since “the judiciary…has no influence over either the sword or the purse… (Hamilton, 1788)(emphasis added).

Research about public funding falls into two categories: issues of inequity and issues of need. The former theme – inequity – has been the focus of much debate. For example, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney conducted her own research about how states received funding under the Assistance to Firefighters program, created by the Firefighter Investment and Response Enhancement (FIRE) Act. She found that lesser populated states received much more money per capita than larger states. According to Eisinger (2006), Maloney’s research revealed that…

Montana, North Dakota, and Vermont received $9.33, $8.67, and $8.50 per capita, respectively, in FIRE grants made through February 2004, whereas California, Texas, and New York received only $.86, $1.34, and $1.79 per capita. New York City itself received only $.09 per capita.

Inequity, and why some states receive more funding than others, has been the focus of a few academic studies. The first, Roberts (2005), examined the grant making
relationship between the U.S. states and the DHS. Using fiscal year 2003 and 2004 state funding data, he found that “small states receive more HS grant money per capita than large states” (Roberts, 2005). Over those two fiscal years, some of the least populated states like Wyoming, Vermont, and North Dakota received about seven times more federal grant money per capita than heavily populated states like New York, Texas, and California (Roberts, 2005). Roberts attributes this apparent funding inequity to two major causes: how Congress structures decision making and the use of block grants.

To remedy the perceived inequity, Roberts recommends changing institutional settings for Congressional decision making but concedes doing so is difficult since there are “large disincentives for smaller states to cooperate in efforts that result in less money for them” (Roberts, 2005). He also suggests using competitive grants which would “require states to submit proposals for how to use the money to expert panels that rank proposals and decide how to award funds” (Roberts, 2005). In short, Roberts’ study suggests that how states are funded, and by extension their HS activity, is heavily influenced by the Congress and the DHS’ use of block grants, which place too little emphasis on vulnerability.

In the years following Roberts’ study, the DHS worked to “include more vulnerability/risk information” in its allocation process (Greenberg, Irving, & Zimmerman, 2009). But these efforts were criticized for “relying too heavily on the U.S. Patriot Act formula that contains set-asides for each state” (Greenberg, et al., 2009). Greenberg, Irving & Zimmerman (2009) examined the updated (criticized) allocation model, and the outcomes it generated. Using state- and county-level data, they focused on grant making in the five HS grant programs: the State Homeland Security Program, the Urban Area
Security Initiative (UASI), the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, the Metropolitan Medical Response system, and the Citizens Corps Program. They found these programs place tremendous emphasis on overall state population as an environmental risk factor (Greenberg, et al., 2009).

The findings of both Roberts (2005) and Greenberg, Irving and Zimmerman (2009) suggest that in federal attempts to award HS grants to U.S. states, “key criteria still bend the allocation toward population size” (Greenberg, et al., 2009). They suggest academic inquiry move beyond “whether equity, population size and need are appropriate fund distribution criteria” to the issue of “how each criterion should be weighed” (Greenberg, et al., 2009). To summarize, population size partially precipitates funding inequities which in turn influences state HS activity.

Drawing from Congresswoman Maloney’s findings, Eisinger (2006) concluded that when Congress disburses funds to states, the politics of distribution usually take higher precedence over targeting need. Others have sought to examine this claim by studying the issue of whether politics trump risk. Using an econometrics model \( \text{FUNDING}_i = f(\text{RISK}_i, \text{POLITICS}_i, \text{POWER}_i) \), they compared “varying grant disbursements, the relative risk of terrorist attack, and the political backdrop in each state…to identify what factors determine DHS grant outcomes” (Prante & Bohara, 2008). They found that the “risk of terrorist attack is a positive and statistically significant determinant of funding” but that “political factors, from the perspective of both party affiliation and congressional influence, are not found to positively influence funding outcomes” (2008). Summarizing Prante and Bohara (2008), Ripberger suggests they found…

no support for the widely popular claim that allocation decisions are politically motivated…. Security considerations are more influencial [sic]
than political concerns in explaining patterns of DHS funding (Ripberger, 2011).

To summarize the funding equity stream of studies in the literature, there is consensus that population influences funding outcomes. There is no consensus, however, on the extent to which politics influences funding patterns among U.S. states though, according to Prante and Bohara (2008), state politics appears to have little influence.

The latter theme in this area of the literature - issues of funding need - is seen in a number of studies with early examples provided by the Century Foundation. In her study of Pennsylvania, Comfort (2003) calls “lack of funding” the “most frequently mentioned obstacle” to achieving improved HS; sometimes, for example, “budget shortfalls” forced the delay of initiatives. However, the lack of funding explanation for inaction may mask other problems (Comfort, 2003). Nonetheless, the lack of funding argument arose in Texas as well.

Robinson, McEntire and Weber (2003) found Texas’ $10,000,000,000 budget shortfall in 2002 as the reason Texas was unable to initiate plans “to add seventy personnel to its ranks,” for example. Additionally, Robinson, McEntire and Weber spotlighted a complicated relationship between federal largess and Texas officials, noting:

- Agencies and organizations at all levels continue to await promised federal funds.
- Competition for limited resources always exists, but the conflict between small and large jurisdictions increases as all anticipate federal funds.
- Federal funding that does finally reach local jurisdictions has strict, often counterproductive restraints on its uses.
- Stehr (2003) begins by noting a positive financial development between Washington State and the federal government, a $5,900,000 Department of Justice grant to
fund local jurisdictions’ equipment purchases for first responders. However, he goes on to discuss the implications of the “ongoing budget crisis.” In Washington, he notes, there are concerns that “state and federal officials are insufficiently knowledgeable about resource needs in cities and counties” and “officials may not be able to assess if new money is being spent wisely” (2003). Stehr (2003) also notes that “disparities between large and small jurisdictions, in the areas of resource and consequence management capacity,” had widened in the previous eight months. Part of this disparity may be attributed to what Stehr calls the potential mismatch between what local jurisdictions need and what state and federal government are willing to fund. It may also be partially attributed to realistic fears that money allocated for HS reduces the level of funding for preparation and response. Stehr (2003) further develops our understanding of matters of need by showing that not only does Washington State believe it lacks funding, but its HS officials may not know how best to use the limited funds.

In Wisconsin, the “lack of funding” was also perceived to influence state HS activity. Not only was the state budget deficit highly impactful, but when coupled with the sense that no terror attack was imminent, the effect was the delayed implementation of some readiness plans (Dresang, 2003). On a positive note, public funds were effective at leveraging action from public agencies; more so than from private businesses (Dresang, 2003).

To summarize, issues of money, and its influence on state HS activity, fall into two themes. First, the process by which the federal government grants money to states for HS activities has been charged with inequity. Indeed, both Roberts (2005) and Greenberg et al. (2009) found that smaller states receive more money per capita than more populated states.
Second, studies of state activity, demonstrated mainly by the Century Foundation studies, reveal strong sentiment about a lack of funding and its influence on state HS activity.

**Conclusions from the Extant Literature**

The first conclusion is a substantive one regarding the numerous factors that influence state HS activity. The other conclusions regard observations about adequacy and incompleteness in the literature itself, including an apparent overemphasis on terrorism; a dearth of in-depth research; a dearth of comparative research; and a dearth of implementation research. I explore each in turn.

The limited research suggests that myriad factors influence policy implementation in the U.S. states. Research of HS, a system of interacting variables, must embrace the complexity of security policy by incorporating a number of important dimensions (Eller & Gerber, 2010). However, existing research often falls short. For example, Roberts (2005), Pelfrey (2007), and Greenberg et al. (2009) conclude that the population of a state impacts funding outcomes and terrorism preparedness levels. One commentary suggests politics and political factors are highly relevant (McDermott, 2010), while Durbin (2009) suggests they are barely relevant. Durbin (2009) persuasively argues that geography is relevant; in particular, whether a state is a border state or ocean state is relevant. Dillman (2008) suggests that HS governance structures are also relevant to state level activity.

The goal of qualitative policy studies is to examine all factors that contribute to shaping a state’s approach to implementation (Hasazi, Johnston, Liggett, & Schattman, 1994). While the extant literature reveals many of these factors, this research includes many others by employing the work of Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian (1980). The Sabatier-Mazmanian model is a dynamic model for studying the implementation of public
policy by American sub-national governments. It provides a minimum of fourteen additional factors that influence implementation.

This qualitative research possesses important features of thorough research models. According to Ryan (1995), a coherent model of policy implementation must allow the researcher to describe the implementation process using all factors that influence implementation, and it must leave room to consider the array of “actors and agencies” involved in the process.

Second, state level research seems heavily focused on terrorism (Comfort, 2003; Dresang, 2003; Pelfrey, 2007; Ripberger, 2011; Robinson, et al., 2003; Stehr, 2003). A heavy focus on terrorism is unsurprising considering that the modern HS era was effectively precipitated by a major terrorist attack. However, May, Jochim and Sapotichne (2011) persuasively argue that HS encompasses more than simply terrorism. They argue that HS consists of eight underlying areas including natural disaster preparedness, border protection, transportation safety, domestic security, information security, food safety, public health emergencies and technological accidents (May, Jochim, & Sapotichne, 2011). To account for these subsystems, inter-jurisdictional HS strategies generally reflect an ‘all hazards’ approach. Thus, while terrorism may have precipitated modern HS policy, this research reflects contemporary ‘all hazards’ practices.

Third, the extant literature reveals a dearth of in-depth research. As the extant literature suggests, policy research is best informed by direct first-person accounts of people with the pertinent experience (Hasazi, et al., 1994; Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, multiple perspectives provide a holistic perspective essential to overall understanding (Patton, 1990). There are multiple ways to account for these perspectives, but surveys tend
to dominate. Surveys are a critical research tool heavily relied upon in the literature. However, their limitations should be offset by other qualitative techniques. Some studies have begun using in-depth interviews and observation (Dillman, 2008) and online content analysis (Durbin, 2009). This study employs in-depth qualitative interviews. Data was collected using in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with state officials in Idaho and Massachusetts. To achieve fuller development of information, the interviews dropped the uniformity of surveys and the requirement that questions be asked exactly the same (Weiss, 1994).

Fourth, the extant literature reveals a dearth of comparative research. Arguing that a “multi-state comparative framework enables an analysis of trends in state policy behavior,” Dillman (2008) has apparently conducted the only in-depth comparative study in HS. The lack of in-depth, comparative research is unfortunate for a few reasons. Comparative research helps us test theories of nationalized policy implementation, especially when the states markedly differ (J. Lester & Bowman, 1989; Zimmerman & Owens, 1989). Furthermore, comparative research is sociologically important because it allows us to study policy implementation by “members of different social groups” (Hayden, 1989). Comparative study allows us to evaluate the utility of several indicators hypothesized to be sources of policy influence (J. Lester, Franke, & Bowman, 1983).

Furthermore, the lack of comparative research has stunted the development of dissimilar sampling techniques in HS research. Dillman (2008) argues that for dissimilar sampling purposes in HS, “governance structures” differentiate the U.S. states. This study further develops our theoretical understanding of dissimilar sampling techniques in HS. In addition to governance structures, this study draws three more factors from the literature.
Finally, as discussed in Chapter One, the extant literature lacks implementation research. This is problematic because HS rests on how its policy visions are implemented (May, et al., 2011). The lack of implementation research is unsurprising because research of HS policy processes, generally, has “been rather slow” (Ripberger, 2011). An academic database search reveals one study with the word implementation in the title and that study is not state level. This study aims to fill this void.
CHAPTER THREE – Conceptual Framework

This study assumes that understanding the experiences of those in the field is critical to the development of the state level HS literature. Using in-depth interviews, data collection and analysis aimed to translate the experiences and perspectives of state officials into useable data about the NIMS and its implementation. To accomplish this goal, a modified form of grounded theory research was used. By building inductively from individual statements into emergent themes, grounded theory research employs in-depth interviewing to generate conclusions and hypotheses about what influences a phenomenon of interest. However, in pure grounded theory research, it is assumed that “anything might be relevant so observe and code everything” (Yin, 1981). However, such an approach here would have been neither efficient nor particularly replicable since everyone’s perspective about NIMS compliance varies to some extent.

This study modifies purely grounded theory research by introducing a replicable structure to the data collection and analysis process. Prior research has identified a range of factors known to influence the subnational implementation of nationalized public policies. Therefore, the conceptual framework used in this study guided each interview so each interviewee discussed identical topics.

The model is based on the work of Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian (1980). Others find the Sabatier-Mazmanian model particularly useful for examining the state level implementation of nationalized policies (J. Lester & Bowman, 1989). Analytically, Sabatier-Mazmanian is a top down model that begins with a policy decision, like an important executive order (Ryan, 1995), and proceeds to examine the extent to which its mandated objective are achieved over time and why. It is important to make clear that this
study was not focused on whether implementation has been successful in Idaho and Massachusetts; hypothesis testing was not the goal. Rather, the following factors and their resultant hypotheses were used as guideposts or discussion topics for structuring the interviews in a repeatable fashion.

The policy examined here derives directly from Homeland Security Presidential Directive Number Five (HSPD#5) which was issued by President George W. Bush on February 28, 2003. Entitled *Management of Domestic Incidents*, HSPD#5 “mandated the creation of a single, comprehensive system of domestic incident management” (Edwards, 2007). This led to the creation of what is today called the *National Incident Management System* (NIMS).
The NIMS became nationalized policy in March 2004. Officially, the NIMS is a “comprehensive national framework within which public and private entities cooperate to manage domestic incidents” (Chertoff, 2008). Nationwide use of the NIMS presumes that if left unmanaged, domestic incidents or ‘all hazards’ such as major storms, hazardous material spills, and terrorist attacks threaten our perceived HS. To enable and promote the management of these incidents, the NIMS is “a unified plan for a command structure to coordinate operations, planning, logistics, and administration, in addition to ensuring information exchange and comprehensive preparedness training” (Walsh et al., 2005). The National Integration Center (NIC), an office formerly called the NIMS Integration Center and located within the DHS, publishes the NIMS’ standards and guidelines and the protocols for determining whether states are in compliance (Chertoff, 2008). According to the FEMA, NIMS compliance means states are working to “ensure all NIMS objectives have been initiated and/or are in progress toward completion.” Implementation objectives are published annually and include a range of actions states must take to be considered NIMS compliant. For example, in 2009, one requirement was that states “designate and maintain a single point of contact…to serve as principal coordinator for NIMS implementation jurisdiction-wide.”

The NIMS has five component parts: preparedness, communications and information management, resource management, command and management, and ongoing management and maintenance. To be clear, the NIMS is not an operational or emergency response plan for managing governmental responses to domestic incidents. Such plans are based on the incident command system (ICS), which is the “field-level basis” for the NIMS and one element of the “command and management component” (Edwards, 2007).
Commenting on a preview of this study, Professor Donald McClellan notes that while people have used parts of the ICS for thousands of years, the NIMS unifies their efforts into a uniform program so critical parts are not overlooked. Thus, the NIMS “does not give a how, but rather the what to state…governments” (Dillman, 2008). Recognizing that domestic incidents and their effects are almost never confined to one jurisdiction, the NIMS is “the country’s first-ever standardized approach to incident management and response” (Walsh, et al., 2005). It provides all levels of government (and private entities should they choose to participate) with a nationalized, cross-jurisdictional foundation for coordinating domestic incident management (Walsh, et al., 2005).

While HSPD#5 mandated the use of the NIMS by federal agencies, adoption of the NIMS by the states is voluntary. Today, the U.S. states voluntarily work to remain compliant with NIMS protocol two main reasons. First, as noted in HSPD#5 and as the interviews suggest, a systematic approach to integrating best incident management practices is perceived as a good idea by incident managers across the U.S. Second, their adoption of the NIMS is a condition on the receipt of federal preparedness assistance. When a state fails to maintain their NIMS compliance, they are ineligible to receive funding under the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), as well as other funding streams. In Fiscal Year 2010, the HSGP consisted of the following five initiatives (available funding in parentheses): the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) ($842,000,000); the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) ($832,500,000), Operation Stonegarden (OPSG) ($60,000,000), the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) Program ($39,360,000), and the Citizen Corps Program (CCP) ($12,480,000). The following year, priorities shifted away from states and toward big cities, and funding for
HSGP initiatives was substantially reduced. In FY2011, UASI became the most funded initiative: the UASI ($662,600,000, down 21%); the SHSP ($526,800,000, down 38%); OPSG ($54,800,000, down 9%), the MMRS ($34,900,000M, down 12%), and the CCP ($9,900,00, down 21%). For U.S. states to receive these increasingly competitive funding streams, they must formally adopt the NIMS and work in good faith to remain compliant. This study examines the compliance experiences of state officials in Idaho and Massachusetts.

In sum, it has been rumored the NIMS was adopted with “limited scientific, policy or public analysis” (Bellavita, 2010). By studying its state level implementation, this study develops our understanding of NIMS policy. This section now outlines the fourteen influencing factors, displayed in the above schematic, and the hypothesis each generates.

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes state implementation of nationalized policy occurs in a five-phase feedback loop. Each of the stages in the implementation process is a dependent variable. According to the model, in stage one, implementing governments generate policy outputs; for example, a governor’s executive order requiring state agencies to adopt the NIMS. In stage two, officials in state agencies (in this case, the NIMS’ “target groups”) work to implement state policy towards the NIMS; these individual efforts can also be called outputs (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). In stage three, the policy outputs’ measurable impacts are identified while in stage four, their perceived impacts are identified. Finally, in stage five, these identifications feed back into major revisions to the initial policy decision.

In this study, stage two is the dependent variable. Researchers may employ any number and combination of the five dependent variables. For example, Lester and
Bowman (1989) used the Sabatier-Mazmanian model to examine the state implementation of hazardous waste management policy, specifically the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Their study addressed “the first two stages in the implementation process.”

In this study, the outcome of interest was stage two, the phase during which state officials actually work on NIMS compliance. The research goal was to determine how each of the factors influences the (stage two) efforts of implementing state officials. Thus, the primary research focus was how and to what extent each factor influences state officials’ implementation efforts, i.e., their individual policy outputs. The interviewees’ perspectives serve as the proxies for whether and how each of the Sabatier-Mazmanian factors influences the implementation efforts of state officials.

**Guiding Hypotheses**

The remainder of this chapter outlines the fourteen factors examined in this study. Each factor generated an explorable hypothesis. Each interviewee was asked about the hypothesis and their perspectives on how each factor influenced implementation. Each official was interviewed in the same fashion with variance only in time, location, duration and, occasionally, follow-up questions. In other words, the interviews followed a repeatable methodology that derives directly from the conceptual framework. Fourteen factors exist in three categories: tractability (three), statutory (five), and nonstatutory (six).

At the end of the day, some policy problems are easier to deal with than others. In short, intractability causes measurement difficulty. Indeed, a policy problem’s intractability creates difficulties for empirical measurement (Lester and Bowman, 1989). Said alternatively, tractable problems like street side garbage pickup are easier to solve than
intractable ones, like climate change. Unlike climate change, the few ways to alleviate street side garbage are relatively clear and few. In other words, intractability hinders implementation by making problems harder to resolve. As implied in Figure One, the tractability dimension of the conceptual framework includes factors that not only directly influence the outcome of interest but they also influence the other categories of variables. Thus, the following factors examine the extent to which homeland insecurity is a tractable problem.

**Hypothesis One:** The greater the perceived validity of the NIMS’ causal theory, the more likely is successful implementation.

A causal theory is valid if it connects the behavioral change necessary for successful implementation to ameliorating the perceived HS problem. In the context of the NIMS, the policy problem being ameliorated is future mismanagement of domestic incidents. The perception of an invalid causal theory creates doubt and uncertainty in relating implementers’ individual efforts to the larger policy goal. The interviewees’ support for the causal theory was gauged by determining the extent to which those interviewed believe the NIMS facilitates HS.

**Hypothesis Two:** The lesser the scope and diversity of implementers, the more likely is successful implementation.

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1 From microeconomic and environmental law and policy perspectives, it is worth noting the possible intractability of street-side garbage pick-up. Picking up garbage, street-side, may address the short term problem of garbage accumulation in residential and commercial areas but myriad subsequent problems result post-pick up. For example, what transaction costs exist and who pays them? These costs may include fuel costs for pickup and processing equipment and other administrative requirements. There are also myriad environmental concerns that arise at and near the dump. There are the biological types, such as the toxic leachate or the introduction of nonnative species at the drop site, and there are the socio-economic types; for example, environmental justice concerns may center on the price of external costs and challenge the process by which some of society's members tend to be disproportionately exposed to the negative externalities of street side garbage pick-up. In short, while this study offers street side pick-up as an example of a tractable policy problem, in some ways its tractability is short-term.
Policies that target small and isolable groups tend to generate the support that makes implementation successful (Lester & Bowman, 1989). An increased number of perspectives in a group can complicate cooperation rendering implementation more difficult. Scope is a function of the number of implementers. Assuming it is easier to change one person’s mind than two peoples’ minds or one hundred peoples’ minds, as smaller scope is desirable. The more people involved, the more diversity exists. Diversity is a function of the discernible types of implementers. Theoretically, less diversity is better, and a simple way to reduce a group’s diversity is to reduce its scope. Interviewees were queried about the number and types of other people they work with on NIMS compliance.

Hypothesis Three: The lesser the amount of behavioral change required, the more likely is successful implementation.

One of the reasons a small scope and diversity is important is because it means there are fewer behaviors that need to be changed. Changing behavior is fundamental to most policy. By cultivating behavior conducive to implementation, policymakers often assume that by modifying employees’ behavior, the policy problem will be at least partially ameliorated.

Before turning to hypothesis four, we briefly introduce the second category of factors: statutory. This category reflects the extent to which the NIMS structures the implementation process. They are called statutory factors because they derive from the policy decision. In turn, the policy decision has the capacity to explicitly structure the implementation process…

through its selection of the implementing institutions; through providing legal and financial resources to those institutions; through biasing the probable policy orientations of agency officials; and through regulating the opportunities for participation by non-agency actors in the implementation process (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980).
Hypothesis Four: Where implementers perceive successful incorporation of the causal theory into practice, the likely is successful implementation.

In their classic work on implementation, Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) discuss the “complexity of joint action” and the challenge posed by “technical details.” This factor asks: how well has the theory been incorporated into reality. They suggest incorporating theory into practice is vulnerable to obstruction, delay and red tape, overlapping, duplication, vacillation, and hesitation (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Interviewees were asked about how well the NIMS theory has been translated into everyday practice.

Hypothesis Five: Where implementers perceive the NIMS’ goals and objectives as precise and clearly ranked in importance, successful implementation is more likely.

Clear goals and objectives represent important, unambiguous directives to state officials. Implementation is more likely where they harbor little ambivalence or uncertainty over policy goals and objectives. In other words, where policy provides precise and clearly ordered goals and objectives, implementation is more likely because implementers are better able and therefore more likely to comply. Interviewees were queried about their level of clarity on the NIMS’ goals and objectives.

Hypothesis Six: Where implementers perceive adequate access to threshold resourcing, successful implementation is more likely.

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes some adequate level of resourcing is necessary for there to be any possibility of achieving policy objectives through successful implementation. Sabatier and Mazmanian call this a “threshold level.” Interviewees were asked about whether they feel they have access to financial, informational, and technological resources.

Hypothesis Seven: Where implementers perceive an adequately integrated and coordinated NIMS apparatus, successful implementation is more likely.
Theoretically, better integration facilitates better coordination, a primary goal of the NIMS. According to Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980):

The degree of hierarchical integration among implementing agencies is determined by [factors such as] (a) the number of veto/clearance points involved in the attainment of [policy] objectives and (b) the extent to which supporters of [policy] objectives are provided with inducements and sanctions sufficient to assure acquiescence among those with a potential veto.

Interviewees were queried about how well they believe they have been integrated with and among implementing institutions.

**Hypothesis Eight**: Where the NIMS’ implementation employs adequate decision rules, successful implementation is more likely.

Decision rules - alternatives to discretion – promote implementation by reducing the opportunity for implementers to deviate from policymakers’ intentions. If there are too many decision rules, officials may feel hindered. If there are too few, they may be unclear as to their authority to undertake certain actions. Interviewees were queried about whether they perceive either too few or too many decision rules.

We now turn to the final category of factors: nonstatutory. These factors operationalize the inherent dynamics of the policy environment within which the NIMS is implemented. The name draws from the assumption that inherent dynamics are largely outside the scope of statutory control.

**Hypothesis Nine**: Where socioeconomics are perceived as healthy and conducive to implementation, the more likely is successful implementation.

Examining the states’ socioeconomic profiles, which combines social with economic factors (American-Heritage, 1996), allows this study to provide further context to discussions of resources. Since state officials can relate economic characteristics to policy problems (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1980), the economies of some states have been
closely linked to their implementation behaviors (Lester and Bowman, 1989). Interviewees were queried about the extent to which perceived elements of the state’s socioeconomic profile influences their implementation efforts.

Hypothesis Ten: The greater the quality, amount and continuity of media attention to the NIMS, the more likely is successful implementation.

According to Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980):

media are important in the implementation process for at least two reasons. First, they are generally a crucial intervening variable between changes in socio-economic conditions and perceptions of those changes by the general public and, to a lesser extent, political elites. This is particularly true for events beyond the local political arena. Secondly, the tendency for most television stations and newspapers to play an issue to the hilt and then go on to something else is a real obstacle to the constant infusion of political support....

In other words, the media has the capacity to in- or de-fuse essential political support for the NIMS and its implementers. Interviewees were queried about the extent to which the media influences their implementation efforts.

Hypothesis Eleven: The greater the perception of public support for the NIMS, the more likely is successful implementation.

The public influences the implementation process in at least three ways:

1) Public opinion (and its interaction with the mass media) can strongly affect the political agenda, i.e., the issues to be discussed by legislatures. 2) There is substantial evidence that legislators are influenced by their general constituents on issues of salience to those constituents, particularly when opinion within the district is relatively homogenous. 3) Finally, public opinion polls are often employed by administrators and sovereigns to support particular policy positions (Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1980).

Indeed, like media, public opinion can generate de- or in-fusions of political support for the NIMS and its implementation. Interviewees were queried about the extent to which they believe the public influences implementation.

Hypothesis Twelve: Where the attention and involvement of constituency groups is greater, the more likely is successful implementation.
This factor allows examination into the extent to which constituency groups effect the NIMS’ implementation. Constituency groups, such as private business, non-profit organizations, NGOs, and churches for example, affect implementation a number of ways. First, sometimes these groups are able to exert influence on policy implementation because of their substantial political skills and financial resources. They can also influence implementation by publishing their own studies (Lester and Bowman, 1989). Interviewees were queried about whether and to what extent constituency groups influence the NIMS’ implementation.

**Hypothesis Thirteen**: Where greater support from the sovereigns is perceived for the NIMS, the more likely is successful implementation.

Sovereigns - institutions that control the legal and financial means of implementing officials - affect implementers through oversight and the issuing of formal changes. By this definition, the three branches of state government are the primary sovereigns (Miller & Barnes, 2004). Interviewees were queried about whether the three branches are adequately attentive to the NIMS and its implementation.

**Hypothesis Fourteen**: Where implementers demonstrate greater active commitment to the NIMS, the more likely is successful implementation.

Policy implementation requires officials who are not merely neutral but sufficiently persistent in their implementation efforts. To gauge implementers’ attitudes about and commitment to the NIMS’ implementation, interviewees were queried about their demonstrable commitment to the NIMS.

In conclusion, this chapter overviewed the conceptual framework. The Sabatier-Mazmanian model conceptualizes the state level implementation of nationalized policies like the NIMS. The outcome of interest is stage two of the implementation process, the
stage where state officials work on ‘NIMS compliance’ (their term for ‘implementing the NIMS’). The Sabatier-Mazmanian model suggests implementation is influenced by fourteen interrelated factors. Each factor generates a hypothesis explaining its relationship to the implementation efforts of state officials. During data collection, these hypotheses served as a guidepost for examination. Chapter Four details the methodology used to conduct this implementation study.
CHAPTER FOUR- Research Method

This study’s primary research objectives are to (a) describe state officials’ experiences implementing homeland security policy and (b) compare their experiences with those in another state. State officials in Idaho and Massachusetts were interviewed about their experiences implementing the NIMS. These experiences were collected, aggregated into themes, described in Chapters Five and Six, and analyzed in Chapter Seven.

The case study method was used for multiple reasons. It is particularly well-suited to new research areas like HS (Eisenhardt, 2002) and it is often relied upon to examine human activities like policy implementation (Stake, 2008). Case study renders research concrete and particular rather than abstract and general (Weiss, 1994) and it grounds research in real life contexts (Yin, 1981). The use of individual case studies allowed this study to compare the NIMS’ implementation in two states.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the sampling strategy, including how Idaho and Massachusetts were selected and how state officials were chosen for interview. It then discusses the process by which the interviews were administered and subsequently processed into usable data. The chapter concludes with an overview of how the two states were compared.

Case Selection

Out of concerns for feasibility, two U.S. states - Idaho and Massachusetts - were selected. To maximize any generalizability found in a two-state study, dissimilar sampling was employed. The study of dissimilar U.S. states represents “different patterns of state behavior in HS” (Dillman, 2008). Eisenhardt (2002) suggests the search for similarity in
seemingly dissimilar cases is important for understanding policy implementation. Sampling ‘polar types’ enhances generalizability by ensuring different perspectives are incorporated into the findings (Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt, 2002). Triangulation and triangulated data sources - the use of multiple perspectives to reveal emergent themes, repeatable observations and interpretations about qualitative data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2008) - strengthen these HS findings (Dillman, 2008).

Under the theory of dissimilar sampling, cases were chosen if they maximally varied on critical policy-related variables (Hasazi, et al., 1994; J. Lester & Bowman, 1989). This required determining in advance some criteria differentiating the study sites and then selecting cases that maximally varied on the criteria (Cresswell, 2007). Four criteria were employed: political culture, population, geography, and homeland security governance structure. On these four criteria, Idaho and Massachusetts maximally vary.

Political Culture

Political cultures and their politics influence public policy and its implementation (VanHorn, Baumer, & William Gormley, 2001). Thus, appreciation for the prominent role of politics and political factors is central to HS research (McDermott, 2010). Idaho and Massachusetts were selected because of stark contrasts in their political cultures. Consider how voters in the two states self-identify their political ideologies: in a recent Gallup survey, 48.5% of Idaho residents self-identified as conservative (53.6% self-identified as Republican); only Mississippi had a higher number of self-reported conservatives. According to the same survey, Massachusetts is virtually the opposite. Only 29.9% of Massachusetts residents self-identified as conservative (31.8% Republican). Only one state – Hawaii – had a lower percentage of self-identified conservatives. By this measure, Idaho
is the second most conservative state while Massachusetts is the second least conservative.
As to liberalness, 14.9% of Idahoans self-identify as liberal (29.7% self-identified as Democrat). In Massachusetts, 28% self-identified as liberal (52.5% Democrat). Contrasting again, Massachusetts is the third most liberal U.S. state while Idaho is the fifth least liberal. Also consider the Presidential electoral histories of the two states: since 1960, Idaho’s electoral votes for President have gone to the Republican nominee every time but once. In contrast, during the same period, Massachusetts’ votes went to the Democratic nominee every time except when Ronald Reagan was the Republican nominee.

Ideological variance also manifests in their state legislatures. It is worth first considering a fundamental difference. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), Idaho and Massachusetts have different legislatures. The NCSL describes part-time legislatures, like Idaho’s, as such:

[O]n average lawmakers spend the equivalent of half of a full-time job doing legislative work. The compensation they receive for this work is quite low and requires them to have other sources of income in order to make a living.... [They] have relatively small staffs. They are often called traditional or citizen legislatures and they are most often found in the smallest population, more rural states.... These legislatures...are the most traditional or citizen legislatures.

In contrast, legislatures like Massachusetts’…

require the most time of legislators, usually 80 percent or more of a full-time job. They have large staffs.... [L]egislators are paid enough to make a living without requiring outside income. These legislatures are more similar to Congress than are the other state legislatures. Most of the nation’s largest population states fall in this category. [Legislators] generally spend more time on the job because their sessions are longer and their districts larger.... As a result, they tend to have more staff and are compensated at a higher rate.

There also exist contrasts courtesy of their systems of one-party dominance.

According to NCSL data, Idaho is dominated by the Republican party. After the 2010
election, for example, the Republican party controlled 80% of the seats in the State Senate and 81% of the seats in the House. But in Massachusetts, control is firmly held by the Democratic party which, after the 2010 election, held 90% of the Senate seats and 80% of the House seats.

The differences between the two state governments are reflected on a couple banner issues. Consider marriage law for example. In Massachusetts, same sex marriage licenses began being issued in May 2004. Two years later, Idaho took the nearly opposite step when it amended its constitution to prohibit gay marriage. The change made it unconstitutional “for the state to recognize or perform same-sex marriages or civil unions.”

There are also major differences in their labor laws. Idaho is a “right to work” state thereby prohibiting, among other things, the requirement that a…

person shall be required, as a condition of employment or continuation of employment, …to pay any dues, fees, assessments, or other charges…to a labor organization…. It shall be unlawful to deduct from the wages, earnings or compensation of an employee any union dues… unless the employee has first presented, and the employer has received, a signed written authorization of such deductions.

In Massachusetts, such requirements are not only authorized but much more common.

Population

As suggested by both Roberts (2005) and Greenberg, Irving and Zimmerman (2009), the size of a state’s population matters. According to Greenberg, Irving and Zimmerman (2009), three aspects of state populations are important to HS policy: its size, how it is distributed, and identifying characteristics. On these criteria, Idaho and Massachusetts are quite dissimilar. The population of Massachusetts is much larger than that of Idaho. The population of Massachusetts (~6.3M) is over four times larger than the population of Idaho (~1.5M). And while both states’ largest cities are also the state
capitals, Boston is a much more populous city than Boise. According to the 2010 Census, Boston was the twenty-second largest city in the United States; Boise was the 104th. There are about 830 residents per square mile in Massachusetts and nineteen in Idaho.

Next, the two populations also have different (though perhaps not fully ‘polar’) racial characteristics. Using the 2010 Census Data, the USA Today provides a diversity index described as “a 0-100 score that represents the probability that two people chosen randomly from an area will have different racial or ethnic backgrounds.” Massachusetts is a 41 on the index while Idaho scores a 29. Indeed, Idaho is more ethnically and racially homogenous than Massachusetts. According to the 2010 Census, about 80% of Massachusetts self-identify as ‘white’. That number is almost 90% in Idaho. This means percentage of non-white residents in Massachusetts is twice as large as in Idaho, per capita.

Geography

Geography is relevant for at least a few reasons. First, geography was considered because in HS, adjacent jurisdictions matter. Durbin (2009) argues that a geographic characteristic that matters is whether a state borders another country or an ocean. He argues a factor that may “influence the… public safety function is whether the state borders another country” (Durbin, 2009). He distinguishes between ‘border states’ and ‘ocean states.’ Drawing from Durbin’s dichotomy, Idaho represents a border state while Massachusetts represents an ocean state.

The amount of land area also implicates population densities. Idaho is a large state consisting of over 82,000 square land miles. Massachusetts is over ten times smaller having only about 7,800 square land miles. According to the 2010 Census, Idaho has about nineteen people per square mile while in Massachusetts, there are about 830.
Massachusetts was the fifth most densely populated state in the U.S. whereas Idaho was almost the least densely populated. Because of their individual land area sizes, they have very different population densities. Historically, denser populations have made better targets for terrorists.

**Governance Structure**

Dillman (2008) posits that HS government structures - the offices in state government where HS functions are assigned – reflect distinct patterns of state behavior. Diverse governance structures are an important element for creating the basis of comparative analysis in HS policy (Dillman, 2008). As discussed in Chapter Two, Dillman identifies four distinct governance structures: the Governor’s Office model (thirteen states); the Adjutant General model (twelve states); the New Agency model (ten states); and the Existing Agency model (fifteen states). Given the sample size, it was only possible to achieve dissimilarity on two of the models. Thus, Idaho employs the Adjutant General model and Massachusetts employs the Governor’s Office model. These two models are used by half the states.

To summarize, Idaho and Massachusetts were selected because they have dissimilar political cultures, dissimilar populations, dissimilar geographies, and dissimilar HS governance structures. The selection of two dissimilar states aims to optimize any generalizability that exists in a two-state case study. Because no two states are identical, a two-state study is never fully representative. Therefore, by selecting states on four criteria, the aim is to provide policymakers in other (nonsampled) states with increased ability to employ this study’s findings based on perceived similarities (or dissimilarities) with Idaho or Massachusetts.
**The Interviews**

Homeland security is a relatively new policy domain. In academic research, state governments have received less attention than their federal and local counterparts. Consequently, little is known about state activity in HS. It was therefore decided that going ‘into the field’ would yield valuable data about this relatively unexplored phenomenon. Interviews were selected because, unlike the mostly survey instruments used in the literature, in-depth interviews emphasize concern for detail and complete accounts (Weiss, 1994). This emphasis not only captures the unseen that was and is, but also how implementing officials feel and how they explain or account for things (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The interviews brought field level meaning to the data which in turn connected academic concerns to the ordinary practice and natural habits of implementing officials (Stake, 2008). Furthermore, the interviews helped access and order their accounts and observations (Moustakas, 1994; Weiss, 1994). The interviews were conducted in Idaho and Massachusetts, in person, between July 2010 and April 2011.

The interviewing process first required making contact with state officials who had privileged access to the NIMS’ implementation. Their privileged perspectives are rare and, by extension, valuable (Weiss, 1994). Contact was largely initiated ‘cold’ using publicly available information, usually from the internet. Rarely did this information lead directly to a state official with the relevant NIMS experience. However, through snowball sampling, a.k.a. the orienting figure approach, the initial contact was usually able to successfully forward my inquiry on within their agency. Eventually, in both states, this process yielded a couple dozen state officials who seemed “information rich” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Of the couple dozen, half responded to the initial invitation to participate though fewer
provided consent to be interviewed. Ultimately, twenty interviews were conducted; in Idaho, nine state officials were interviewed and, in Massachusetts, eleven were.

The ‘interviewees’ were each subjected to in-depth, semi-structured, open ended interviews, each lasting about one hour. To increase reliability, and as recommended by Weiss (1994), the interviews were conducted according to a carefully worked out plan. The plan employed a ‘semi-structured interviewing protocol’ which derived directly from the conceptual framework. By distilling down the central questions (and primary follow-up questions), the protocol served as a re-usable roadmap (Cresswell, 2007). Indeed, it allowed the same information about the same factors to be collected across interviews and cases (George & McKeown, 1985; King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994). This facilitated systematic, structured inquiry and explicit measurement (Huberman & Miles, 2002). With permission, the interviews were audio recorded for transcription purposes.

**Within Case Analytic Design**

The case studies about Idaho and Massachusetts follow the rule of qualitative reporting that data be “laboriously and systematically collected and interpreted” (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975). The aim of within case analysis was to generate two cases that could be compared at the end of this study. The individual case study reports for Idaho and Massachusetts employ descriptive analysis and a narrative presentation format to explain the interviewees’ perceptions and experiences. Using the written transcripts, repeated words and phrases were coded into useable, meaningful and organized segments of information (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Procedurally, QDA Data Miner software was used for the efficiencies it adds to the traditionally labor intensive process of coding.
qualitative interview data. This software allowed common phrases and terms to be quickly identified, collated, and organized into themes.

Substantively, coding was guided by the Sabatier-Mazmanian model. Unlike wholly inductive, grounded theory qualitative research, which assumes “anything might be relevant so observe and code everything” (Yin, 1981), this study operated within established parameters. The data collection process was theory-bound by the notion that state-level implementation of the NIMS is influenced by the model’s pre-identified factors. This brought a survey-like ordering to the questions and answers about the interviewees’ perceptions of each factor’s influence. Most questions produced wordy answers. Therefore, a two-step analysis was used to calculate emergent themes.

First, each interview was locally integrated, which means repeated terms and phrases were collated (See Weiss, 1994). This allowed for the identification of each interviewee’s perception about the influence of each factor, proxies for reality. Second, using a process called inclusive integration, the interviews were combined into the case. In each state, emergent themes were identified. Emergent themes are descriptive data that tell the story of a contextualized flow of connected events (Ragin, 1987). The emergent themes from each case were distilled into a content summary table that promotes comprehension by systematically sorting and presenting the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

**Cross Case Analytic Design**

Comparative studies are important for testing theories of nationalized policy implementation, especially when states markedly differ (J. Lester & Bowman, 1989; Zimmerman & Owens, 1989). They force us to view evidence through multiple lenses (Huberman & Miles, 2002). In other words, comparison is a systematic way of
determining whether, and to what extent, the NIMS’ implementation in Idaho is similar or dissimilar to implementation in Massachusetts.

To facilitate comparison, a factor-by-factor approach was conducted to identify themes of similarity and dissimilarity. Then reasonable explanations were generated. These explanations for the differences in implementation can also be called “mini-theories” (Miles & Huberman, 1994) or “preliminary theories” (Huberman & Miles, 2002). Future research may test these theories by applying them to the NIMS’ implementation in other U.S. states.
CHAPTER FIVE – Idaho Case Study

This chapter is designed to provide the descriptive data that is analyzed in Chapters Seven and Eight. In this chapter, we examine the question: What influences the NIMS’ implementation in Idaho and why? For each of the fourteen factors, this chapter describes the perspectives and experiences of nine state officials (represented below by fictitious names) from seven state agencies. Each official had demonstrable experience working on “NIMS compliance.” The interviews each lasted about one hour.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of some of Idaho’s basic characteristics and basic governmental aspects followed by brief discussion of HS issues in Idaho and the state’s organizational structure for HS. Then the themes that arose in the interviews are reported and described.

Idaho

Idaho became a U.S. state on July 3, 1890. The state is quite large. In terms of land area, it consists of over 82,000 square miles, making it larger than the six New England states combined. Yet, in this land area, there are only about 1,500,000 residents. According to the 2010 Census Report, there are about nineteen (19) people per square mile making it one of the least densely populated U.S. states. With the exception of the fast growing Treasure Valley in the state’s southwest, Idaho is essentially a large wilderness.


Idaho’s largest city, Boise, is the capitol and seat of state government. As discussed in detail in Chapter Four, Idaho is a conservative state where a high number of residents
self-identify as conservative and libertarian. Not surprisingly, the Republican Party dominates state government. GOP dominance extends to both houses of the part-time Legislature, where it controls over eighty percent of the seats, and the Executive branch. Since February 1947, only two Democrats have been Idaho’s Chief Executive.

**Homeland Security in Idaho**

The modern HS era was triggered by terrorism so it is unsurprising that U.S. states take terrorist threats seriously. However, as with most states, the HS policy agenda in Idaho is dominated by more prevalent threats. The largest threat to Idaho’s HS may be wildfires. It is no coincidence that the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is located in Boise. Other threats mentioned in the interviews included earthquakes, drought, and livestock disease.

Under Dillman’s (2008) classification scheme, Idaho employs the Adjutant General model for HS. HS activity is coordinated in the Executive Branch, primarily in the State’s Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS) which is also the state administrative agency (SAA) for the NIMS. The Director of the BHS reports to the Adjutant General of the Idaho Army National Guard who in turn reports to the Governor.

The Idaho legislature has no standing committee for HS. Significant legislative involvement in HS last occurred in 2004. In that year, the legislature passed a broad HS bill. The State Disaster Preparedness Act created the BHS to effectuate “Homeland Security and Emergency Management” strategies. After passage of the Act, a few state agencies voluntarily adopted the NIMS. On July 16, 2010, Governor Clement "Butch" Otter issued Executive Order 2010-09 requiring all state agencies to adopt the NIMS. The Order provides that the Adjutant General and the BHS must “prepare for and respond to
emergencies or disasters within the State of Idaho in a manner consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) using management structure consistent with the Incident Command System (ICS).” In sum, the NIMS is official policy in Idaho.

**Emergent Themes about the NIMS’ Implementation**

Each interviewee answered questions about the influence of each of the fourteen factors. In this section, the themes that emerged in the interviews are reproduced in a narrative format. A brief-summary of these emergent themes is provided below in Table One.

**Causal Theory**

The causal theory holds that the NIMS - a nationwide, unified, and systematic approach to incident management - is causally related and essential to HS. The interviews revealed a lot of support for this theory. Two themes suggest why; in short, the NIMS provides a reliable structure and it helps the multiple disciplines involved in incident management

First, the interviewees support the causal theory because the NIMS promotes a structured and reliable set of incident management practices. Jason said “you cannot beat having a system everybody uses to organize across state lines.” Bob appreciated how the theory of NIMS aims to “standardize everything.” Similarly, Paul and Jason view the NIMS as a “set of tools” to help incident managers organize. Rick said the NIMS enhances Idaho’s “ability to integrate.”

John spoke extensively about the importance of the NIMS’ impact on incident management. He said the NIMS is “a good system, especially in theory.” It is “extremely important” for incident managers to have a “consistent universal system that can be applied
to an incident in Idaho, or Kansas or Florida.” He went on to note that before the NIMS, incident management employed “different policies from different agencies which

Table One  

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<th>The NIMS’ Implementation in Idaho – Summary of Emergent Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Causal Theory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope and Diversity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioral Change</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Incorporation of Causal Theory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals and Objectives</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Decision Rules</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Socioeconomics</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Public Attention</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Commitment of Implementers</strong></td>
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undermines a cohesive single response.” According to John, 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina were the final straws: “the ‘feds’ looked at those responses and said things could be better and the NIMS is their effort to unify everything into one cohesive response.”

Implementing officials like the way the NIMS is structured through the standardization of incident management language. As Dan said, “the terminology and common language it attempts to create is a strength.” It means, according to Jason, that an Idaho team of incident managers “can go to Florida or New York City [for example] because the same language is spoken.”

Additionally, said Jason, the NIMS helps incident managers “have plans and equipment in place.” For the first time since Jason started his career in the 1970s, he sees “a nationwide ability to utilize resources.” He believes this proper and efficient utilization of resources saves time and money.

Paul, a BHS official, cited his pre-NIMS experience during the 1983 Borah Peak earthquake as evidence that the NIMS brings structure to contemporary incident management practices. The earthquake, a 6.9 on the Richter scale, occurred around 8AM on the morning of Friday, October 28. At the time of the earthquake, Paul was two hours away from the incident command center. When he finally arrived, the incident manager told him only to “grab a phone.” But Paul had no idea what had happened beyond that there was an earthquake. He was a bit confused. He believes the idea behind the NIMS has brought Idaho “so far from that” unstructured approach to incident management.

At the same time, the interviewees do not believe the NIMS is overly rigid. As a standard reference tool across states, they view the NIMS as quite scalable. As Dan said, the NIMS “recognizes the need for a scalable management system to deal with incidents.
that come in all scales.” While the NIMS provides national standards for incident management, it does not employ a cookie cutter approach. According to John, it allows implementers to “create a customized approach that works best in their environment.”

A second theme attributes the causal efficacy of the NIMS to the perception that the NIMS helps officials think outside their disciplines and professional “silos” where tunnel vision prevails. Under the NIMS, incident managers are freed from the sole perspectives of their professional silos and are lured into seeing the bigger picture. The NIMS helps incident managers see the system-wide consequences of their actions. According to Bob, with the NIMS, “first responders see the ripples too, not just where the rock went into the pond.” Similarly, Jack, a State Police officer, believes the “big picture” is about safety, stating: “the whole concept of NIMS boils down to, in my mind, safe incident response for the officers and the public.”

In the past, two police chiefs would arrive on-scene and the senior of the two would say ‘I’m in charge’. But under the NIMS, rank does not always determine who is in charge during an incident; rather, under the NIMS and ICS, the most qualified person should be the incident commander. John endorsed the theory behind the NIMS on the grounds that it helps remove “the standard silos of different positions, and the pride of the individual and their title, and get down to who is best to make decisions.” Illustrating the overall belief that the NIMS is essential to HS, Bob suggests the NIMS “it is not optional.”

Scope and Diversity

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes that larger and more diverse implementation apparatuses are less likely to achieve implementation due to the resultant
complexity of managing large bureaucracies. In Idaho, the scope and diversity of implementers do not seem particularly great. First, we consider the scope.

Calculating the scope of implementers was difficult for two reasons. First, some state employees who have NIMS responsibilities do not take them seriously enough to be called *bona fide* implementers by (at least) those interviewed. As discussed in detail below, there are a number of reasons some do not work hard on the NIMS. They may not buy into it or they may be anticipating retirement therefore seeing little need to ‘learn new tricks.’ *Bona fide* implementers are distinguishable. As Rick noted, when he visits prisons to conduct NIMS and ICS training, he can tell who is attending involuntarily and who is attending because they “buy into the NIMS.” Second, it is not easy to define ‘implementer.’ There is uncertainty as to whether simply taking ICS100 (an introductory course about the incident command system; the foundation of the NIMS) makes someone an implementer, or whether one’s NIMS responsibilities have to rise to some critical level, such as completing the NIMS Compliance Assistance Support Tool (NIMSCAST) for your agency.

Nonetheless, drawing from the interviews and some publicly available information, this study estimates the number of state-level implementers in Idaho. The estimate was generated by trying to calculate the number of other public officials each interviewee works with on NIMS compliance. First, three implementers at the BHS were interviewed. Explaining how difficult it can be around the time of year for submitting annual reports to the DHS, Chris has a point of contact in each of the forty-seven county and tribal governments. He could not immediately recall “how many state agencies the BHS works
with exactly” but estimated that “probably twenty or thirty [other state agencies and entities] are required to do something with NIMS.”

Rick works on the NIMS with “easily” a couple hundred people within the Department of Corrections (DOC) because of their ICS training. He works with a dozen people outside the DOC to implement the NIMS. Mike, at the Department of Agriculture (DOA), is trying to get all three hundred or so agency employees trained through at least ICS100. He works with about thirty people outside the DOA on the NIMS though, in the average week, he talks to “maybe ten” of them.

At one state university, NIMS responsibilities are tasked to two groups of university personnel: the Emergency Policy Group (EPG) and the Emergency Operations Group (EOG). John described them. The EPG consists of “about a dozen of the University’s top executives, including the President and Vice Presidents as well as the University’s emergency management professionals.” Continuing: this group “makes the key decisions necessary during an emergency.” For this reason, they try to stay “familiar with the structure and the key terms of the NIMS process.” The EOG is a “director level committee.” Committee members like campus security and facilities operations are key operators who, during incidents along with their employees, will receive “specific directives to fulfill.” Beyond the EPG and the EOG, the university employs a “shotgun approach” to NIMS implementation where, as John put it, “four or five individuals have very specific experience and knowledge of the NIMS.” In short, John said that on campus, there are about “two or three dozen people with limited knowledge of the NIMS and, probably a dozen with deeper, formal, and structured NIMS training.” Off campus, he works with “the BHS a few times a year to access funds” but most off-campus NIMS work
is as a participant on a City-County emergency management organization, which is a “conglomeration of city and county governments.”

Therefore, including the roughly two hundred and fifty-five State Police officers and the immediate contact estimates given by the interviewees, it appears Idaho state government has at least 400 employees with some NIMS responsibilities. This estimate excludes, as one official said, the “couple thousand” of state employees who have taken ICS100.

Diversity also exists within the estimated scope of implementers discussed above. Diversity is reflected in an apparent bifurcation of those in first responder agencies and non-first responder agencies. First responder agencies have long histories dealing with incident management. Indeed, as Mike put it: “some departments, by their very nature, are more engaged in emergency response” and therefore the NIMS. For example, the BHS has “been very good and very proactive about taking the NIMS to heart and encouraging other agencies to fully adopt the NIMS’ principles” (Jack).

Then there are agencies like the Department of Commerce that have governmental orientations in areas outside incident management. As John said, the “primary directive or mission of these agencies is not NIMS” or emergency management. For implementing officials within these agencies, it is difficult to “translate NIMS compliance into improving” the agency’s primary directive. To them, the NIMS is merely “a function they invest in to facilitate the continuity of operations and the preservation of lives and resources.” In the eyes of those like John, who works in one, non-first responder agencies occasionally harbor the attitude they will “do what is required to get access to funds but little or nothing beyond that.”
In sum, the interviewees suggested the scope and diversity of implementers in Idaho is relatively small and simple; they did not suggest it was large and complex. There are at minimum 400 implementing officials with some relevant diversity between those in first responder agencies and those in non-first responder agencies.

**Behavioral Change**

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes that by modifying implementers’ behavior to enable implementation, the problem of homeland insecurity will be (at least partially) ameliorated. Those interviewed seem to believe this assumption is true; they all said they have adequately changed their behavior, many noting that the change process was simple. For a few of them, there were allegedly few or no behavioral changes to make.

Mike said it required of him little more than “remembering to talk about the NIMS and say ‘yes, we’re going to respond under the NIMS.’”

Many of these successful ‘converts’ cite “early proponents” of the NIMS as taking provocative steps to enable behavioral change. As Mike put it, many early proponents recognized the NIMS’ importance and kept the costs of attending training and exercising low. This made training more accessible. Under the behavioral change theory, more training is positively correlated to behavioral change.

Nonetheless, the interviewees do not believe all state officials have changed behavior however. Behavioral change for the NIMS requires a reduction of “territories and boundaries” between agencies and their personnel. As John put it, some are “very good at working together during emergencies, but outside of that, it is not always the case.”

According to the interviewees, for some implementing officials, changing behavior was and is difficult. For some, according to Bob, behavioral change has been a “cultural
change;” a shift between “huge paradigms” from the pre-9/11 status quo to a system of cross-jurisdictional and interdisciplinary incident management planning.

Some who were initially resistant to change increased their understanding and, ultimately, their behavior. To illustrate, Rick told a story about delivering NIMS training at one of the state prisons. He said trying to change the prison shift managers’ behavior was very difficult. Initially, they “really struggled with the concept and the idea of delegating authority.” They struggled so hard in fact he had to travel the state to “deliver training [again] directly to leadership and shift commanders.” In training, some resistant shift managers remained hostile. They “all out attacked.” During a training session, Rick was once told: “I think you are full of crap and you do not know what you are talking about.” Rick persevered and after a couple of weeks of training, exercising and experiencing the utility of the NIMS, most of the shift commanders began to “realize it works” and it is “not a big deal.” Since then, Rick has encountered “progressively less” resistance.

The interviews revealed some ongoing challenges facing those attempting to change their behavior. First, older state officials (and particularly sub-state officials) are less likely to change their behavior than young incident managers, who have known nothing but the NIMS in their careers. In other words, being unaware of alternative behaviors, younger incident managers may have not even had to change their behavior. For example, at one state prison, Rick said a post-incident report found that the new, younger staff members were well versed in NIMS concepts; they “understood what should have happened but the shift commanders did not.”

Another challenge to behavioral change in Idaho regards training and the perception by some that the training and exercise regime is too exclusive and fails to
involve enough officials. Some of the interviewees, mainly those in non-first responder agencies, \textit{i.e.}, those without prime directives in incident management, criticized training as lacking sufficient tailoring to make it more relevant. Mike would prefer to participate in “an exercise scenario that is relevant to all the players.” Additionally, some training was perceived as just plain bad. Mike recalled an experience with a trainer contracted by the DHS who failed to tailor their “slick” materials to Idaho. Instead, it left “other states’ names in the blanks.” The lack of personalization led to feelings of exclusion and turned Mike and others off to the training.

A final challenge regards mental retention. While training and exercises are generally perceived as useful, the aftermath is sometimes viewed as problematic. As Dan said, after training when officials “return to their primary jobs, which may lack opportunities to immediately apply what was learned, much of it is unfortunately lost.” Many of the interviewees yearned for more regular training to help retain NIMS-related knowledge. More frequent training is viewed as a refresher of what has been learned but rarely experienced.

In sum, the interviewees all believe they have adequately changed behavior. They were also all able to identify some state officials who have not. Among the ongoing challenges to implementation is the perceived NIMS-knowledge gap between younger and older implementers; the occasional lack of training tailoring; and the inability, during the regular course of employment, to practice and retain what was learned in training.

\textbf{Incorporation of Causal Theory}

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes there are technical aspects of incorporating theory into practice. To use Dan’s words, the consensus among those
interviewed was that closing the gap between NIMS theory and practice is “a work in progress - Idaho is moving in that direction but is not there by any means.” While Rick conceded there may always be a lack of full incorporation, he heralded that with “joint training, we develop respect for what the other people do and we understand their needs,” thus making for better practice.

The interviewees universally criticized early efforts to turn the NIMS’ theory into a reality. Paul stated that the early days were simply “overwhelming because all the things state officials were supposed to be able to do and have in place were just thrown down on us.” He believes it was “not well thought out.” Paul: it was “anticipated all being implemented so quickly.” His colleague at the BHS, Chris, similarly criticized “how it was pushed” on Idaho suggesting “the DHS put everything out so quickly without providing enough information.” According to some, it is not unusual for the federal government to force initiatives on Idaho in unreasonable ways. For example, Mike bemoaned the fact that “the national animal identification system was pushed out too quickly without being vetted through the [livestock] producers.” And Jack noted a past inability to “get money to the right people at the right time” to make initiatives successful.

While things are not perfect, the perception is that they have gotten better. Paul believes “the Feds” are “starting to get their feet under it.” Bob calls the process “very well received.” Jason explained how, or why, things have gotten better. Early in the NIMS’ history, the federal government regularly and unilaterally imposed new requirements on state compliance behavior. Today however, prior to imposing new obligations on Idaho, the federal government engages Jason and his colleagues at the state level. Now they say: “this is kind of where we are going” and then “they let the state help them create the path
so the NIMS will work in Idaho’s culture.” This reflects the reality that “every state has a slightly different way of doing business.” He thinks the greatest insight the DHS has had is that incorporating the NIMS’ theory into practice could “not be a top down thing – it has to be a bottom up thing. If the lowest level is not doing it, it is not going to happen.” These efforts mean that for the first time, he is “starting to see a statewide and nationwide ability to utilize resources” more effectively. He is “starting to see an ability to overcome ‘state lines’ and actually share resources.”

While things have gotten better, some challenges remain. First, if the causal theory’s incorporation truly requires a bottom up approach, John expressed concern that “the NIMS has not been embraced or adopted at the sub-state level as needed or expected.” He suggests part of the reason may be because:

the federal government says “Here’s a ton of federal money to help local agencies respond to disasters, and to have access to this money, here are the requirements you will need to meet.” When those requirements come down from a distant third-party, quite often sub-state agencies respond with “Well, what is the minimum we need to do to get access to those funds?”

And without embellishing, Bob articulated another possible challenge. He said the “higher ups do not want to take some necessary steps to really put the NIMS into place.”

Goals and Objectives

When asked about their clarity on the NIMS’ goals and objectives, ranging on a scale of one to ten - ten being most clear – the responses fell between seven and nine. The officials think they are pretty clear on the NIMS’ goals and objectives.

John went further and explained why he was unable to rank his clarity level as a ten. He said “I probably don’t understand every single thing about what the ‘feds’ are
asking us to do but I see the big picture.” Continuing: when it comes to “detail specific knowledge of the NIMS’ structure” he is more of a five.

When there is uncertainty about goals and objectives, those interviewed have points of contact for clarification. Some contact the same person(s) for every question while some have different contacts depending on subject-matter. Rick directs his clarification questions to the BHS, “without a doubt.” Mike believes state agency work group meetings have the effect of clarifying certain aspects of the objectives by having representatives from the FEMA and the DHS come in and “provide the latest updates.” Chris at the BHS directs his clarification questions to “the FEMA Region Ten person and if he doesn’t know, then headquarters.” Jason directs his questions to those who provide “grant guidance.” Bob views the goals and objectives as the government’s “checklist of grant based obligations.” Thus, before calling other people he will “look online” for clarification. It is also common for implementing officials to reference past training publications and other documents stored in their offices.

Another emergent theme suggests that sometimes uncertainty is manageable or even preferred. John said that sometimes uncertainty “is on my side.” For example, it works in his favor that “they have not defined ‘critical mass’ in their rule requiring agencies to have a critical mass of NIMS trained professionals.” That means, he continued, “I can interpret critical mass to mean two or three people.” And about the objective that agencies have an “emergency management plan based on the NIMS structure? What does ‘based on’ mean?” Similarly, some officials can anticipate waves of uncertainty. Chris said his uncertainty spikes the same times of each year. For example, when annual publications
must be drafted and released, he mitigates against uncertainty by checking to see “if anything changed from last year.”

More times than uncertainty is tolerable, however, it is frustrating. For example, Chris, who orchestrates NIMS-related meetings said uncertainty leads to wasted time. He recalled “a couple meetings” trying to interpret some language about stated goals and objectives. Chris: interpreting and determining how to proceed, “wasted our time.” It is sometimes easier to “hold off and wait to see what national is going to do” rather than risk activating an interpretation that turns out to be a costly one. There is no sense “spending thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours working on something to finish up and have the ‘feds’ say ‘Okay, here is how we’re going to do it.’”

To mitigate uncertainty and the resultant wasted time, Bob expressed a desire to see goals and objectives be “more black and white.” He also discussed how easy it can be to confuse draft code with final code. Bob: “after I have read a draft federal code by the time it comes out in a final draft, I may have forgotten which part was final and which one was draft.” Bob wishes the documented life cycle of a rule were “put out in reminders every so often.”

Resource #1 - Financial Resourcing

Most federal HS funding to states is from the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSPG). Under the HSPG, Idaho received about $26,000,000 in the year 2003 but by FY2010 that amount was reduced to approximately $6,500,000. Today, many of the interviewees do not believe they have adequate financial resources. Those in first responder agencies like the State Police and the BHS were much more likely to believe they have adequate financial resources. Chris: “for the most part, we’re managing with the
funding we’ve been given.” While this could be seen as a statement of making do with inadequate resources, it seems to suggest adequate funding exists. To illustrate, Chris noted that since the BHS received funding to hire a statewide NIMS coordinator, the NIMS “has flourished and actually gotten somewhere.”

Chris was the first to note that every implementing official has a ‘wish list’ where more funds would be nice. Most of the wish lists seemed to be topped by training. Rick said that in his agency, intrastate travel for training and exercise purposes is “probably the biggest expense” where more financial resources could be put to immediate use. Rick: for example, north of Boise…

there was a simulation in Orofino, which is about six hours away. It was a full-scale, joint operation with fire. I took myself and several staff and booked hotels and drove everyone up there for a couple days. Costs associated with exercises like this are a serious deal.

In contrast to those who believe they receive adequate funding, those in non-first responder agencies largely do not believe they receive adequate financial resourcing. They offered a couple of reasons why. The most salient may be the state government’s financial resourcing philosophy that favors first responders and the agencies within which they work. John:

Idaho prides itself as being one of the few states where nearly 100% of federal homeland security dollars go to first responder agencies. From a citizen’s perspectives, I can see that being a good thing. But at the same time, it suggests non-first-responder agencies are not getting a reasonable share of those dollars.

Another reason may actual lack of resources. Indeed, Idaho does not qualify for most of the more lucrative HS grants. As Mike eloquently stated,

Idaho is only going to get so much money. We’re not going to get UASI money. We’re not going to get port money. It doesn’t matter if Ernest
Hemingway writes our grant applications, Idaho is not getting more money than the base amount.

In sum, implementing officials in non-first responder agencies generally believe they do not receive adequate financial resourcing while those in first responder agencies and the BHS do. Overall, more money for training and exercises is frequently on the interviewees’ wish lists.

Resource #2 - Technological Resourcing

Technology has played an important role in the NIMS’ implementation. As Jack said, “much of the equipment purchased through NIMS grants has been used now for several years and is still functioning with some repairs.” Those interviewed commonly cited use of computers and the internet in their implementation efforts. For example, John uses them to conduct “self-study courses and certifying exams.” He said his university uses particular “software for business continuity planning and mass notification, both of which aid the spirit of the NIMS.”

Additionally, other communications platforms were mentioned; as Rick said, “communication is huge.” For example, according to John, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has “video conference centers in all different regions of the state.” And referring to his agency’s frequent use of radios, Rick said his agency is “trying to get their radios compatible, to go digital basically because they are currently exhausting frequency and bandwidth.” Rick further noted his agency’s attempt to avoid overreliance on radios and told the story of when his agency attempted to simulate… an emergency and tried to respond without using radios. There was no good communications plan for such a scenario and they failed because we had no other real form of communication. Our radio communication equipment is not where it needs to be.
A couple of minor technological challenges exist. Rick believes his agency “does a lot with pen and paper that would be better if [software programs were] pre-designed to facilitate particular tasks.” And, sometimes, when officials do not use technology frequently enough they forget how to use it. Thus, the use of technology to implement NIMS, according to Dan, requires “staying up to speed on certain technologies and bringing technology into officials’ regular life so they interface on a more consistent basis and become more familiar with it.”

**Resource #3 - Informational Resourcing**

Informational resourcing has had a noticeable, largely positive impact on implementation and other administrative functions. As Dan said, “there is plenty of information out there.” Those interviewed get most of their information by searching the internet but also from reference materials acquired at conferences, classes, and training exercises. Jack at the State Police said that when he wants to know who needs certain training, he uses the “Idaho State University’s Learning Management system which keeps track of all FEMA training done by state employees.” The BHS also generates a lot of NIMS-related information in Idaho. For example, Chris works to compile reports from the “forty-seven counties and tribes and probably another twenty or thirty state agencies required to do something with the NIMS.” The BHS also spearheaded an effort to “pool county money to hire and train people to go out and collect data and enter it into the database.”

Those interviewed said that while, generally, there is enough information, two challenges regarding information resourcing recur. First, a number of those interviewed said there is sometimes too much information. Don said “sometimes the quantity of
information is so overwhelming; what is needed is digested information where someone helps you sort through it all to find out what is relevant to the immediate task.” Bob suggested the need for a teacher-like approach to making information less convoluted. When you are a student, he said, “some teachers just have an ability to make information really clear and simple.” Similarly, John said that while there is enough information to comply with “the spirit of the NIMS” more information could provide “guidance on some gray areas of NIMS compliance.”

A second challenge is that sometimes information is not adequate for administrative decision making. For example, Chris said that sometimes when he calls federal representatives for information, he “gets an answer that is indirect or incomplete.” He speculates the reason is that “nobody wants to say ‘this is what the policy is.’” Similarly, he said that in the NIMS’ early years, much was expected of the BHS and the state but the federal government did not give the state “enough information to do it.” Also, Mike believes ‘higher ups’ in Idaho “need to do a better job sharing information [which may require them to] gather us more often and give us a speech or the latest marching orders.”

Integration

The Sabater-Mazmanian model holds that integration is the ability to obtain coordinated action. In Idaho, Executive Order 2010-09 formally initiated coordination by ordering state agencies to adopt the NIMS. Under Idaho’s scheme, the Governor, the Adjutant General, and the BHS sit atop Idaho’s tiered integration scheme and the BHS works with the counties and tribes on NIMS compliance. According to Chris, Idaho’s system of integration “works fairly well at this point.” Chris: “our tiered system, where
each level works up to the next, has worked well.” Jack compared this integration scheme to the command structure in incident command processes “where you have got an incident commander who answers to the folks above her; with NIMS policy makers, it is almost that way where they have branches underneath them” reporting upward. He cites the state’s use of a system of “state agency representatives that work” on the NIMS. Similarly, Rick said the State Agency Working Group (SAWG) “brings to the table emergency coordinators from multiple agencies to discuss different things that are going on” (Rick). These meetings are administered by officials at the BHS. The BHS “is really the state entity with almost complete focus on the NIMS and where almost everyone deals with the NIMS” (Paul). Jack views Idaho’s system as one where the BHS is the “centralized interface.” From its centralized position, the BHS “filters information down” to the counties and tribes (vertical integration) and other state agencies (horizontal integration). Rick proudly proclaimed that “if I call the BHS, they are on it; they will get me in touch with those I need to get in touch with.” In short, as Bob said, “cooperation at the state level seems good.” Rick believes “the level of cooperation has been huge.”

Integration, however, is not entirely a formal process. Knowing who people are is key to integration in Idaho. As Jason put it, “a lot of NIMS implementation is just knowing who to talk to.” To this end, one interviewee goes to all six districts in his jurisdiction to talk about the NIMS as it relates to his agency’s plan. After this type of contact, said Bob, “implementers are more willing to say ‘Yeah, we can do this.’”

Prior to the NIMS, incident managers recognized the important roles of “law enforcement, fire, and EMS but now that integration has brought officials together, we recognize that public works and transportation and private security” have a role too (John).
The increased number of implementing officials was mildly problematic because, as Dan said, integrating just the “key agencies” is a “huge thing.”

It is like moving a million yards of dirt: it would be difficult if not impossible to just pick it up all at once and move it in an unfragmented way. The NIMS is so big and encompassing, it involves a lot of people and touches everything from communication to procedures.

Challenges to statewide integration still exist. Sub-state entities are less integrated because they have fewer opportunities to experience incident management. To remedy this lack of integration, Bob told the story of trying to integrate county level coroners. At a meeting of the Coroner’s Association,…

the coroners tried to make a resolution to facilitate integration. Coroners are countywide and counties in Idaho can be 200 to 300 miles wide so some have deputized different Sherriff’s deputies to be deputy coroners in different areas. They go ahead with body recovery and transportation and other work that needs to be done rather than blocking and closing roads until an official gets there.

Another challenge to integration is that SAWG meetings are “more sporadic” today. According to Mike, SAWG meetings used to be “pretty regular.” He would like to “go back to doing meetings at least every month.” John said in his eight years at his university, “maybe two times” had he “sat down in a room with other emergency management professionals from across the state.” He has “not seen cross-functional groups of state agencies getting together to work on pushing the NIMS forward.”

Not surprisingly, another source of disintegration is attrition. Indeed, “there has been turnover” (Jack). Bob, for example, seemed unsure if attrition is due to “promotions and people moving up the ladder, or moving out, people retiring or moving on to a different job for whatever reason.” He believes the clearest implication of attrition is that integration decreases when “suddenly someone’s primary agency contact disappears.”
Paul believes integration could be better achieved through better use of social networking tools. He said there is “a whole level of the communications arena that is evolving and becoming more useful” to interoperability - the ability for everyone to talk to each other. Most interoperability discussions focused on radios. Currently, Bob noted, “some agencies go into 700mhz and protect their personal channels, and other implementers cannot talk to them unless they allow you to.” The inability to communicate inherently undermines integration.

For some, there is too little incentive to engage the implementation apparatus. Mike went so far as to suggest paying state employees more since they currently have little incentive to spend their already limited time on implementation. Paul suggested that if “frontline response or NIMS implementation is only a small piece” of officials’ overall obligations, they are less likely to be integrated. Paul: “do those agencies carry the NIMS flag? I do not think so.”

Integration may also benefit from updated exercise habits. Mike said that “when officials have an exercise, whether tabletop or full scale, interaction should be intentionally established so all departments can participate.” He said currently “certain scenarios get repeated that often lack room for some departments to participate.”

Efforts are being made to integrate implementing officials with counterparts in other states. For example, Rick discussed the development of a “web emergency operations center” (EOC). A web EOC work group is looking at “integrating multiple states and going to a virtual system that allows implementers to see their resource deployment and available resource types.”

Decision Rules
Those interviewed believe there are a good amount of decision rules for NIMS compliance; they do not believe there are too many rules. For a couple reasons, there may be an ingrained reluctance on the part of policymakers towards restricting administrative decision-making of state officials. First, doing so would simply make it harder for states to achieve NIMS compliance thereby creating a disincentive for states to participate. Second, as Paul suggested, where “hard” decision rules are written, “officials and agencies will be held liable if they did not follow them.” Indeed, John said officials may be “paranoid to make decisions that differ from explicit standard operating procedures, even where deviation from decision rules is wiser or the SOP will put more people at risk.” Thus, there are not many decision rules, which means “there is a lot of flexibility in the NIMS” (John). According to Paul, flexibility means having the freedom to “choose how to implement.” Rick believes that within his agency he has “carte blanch to implement the way he wants.” Indeed, those interviewed seem to have “a tremendous amount of discretion” (Jason). This appears to be based on an assumption that “because of the diverse nature of threats, too much structure hampers a tailored response” (John).

According to Jason, flexibility is built into a “management structure” that says: “here are the boundaries and here is what we want to see come out of it. Make it happen.” This freedom, according to Paul, requires everyone to have a “core understanding of how things are supposed to work.” Jason believes the rules that do exist are not so specific they “hobble him in any way; instead, they’ve been just specific enough to work.” Similarly, Chris reads decision rules “very literally then figure out how much wiggle room” there is to implement. The rules’ drafters “try to keep the objectives not too in-depth so there is a bit of play room for determining how to implement” to a “standard leadership will accept”
(Chris; Bob). Indeed, complying with the existing decision rules is “not really that hard” (John).

Occasionally, the overall lack of decision rules can be frustrating. For example, Paul explained why the national ‘resource typing’ initiative has not been implemented as quickly as hoped for. Under the initiative, the states must:

- have everything defined as to a resource. But the DHS did not come down with a front end list so states do resource typing with their own defined titles and descriptions. Eventually, the DHS is going to say ‘Here’s the master list.’ But by then it could be too late because the states will already have resources collected in a different format and under a different name for the same thing.

Paul offered the ‘credentialing’ initiative as another example.

Credentialing is a problem. They want everybody to be credentialed but credentialing? Does that mean your red card says you are qualified to do the job? Or does it mean the card hangs around your neck and says you’re authorized to enter an incident site? The name confuses these two examples. The DHS is telling us we must implement a credentialing program without giving us more concrete guidance.²

A final repercussion of too few rules regards best practices. John said he sometimes worries that without more specific guidance on certain matters some officials will exercise their discretion and make decisions “outside of best practices.” Acknowledging that some officials are more knowledgeable about incident management concepts, he believes that hard decision rules are beneficial for those “who are not incident management professionals.” From this perspective, decision rules are compensatory devices for those with a lack of experience in incident management.

² In an email, Dr. Donald McClellan of Walden University felt it prudent to note that “credentialing is something the National Integration Center (NIC) is working on right now but very little has been implemented at this time.”
Idaho’s socioeconomic profile generates resource-related challenges. First, the worldwide recession that began in 2008 created an increased ability to hire a desired number of implementers. Mike expressed a common sentiment that today he is “doing more with less.” Given the already small numbers of implementing officials, Rick believes this may render Idaho’s implementation capacity “more and more limited.” Apparently, increased workloads are not being met with increased compensation. According to Mike, what state employees are paid “is way down there, like with Mississippi.” Thus, for some, this may mean too little incentive for implementers to spend their limited time working on NIMS compliance.

Interestingly, the worldwide recession may have partially rendered Idaho more secure through improved infrastructure. Because of the weak housing market, Dan said utility companies are “not scrambling to run lines to new subdivisions and are, instead, spending more time on repairs and maintenance and the strengthening of existing facilities.” This suggests that the poor state of economics is not entirely a bad thing.

Second, the socioeconomic impact of Idaho’s ruralness also influences implementation. To begin, substantial intrastate travel costs exist because of Idaho’s size. Size also affects training. Jack shared his experience as a law enforcement officer in Idaho County, the state’s largest county in land area. The county is mostly wilderness and it is very remote and sparsely populated. With officials located so far apart, Jack said it was hard to get them all in the same classroom for training, especially without sufficient funds to address these high opportunity costs. Also, because of Idaho’s ruralness, the first person on scene (who may not always be properly trained) often becomes “the incident commander” (Bob). Indeed, Jack “started as a deputy in Riggins where the nearest backup
was twenty-five miles away and headquarters was forty-four miles away.” He worked alone a lot until additional support arrived.

Another way to illustrate the negative impact of Idaho’s ruralness is to consider internet access, a reportedly important implementation tool. There is a direct relationship between population density and internet speed and, according to a September 2011 news article, Idaho has the slowest internet download speed of all U.S. states. Idaho’s ruralness creates financial disincentive to develop internet infrastructure, which means implementing officials in Idaho have a suboptimal tool compared to those in states with faster and more ubiquitous internet.

Media Attention

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes the media is a powerful factor in policy implementation because of its influence on public awareness. However, those interviewed believe the media has little influence on implementation. As Jack said, the media could be “a powerful force” but engagement is too infrequent; it “really has not influenced implementation at all.” Two explanations arose for the lack of media engagement regarding the NIMS.

First, the media may simply not know enough about the NIMS. As Bob said, one will not see a lot of “media releases about the NIMS” in Idaho. The more dominant second theme is that of media motivation. Bob again: the media do not care about the NIMS “unless there is controversy or some sensational issue.” According to Chris, the media only care about whether state government “helped somebody or not.” According to Paul, the media care mainly about whether “there is a problem” with Idaho’s incident management. In these cases, he continued, the media focus on response problems and “make a big deal
out of it, which is a disservice.” Similarly, Bob viewed it as a disservice because “the
media drives and influences the public; what they put on the five o’clock news is what the
public talks about the next day.”

When the media does demonstrate interest in the NIMS, those interviewed believe
the media’s involvement is well managed. They attributed their success to a couple of
things. First, the officials believe they do “a pretty good job of keeping track of the media
and giving them what they need.” Jason: the media generally need “sound bites, pictures,
and information and when implementers provide that they are happy.” Jason: what the
media need depends on the “kind of media.” For example, when implementers work with
television…

they may talk to the media person for several minutes or even an hour but what shows up in the story is ten to fifteen seconds taken out of context but print media and newspapers have a different take on it. While they want their still shots, they want more information; it is not unusual for a print journalist to call and say ‘Can you give me a little background on this before we go through with the story?’

Second, some officials cite their media engagement training as beneficial. Paul said
that in a big incident, “the big dish trucks will show up and eat the lunch of local officials
if they have no grasp of how to manage the media.” Thus, Jason “spent time learning how
to talk to the media and how to get points across” (Jason). For example, Jack said that at
the ISP, new officers take “a three day speech class to establish a mindset that one needs to
be good communicator.” He then told the story of:

a big event – a potential bomb - east of Boise at a weigh station. We wound up having to close the interstate for eight hours. The media was flying around in helicopters and I was the incident commander. In the world of cell phones, having cameras filming the incident site is problematic so I decided to move the joint information center from the scene to Meridian. The media left…. Without the NIMS training, I probably would not have
had that thought in my mind of moving the joint information center away from the scene. It worked out well.

The benefits of NIMS-training extend to media members, too. As Mike said, when a member of the media “has been in Idaho for a couple years, they know to contact public information officers (PIO) for whatever they need.” This raises a note for future research in this area. As per the NIMS, many state agencies have a public information officer. On matters of the media and the NIMS, Paul said he defers to the PIO who manages the media and exchanges information in accordance with the ICS.” Future research exploring the relationship between the media and the NIMS may want to focus on the media experiences of PIOs.

Public Attention

Like the media, those interviewed believe the public has little direct influence on implementation because they are largely unaware and inattentive. Paul said the public is “probably unaware of the NIMS and its implementation.” Chris believes the “public has no clue.” Chris: if you ask one hundred Idahoans what the NIMS is, “maybe one will know.” According to Jack, maybe one would have “a working knowledge.” Overall, said Bob, the NIMS is something the public is “very uneducated about.”

Interestingly, some of those interviewed believe Idaho residents have the capacity to become educated because they have seen incident management up close. As Paul said, “citizens in any place that has had a major wildfire have seen the ICS work.” Idaho experiences major wildfires and is home to the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). According to Chris, if the public knew more about the NIMS they might “hold elected officials responsible for its implementation.”
While the public has little direct influence on implementation, those interviewed believe the public has (unspecified) expectations for how state officials should manage incidents. “The public expects some sort of incident management” (Mike). Members of the public expect to be “taken care of” (Rick). According to Jack, “the public demands state officials perform at an expected level.” Jason concedes that officials “have not always done a good job working with the public’s expectations.” He believes there are areas where false expectations may exist. For example, he believes the public should know (but probably does not) that “the bigger the disaster, the more responsibility individuals have to take care of themselves for a while.” Continuing: calling 9-1-1 during a disaster is not always useful because “in a disaster, if resources are being applied elsewhere, someone may not show up to help.” According to Dan, the public’s ethos of self-reliance is “key to emergency response” because officials cannot achieve…

an effective emergency response system if individuals simply look for somebody to take care of the problem. Idaho is a community that understands individuals are key to the solution. It is why in Idaho, you can have people without power for thirty days and it doesn’t even make the news.

This suggests the public’s self-reliance ethos, a supposedly defining characteristic, makes the application of ICS, a core component of the NIMS, more efficient. Said alternatively, this means the public supports NIMS compliance by making ICS easier to employ.

**Constituency Groups**

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes these groups can exert “unique influence” on subnational implementation. This seems to be the case in Idaho: the interviewees believe constituency groups play an active and valuable role in the NIMS’ implementation. Such groups mentioned in the interviews include the Red Cross, the Salvation Army,
religious groups such as Church World Services, the Latter-Day Saints (LDS) (Mormons) and the Southern Baptists, the Coroners Association, the Citizen Corps, Citizens on Patrol, the Civil Air Patrol, and the Idaho Humane Society. According to Jack, the NIMS teaches state officials to “think about these groups during the planning process.” The reality is “state officials need to work with these groups” (Jack) because they are “hugely valuable” (Paul). Indeed, as Jason said, some groups “provide a lot of help.” For example, when “a dam failed in eastern Idaho, the LDS Church did a tremendous amount to help.”

Many of these groups are involved with the formal apparatus for their integration: the Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) group. According to its website, VOAD aims to “bring together Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster” on the belief that “the best time to train and prepare for disaster response and become acquainted with your disaster response partners is before a disaster happens.” Chris believes all volunteer groups in Idaho that work in disasters “should be involved in VOAD.” Together, the VOAD group “works through plans and does exercises” to better “understand the NIMS framework” (Paul). The BHS “hosts a VOAD conference every year” (Paul).

Some of the groups are involved because state officials or group members take the initiative to establish “a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for shared resources” (John). John: the aim of MOAs is to formalize communications and “establish agreements in advance.” He shared the history of his university’s relationship with the Red Cross:

I once thought about buying cots in case we had a disaster on campus and we needed 100 cots. Then I thought, why should the University buy cots when I know the Red Cross has lots of cots? So I started talking to the Red Cross asking: ‘If the University ever needed 100 cots, can it borrow them from you, and what is the protocol?’ They said ‘Oh yeah, just fill out these forms, we’ll loan you the cots and you return them; if any are destroyed, you replace them.’ In return, the University offered its arena to be a triage
station if the Red Cross ever needed to do mass immunizations or set up 200 cots for emergency storage.

The Sovereigns

The NIMS’ implementation is influenced by Idaho’s three governmental branches in the way an American government textbook would suggest vis a vis the Legislature writes the laws, the Executive enforces them, and the Judiciary interprets language and Constitutionality. In the context of NIMS compliance in Idaho, the Executive branch plays the major role in driving NIMS compliance, the Legislative branch plays a minor role, and the Judiciary plays no discernible role, yet. We explore each branch in turn.

Since Governor Otter issued Executive Order 2010-09, the Executive branch has actively worked on ‘NIMS compliance.’ Those interviewed were employees of the Executive Branch. The BHS is the primary executive agency implementing the NIMS. BHS officials work under “the Adjutant General which is within the office of the Governor” (Paul). Paul said this structure allows “much better access since the Adjutant General can sit down with the Governor.”

EO 2010-09 represented an important influence on the NIMS’ implementation. By issuing EO 2010-09, Governor Otter made the NIMS’ implementation “a priority” (Rick). Paul said the Governor has the “ultimate power to drive departmental people to ask their subordinates ‘What do we need to do?’” Continuing: this is important because some state employees need their bosses to “tell them what needs to be done.”

While the Governor’s office plays an important role in the NIMS’ implementation, an emergent theme was that the Governor is a figurehead who does not, to quote Jason, “really understand.” Jason: the Governor’s task is to “guide the ship” towards
implementation. To guide the ship, the Governor’s office puts pressure on certain officials. For example, Rick recalls:

The Governor said the NIMS is a priority. We got pressure from the Governor’s office to make sure the DOC had a COOP plan developed and that ICS was utilized.

Since the NIMS is nationalized policy and not state law, the Legislative branch is far less involved than Executive branch agencies. During emergencies though, when state officials are “engaged in emergency response, the BHS pumps information out to legislative units” (Paul). Paul: during these times, legislators may be “more aware of the NIMS related things being done.” Normally, however, most of those interviewed “do not deal with the legislature” in the course of NIMS compliance. Most agreed with Paul’s sentiment that dealing with the Legislature “is my boss’s job.” The interviewees generally agreed with Paul that the Legislative branch is “not very engaged.”

From the officials’ perspectives, elected officials generally lack engagement and understanding of the NIMS because of elections. Currently, some view elected officials as a partial drag on implementation. Chris explains “elected officials are a whole other story; because they rotate out every couple of years, trying to get them trained and up to speed is almost impossible.” Continuing: “those who have been in office a long time might be more likely to know what the NIMS is.” After reconsidering, Chris suggested maybe it is not the “length in office but rather where an elected official’s heart lies.” Some legislators show interest in the NIMS, its implementation, and related ICS issues. Mike believes some “involved” legislators have “been great;” when “invited to exercises,” they often “make good comments.” But, according to Chris, for other elected legislators, HS is “not an issue they focus on.” For them, involvement is probably limited to “approving the budget.”
Considering the general lack of legislative awareness of the NIMS, the BHS holds “training for elected officials to help them understand” (Jason). Jason said that when it comes to the legislative branch, “a lot of education” is necessary. While the extent to which legislators should be involved in policy implementation is debatable, so far as the NIMS is concerned, Mike believes legislators should “take NIMS 100 and 200” to familiarize themselves with incident management processes.

While the legislature has no standing HS committee, it has made noteworthy steps to enable implementation. For example, Jack said the legislature has “rewritten laws” so that cost recovery statutes are in the ‘spirit’ of the NIMS. Simply put, these statutes allow personnel in one jurisdiction to be compensated for costs they incur while responding to incidents that are outside their jurisdiction. Jack said these responses always incur costs to the responder so “certain things are allowable as cost recovery.” Because of Idaho’s size, it is common for incident management personnel to respond outside their jurisdiction; often they are closest. The issue of who must incur these costs, and the compensation process, is addressed with cost recovery legislation.

Also, the legislature has stepped up oversight over certain incident-related Executive actions. One example dates back a decade to the 2001 anthrax scare. In the months following the scare, Idaho received “a flood of white powder calls” (Jack). Jack: there was a fund to “pay for those responses but it started to dwindle.” It dwindled partly because of the economic recession but mainly from drawdowns perceived as unnecessary. Jack described the compensation process, noting that before the scare, a “fire department for example would say ‘Here’s what we need to spend to respond’ and the response was
‘Oh, okay, bye.’” Jack: then the Legislature “appointed an oversight committee to exercise a little more control” over this aspect of incident management.

The Legislature also has influence over the culture of implementation. When an agency does not “have responsibility or jurisdiction,” said Mike, they are unlikely to act as some may hope. For example, it was hoped one agency would develop a plan involving the management of house pets in an incident but the agency had jurisdiction over livestock, not house pets. While it has not happened, the legislature could change this, consequently influencing the agency’s implementation focus.

In contrast to both the Executive and Legislative branches, the interviewees do not see any involvement by the Judiciary. One interviewee could recall working with the Judiciary. Paul said his agency was “working with the courts to develop COOP planning.” If the court system became inoperable it would need to be “reconstituted” using a COOP plan. He conceded, however, his agency does not “have them engaged in response recovery.” Other than this, no interviewee recalled judicial branch involvement with NIMS compliance.

Commitment of Implementers

Those interviewed believe they are adequately committed to the NIMS. For example, Rick said he is “very passionate” about implementation. Similarly, John said his “strong support for the NIMS” enhances his commitment and his “desire to implement.” John attributed his commitment to his belief that the NIMS is a good guide to understanding incident management for those who are new to incident management. Years ago, he said, incident management responsibilities were essentially “placed in his lap.” He
is committed to the NIMS, “a system that teaches new administrators” something they are unfamiliar with.

Commitment is sometimes challenged by conflict. Rick described a training session where he was instructing a group of agency officials.

I sat in front of a group of people at one facility. Some of them will all out attack you. One deputy warden told me ‘I think you are full of crap and don’t know what you are talking about.’ I have to be able to work through that and my passion comes across in those instances.

Those interviewed were quick to note that not all state officials are adequately committed. They believe a minority of state officials (and many sub-state officials) are not as committed as they should or could be. Mike said there is a need to “bring incentive” for under-committed officials to increase their commitment. Rick incentivized commitment in his department by initiating a series of unannounced drills. He…

notified the bosses that we were going to run an unannounced simulation as a test and they had better have buy-in and prepare their staffs. We then took a team of folks around the state. We showed up at facilities unannounced, sometimes snuck in some shifty way, and we would walk up to somebody and kick off the simulation. Eventually, we went to every facility in the state. In evaluating the staffs afterward, we realized that leadership had obviously made efforts and attempts to get the staff committed.

A number of reasons why some state officials are not committed were offered. For example, some of those interviewed believe age partially dictates why some are less committed. Jack called this dynamic “the old guard and the new guard.” Similarly, Rick said that within his agency, officials “coming out of the academy understand it better and try to implement it.” Rick: in many cases, members of the older generation “refuse to take any advice.” In addition to the age dynamic, low commitment was also attributed to general unfamiliarity with incident management. For example, John said “it is difficult for people outside of incident management to embrace incident management at the level
insiders believe they should.” From his view, commitment levels rise as one becomes familiar with incident management concepts.
CHAPTER SIX – Massachusetts Case Study

This chapter provides the other half of the data set analyzed in Chapter Seven. Here we explore the question: what influences the NIMS’ implementation in Massachusetts and why? For each of the fourteen factors, this chapter describes the perspectives and experiences of eleven state officials (represented below by fictitious names) from seven state agencies. Each interviewee had demonstrable experience working on “NIMS compliance.” The interviews each lasted about one hour.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of some of Massachusetts’ general characteristics and basic governmental aspects followed by brief discussion of HS issues in Massachusetts and the state’s organizational structure for HS.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts became a U.S. state on February 6, 1788. It is a comparatively small state consisting of about 7,800 square land miles. An Atlantic coastal state, Massachusetts borders New York and four other New England states: New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. There are about 6,500,000 residents in Massachusetts thus the population is one of the densest in the nation. According to the 2010 Census Report, there are 830 people per square mile meaning only a few states are more densely populated.

Massachusetts’ largest city, Boston, is the capital and seat of state government. As discussed in Chapter Four, Massachusetts is the third most liberal state based on the percentage of residents who self-identify as liberal. Although for most of the last 22 years, the state’s governor was Republican, Democrats currently control the Executive branch.
Also, the full-time state legislature is dominated by the Democratic Party, where Democrats control over 80% of the House seats and 90% of the Senate seats.

**Homeland Security in Massachusetts**

Massachusetts faces a number of HS challenges. In the interviews, references were made to terrorism, hurricanes, winter storms, and big-building firefighting, to name a few. Under Dillman’s (2008) classification scheme, Massachusetts employs the Governor’s Office model for HS. HS activities are coordinated in the Executive Office for Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) by an Assistant Secretary for Homeland Security. The Assistant Secretary reports to the EOPSS Secretary, who in turn reports to the Governor. Additionally, the legislature maintains a Joint Legislative Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security.

Massachusetts formally adopted the NIMS in September 2005 when Governor Mitt Romney issued [Executive Order 469](#) which mandated the NIMS’ use by state agencies. The Order holds that Massachusetts will…

utilize the National Incident Management System (NIMS) as the standard for incident management [and] through its Regional Homeland Security Planning Councils, [it requires] all cities, towns, and other municipal entities to certify that they have adopted and implemented NIMS as a condition of receiving Federal preparedness grant awards (Executive Order 469).

**Emergent Themes about the NIMS’ Implementation**

The interviewees each answered questions about the influence of the fourteen factors. In this section, the themes that emerged in the interviews are reproduced in a narrative format. A brief-summary of these emergent themes is provided below in Table Two.
**Table Two**

**The NIMS’ Implementation in Massachusetts – Summary of Emergent Themes**

| **Causal Theory** | There is unanimous support for the belief that the NIMS is essential to HS. The NIMS provides common language, training and response mindsets. |
| **Scope and Diversity** | This study estimates there are at least 2,600 state implementers and the number is growing. There are three types of agencies - locus, primary, and secondary - and three types of implementers: high, medium, and low. |
| **Behavioral Change** | The interviewees believe they have adequately changed their behavior. Buy-in, training and exercising were prerequisite to their behavioral change. The interviewees believe older state employees are less likely to have adequately changed behavior. |
| **Incorporation of Causal Theory** | Many failed attempts at incorporating 'theory into practice' occurred during the NIMS’ early years. Today, although challenges remain, the interviewees seem pleased with how things are going. |
| **Goals and Objectives** | Those interviewed generally believe the NIMS’ goals and objectives are pretty clear. Some minor uncertainty is attributed to unfamiliarity with NIMS training and compliance protocol. |
| **Resources** | Those interviewed believe they receive threshold funding. More funding would be used for training. They also believe they have access to enough technology and information, though sometimes too much information becomes incomprehensible. |
| **Integration** | Interviewees believe the implementation apparatus is adequately coordinated. Minor challenges to integration may be the lack of guidance on best practices, lack of situational awareness by some, and leadership discontinuity. |
| **Decision Rules** | Those interviewed enjoy a general lack of decision rules. They enjoy flexibility in administrative decision making. |
| **Socioeconomics** | The worldwide recession created few economic problems that did not already exist. It may have exacerbated the negative effects of attrition among state officials and the inability to develop assets. |
| **Media Attention** | Interviewees believe the media has little to no impact on implementation. The largest impact may be the increased time implementers (mainly PIOs) spend explaining their agency’s incident management efforts. |
| **Public Attention** | With the possible exception of the parents of college students, the interviewees believe the public has no idea what the NIMS is. Indirectly, public perception drives implementation by creating expectations for incident managers. |
| **Constituency Groups** | Constituency or ‘private sector’ groups are actively involved in the NIMS’ implementation. Some are perceived as more professional than others but all are viewed as having some positive influence on implementation. |
| **Sovereigns’ Attention** | The Executive Branch is the primary driver of implementation while the Legislative Branch is an occasional, minor driver. The Judiciary does not seem involved in implementation. |
| **Commitment of Implementers** | The interviewees are strongly committed to the NIMS’ implementation. They view some state (and sub-state) officials as less committed. |
Causal Theory

The interviewees unanimously agreed with the causal theory that the NIMS is a critical component of overall HS efforts. The interviewees generally felt as Yunger did that the NIMS or “some sort of incident management system” is essential to HS.

Support for the causal theory derived from the perception that the NIMS brings commonness to incident management language, training and response. And by standardizing many aspects of incident management, ill communication is avoided. Steve defined common approach as “responding and talking the same language.” Beyond common language, the theory also facilitates standardized training regimes. Bill said the common training regime is “highly valuable.” Yunger said the standardized regime provides a “common response mindset,” a mindset Earl called “coherent and collaborative.” Earl: the effect is that someone who is trained in Boston can go to an incident in California, for example, and “with reasonable getting used they can fit right into their position.” Similarly, Steve highlighted the NIMS’ value to HS by noting that an incident could occur at the Seabrook nuclear facility. Though the facility is in New Hampshire, it is only about two miles from Massachusetts making an emergency there a threat to HS in both (and other) states. As Steve said, if an incident occurred there, responders and incident managers from both states would possess a common NIMS-derived mindset. In short, according to Yunger, the NIMS may be the “greatest power” in HS planning right now. Earl could not think of “anything in 36 years of law enforcement as important as the NIMS’ implementation.”

Scope and Diversity

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes that a large number of implementation officials frustrates successful implementation because, through the resultant diversity, it
expands the number of behaviors that need to be changed. Thus, for implementation to be successful, the size and diversity of implementers should be “small and isolable” (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). In Massachusetts, the scope and diversity of implementers does not seem small or isolable.

For a couple of reasons, the actual scope of implementers is undetermined. First, no one is sure exactly what ‘NIMS implementer’ means. There was uncertainty as to whether the simple act of taking Incident Command Systems 100 (ICS100) (a basic NIMS requirement) renders one a NIMS implementer. If so, the scope is quite large because, as Ian estimated, the number of those who have taken ICS100 is “well into the thousands.” This estimate is only partially helpful, for it overestimates the scope of implementers by including local officials. And even if we could define ‘NIMS implementer,’ the scope is difficult to quantify because it is continuously expanding. According to Nick, a NIMS trainer, more and more state officials are “coming forward to get involved and receive NIMS training.” While it is not possible to precisely calculate the scope, an aggregation of statements and publicly available information yields rough estimates.

The interviewees were unsure precisely how many in their agencies worked on NIMS compliance, but they provided their best guesses. According to Yunger, there are about twenty “named people” on the NIMS Advisory Group (NAG) and fifteen of them are “regularly and actively involved.” This estimate is high because it includes local and federal officials. And at the Department of Fire Services (DFS), “maybe” thirty-five state employees know about the NIMS (Ed). “Hundreds” at the Massachusetts Port Authority (MassPort) know what the NIMS is (Eric). Eric said he works with “maybe two dozen” other MassPort employees when implementing NIMS and “maybe another two dozen”
outside the MassPort. On one state university campus, Nate estimates over 100 state employees know what NIMS is through at least ICS200 training. At another campus, Earl said “about sixty” employees are familiar with the NIMS. At the MBTA, the number of people who, at least, should be involved with NIMS at was estimated to be “pretty sizeable” (Ned). Upon marrying the above statements with the approximately 2,300 sworn State Police officers, there are over 2,600 state employees in Massachusetts who are NIMS implementers.

Within this estimated scope, there is a diverse range of behaviors, cultures, and personalities (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). Indeed, the interviews revealed multiple dimensions of ‘diversity.’ Nick offered his simple dichotomization of implementers as those “inside the NIMS tent and those outside,” i.e., those who buy into the NIMS and those who do not. Diversity however seems to extend beyond this simple dichotomy. In Massachusetts, diversity extends among agencies as well as implementers. While such diversity is not formalized, the interviews suggest there are three types of agencies. We explore each in turn.

A handful of local agencies represent the core or hub of statewide implementation activity. They are not operational in incident management but they make the primary policy decisions, administer grants, and, so far as NIMS is concerned, serve as the primary state contacts in vertical IGR. Locus agencies included the EOPSS, its Office of Grants and Research (OGR), as well (some members of) the NAG. The EOPSS Secretary serves as the state administrative agency (SAA), which is in charge of administering federally funded grants. Within the EOPSS, the OGR administers the grants “on behalf of the SAA” (Yunger, Ian). In a sense, the SAA delegates major NIMS decisions and planning to a
statewide NIMS Advisory Group (NAG). This group, chaired by the Homeland Security Assistant Secretary, develops policy and statewide NIMS-guidance (Steve) and advises training designers on “where to go” (Nick).

In contrast to the locus agencies, primary agencies are not at the core of policymaking. Rather, primary agencies have historically had lead roles in incident management. Thus, these agencies are well-versed in incident management and provide a substantial amount of NIMS and ICS training. Ned said primary agencies are much more familiar with the NIMS because “they use it on a regular basis.” Primary agencies include the State Police, the DFS, and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

Secondary agencies are relatively new users of incident management concepts and, in a way, partially peripheral to the implementation apparatus. Indeed, they have orientations outside of per se incident management, such as education and transportation. In this study, secondary agencies included two state universities, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) - operator of the Boston area transit system - and the MassPort.

In addition to agency diversity, there is also diversity among implementing officials in terms of their decision making authority. These divisions are not formal but used here to explain differences between individual implementers. Diversity of implementers can be viewed along a three point spectrum: high, medium and low. These distinctions are based on a ‘veto points’ principle. Veto points are occasions where state officials have “the capacity (quite apart from the question of legal authority) to impede the achievement of statutory objectives” (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1980).
High level implementers, such as the Governor, the EOPPS Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary for Homeland Security, possess great veto capacity. They control access to financial and legal resources. Officials in this group were referred to as the “administrative management level” (Ian) or the “executive level” (Nate). One high level implementer thought of himself as a “policy person more than a user.” This level contains a small number of implementing officials.

Most of those interviewed are middle level, the level of directors and managers. They are the intermediaries between the high level implementers who work mainly in the state capital and those who work in sub-state governments. According to Randy, himself a ‘mid-leveler,’ officials at this level face the unique challenge of managing “the desires of the bosses with the abilities of staff.” According to Randy, occasionally mid-level implementers are directly “involved in incident operations.”

Low level implementers have the least veto capacity. None were interviewed here. Those at this level are actively “involved in incident operations” and direct application of ICS. As the saying goes, all incidents are local first, hence the importance of first responders like fire and police. At this “operational level” (Randy), officials are viewed as “boots on the ground” (Ned), a.k.a., the first responders and “the users.”

Estimated to be at least 2,600 people, the scope of Massachusetts’ implementation apparatus seems quite large. Under the Sabatier-Mazmanian model, this may be a serious obstacle to successful implementation. The implementers are diverse at the agency and individual level. Agency diversity extends along a three-point spectrum (locus-primary-secondary) each characterized by their roles and familiarity with incident management.
Similarly, the thousands of implementing officials are diverse along a three-point spectrum of authority (high-middle-low).

Behavioral Change

Through buy-in and active participation, those interviewed believed they have changed their behavior enough for successful implementation. They believed buy-in is prerequisite to behavioral change. Those interviewed all attest to having buy-in, which they believe goes beyond agreement with the causal theory and reflects their willingness to effectuate the NIMS. Occasionally, a single weather incident establishes buy-in. Two of the interviewees explained how a straight-line thunderstorm, and more importantly the response to it, created buy-in among their colleagues. Earl said that his university’s successful response helped convince “a lot of the NIMS’ naysayers.” Nate said his campus’s response to the storm “publicly validated the training.”

After buy-in was established, training and exercising modeled alternative behavior. The interviewees report that they are actively involved in training and exercises. While they perceive adequate access to training and exercises, issues of training frequency and mental retention arose in the interviews.

There was consensus among the interviewees, illustrated here by Steve, that NIMS training should have an “ongoing piece” where “refresher training” and exercises “re-emphasize” important NIMS principles and concepts. The ability of implementing officials to retain training materiel was a recurring concern. Many believe that if NIMS training is not used and exercised regularly, its principles and concepts are lost. Ned said he does his job well but if you asked him to “lay out all the different NIMS functions” he would be
unable to recall them in detail. His colleague, Tim, said if he were to sit for a “pencil and paper test,” he would certainly have to review first.

While the interviewees criticized NIMS training for its infrequency, Eric also criticized it on other procedural grounds. He criticized what he calls the “NIMS training mafia.”

The NIMS training mafia is designed by people who know the guys getting trained are probably going to get overtime and the guys who are temporarily replacing them are on overtime so they take four hours’ worth of instruction and stretch it to three days.

This observation implicates the efficient and, possibly, effective administration of NIMS training. Suppose for a moment that Eric’s observation is wholly accurate and, as he suggests, three days of NIMS training could be condensed into four hours. Where one day consists of two, four-hour halves, Massachusetts expends approximately six times the ‘market rate’ for training. Eric seems to believe major inefficiencies exist. In short, training and, ultimately, behavioral change could be achieved with fewer state inputs.

Not all implementing officials have changed their behavior. While those interviewed attested to having changed their behavior, each identified some implementing officials who have not. Some officials for example expressed a generational view to explain why some state officials do not buy in. This view assumes younger officials possess more buy in since they are more likely to be inculcated with buy-in as students, cadets, and trainees of the relevant disciplines. Related to this generational view was the idea of ‘retirement anticipators.’ Those anticipating impending retirement were viewed as less likely to buy in and perform NIMS related tasks. Nick shared the story of one now-retired official who told him:
I’ll take your exam and sit through this training because I’ve been ordered to be here, but I will never use the NIMS.” Some retirement anticipators are more diplomatic in their rejection. Nick: they “politely rebuff” invitations to attend training.

Incorporation of Causal Theory

Almost everyone interviewed agreed that the incorporation process – turning NIMS theory into practice – has grown increasingly successful. In contrast to the NIMS’ early years, today, the interviewees are somewhat pleased with “how things are going” (Earl) though they agree there remains “a lot of work to do” (Nate).

In the NIMS’ early days, those interviewed believe the NIMS came on too strong. Steve for example said it came on “gangbusters.” Nick was not surprised saying “you cannot impose a new system on an organization like a state agency and expect to get good results.” The perception was that good results were particularly unlikely since other obligations were already going unmet. For example, Nick thought: “Geez, I’m not sure about this. Why is the DHS requiring me to do all this new training when I don’t have money for the training I’m already supposed to be doing?” Similarly, Earl said early efforts to turn NIMS theory into practice “overwhelmed and scared people.” Some attributed early confusion to a lack of clarity. Earl said that initially the NIMS “lacked explanation.” Steve said the lack of explanation made it “hard to understand and implement.” Earl attributed early misunderstanding to the fact that, sometimes, things “written by the federal government are clouded in mystery and congealed with acronyms.”

Another criticism of incorporation in the early years was that implementation phases were projected only one year out. This was viewed as too short a timetable, one that
put undue pressure on the interviewees. This is consistent with some HS research that suggests an implementation timeline perceived as too short creates “tremendous pressure” (Caruson & MacManus 2005). In short, the NIMS’ early years were challenging because the initiative lacked adequate explanation which generated confusion, and the short implementation timelines created unnecessary pressure.

Today, incorporation is viewed as increasingly successful, having overcome many of the earlier shortcomings discussed above. According to Steve, one reason things have “gotten better and more useful” is because concepts have become “easier to understand.” Through increased familiarity, Steve said “it becomes easier to buy-in.” Also, the NIC extended implementation timelines from one year to three to five years. And incorporation has become more efficient. ICS 100 and 200 training was moved online. This made it more accessible, especially to those with the least access to training sessions and sites. Consequently, training rates are increasing and courses are continuously modified to be more applicable and useful.

While incorporation is largely viewed as increasingly successful, a few challenges arose in the interviews. Ed said stronger leadership is needed. According to Ed, strong leadership is necessary to push “different initiatives.” Eric said he would like to see some state leaders stand up and be more forceful by saying, for example: “Look God dammit, we’re not going to have brevity codes\(^3\) in Massachusetts anymore.”

Also, greater familiarity with the NIMS among individuals, \(i.e.,\) increased proficiency, is important. Nick believes his NIMS proficiency means he has a “responsibility to brief the NAG and give them an idea of what his agency thinks is

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\(^3\) Generally, brevity codes are designed to convey complex or plentiful information using few words. They are often discipline specific and therefore undecipherable to those in other disciplines.
possible.” His familiarity with the NIMS makes it easier for him to engage and assist others. This type of cooperation has the effect of spreading best practices which would help close the gap between theory and practice.

Lastly, ongoing incorporation is hindered by what Eric perceives to be flawed and inefficient rulemaking, which he believes it is too vulnerable to special interests. To illustrate, he offered the following anecdote about the creation of a statewide instructor manual:

To have a detailed instructor or evaluator manual, what do we have to do? We have to hire consultants. That’s wonderful for the consultant who may have inserted the language into the regulation that says ‘consultants may be needed.’

Eric eschewed the notion that he and other implementing officials are incapable of developing such manuals and that development should be outsourced to consultants. He seems to suggest that closing the gap between theory and practice would be more easily achieved if the administrative process were less susceptible to special interests.

Goals and Objectives

Clear goals and objectives are unambiguous directives to implementing officials. Those interviewed perceive the NIMS’ goals and objectives fairly clearly, at least clearly enough for successful implementation to occur. Some view them as very clear and one views them as unclear, but overall the NIMS’ goals and objectives are fairly clear to those interviewed.

The interviews revealed some minor uncertainty over goals and objectives. Ned said he is “not clear” on the objectives because his training is old and he does not utilize the NIMS enough. Randy said that officials in “small rural communities” are less clear on
goals and objectives compared to those in larger cities who have the “requisite staff” to regularly pursue clarity.

However, overall, the interviewees offered several reasons why most interviewees are clear. The goals and objectives are clear in part because they are written by the NIC, a federal entity. The NIC employs a standards review process that is “conducted by a multidisciplinary field-based Practitioner Working Group (PWG) and Technical Working Group (TWG) to ensure the adopted NIMS standards are relevant, implementable, and useful in implementing NIMS.” For this reason, said Earl, by the “sheer weight of having been written by the federal government, few doubt the NIMS is a well thought idea.” This increases his willingness to participate. Clarity also exists due to the extension of implementation phases from one year to up to five years. Steve said the extension gave him more time to gain clarification, which was “helpful in providing long and short term vision.”

Multiple sources of information also help develop clarity. Most cited the internet, mainly websites and list serves, as a prevalent conduit for sharing distilled information about questions they may have. Interviewees repeatedly said they reference the FEMA’s NIMS website. Those interviewed also call other officials. Who they call depends largely on their question. For example, Nick said he would call someone on the NIMS Advisory Group (NAG) for clarity on objectives but, if the question were about grants, he would probably call the EOPSS’ Office of Grants and Research (OGR). The OGR is widely viewed as the state expert on “what the federal NIMS requirements are and how that plays out at the state level” (Randy). One official at the MBTA said his agency’s police department often helps him clarify certain things.
Today, Massachusetts receives far fewer federal dollars from the HS Grant Program than in the early days of the NIMS. According to Yunger, who works in the SAA, in FY2005, Massachusetts received over $40,000,000 and today it gets about $15,000,000. When asked whether this amount meets their threshold needs for successful implementation, most responded with a begrudging yes. According to Ian, “as far as funding, Massachusetts is fine. Could we use more? Sure, but I don’t think we really need more.” Similarly, Nick said “we haven’t run out, we have basic resources.” Earl conceded the NIMS can be successfully implemented on a “shoestring budget.”

According to Nick, limited funding can be annoying. He said he gets “pinched” on little things like waiting longer for a newer, cheaper vendor to deliver training textbooks, and other “little irritations.” Similarly, Ian suggested implementation is on a fragile foundation, stating: “if HS funds dried up tomorrow, NIMS in large part would dry up.”

If Massachusetts received more funding, those interviewed believe it should be used for training; mainly through the provision of overtime so more officials could attend training. Other stated uses for increased funds were “infrastructure initiatives” and the building of a “resource management database” (Steve), as well as the hiring of backfill employees (Yunger). The interviewees all expressed the sentiment that with more money, there are always more ‘toys’ to buy.

One emergent theme regarded money management and several challenges facing implementing officials who manage HS monies. According to Ian, the within-state distribution of federal grant money can be a challenge. Getting grants and other “politically charged funds” into the hands of state and sub-state officials is an “involved procedure.”
Ned said the process is a “constant management issue.” Ed said it is a challenge when his agency has to operate concurrently on six different grants. Furthermore, some noted that federal funding must often be augmented with Massachusetts resources, which is not always feasible in a state that (at the time of data collection) projected an almost two billion dollar budget gap. And when outside sources of funding cannot be found, Nick said sometimes steps are taken to “reallocate internally.” Randy called this “pulling money from other places.”

Resource #2 - Technological Resourcing

Those interviewed believe they have enough technology to successfully implement the NIMS. They conceded that implementation does not require a tremendous amount of technology.

The technologies most frequently cited were computers and the internet, including internet based applications. Ned noted that while “no one needs a computer to implement the NIMS, it sure makes it easier.” Similarly, Ian called the NIMSCAST a “great tool.” The NIMSCAST is “a web-based self-assessment instrument” for Federal agencies and State, territorial, tribal, and local governments to evaluate and report their jurisdiction's progress and achievement of NIMS implementation activities. Similarly, Massachusetts is attempting to develop a computer-based resource management tool which, according to Steve, is a “system to better augment situational awareness.” Two university officials discussed the utility of Emergency Notification Systems (ENS). These technologies allow them to send text messages, emails, and voicemails to students when incidents occur on or near campus. Speaking about their value to the ‘T’ system, two MBTA officials said video cameras facilitate efficient hazard identification.
Nick made two noteworthy observations about the technology adoption process. First, he suggests that rather than being selected arbitrarily by ‘higher ups,’ technology should be developed and acquired in response to “specific demands from the users.” Second, he expressed a generational view of technology adoption that held “if you hit certain (older) generations with new technology, they may shut down on you.” Nick seems to suggest that perhaps technology adoptions should anticipate some degree of age-based receptivity.

Resource #3 - Informational Resourcing

Most of those interviewed believe they have enough information to successfully implement the NIMS. A number of explanations were offered. Earl said the State has been “pretty responsive at providing all kinds of information” and that many implementing officials participate in “a number of information sharing” systems. For example, his agency participated in the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC), a municipally-focused intelligence clearinghouse run by the Boston Police Department. Similarly, the NIMS Compliance Assistance Support Tool (NIMSCAST) was cited as a good device for moving information around the HS ecosystem. The interviews suggested that informational resourcing faces four ongoing challenges.

First, as Nick put it, informational resourcing competes against an “engrained reluctance to share information.” Information sharing is new for many of the disciplines, a.k.a., “information silos,” involved in NIMS compliance. To help overcome this culture, the NAG has been a “very useful group” (Ian). According to Ian, the NAG addresses the issues and then “disseminates the information.” Steve said that by including federal, local,
and private-sector officials on the NAG, it has “a constant up and down flow of information.”

A second challenge involves the speed and accuracy of the information sharing process. Those interviewed frequently view the process as slow. Often, information generates at the federal level. Upon its arrival in Massachusetts, the NAG and EOPSS filter it, simplify it, and “push it out” to sub-state entities (Ian). Ian: in organizations as large as the DHS, the FEMA, and Massachusetts state government, information can take a while to “filter down.” This process occasionally generates misinformation. Like in the old game ‘telephone,’ Randy said that by the time information filters down into the implementation apparatus, it can be “quite diluted” and “misunderstood.” Nick wondered whether enough information sharing goes on “within FEMA and the DHS.” From his experience, employees in one department “often know too little about what is occurring in other departments because they do not get together and exchange information or let each other know when something changes.”

Third, a couple of officials believe there is too little information. Yunger said he seeks information “all the time” that is, often, not there. He believes it could help him do his job better if he knew, for example, how, why, to whom, and in what increments the “ports grants” were ultimately allocated among sub-state entities. And he is curious how NIMS compliance is influenced by the anticipation of pre-planned events like the Boston Marathon versus unplanned events like deadly tornadoes in the Springfield area.

In contrast to too little information, a final (bigger) challenge is that there is often too much information. Many agreed that with such heavy use of the internet, the information ‘pool’ can be difficult to navigate. Information is often inaccessible and
indigestible. Many agreed with Ian, who said that information is most useful when it is “packaged in a meaningful and accessible way.”

Integration

Those interviewed believe the implementation apparatus is adequately integrated and coordinated for successful implementation to occur. They largely define integration and coordination as ‘working together.’ For HS generally, Massachusetts, like many states, employs a regional model of HS management. The interviewees believe Massachusetts’ state-local government structure affects implementation. Almost all noted that Massachusetts is an old, entrenched “home rule” state. Yunger: rather than strong, active county governments, Massachusetts has “351 fiercely independent cities and towns each with a long, strong tradition of home rule and being left alone.” Under this municipal driven system, some perceive Boston’s influence over implementation as disproportionate. Earl said intra-governmental affairs sometimes look like the “state of Boston” versus the “commonwealth of Massachusetts.”

To manage its complex municipally driven system for NIMS and other HS activity, Massachusetts employs a regional management approach. The state is divided by municipality into four numbered regions and the Boston region. As mentioned above, the Advisory Councils are employed to assist in the development and implementation of HS initiatives. This is a common approach among states (See Comfort, 2003; Dresang, 2003; and Stehr, 2003).

For the NIMS, specifically, integration is spearheaded formally through the NAG and the SAA, and informally through the awareness of implementing officials. Yunger said the NAG, a multi-disciplinary ideas clearinghouse, is the hub of the state’s cooperative
format. He called it “very” integrated. Steve compared the Massachusetts’ integrative capacity to the state of Maine’s. In Maine, he said, “the emergency management office is also the state administrative agent to the DHS; the two offices are co-located.” This means that in Maine there is less opportunity for other agencies to actively participate because one discipline – emergency management – is the primary decision maker. In contrast, in Massachusetts, the SAA and the NAG are not collocated and major compliance decisions are made by a multidisciplinary body. In short, the NAG (and HSACs for general HS activity) facilitates integration for NIMS because most state agencies contribute formally and regularly to the NAG’s decision making. By increasing involvement, the NAG increases integration.

Integration is also maintained informally through attentiveness. Nick said it is important for implementing officials to be aware of those who volunteer to fulfill a NIMS related need. He said leaders have to “leave their ears open to voices crying out saying ‘we should be included.’” As an example, members of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) repeatedly approached Nick during a training session saying how, with the assets they bring to incident management, they could help with NIMS compliance. When Nick returned to his office, he asked his boss: “Why aren’t we working with the CAP?” Steps were subsequently taken to integrate the CAP.

Active officials also informally maintain integration. Ian, recognized by the interviewees as a de facto coordinator, actively works “to get officials together” to work on NIMS compliance. Ned said active officials “always end up at the same meetings.” Continuing: they arrive with “really good attitudes. They get involved and they participate.” This cultivates a “really beneficial” culture (Steve) where, according to Tim,
implementing officials get “involved to develop teamwork, to get to know one another and each other’s thinking and attitudes.”

Another reason that seems to explain why Massachusetts has developed an adequate integration process can be traced to adequate incentive. Ed said that by attaching funding to requirements and making the requirements clear, the federal government delivered a clear message to leadership: if your state agencies do not integrate and work with other agencies to implement the NIMS, funding will be lost. The result was that early adopters did not have to persuade leadership on the NIMS’ importance because the financial incentives for NIMS compliance were enough.

Credit for integration was also given to the fact that disintegration is viewed as dangerous and a threat to HS. To illustrate, Eric discussed the 2002 Pompey, New York house fire in which two firefighters died. He said the lack of cooperation between two incident managers probably led to the deaths because, as one of the decedent’s widows argued in subsequent litigation, major failures of ICS protocol occurred. Eric said that had the two fire departments been better integrated under NIMS protocol, the two firefighters probably would not have died.

The interviews revealed some challenges to integration. The state does not interact with the federal government as much as it used to on planning matters. Ian said “the last meaningful interaction Massachusetts had with FEMA on the NIMS was in 2007” when FEMA held a “wonderful conference” to clarify goals, processes, and expectations. Nick assigned blame for any disintegration to the FEMA and the NIC because “they are the ones who are supposed to keep the system going.”
A second ongoing challenge to integration is fostering inclusion. According to Nick, integration requires officials to “develop inclusion” partly by getting on a “first name basis” with everyone. Continuing: this prevents against the distrust and dis-integration that can occur when, during an incident, someone arrives on the scene and says “I’m from the government and I’m here to help.” Integration requires interpersonal relationships to be built over time.

**Decision Rules**

In contrast to the model’s assumption that more decision rules are better because they minimize potential for implementers to deviate from established protocols, the interviewees favorably perceive a general lack of ‘hard’ decision rules. The decision rules mentioned included guidelines generated by the NIC, and HSPD#5 which broadly articulates the “compliance objectives” (Ian). This ‘broad’ articulation was mildly criticized by Nick, an armed forces Veteran, who said military rules are “superior [to the NIMS’ rules] because they are more detailed and far more specific” about what decisions are authorized. Overall, however, the interviewees believe that having few decision rules and standard operating procedures (SOP) enables their implementation efforts. They offered a number of explanations why.

The American form of federalism, upon which HS and other policy domains rest, creates limits on the extent to which the federal government may give orders to the States. As Nick said, the federal government “can only go so far in saying what Massachusetts must do.” While this is not necessarily true, the federal government has likely adopted minimal decision rules to incentivize Massachusetts’ participation in NIMS compliance.
Others justified the lack of decision rules at the personal level. Yunger said “there are times when you should take decision-making power out of people’s hands and there are times when you need to trust their judgment.” The NIMS’ implementation appears to rely more heavily on the latter. This means, according to Ian, implementing officials often “make their own guidance.” Given this level of flexibility, Steve said the NIMS is “scalable, something you can adopt yourself” without being too hindered by restrictions on administrative decision making.

Also, decision rules may not necessarily be needed so long as the big picture goals are understood. Ian conceded that since HS is “a new field, standards do a lot towards creating uniformity” but admitted that “it is much better if state officials have a picture of the goal” because if they do, they can make use of a “flexibility that is fantastic.”

**Socioeconomics**

The interviews suggest that, overall, Massachusetts’ socioeconomic profile is sufficiently healthy for successful implementation to occur. When asked whether the worldwide recession that began in 2008 hurt the NIMS’ implementation, those interviewed largely said: not really. However, they did admit two things. The recession may have aggravated their inability to rehire lost personnel, which exacerbates the challenges of attrition. The recession also limited Massachusetts’ ability to develop assets, like regionally-based incident management teams.

**Media Attention**

According to the Sabatier-Mazmanian model, the media influences implementation through its role informing the public. Implementing officials in Massachusetts believe the media know little about the NIMS and therefore have little direct influence on
implementation. According to Ned, if you asked five reporters what the NIMS is, four would have no idea and one would have “a little bit of an idea.” For this reason, he said, the media does not have a “huge impact” on implementation. Rather, said Ned and others, the media generally waits to see if “we fail to do a good job. Then they will say, ‘Why didn’t you do it right? Why didn’t you follow the NIMS?’”

While the media has little influence on implementation, the media has influenced the behavior of implementation officials. For example, state officials are taught the importance of message consistency. Nick: NIMS training “drums into PIOs the importance of message consistency.”

Implementing officials also invite media to NIMS training. For example, during a full-scale exercise in Boston Harbor, state officials brought a number of news outlets to the exercise site. They held a mock press conference and let videographers get footage of the responders practicing and training. They wanted reporters to better understand the circumstances of incident management and to identify any questions they might ask public officials during an incident. As Steve said, engaging the media this way “builds mutual confidence.”

The media have also been invited “into the [MEMA] bunker to make sure they understand what goes into preparing Massachusetts for an incident” (Ed). They were invited because implementing officials seem to believe that by developing the media’s understanding of the NIMS, the media will be better prepared to ask ‘good’ questions; questions that have to do with whether the NIMS was “implemented properly and the way it was designed” (Ned). They also believe it is important for the media to better understand the orientations of incident managers, which may help reporters to contextualize their
reports. For example, after a drill at Logan Airport, a reporter asked the PIO how the exercise went. The PIO said ‘great’ because “we identified twelve things we need to correct” (Nick). The media perceived this as governmental “spin” since they only heard that twelve things went wrong. In short, through active media engagement and management, implementing officials aim to help the media report more accurate and useful stories. Yunger articulated the common sentiment that the media may report the truth but “not always the full and accurate story.” Continuing: In Massachusetts, we take the time “to effectively explain to the media what is happening, what’s going on, and other big picture questions.”

The interviewees distinguished between the influence and value of television and print media. They viewed the television media as the more dominant form. Tim thought this may be because of the old adage that “a picture is worth a thousand words.” However, whether due to the lack of interest or the lack of major incidents, television rarely reports on NIMS related activities. In those rare instances they do, Steve said you will never hear them report “the state doing a horrible job” managing an incident. Print media, on the other hand, seemed to be viewed more favorably by the interviewees. A couple of interviewees noted that, because of the nature of their research, print reporters “seem more focused on the nitty-gritty of NIMS” (Tim). This is one reason they too are invited to observe training exercises.

Public Attention

The model assumes that public awareness of policy implementation can infuse support but those interviewed believe the public does not know what the NIMS is and consequently has little direct influence on implementation. However, the interviewees did
agree with Randy that “public perception drives” implementation. Implementing officials believe the public has an expectation that “someone is doing something to make them feel safer” (Earl). Yunger: they expect “public safety officials to coordinate.” To illustrate how the public expects “incidents to be resolved,” Randy discussed Hurricane Katrina. He said the public was upset because the “outcome was not one they expected.” To illustrate in Massachusetts, consider Hurricane Earl.

In 2010, Hurricane Earl became the fifth named storm of the eastern U.S. hurricane season. Its arrival was highly anticipated in Massachusetts as demonstrated in a September 2, 2010, Associated Press article:

The storm has weakened slightly but still threatens the New England coast, where officials fear a further turn west. Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick has declared a state of emergency ahead of the storm's arrival, saying the declaration will allow officials to respond quickly.

Randy said the declaration allowed him to “pre-position resources.” During the pre-positioning phase, PIOs kept the public informed of its coordination activities, as illustrated by this report on September 3:

‘We're asking everyone: Don't panic,’ said Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick. ‘We have prepared well, we are coordinated well, and I'm confident that we've done everything we can.’

As Randy said, the hurricane ended up “essentially a non-event in Massachusetts.” But in the public’s perception, the NIMS and ICS were successfully implemented because incident managers met the public’s expectation. Thus, continued Randy, few in the public “condemned the spending that occurred pre-landfall.”

While, overall, the public is not familiar with the NIMS, the interviews revealed an exception to this rule. One segment of the Massachusetts public may know more than others: the parents and guardians of college students. Out of concern for their children’s
on-campus security, Nate said that after the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting parents began expressing interest in “how universities manage their incidents.” He said they have “fair-to-good” knowledge of the NIMS. Similarly, on his campus, Earl is not surprised when parents ask him: “if something bad happens, what is your system for dealing with it?”

Constituency Groups

Constituency groups are actively involved in NIMS compliance. The interviewees had a variety of names for constituency groups, including private groups, NGOs, non-profits, private sector organizations, and “non-traditional grant awardees” (Ian). The Red Cross was repeatedly mentioned for its ability to provide mass sheltering but other groups mentioned included the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Fidelity and Verizon Corporations, the Salvation Army, local synagogues, the United Way, the Civil Air Patrol, the Urban League of Women, the Medical Reserve Corps, and the Critical Incident Stress Management team.

The interviewees believe constituency groups have a positive influence on the NIMS’ implementation. When it comes to incident management, Randy sees them as “viable co-participants.” Nick said these groups are important because they often provide emergency services “no one else can.” Steve said these groups are “a huge benefit.” According to Earl, they are “a bigger resource than some initially thought. Consequently, these groups are an “integrated part of the team” (Nick).

These groups also help implementing officials leverage and develop resources. A couple of examples help illustrate. The Salvation Army sets up in “the bunker” - the statewide emergency operations center - during some incidents to manage incoming calls from people who want to donate funds. Thus, during incidents, the Salvation Army
administers a collection hotline which adds utility by leveraging pre-existing capabilities and resources. Also, Ed cited the value of the Critical Incident Stress Management team (CISM) for its work with on-scene firefighters during the December 1999, “Worcester cold storage fire.” In one of the deadliest fires in recent Massachusetts history, six firefighters died and it took eleven days for the bodies to be recovered. Ed praised the CISM team which was “on-scene 24/7.” After searching “the pile, firefighters would go to the CISM and get debriefed” with the aim of mitigating future post-traumatic stress.

That constituency groups add value to incident management is widely perceived, thus state officials have worked increasingly to incorporate a wide range of constituency groups into regular implementation activities, including training and meetings. Randy said some state agencies “tie NIMS compliance” into the distribution of funds to constituency groups even if the recipient is a “nursing home or living facility.” Interestingly, none of the interviewees mentioned the statewide VOAD. Massachusetts’ VOAD website reveals no active or formal relationship between volunteer groups and Massachusetts state government.

The interviewees identified some challenges to their efforts to effectively incorporate constituency groups into incident management. According to Nick, effective incorporation requires determining “How can I take advantage of this person’s willingness to volunteer? How can I use this group effectively? What can they contribute?” While occasionally simple, extracting constituency group value requires trial and error. Ed’s story about an elderly couple who wanted to volunteer illustrates one challenge of identifying and galvanizing the utility of those who volunteer for incident management.

The Sudbury area Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) conducted an exercise where volunteers had to enter a ‘gigantic regional
high school to find dummies that had been hurt.’ This was no problem for the younger volunteers but for one ‘elderly couple, a couple trips up and down the stairs’ left them unable to continue. It was through this learning process that CERT leaders realized the couple could do ‘a far better job’ if they sat at ‘the communications table’ and accounted for the rescuers and the rescued. This awareness and position-switch meant the couple went from largely ‘incapable’ volunteers to perfectly capable.

A final theme, the interviewees distinguished between different types of constituency groups. According to Nick, some officials are more tolerant of semi- and non-professional groups but some view them as “amateur level.” Tim said these groups might “have one or two people who spend a large amount of time on emergency planning and interacting with local governments.” Nick said less professional groups tend to be “more local.” Continuing: it is usual for these groups to receive “old equipment and an unused station to meet in.” In contrast, some groups, like the Red Cross, are viewed as more professional. Some interviewees, like Nick, consider a group professional “even when half their people may be volunteers.” Most professional groups, like the Red Cross, have multiple full-time employees who work on incident management.

The Sovereigns

In the context of NIMS compliance, the Executive branch is the most active in implementation, while the Legislative branch occasionally supports implementation through legislative amendment and oversight. For all intents and purposes, the Judicial branch does not (yet) participate in NIMS compliance.

Since former Governor Mitt Romney issued Executive Order 469 in 2005 mandating the statewide adoption of the NIMS, the Executive Branch has been very supportive. The interviewees agreed with Randy’s sentiment that the executive branch is “on board”. When asked, Earl could not name one executive branch agency “not using the
NIMS as the way of business.” Governor Deval Patrick recently signed legislation addressing the legal issues implicated by cross jurisdictional asset sharing, common in incident management. And “over the last couple of years, his Administration visited the bunker to learn what it takes to coordinate everything during a major incident” (Ed). Nick views the EOPSS Secretary and her Assistant Secretary for Homeland Security as the “executive link” to the Governor.

In contrast to the Executive Branch, the Legislature is much less active in statewide NIMS implementation. Although less active, Yunger said the “legislature is dialed-in” to the NIMS and its importance, noting the Legislature’s standing Joint Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security.

While the legislature may not actively participate in the NIMS’ implementation, they are responsive to the needs of those who do. For example, after a major ice storm a couple of years ago, implementing officials learned there was a lack of legislative authority for “public utilities to do certain things” like train and exercise and communicate and respond during disasters (Steve). In response, Steve said:

The Legislature stood up and enacted legislation to deal with utility companies throughout the Commonwealth to make sure that in a disaster, we understand what they’re doing, they understand what we’re doing, so that we don’t go three weeks with entire neighborhoods without power. If we send out chainsaw crews to get rid of debris so the utilities can get in to work, we expect their teams to be in place to return power.

A recently passed “bomb bill” also illustrates legislative responsiveness to NIMS related concerns (Ed). Ed: before the bill, criminal charges could only be filed where bomb segments were conjoined into an “infernal machine.” The bill changed the law so prosecutors could charge people so long as they had both the components - segregated or conjoined - and the intent to create an infernal machine. Also, as mentioned above, the
Legislature passing a law to assist in cross jurisdictional asset sharing, a common incident management procedure.

Overall, the Legislature is attentive to implementation; however, attention varies by circumstance. Generally, the interviewees never speak with legislators about the NIMS. When the joint legislative committee has questions, they ask the EOPSS Secretary. According to Ian, if a legislator ever called with a NIMS-related question, not only would it “be surprising, it would probably be a very innocuous question.” During major incidents however, normal legislative disconnect turns into hyperawareness where legislators are more receptive to incident management specifics. For example, Yunger recalled working with the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure safe delivery of a Yemeni natural gas shipment into Boston Harbor. Alongside the Coast Guard, he provided “periodic briefings” to legislators on the delivery. He took the opportunity to further provide legislators with a “big picture view” of the response structure design, where money is used, what jurisdictions receive what and “that type of thing.”

Beyond overall legislative attention to the NIMS, it is normal practice for interested legislators to engage implementing officials. If HS or the NIMS is of particular interest to a legislator, the interviews suggest they are more likely to influence implementation Nate said he knows two “really proactive local legislators who are real, true supporters of his University and are very engaged. They are interested in any grant, and any opportunity to help us.” Their involvement is generally in the form of them asking: How can I help?

Lastly, the judicial branch does not currently influence implementation. No interviewee could recall working on NIMS compliance with a judicial branch official.
The Sabatier-Mazmanian model assumes that implementers must not be merely neutral but sufficiently persistent in their implementation efforts. The interviewees believe they are, but, in their efforts to commit, they face challenges.

For some, commitment is unattractive when it is perceived to erode traditional powers. Eric said NIMS compliance means that people have to get used to the idea that “an incident’s circumstances determines who is in charge” and not the officials’ title. Eric believes that some who ascend “high up in an organization” have personalities that may prevent them from committing if doing so would require the concession of powers they have traditionally held.

Another challenge is that some officials can be too committed. Nick recalled “an odd situation” working with someone who was a real “master of ICS.” During incident response he tried to “dot every ‘I’ and cross every ‘T’ on his plan” but at that pace, he would not have presented his plan to the National Guard until “seven in the morning” giving them too little time to get into position. So Nick felt compelled to say “Okay, I know you are right, it does say that in ICS but we’ve only got three hours left” and we need to leave time for others to get their work done.

Variation in community capabilities is also a challenge to commitment. The perception among interviewees was that the least committed implementers in Massachusetts are often sub-state officials. Ian said he thinks the small communities are, without malicious intent, generally the least committed to implementation because, at the local level, commitment is more burdensome. Nick shared an example about a “little town in west Middlesex County:”

The emergency management director’ is unpaid and works full time as manager at ‘the local Stop and Shop.’ He cannot ‘take days away from his
job to attend training’ especially since meetings are never held that far out in the county. So, even if he could take the morning off to attend, he does not really want to drive all the way to Saugus or Tewksbury.

A final observation about commitment suggests organization leaders must be the most committed. Yunger believes those who are “well positioned to exercise authority” should be the biggest proponents of NIMS compliance because commitment at the top trickles down throughout the organization thus generating greater numbers of committed implementers. The commitment of leaders can apparently be induced through exercises and training. Eric said his boss, while a believer in the NIMS’, was originally not actively committed to implementation. However, after a major exercise, his boss saw how important his leadership role was and became more committed to learning about implementation, and sending employees to training.

As discussed above, some state officials are not adequately committed to implementation. Nick calls them “the hardcore fifth” – those approximately 20% of state (and sub-state) officials who are not adequately committed. Their non-responsiveness means they do not attend trainings or meetings, they do not return phone calls or emails, they do not buy-in, and they are ill equipped to answer the questions on the NIMS CAST (Nick). Nick said they are essentially “non-responsive.” The result, so far as IGR is concerned, is that the “hardcore fifth” is easy to deal with by way of not dealing at all. The unfortunate consequence, concluded Nick, is that a number of towns are effectively “blocked out” of the incident management apparatus.
CHAPTER SEVEN – Comparative Analysis

The previous two chapters aggregated the interviews into parallel narratives about the NIMS’ implementation in Idaho and Massachusetts. This chapter compares Chapters Five and Six to generate cross-state findings and possible explanations. This chapter begins by discussing the numerous similarities between the two states. While the states were selected because of their dissimilarities, the interviews revealed numerous implementation similarities, which we examine first. The Chapter then discusses the dissimilarities and possible explanations. Lastly, a summary of the findings is provided.

Cross-State Similarities

Suggesting general patterns among several U.S. states, Idaho and Massachusetts showed numerous similarities. The similarities indicate that even dissimilar states are voluntarily taking cues (and funding) from the FEMA and the NIC because they believe the NIMS is valuable HS policy. Whether the NIMS is effective will undoubtedly be the focus of future research.

Causal Theory

Among those interviewed in both Idaho and Massachusetts, there was universal support for the belief that the NIMS positively contributes to HS. No interviewee dissented from the claim that some sort of systematic and unified approach to incident management is important. The NIMS is viewed as a good IGR framework for avoiding post-Katrina failures in incident management.

Behavioral Change

The interviewees believed they have adequately changed their behavior for successful implementation. At the same time, they conceded that not all state officials have adequately changed their behavior. Explanations generally held that those who have not
changed behavior have not done so because they lack either the willingness or the opportunity to participate in training and exercises. Those accused of not changing their behavior, however, were not interviewed.

Incorporation of Causal Theory

This factor addressed the technical aspects of making the NIMS’ causal theory a reality. A nearly identical story was told across the two states: while challenges remain, the incorporation process is on a noticeably positive trajectory. Early NIMS compliance standards were widely characterized as expecting too much too quickly. Indeed, previous research has examined this claim and found that mandates from higher governments create “tremendous pressure” when they impose “short timelines for implementation.” Since these early efforts, however, compliance protocols are perceived more favorably now as federal officials are more prone to adopt recommendations from subnational officials.

Goals and Objectives

The interviewees felt reasonably clear about the NIMS’ goals and objectives. This similarity may exist because, first, there are simply few objectives for officials to be uncertain about. Indeed, none of the interviewees suggested the NIMS tries to do too much. This is consistent with Pelfrey (2007) who found that although the U.S. states been given significant responsibility in HS they have been given relatively few specific objectives. Second, when a lack of clarity exists, there is a tremendous amount of NIMS-related information available through the internet or professional contacts.

Informational and Technological Resources

First, the interviewees generally feel they have access to enough information to successfully implement the NIMS. If anything, there is sometimes too much information,
which can render it difficult to navigate and comprehend. McCauley (2011) suggests that whether information is available is only part of the informational equation.

An implementer’s capacity for utilizing information is also an important element of information’s influence on implementation. McCauley (2011) found that when it came to information about their leadership authority, “the typical Ohio city public safety director uniformly exhibits a lack of knowledge [regarding] leadership for NIMS implementation.”

Similarly, across states the interviewees feel they have access to adequate technology to implement the NIMS. They cited heavy use of computers and the internet. Some noted a few areas where additional technology could be helpful; for example, standardized software could occasionally make certain administrative tasks less time consuming, rendering implementation more efficient.

That the interviewees believe they have access to enough technology should not suggest that the two states’ technological capacities are equal. They are not. For example, like other large and sparsely populated states, Idaho has an inferior and slower internet infrastructure than Massachusetts. This has implications for policy and research, discussed in the next chapter.

Decision Rules

Across states, there was consensus that implementation is subjected to a reasonable amount of decision rules. The interviewees generally believed there are relatively few hard rules that bind their administrative decision-making. Similarly, in his study of terrorism preparedness among South Carolina law enforcement agencies, Pelfrey (2007) found that in fulfilling their HS responsibilities, the U.S. states have received few specific directions.
Here, the interviewees believe that NIMS compliance involves a good amount of flexibility and opportunities to exercise discretion.

**Media Influence**

In both states, the media was perceived as having little if any direct influence on implementation. It is widely believed that the media knows and cares little about the NIMS since there is little incentive for them to know. The general perception is that the media believes the NIMS’ implementation contains no controversial or “sexy” issues that will generate sales. That the media neglects the NIMS is unfortunate. Media messages can contain important information, but the failure to garner attention can undermine the ability to achieve policy goals (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). Indeed, the lack of media engagement in the NIMS is unfortunate because “mass media can…help to raise awareness about policy issues” (Crow, 2010) and as discussed next, public awareness of the NIMS is lacking.

**Public Influence**

Across states, it was believed the public has little to no direct influence on implementation. It was largely believed the public is uninformed on the NIMS. This may be unsurprising to those who believe members of the American public are largely uninformed on particularly policies ("What Informed Public Opinion?," 1995). There may be an exception to this rule, however. In both states, some of the interviewees distinguished from the larger public a ‘sub-public’ who they believed are predisposed to heightened capacity for understanding the NIMS and incident management. In Idaho that sub-group was anyone who has experienced a wildfire and, in Massachusetts, it was the parents of college students.
Interviewees in Idaho and Massachusetts believed the public has indirect influence on implementation through expectation setting. It seems the public indirectly influences implementation through their expectation that implementing officials work to keep the public safe. This finding is very consistent with the literature. As noted in Chapter Two, Scavo, Kearney & Kilroy (2007) suggest that HS officials gauge success partially by measuring their constituents’ level of satisfaction. Indeed, even prior to 9/11, the common assumption seemed to be that those in “bureaucracies seek to maintain their public reputations” (Norrander, 2000). Additionally, Kettl (2003) noted that “meeting citizens’ expectations” is an important element of modern HS policy. McCauley (2011) similarly discusses “the public’s expectation that governmental agencies, policy administrators, and public servants be efficient, effective, accountable, and responsive.” In sum, in both states the public is viewed as knowing little about incident management although they have general expectations for how incidents should be managed.

Constituency Groups

The interviewees in both states widely believed that constituency groups are actively engaged in implementation and are a real asset to incident management. The value these groups seem to bring is an ability to galvanize particular resources in ways governmental entities are unable to do. Some valued private sector resources mentioned included emergency sleeping cots, on-site trauma screening, and experience with mass casualty management.

Other HS research also suggests these groups are valuable. Dillman (2008) notes that “in the U.S. tradition of limited government, the American private sector provides most of our goods and services; and a majority of the nation’s critical infrastructure is
owned and operated by…private sector entities.” Hershkowitz (2009) calls these entities force multipliers and argues for integrating them into official efforts. Others have also discussed the value of constituency groups to HS (Greve, 2002; Kemp, 2005; Simpson & Strang, 2004). In short, constituency groups have a valued role in NIMS compliance as they often can provide resources and expertise public agencies cannot.

The Sovereigns

Across states, the influence of the three governmental branches on the NIMS’ implementation was perceived nearly identically, and as a textbook on American government would suggest. The interviewees view the Executive branch, unsurprisingly, as the primary driver of the NIMS’ implementation. The Legislative branch is viewed as a minor driver, occasionally passing legislation to enable NIMS compliance, while the Judiciary is viewed as largely uninvolved. Future research will begin to identify areas of judicial involvement in NIMS compliance; for now, however, researchers can attempt to hypothesize how future involvement in NIMS compliance might come about. In sum, these cross-state similarities reflect a standard picture of American government and the role of each branch in public policy implementation.

Commitment of the Implementers

Across states, the interviewees believed they are adequately committed to implementation. They conceded however that not everyone in their state government is adequately committed. The reasons offered were similar to those for why some state officials have not adequately changed their behavior; simply put, some are unwilling or unable to actively participate in NIMS compliance, primarily trainings and meetings. Interestingly, the interviewees suggested that younger, more junior incident managers are more comfortable with NIMS concepts and practices and may therefore be more
committed. Similarly, McCauley (2011) suspects age-based differences between those working on NIMS compliance. He found that Ohio city public safety directors are from different “generational eras” and that ‘baby boomers’ possess particular attitudes and values about the NIMS. Others have noted that generational differences among public officials are relevant. Public employees are shaped by different life experiences and defining moments (Bright, 2010); their ‘era’ and resultant values shape them (Bennis & Thomas, 2002). Future research in this area may help policymakers address any reluctance to the NIMS that senior officials may hold.

Cross-State Differences

Above, the similarities between implementation in Idaho and Massachusetts were discussed. In this section, evidence of dissimilarity is discussed and possible explanations are offered.

Scope and Diversity of Implementers

The scope and diversity of the NIMS-implementation apparatus in Massachusetts is noticeably different from its Idaho counterpart. In Massachusetts, there are (a) more implementing officials and (b) more diversity among them and their agencies. We first examine its size.

In 2010, according to the Annual Survey of Public Employment and Payroll, Idaho had 18,313 full-time employees and Massachusetts had 84,163. That Massachusetts has more implementing officials is unsurprising since it has a larger state government to draw from; this, in turn, is unsurprising since Massachusetts’ population is roughly four times that of Idaho’s. It is unclear what this means for implementation. The Sabatier-Mazmanian model predicts that a state with a smaller and more isolable group of implementers is more
likely to achieve successful implementation; this analysis favors Idaho. This prediction, however, contrasts with other research. Indeed, Massachusetts’ larger implementation scope may have positive implications for the implementation of incident management, at least terrorism preparedness. In South Carolina, Pelfrey (2007) found that terrorism preparedness levels are “significantly related” to the size of a state or local agency, namely the number of sworn officers. Massachusetts’ state police force has about 5,550 sworn officers which is twenty times more than Idaho’s 256. Pelfrey would probably hypothesize that Massachusetts is better prepared to address terrorism.

In sum, there are far more implementers in Massachusetts than Idaho. If the Sabatier-Mazmanian model’s predictions are accurate, successful implementation of the NIMS is less likely in Massachusetts than Idaho because its implementation apparatus is neither small nor isolable. But if Pelfrey (2007) is correct, Massachusetts’ larger agency sizes may mean the State is better prepared to address terrorism.

Having considered their comparative sizes, consider the diversity between the implementation apparatuses in Idaho and Massachusetts. According to the interviews, Massachusetts seems to have a slightly more diverse implementation apparatus. For example, Massachusetts has a dedicated Office of Grants and Research (OGR). The OGR, the State Administrative Agency (SAA), houses a Research and Policy Division, which uses research and evaluation to promote public safety by informing criminal justice and public safety policy. In Idaho, no comparable office was identified. Broadly speaking, there appear to be more, specialized government offices in Massachusetts.

Across states, the interviewees employed different categories of diversity. The categories are based on familiarity with and roles in incident management. In Idaho, the
interviews revealed two levels of agency diversity, and three in Massachusetts. In Idaho, the interviewees repeatedly referenced state agencies as primary, first-responder agencies or non-primary, non-first responder agencies. The interviewees made clear that first responder agencies have been ‘doing incident management’ for a long time compared to the others. Officials in Massachusetts, however, seemed to acknowledge more diversified tiers. In Massachusetts, interviewees did not simply view agencies as either first responder or non-first responder. Rather, they viewed some agencies as (not their terms) (a) *locus* decision makers and primary agents in IGR (Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the NIMS Advisory Group, for example), (b) *primary* agencies consisting largely of trainers and educators (the MEMA and the DFS, for example), and (c) *secondary* agencies, like the MBTA and the University of Massachusetts, who are relatively new to incident management concepts.

The Sabatier-Mazmanian framework assumes that more size and diversity complicates the implementation process and that small and isolable governments lend themselves to successful implementation. In other words, simple is better. Under this rationale, successful implementation of the NIMS is more likely in Idaho than Massachusetts since its implementation apparatus is smaller and less diverse. Future research may test this hypothesis.

An additional dimension of this finding, however, is the realization that incident management and NIMS compliance may benefit from more, not fewer, implementers. Indeed, the interviews suggest that more state employees are coming forward to receive NIMS training. This trend was viewed positively as a means to increasing state preparedness. Thus, it may simply be true that the Sabatier-Mazmanian notion of ‘small
and isolable’ governments does not apply to the NIMS; perhaps a bigger and more diverse NIMS implementation apparatus is better.

In sum, the scope and diversity of implementers was notably different between the two states. Future research is needed to examine additional dimensions that seem to be at play here, including absolute versus relative size of a state’s implementation apparatus, its history, its culture of administrative practice, and whether more or fewer implementers better serves the process of NIMS compliance.

Financial Resources

In Idaho, interviewees were much more likely to believe they do not receive adequate funding for their implementation efforts. No interviewee in Massachusetts perceived a lack of ‘threshold’ funding. In Idaho, non-first responders almost unanimously perceived a lack of threshold funding. There are a couple of reasons for these varying views on whether they receive adequate funding.

First, interviewees in Idaho are more likely to perceive a lack of threshold funding on the simple grounds that they receive less funding than their Massachusetts counterparts. While there are various explanations for this disparity, at the end of the day, Idaho simply has fewer financial resources. In FY2010, Idaho received about $6,500,000 while the next year (one which saw reduced federal funds allocated to HS), Massachusetts officials expected to receive about $27,800,000. There are good reasons for this difference in funding levels. First, because it has a large urban area, Massachusetts qualifies for UASI funding. In FY2011, Congress funded UASI with $662,622,100. Idaho does not qualify for any of this money because Boise, the largest city, is not a designated Tier I or II city, while Boston is (Tier I). Nor does Idaho qualify for any of the $235,029,000 in the Port Security
Grant Program (PSGP) because it has no coastal port while Massachusetts does. In short, rightly or wrongfully, Massachusetts qualifies for funding streams Idaho does not; so it is not surprising that some in Idaho feel they receive inadequate funding for NIMS compliance.

A second reason may explain why some in Idaho perceive a lack of sufficient funding for NIMS compliance. Administrative culture may also explain this difference. Simply put, Idaho subjects its internal allocation of federal funds to a process of preferential treatment. For HS purposes, the state seems to favor first responder agencies. Consider for example how federal funding is allocated to state agencies under the ‘80/20’ rule, which requires that 80% of all federal HS funding to a state be passed on to sub-state entities (See Eisinger, 2006). State governments may retain up to twenty percent (20%) for their own implementation efforts. According to one interviewee, Idaho is a state where the 20% of federal funding it may retain for state level activity is passed through wholly to first-responder agencies; Idaho allegedly “prides itself” on this approach. This may explain why those in non-first responder agencies were more likely to say they did not have adequate funds. Said alternatively, Idaho’s allocation process for HS leaves non-first-responders more apt to feel underfunded.

If the perception is true, and some agencies in fact do not receive enough funding, there could be implications for HS. Pelfrey (2007) suggests that agencies that receive more (not adequate) federal funding should be further along the road to terrorism preparedness. This suggests that because Massachusetts receives more federal funding it may be better prepared than Idaho to address terrorism.
In sum, comparison of available funds in absolute terms does little to explain qualitative differences in why Massachusetts has more funding; indeed, it has a different threat profile that likely justifies greater funding. Future research may examine this further. The point here is only that the interviews reveal that officials in Idaho were much more likely to feel that they lack adequate funding for NIMS compliance.

Integration

Differences in integration between the two states were evidenced by at least two emergent themes. The first conclusion drawn from the interviews is that Idaho and Massachusetts have different intrastate systems for IGR. This is an important distinction because, as discussed in the literature review, the internal organization of states is relevant.

Intrastate relations in Idaho are based on the State’s strong county government system. That is, IGR is built upon the State’s expectation that counties deliver numerous services. Thus, state and local relations in Idaho are generally evidenced, outside the Boise metropolitan area especially, by regular contact between state officials, mainly at the BHS, and county and tribal officials. Such interaction is rare in Massachusetts, a state that relies little on the counties to deliver government services.

In Massachusetts, state and local relations are much different than Idaho. They are characterized by a regionalized model. The 351 local governments are divided into five Homeland Security Advisory Councils, each serving as an intergovernmental conduit between state and sub-state officials. The interviews suggest Massachusetts employs the regional model for, at least, the following two reasons.

First, Massachusetts is a strong home rule state and, consequently, relies on...
the challenges that result from having “myriad local governments,” each having protection from state intervention through traditions favoring local prerogatives. This finding is consistent across the literature. Indeed, regional modeling is regularly used to overcome “local jurisdictional barriers” to incident management (Caruson, et al., 2005). In a relatively urbanized state like Massachusetts, the need for inter-local cooperation is particularly acute because incidents are likely to have effects that spill across multiple local jurisdictions. Regional approaches were identified in Pennsylvania (Comfort, 2003), Washington (Stehr, 2003), and Florida (Caruson, et al., 2005). Not surprisingly, these states, like Massachusetts, contain major urbanized areas in Philadelphia, Seattle, and Miami, respectively. Thus, in states where the intergovernmental landscape is most complex, regional organizational structures are used to promote IGR (Caruson, et al., 2005). The interviews suggest Massachusetts is such a state. IGR may be aggravated by the evidence of municipal rivalries. As one state official said, sometimes he sees intrastate relations as a contestation between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Boston. Future research should further examine how state-local relations influences HS policy implementation. These findings suggest that regionalized models are likely to be found in states with the greatest need for inter-local cooperation, i.e., those with large urbanized, metropolitan areas used to home rule privileges and municipal rivalries.

A second theme about integration suggests that, in Idaho, more regular and frequent interactions among implementing officials are desired because they would promote interaction and therefore integration. Those in Massachusetts repeatedly cited the NAG as the central, multi-disciplinary node for regular interactions about the NIMS. In contrast, those in Idaho said such regular interaction does not occur and wished to see the
stage agency work group meet monthly, as it apparently used to. There are three possible reasons why regular meetings do not occur in Idaho.

First, Idaho is more difficult to travel because it is larger and there are few roads in some of its large wilderness areas. Consequently, the interviews revealed financial challenges to travel the state. In other words, face-to-face interaction among implementers is more costly than in the more easily navigable state of Massachusetts.

Second, while modern internet capabilities could bring some parity to Idaho’s ability to integrate, unfortunately, Idaho has among the slowest internet download speeds in U.S., especially compared to Massachusetts. This is not to suggest that variable internet speeds *per se* are a major implementation factor. It is meant to suggest that the internet infrastructure in Idaho is inferior to its Massachusetts counterpart, and given implementers’ reliance on the internet, it seems reasonable to suggest that increased internet capacity would enable the (bandwidth heavy) use of videoconferencing, which in turn could promote interaction and integration.

Third, some states are simply less integrated then others. McCauley (2011) found that in Ohio’s integration system, public safety directors were excluded from statewide NIMS implementation planning. In response, he advocates for “a process” that better integrates the Ohio Department of Safety with those in the position of Ohio city public safety directors. In Massachusetts, they seem to have found that process. Indeed, the NAG seems to adequately facilitate this integration process. Thus, perhaps there is something Idaho and Ohio have in common explaining their evidence of a lack of integration. Future research may examine this question.
In sum, this Sabatier-Mazmanian factor assumes state level implementers need to be adequately integrated and coordinated for successful implementation to occur. The model therefore predicts that since implementers in Massachusetts seem to be more integrated than their Idaho counterparts, successful implementation is more likely in Massachusetts.

**Socioeconomics**

Implementation in Idaho and Massachusetts seems heavily distinguished by the two state’s respective economic realities. Indeed, Massachusetts seems to have resources Idaho does not, for example adequate funding, higher employee pay, and state research entities. Interviewees in Idaho were much more likely to note a litany of economically related challenges to implementation. For NIMS compliance, Idaho seems to have a comparative inability to galvanize resources on its behalf. In contrast, interviewees in Massachusetts never felt that economics in their state fatally challenged implementation. In short, application of the Sabatier-Mazmanian model suggests the economic realities of Massachusetts are more conducive to successful implementation. Future research is needed to test this hypothesis.

**Media Influence**

Idaho and Massachusetts differed in how they manage the media’s involvement in incident management and NIMS compliance. The interviews suggest that officials in Massachusetts more actively manage the media’s involvement. Indeed, Massachusetts interviewees repeatedly recalled occasions where the media was invited to and did participate in exercises. They also noted that the media has been invited to the State’s incident management center, *i.e.*, the bunker, to see how incidents are prepared for and managed. Unfortunately, the interviews did not reveal why implementers in Massachusetts
take a more active approach to media management than Idaho. It may be because the SAA in Massachusetts has a dedicated office of research, where researchers may have learned that public relations are particularly important because of “the increased power of the news media” (Lee, 2009). Massachusetts’ active media management may derive from the generally “increased attention to public relations in public administration” (Lee, 2009). In short, differences in political and administrative cultures could explain this administrative difference between the two states. Thus, future research may examine why and how some states, like Massachusetts, actively manage media involvement, and what difference it makes, if any.

Constituency Groups

The interviews suggest that implementing officials in Idaho take a more active and formal approach to constituency group management than their Massachusetts counterparts. Each state has a Volunteers Active in Disasters (VOAD) program, but, unlike, in Idaho, the interviews in Massachusetts did not suggest its VOAD is actively coordinated by the SAA; in Idaho, for example, the SAA administers an annual VOAD conference. In other words, constituency group involvement in Massachusetts seems more disconnected from the NIMS compliance apparatus. It is not unusual that constituency groups lack formal and active engagement in some states. In these cases, Hershkowitz (2009) suggests governments provide constituency groups with more “action guidance, and exposure to and instruction on mission relevance.”

One reason Idaho may be a more active manager of its constituency groups is its history combatting wildfires. Fighting wildfires is an incident management process where volunteers almost always participate if only to protect their property. Thus, historically
there has been interaction between these volunteer fire fighters and state and local incident managers. It is possible that these historical interactions eventually led to a more formal and active relationship with constituency groups.

Another reason Idaho officials may more actively manage constituency groups is because they long ago learned to address their comparative shortage of public resources. Indeed, as the case study reports made clear, some non-government groups have capacity and expertise in areas pertinent to incident management. Officials in Idaho may have decided that these constituency groups should be brought into the fold of incident management.

**Summary of the Comparative Findings**

In Chapters Five and Six, content-summary tables were used to provide a succinct articulation of the emergent themes and findings about Idaho and Massachusetts, respectively. For the comparative findings, this section is dedicated to similar ends. Idaho and Massachusetts are quite dissimilar states, but a comparison of their case study reports suggests that implementation in the two states shares numerous parallels. Indeed, this comparative analysis revealed about two similarities for each difference. The following similar themes emerged in the interviews.

First, there was universal support for the theory that the NIMS is essential to HS. Second, the interviewees believe they have adequately changed their behavior but admit some state officials have not. Third, the two states have similar histories of incorporating the causal theory into practice: things have gotten much better in recent years though challenges remain. Fourth, those interviewed seem reasonably clear on the NIMS’ goals and objectives. Fifth, those interviewed largely believe they have enough technology and
information to successfully implement the NIMS; if anything, sometimes an internet search can yield too much information. Sixth, there are not too many decision rules and the resultant flexibility is appreciated. Seventh and eighth, it is believed neither the media nor the public are familiar with the NIMS and have little direct influence on implementation beyond their expectations. Ninth, constituency groups are viewed as active and valuable participants in NIMS compliance. Tenth, the roles of each state’s three governmental branches are similar: the Executive branch is the unsurprising major driver of implementation, while the Legislative branch is a minor driver; the Judiciary has not yet had direct influence on the NIMS. Finally, those interviewed believe they are adequately committed to the NIMS but readily note that some are not.

The implementation experiences in Idaho and Massachusetts also reveal some differences. The first and most glaring is the size and diversity of each state’s implementation apparatus. For understandable reasons, there are many more people working on NIMS compliance in Massachusetts than Idaho and they tend to be viewed using separate criteria of diversity. In Idaho, implementing agencies generally fall into first responder agencies and non-first responder agencies. In Massachusetts, however, diversity is more complex: a handful of agencies are at the locus of NIMS compliance and are the primary points of state contact in IGR. Primary agencies are not as active in IGR but they do tend to have the most knowledge about the NIMS and ICS and therefore provide much of the training. Secondary agencies are relatively new to incident management and the NIMS’ concepts.

Second, officials in Idaho were much more likely to lament its socioeconomic status and acute lack of financial resources. Third, on two levels, the states demonstrate
different integration patterns. First, in Massachusetts, implementing officials get together for reliable monthly meetings but in Idaho comparable meetings do not occur with perceived regularity. Also, Idaho has a strong county government system where county and tribal representatives work with state officials. Massachusetts in contrast is a strong home rule state; thus to manage some of the intergovernmental complexities, the state is divided into regional HS councils.

Fourth, officials in Massachusetts seem to take a more active and formal approach to managing the media’s involvement with the NIMS. Fifth, officials in Idaho seem to take a more active and formal approach to managing the involvement of constituency groups.

In sum, the NIMS compliance experiences of implementing officials in Idaho and Massachusetts share many similarities and a few differences. Chapter Eight discusses some conclusions drawn from these findings and their implications for HS policy and research.
CHAPTER EIGHT – Implications and Conclusion

The previous chapter generated comparative findings about the NIMS’ implementation in Idaho and Massachusetts. This chapter interprets those findings by drawing conclusions and discussing their implications for policy and research. Because of the diversity of the findings, the following conclusions and implications are arranged into two categories. The first category includes those findings related more to the procedural aspects of state level HS research, while the second focuses on more substantive aspects of HS policy.

Implications for Policy and Research

The first set of conclusions implicates how states are selected in HS research. In this study, Idaho and Massachusetts were selected using four selection criteria each with an implied equal value. However, the findings suggest that two of the selection criteria - geography and population - have more influence on NIMS compliance than a state’s political culture or governance structure. While future research is needed to confirm the strength of this conclusion, each criterion, we see below, seems to have varying influence on NIMS compliance.

Because of its impact on funding, geography seems to have a greater impact on state level NIMS compliance than the other three selection criteria. In selecting states, this study employed Durbin’s (2009) dichotomy of border states and coastal states. Certainly, the costs of securing a coastline differ from the costs of securing a border; this study did not examine the costs of this distinction. However, given the design of major funding streams, geography is highly indicative of funding. For reasons that should be examined in future research, the interviews suggest that, rightfully or wrongfully, a state with a
coastline (or an urban area, as discussed below) is privy to more funding than states without. This may simply be a shortcoming of the geographic dichotomy used in this study, but consider the Ports Security Grant Program (PSGP), for example. Massachusetts has a large coastal port in Boston Harbor and therefore qualifies to receive funding under the PSGP which, in FY2011, Congress funded with $235,000,000. As a coast-less state, Idaho does not qualify for this funding. Numerous officials in Massachusetts lauded the value of “ports money” but none in Idaho mentioned comparable windfalls as a result of its international border.

In addition to its role in determining which states receive funding, geography also seems highly determinative of how states spend that funding. The interviews suggest that Idaho dedicates more of its resources to intrastate travel, for events like training, exercises, and meetings about NIMS compliance. Compared to Massachusetts, Idaho’s large land size and roadless wilderness areas mean NIMS implementation in Idaho has distinctive compliance costs. Some could argue that the internet alleviates some of these ‘unique’ compliance costs: use of web-conferencing, for example, allows implementing officials in remote parts of the state to participate in real time, face-to-face compliance planning and training. The problem with this argument is that Idaho’s internet infrastructure is inferior to Massachusetts’ and other small, densely populated states. Indeed, as discussed in detail below, large and sparsely populated states like Idaho provide little free market incentive to develop internet infrastructure. This explains why Massachusetts has among the fastest internet in the country and Idaho the slowest. Thus, while Idaho could address its differential compliance costs with enhanced internet use, geography reduces its capacity
for doing so. Policymakers should consider this fundamental inequity when deciding whether large, sparsely populated states like Idaho deserve more funding.

Given the importance of geography to state level HS issues, future research should expand how we operationalize ‘geography.’ Indeed, this study’s dichotomy of coastal states and border states is insufficient. At minimum, future research should consider regional differences which sometimes explain policy differences between states (Douglas, 1989). Consider federal land use policy, which can be analogized to HS policy on the grounds it too relies on IGR between state and federal governments. Opinion polls repeatedly show that residents in western states possess greater distrust of the federal government. Since western states generally contain more federally held and managed land, land use is among “the most divisive issues in the western states” (Gray, 2008). In other words, future research can expand on geographic distinctions that rely solely on coastlines and borders. By considering regional influences, future research can determine whether and how such influences impact HS policy.

By yielding unique funding advantages, population also seems to have more influence on implementation than political culture and governance structure. While future research should examine this impressionistic conclusion, the findings suggest that a population’s size and ethos influence state level NIMS compliance in important ways.

First, like its coastline, Massachusetts’ much larger population again qualifies Massachusetts for funding not available to Idaho. In addition to the benefits that derive from the larger tax base, Massachusetts’ most populous municipality, Boston, qualifies the state to receive Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) funding. To qualify for UASI funding, a state must have a Tier One or Two city. Boston is a Tier One city. Boise,
however, is neither a Tier One nor Two city; thus, Idaho is ineligible for any of the approximately $662,000,000 budgeted in FY2011. In one sense, this study supports Greenberg, et al. (2009) who found that HS grant programs place tremendous emphasis on population. They concluded that lesser populated states receive a disproportionate amount of HS funding. However, this study suggests that while certain states may receive more per person funding, such positive gains may be offset by the finding that lesser populated states are systematically excluded from large HS funding pools. Future research should examine whether unequal patterns in per capita funding processes compensate for the lack of funding opportunities faced by states with smaller populations.

The second finding regarding a state’s population was unanticipated under the research design and deserves much more attention in future research. This study suggests that a population’s ethos might influence NIMS compliance by enhancing a state’s ability to more effectively and efficiently employ the ICS. An ethos is a disposition or fundamental value unique to a specific people (American-Heritage, 1996). Interviewees in Idaho repeatedly noted a supposed self-sufficiency ethos prevalent among Idaho residents. They regularly mentioned their belief that Idahoans are unusually self-sufficient people, explaining why, for example, it is not newsworthy when much of the state loses power for a month. Compare this to Massachusetts, where just before Halloween in October 2011, a powerful storm left over two feet of snow in parts of western Massachusetts. Immediately, news outlets began reporting that hundreds of thousands of residents had no power. Prior to the storm, some (at least those in Idaho) may have hypothesized that in the wake of the storm, greater self-sufficiency among Massachusetts residents would have reduced the number of those without power (and therefore the incident’s newsworthiness). Thus, while
this self-sufficiency ethos may not directly influence NIMS compliance, those in Idaho believe it affects the application of the ICS: when residents can self-suffice during and in the wake of incidents, incident managers can efficiently focus their efforts and resources elsewhere and to more vulnerable interests. In sum, in addition to its size, a population’s ethos influences NIMS compliance in ways deserving further study.

On the ‘governance structure’ criterion, this study employed Dillman’s (2008) categorization of four different HS governance structures. While future research is certainly needed, the interviewees did not suggest their structures are particularly influential on NIMS compliance; that is, they did not attribute compliance challenges to the issue of whether their state employed the Adjutant General model (Idaho) or the Governor’s Office model (Massachusetts). However, the following observations about governance structures seem important to research and policy.

Dillman defines a governance structure as the place in state government where HS responsibilities are “placed”. This placement, which is an affirmative action by government, usually triggered by statute and/or executive order, is a largely legal conceptualization. This legal conceptualization assumes that particular actions should be taken by particular agencies and actors. However, this study found that some of what governs NIMS compliance is not only an affirmative, legal obligation, but also the personal initiative and reactive attentiveness of those who establish reliable working relationships with new and different partners. For example, in Idaho, there was evidence that some implementers voluntarily reached out to the Red Cross, and, in Massachusetts, there was evidence that personal initiative was taken to establish relationships with the Civil Air Patrol.
That legal requirements do not fully govern implementation behavior is unsurprising. Indeed, Woods (2008) found that in environmental policy, assigned responsibility does not affect policy responsiveness as expected. Consequently, he questioned “the relative importance of formal authority in intergovernmental policy implementation.” In short, while NIMS compliance is influenced by a formal governance structure, our understanding of that structure deserves more research because there are also extra-legal, social and real circumstances that structure governance.

Finally, the political cultures in Idaho and Massachusetts seem to have little influence on NIMS compliance. These two states were partly selected because they have starkly contrasting political cultures, but those differences appear to have little influence on implementation. None of the interviewees blamed compliance outcomes on partisan politics. This finding therefore contradicts McDermott (2010) who argues that political factors are highly relevant to HS. Others have similarly found that partisan influence on HS policy is negligible (Dillman, 2008; Durbin, 2009; Prante & Bohara, 2008). In short, the emerging consensus seems to be that HS policy is largely apolitical.

In sum, this study selected Idaho and Massachusetts based on their dissimilar political cultures, populations, geographies, and governance structures. However, as discussed above, these criteria are not equal influencers on NIMS compliance. Aware that geography and population influence state level NIMS compliance more than governance structures and politics, future use of dissimilar sampling in state HS research should use some form of graduated sampling criterion to account for the levels of varied influence discussed above.
The next procedural implication for research is how we study the media’s influence on NIMS compliance. This study asked state officials about their experiences with the media in the course of NIMS compliance. In hindsight, it is clear that future research about HS policy and the media should focus on a particular sub-set of state officials. Public information officers (PIOs) may be in the best position to comment on the media’s influence because of their repeated interactions with the media. They are formally designated to actively engage the media and the public and may, therefore, be particularly knowledgeable about the influence of the media on their agency, and vice versa. Collectively, their insights may yield particular knowledge about the relationship between the media and state HS activity. Thus, future HS research examining media influence should focus more narrowly on the perspectives and experiences of PIOs.

A final procedural conclusion is that researchers in this area should anticipate small sample sizes. So far, NIMS research suffers from low participation rates by members of the sampling population. McCauley (2011) mailed his survey instrument to over two hundred city safety directors but only about 12% of them were returned, usable. In this study, representatives from only seven of Idaho’s agencies and seven of Massachusetts’ agencies agreed to be interviewed. Low participation rates are so far the norm for a couple of possible reasons. First, officials who are engaged with NIMS compliance are very busy, possibly too busy to participate in in-depth qualitative research. Second, some officials are inactive in NIMS compliance. Without mandatory participation, they are not likely to volunteer for in-depth qualitative research like this.

We now shift away from the findings related to process and towards those implicating the substance of HS policy in the U.S. states. We begin with a discussion of
possibly the most ubiquitous tool in subnational NIMS compliance: the internet. Unlike the implementation era examined by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), the interviews revealed regular use of the internet as a means of communication and information sharing. Indeed, for years, state governments have been using the internet to promote efficacy and efficiency in public administration (Reddick, 2011; Stephens, 2004). As Reddick (2011) helpfully summarizes:

The internet [provides] useful information about emergencies and disasters to the public and first responders (Gonzalez-Herrero & Smith, 2008; Liu, 2008). It enables responders to work well with others due to its ability to communicate quickly and share resources (Jaeger et al., 2007; Pine, 2007). The internet provides a low cost approach to exchanging information on specialized (sic) topics. It also allows small and rural communities access to information that may not be available to them otherwise (Bertot, Jaeger, Langa, & McClure, 2006; Palen, Hiltz, & Liu, 2007).

Given the significant level of influence the internet seems to have on state level NIMS compliance, this study did not give the internet due consideration. However, some observations are noteworthy.

First, since the internet plays a major role in subnational NIMS compliance, large and sparsely populated states may be at a great disadvantage. As suggested by Bertot et al. (2006) and Palen et al. (2007), the internet can facilitate a more efficient cooperation platform for NIMS compliance by reducing the need to travel, thus allowing resources to be dedicated elsewhere.4 Unfortunately, as noted above, large and sparsely populated states are the least likely to have reliable internet infrastructures, since private markets provide little incentive to develop them. Thus, Idaho has among the least capable internet infrastructures in the country while Massachusetts has among the most capable. This reveals the fundamental inequity: states like Idaho may have the greatest need for the

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4 Idaho employs its own virtual emergency operations center, or WebEOC.
internet but may be the least likely to have it. Given the importance of the internet to NIMS compliance, policymakers should take efforts to address the fundamental inequity that results in inadequate internet capacity in states most in need.

The second observation about the role of the internet in NIMS compliance suggests policymakers should address another internet related challenge: internet searches often yield so much information that state officials find it difficult to navigate and comprehend. Given the level of reliance on the internet, state officials working on NIMS compliance could use assistance or training becoming more successful and efficient consumers of online information.

We now turn to the issue of funding. Given the amount of taxpayer money that has been and will be spent on HS, it is unsurprising that funding issues are of particular interest to both policymakers and researchers. Because NIMS compliance – nationalized policy and not state law - is incentivized through federal grants, more research about how states spend that funding is needed to supplement the research that examines the preceding allocation processes. Indeed, orienting perspectives in funding research have tended to focus primarily on how funds are allocated per person, exploring questions like ‘Why do some states receive more federal funding’ and ‘How are allocation formulas designed?’ For example, see Greenberg, et al. (2009) and Roberts (2005). However, this study identified distinct trends in how Idaho and Massachusetts spend their funding. For example, as discussed above, interviewees in Idaho repeatedly noted that intrastate travel costs were a concern. Some noted that sometimes it is too expensive to undertake training, or to bring sufficient personnel to training sites; an issue deriving the state’s large size and roadless wilderness areas. In short, while research should continue to examine the utility
and fairness of how HS funds are allocated, future research should also examine state spending patterns. Collectively, research about both funding allocation and spending can help policymakers determine how to better use limited HS funds (Stehr, 2003).

An additional finding about comparative spending patterns also yields relevant insight. Previous research suggests the intra-governmental affairs of U.S. states are influenced by whether the federal government makes funds available (Durbin, 2009). Durbin found that U.S. states are more likely to re-organize for HS (which in turn influences IGR) when the federal government makes funds for doing so available. This study additionally suggests that the IGR of NIMS compliance is also influenced by whether the state government makes federal funds available. This study found that under Idaho’s application of the 80/20 rule, the small share of funds the state government retains for its own NIMS compliance efforts are allocated to first responder agencies. According to one interviewee in Idaho, the State “prides itself” on this approach. Thus, in Idaho, implementing officials in non-first responder agencies were much more likely to suggest they do not have what is needed for maintaining NIMS compliance. Future research should examine whether and how such preferential treatment influence NIMS compliance in the U.S. states.

Next, the findings suggest that states and their agencies could benefit from increased opportunities to exercise discretion. More specifically, increased discretion may allow states to enable more effective and efficient use of their federal funding. While the individuals interviewed in this study believe they have enough flexibility to do their jobs effectively, their collective statements suggest state agencies may be more confined in their decision making. This study suggests there is a need to reconsider hard, state-level
requirements that limit state decision making power. To illustrate, consider the 80/20 rule. Cities and towns are on the ‘front line’ of HS so it is reasonable to require states to pass through most federal HS funding to them. However, why must the states forward at least 80%? It has been rumored that some sub-state entities occasionally return portions of their federal largess to the state government for perceived better use. Thus, to give states more organizational flexibility, a better approach may be to allow states and their sub-state entities to negotiate a ratio they perceive more favorably. Under this scheme local governments could decide its HS activities would be better served if the state retained, let us say, twenty-eight (28) percent of federal funds. The parties could collectively reason that by allowing the state to retain an additional eight percent of federal grant funds, it could constructively address perceived needs such as statewide training and cooperative exercises. The point is that more customizable rulemaking could give states needed administrative flexibility. Some have warned against employing too much of a top down, command and control approach (Waugh & Sylves, 2002; C. Wise, 2002). Thus, creating organization-level flexibility, for example by adjusting state level rules like ‘80/20,’ may produce efficiencies that generate a better use of federal funding by states and their sub-state entities. Future research in this area is deserved.

This notion of state discretion speaks more broadly to implementation issues at large. As discussed in Chapter Two, the development of implementation studies in HS has been rather slow (Ripberger, 2011). This study suggests that how states implement HS policy deserves just as much attention as federal and local governments. In fact, state implementation activities may deserve more attention than their local counterparts because state governments serve as the primary conduit of funds from the federal government to
local government. Thus state implementation behavior has direct impact on the implementation capacities of local governments. The only exceptions are in those local governments large (or resourced) enough to have someone submit grant applications on their behalf. In other words, the lack of state level implementation studies has direct effect on local governments. Thus, local governments have incentive to promote research of state level HS policy implementation.

The next implication for policy regards individual involvement in NIMS compliance. Alongside an increasing number of HS observers, this study suggests more people need to be actively involved in NIMS compliance.

To begin, NIMS compliance might benefit from more active participation by some public officials. Those in Idaho and Massachusetts were equally inclined to lament a lack of involvement in NIMS compliance by numerous state officials. This study revealed a common perception that some state officials are not ‘up to speed’ on NIMS compliance because they are either unwilling or unable to participate. This implies that some are not fulfilling their responsibilities, leaving the labor to the most dedicated officials, like those interviewed here. Collectively, this might be undermining the NIMS’ utility. McCauley (2011) warns against replicating the situation in Ohio where some officials (city public safety directors) do not participate in statewide NIMS planning. Policymakers should address this administrative challenge and incentivize greater engagement with NIMS compliance by public officials.

In addition to state employees, NIMS compliance could also benefit from increased familiarity and involvement by the public. The public’s seemingly paradoxical position on NIMS suggests greater understanding is needed. On the one hand, the public knows little
about the NIMS, which is unsurprising given their record of understanding and attention to most public policy. While they may be uninformed on the NIMS, subnational NIMS officials believe the public has expectations for incident management. McCauley (2011) suggests the public expects government agencies, policy administrators, and public servants to be “efficient, effective, accountable, and responsive.” Those interviewed in this study possessed a similar fidelity to the public’s “expectations.” Addressing the public’s uninformed influence on NIMS compliance may require public officials to more actively engage the public to discuss issues and concerns. Others have begun making this claim. In a recent interview, Daniel Kaniewski, Deputy Director of the Homeland Security Policy Institute at George Washington University, was quoted saying it is time for HS policymakers to engage the public in “open and honest dialogue.” This study suggests that dialogue should identify the more probable incidents in local communities, what incident managers should do in anticipation of and response to those incidents, and what resources might be needed. During the course of such dialogue, the public may develop more informed (and realistic) expectations about both the government’s role in incident management, and their own.

Lastly, I briefly respond to those who might be struck by how little this study discusses matters of terrorism. This may seem a particularly egregious omission since Boston was one of the launch pads for the 9/11 attacks. Let us begin by assuming that in the wake of domestic incidents, the government’s role is to provide immediate relief and facilitate recovery (Donahue, Cunnion, Balaban, & Sochats, 2012). To this end, and to the extent possible, incident management begins pre-incident. This requires policymakers and bureaucrats to decide which incidents to plan for. Prioritizing incidents has always been
complicated but, to oversimplify, modern approaches began in 1996. That year, FEMA published its ‘Guide for All-Hazard Emergency Operations Planning.’ The Guide represented “a paradigm shift from a concrete, scenario-based emergency management perspective to a more abstract focus on the common response elements across emergency events” (Donahue, et al., 2012). For many American governments, 9/11 put terrorism high on the list of possible events, but the Great Recession that began in 2008 issued in an era of austerity in public (and private) spending. As an economic consequence, America’s almost 90,000 governments began to focus more on probable events and not simply those that are possible. Indeed, the perception that “addressing a broader spectrum of needs” is beyond the current capabilities and responsibilities of government has increased (Donahue, et al., 2012). For these reasons, the interviewees’ general lack of relevant statements about terrorism shows that, while less true in Massachusetts than Idaho due to Massachusetts’ larger number of value-rich targets, terrorism is not the most probable domestic incident.

In fact, the likelihood of a terrorist attack is low. This view is consistent with a “jurisdictional hazards” view of HS. Under this view, HS means something different in every state (or city), and government officials work to prevent and prepare for incidents most likely to harm the public (Bellavita, 2008). In other words, statistically, terrorism is not a probable HS threat in most jurisdictions. This explains this study’s general lack of themes about terrorism.

It is worth mentioning, however, that acute interest in responding to terrorism is an indicator of larger incident management trends. Incident managers have been increasingly diligent about addressing mass casualty events. Such events can be either ‘man made,’ like nuclear blasts and dirty bombs, or ‘acts of god,’ such as floods, hurricanes, volcanoes, and
tsunamis. In either case, incident managers, especially since Hurricane Katrina, have enhanced their efforts to deal with the consequences of incidents that not only cross multiple jurisdictional boundaries but also those that render numerous citizens temporarily or permanently displaced. To illustrate, an interviewee in Idaho discussed how agreements were established with agencies in Utah for the delivery of decontamination showers if a chemical incident were to occur. In short, while specific acts of terrorism may not be a major priority for incident managers (especially in Idaho), planning for mass casualty events is.

**Research Limitations**

First, this study is not very generalizable. For feasibility reasons, only two of the fifty states could be studied. What emerged in these interviews with officials from Idaho and Massachusetts may not necessarily apply to Kansas or California. In exchange for this limited generalizability, however, this in-depth implementation study generates unique data in ways surveys and statistics cannot. Implementing officials spoke in detail and at length about their experiences implementing the NIMS. Their statements are the proxies for the state level reality of NIMS compliance. For these findings to be useful elsewhere, state officials in those forty-eight (non-sampled) states will have to decide which of these findings are relevant in their state.

A second limitation is that the interviews probably paint a slightly imbalanced picture of the NIMS’ implementation. The data collection process was unsurprisingly subjected to a systematic sampling bias since only enthusiastic officials were likely to volunteer to make the time to be interviewed. This study is limited because it primarily reflects policy proponents’ biases through its systematic exclusion of the opinions of
policy opponents. Without mandating participation, eliminating this sampling bias is unlikely. McCauley’s (2011) study also suggests that a low sample size is unsurprising. Apparently, NIMS research based on time consuming data collection techniques with public HS officials can expect relatively small sample sizes. In short, the findings are not wholly representative of the implementation apparatuses in Idaho or Massachusetts.

A third limitation of this study regards not who was interviewed but how. The interviewees may have engaged in socially desirable interviewing (Fontana & Frey, 1994) which occurs when interviewees’ perceptions are knowingly or unknowingly sent through pro-social filters. The interviewees may have been predisposed to withholding statements that their peers might have viewed as professionally or socially undesirable. In other words, they may have answered only in a professionally flattering light, which has the collective result of painting an overly rosy picture of NIMS implementation.

Finally, this study is limited by the lack of follow-up interviews. Such interviews are almost always preferable, but feasibility concerns prevented them here. Each interviewee was interviewed only once. Had follow-up interviews been conducted, some of the findings and conclusions discussed above may have been confirmed, rejected, or refined.

Conclusion

The modern HS era is a relatively new concern for policymakers and researchers. Almost overnight after the 9/11 attacks, the words “homeland security” entered the public lexicon and assumed a position high on the U.S. public policy agenda. Academic research in HS is growing but so far the growth has not been balanced. The literature is dominated by federal and local perspectives and, with some exceptions, largely neglects the U.S.
states. This qualitative study partially fills this void by developing our understanding of how two very different states implement the NIMS, a major nationalized HS policy.

The Sabatier-Mazmanian model served as a conceptual roadmap for guiding data collection and analysis. This study, based on semi-structured, in-depth, open-ended interviews with state officials, extends non-quantitative techniques in the HS literature beyond heavy reliance on survey methods. Each interview was an opportunity to explore how fourteen analytic factors influenced state officials and their efforts to implement the NIMS. The interviews were transcribed and coded into emergent themes. Chapters Five and Six are narrative distillations of these themes, and they serve as the data sets compared in Chapter Seven.

The emergent themes suggest that implementation or ‘NIMS compliance’ in Idaho is quite similar to NIMS compliance in Massachusetts. Across the two states, the interviews revealed eleven similar themes. Thus, it is the few differences that are perhaps more insightful. At risk of oversimplification, this study revealed the following major differences. Idaho has fewer financial resources than Massachusetts and, because it is so much larger, those limited resources are disproportionately dedicated to intrastate travel; Idaho also has a comparatively inferior internet infrastructure; Idaho more actively manages its constituency groups than Massachusetts; and, Massachusetts more actively manages the media than Idaho does.

The findings generated a number of conclusions each with implications for policy and research. Among the procedural findings: when selecting states, geography and population likely have more influence on NIMS compliance than governance structure and
politics; research about the media should pay particular attention to the experience and perspectives of PIOs; and, NIMS research is so far subject to small sample sizes.

On the substantive front, the internet is a major factor in implementation and deserves more attention from policymakers and researchers; currently, there are fundamental inequities of access across the states. Also, funding research is important but has been focused more on allocation patterns than spending patterns. Next, more involvement by public officials and the public at large may be necessary for NIMS policy to be successful.

This study is one of two recent projects about subnational NIMS compliance. No doubt, future research about the NIMS – at local, state and federal levels – will be essential to make nationwide incident management a reality. NIMS research thus far has not been particularly generalizable. Indeed, this study examined only two states and McCauley (2011) examines municipal employees in a single state. Thus, until a large, in-depth comparative study is conducted, NIMS observers in other states will have to continue deciding whether these findings are relevant to their state, and to what extent.

In conclusion, this study has sought to develop our understanding of state activity in the HS policy ecosystem. By interviewing state officials about their experiences working on NIMS compliance, this study sought to provide the growing literature with field level insight. The HS policy ecosystem is very complex. Future research is needed to help policymakers effectively and efficiently navigate it.
APPENDICES

Appendix A – List of Acronyms

BHS – Bureau of Homeland Security (ID)
BRIC – Boston Regional Intelligence Center
CBP - Center for Best Practices
COOP – Continuity of Operations
DFS – Department of Fire Services (MA)
DHS – Department of Homeland Security
DOA – Department of Agriculture (ID)
DOC – Department of Corrections (ID)
EOPSS – Executive Office for Public Safety and Security (MA)
FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRE - Firefighter Investment and Response Enhancement Act
HS – Homeland Security
HSGP – Homeland Security Grant Program
ICS – Incident Command System
IGR – Intergovernmental Relations
ISP – Idaho State Police
ITD – Idaho Transportation Department
MassPort – Massachusetts Port Authority
MBTA – Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
MEMA – Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
MOA – Memorandum of Agreement
NAG – NIMS Advisory Group (MA)
NCSL - National Conference of State Legislatures
NIC – National Integration Center
NIMS – National Incident Management System
OGM – Office of Grant Management (MA)
PIO – Public Information Officer
PUC – Public Utilities Commission (ID)
SAWG – State Agency Working Group (ID)
SHSGP – State Homeland Security Grant Program
UASI – Urban Area Security Initiative
VOAD – Volunteers Active in Disasters

Appendix B – Fictitious Names Table with Agency Information

IDAHO:

Bob
Agency: Transportation Department (ITD)
Website: http://itd.idaho.gov

Chris
Agency: Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS)
Website: www.bhs.idaho.gov

Dan
Agency: Public Utilities Commission (PUC)
Website: www.puc.idaho.gov

Jack
Agency: State Police (ISP)
Website: www.isp.idaho.gov

Jason
Agency: Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS)
Website: www.bhs.idaho.gov

John
Agency: Boise State University (BSU)
Website: www.boisestate.edu

Mike
Agency: Department of Agriculture (DOA)
Website: www.agri.idaho.gov

Paul
Agency: Bureau of Homeland Security (BHS)
Website: www.bhs.idaho.gov
Rick
Agency: Department of Correction (DOC)
Website: www.idoc.idaho.gov

MASSACHUSETTS:

Earl
Agency: University of Massachusetts – Boston
Website: www.umb.edu

Ed
Agency: Department of Fire Services (DFS)
Website: www.mass.gov/dfs

Eric
Agency: Massachusetts Port Authority (MassPort)
Website: www.massport.com

Ian
Agency: Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS)
Website: www.mass.gov/eopss

Nate
Agency: University of Massachusetts – Amherst
Website: www.umass.edu

Ned
Agency: Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
Website: www.mbta.com

Nick
Agency: Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
Website: www.mass.gov/mema

Steve
Agency: Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)
Website: www.mass.gov/mema

Randy
Agency: Department of Fire Services (DFS)
Website: www.mass.gov/dfs

Tim
Agency: Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
Website: www.mbta.com
Appendix C – Semi-Structured Interviewing Protocol

Causal Theory:
- **Hypothesis:** The NIMS is essential to overall homeland security.
- **Focus Questions:** The causal theory underlying the NIMS holds that the national incident management is an important component of homeland security. Do you agree with this causal theory? Why or why not? Do you think the NIMS strengthens homeland security? Do you think the causal theory is oversimplified? Overcomplicated? Does this effect how you implement the NIMS? How?

Scope and Diversity:
- **Hypothesis:** The lesser the scope and diversity of sub-national homeland security implementers then the lesser the amount of behavioral change necessary and thus the more likely is implementation.
- **Focus Questions:** How broad is the scope of those implementing the NIMS? Or, how many people actually work to implement the NIMS? How many people do you think it takes to implement the NIMS in Idaho/Mass? How much behavioral change has been necessary for you to implement NIMS? How has your behavior changed? Was it a necessary or unnecessary change? Was it any easy or hard change to make?

Behavioral Change:
- **Hypothesis:** The lesser the amount of behavioral change required, the more likely is successful implementation.
- **Focus Questions:** Do you feel you have adequately changed your behavior to implement the NIMS? In what ways have you changed your behavior?

Incorporation of Causal Theory:
- **Hypothesis:** Where implementers perceive successful incorporation of the causal theory into practice, the likely is successful implementation
- **Focus Questions:** Do you feel the NIMS’ theory has been translated well into practice? Why? Why not?

Goals and Objectives:
- **Hypothesis:** The lesser the confusion over the ordering of policy goals and objectives, the more likely is implementation.
- **Focus Questions:** What are the goals of the NIMS? How clear are you on the goals and objectives of the NIMS? Do you have any confusion about the goals of the NIMS? Who makes the goals clear to you, and how? How this effect what you do?
Resources:
- **Hypothesis**: The greater the financial, technological and informational resources are available to states generally and for homeland security specifically, the more likely is implementation.
- **Focus Questions**: Are your NIMS implementation efforts adequately resources such as funding, technology and information? Do you feel that if you had more or adequate resources, you would better be able to implement the NIMS? How so?

Integration:
- **Hypothesis**: The lesser the administrative fragmentation within sub-national governments, the more likely is implementation.
- **Focus Questions**: How many people do you deal with in your efforts to implement the NIMS? Would you say the NIMS implementation apparatus in Idaho/Mass is fragmented? If yes, how fragmented? Does this affect what you do? How?

Decision Rules:
- **Hypothesis**: The greater the number of stipulated decision rules, the less deviation from the statutorily-structured implementation process and thus the more likely successful implementation.
- **Focus Questions**: How well stipulated are the NIMS’ decision rules? Are there a lot stipulated rules? Do you have a lot of discretion in how you implement NIMS or do you do it “by the book?” Do you ever deviate from the stipulated rules? Why? When? How?

Socioeconomic Characteristics:
- **Hypothesis**: Where socio-level state characteristics are perceived as good and conducive to implementation, the more likely is successful implementation.
- **Focus Questions**: Are there any unique social attributes of Idaho/Massachusetts that influences your implementation efforts?

Media Attention:
- **Hypothesis**: The greater the quality, amount and continuity of media attention to the NIMS, the more likely is successful implementation.
- **Focus Questions**: Does the media view incident management as a serious challenge that should be addressed? Do media help or hurt the public perception of incident management in Idaho/Mass? Does this affect how you implement the NIMS? How?

Public Attention:
- **Hypothesis**: The greater the perception of public support for the NIMS, the more likely is successful implementation.
- **Focus Questions**: Does the public view incident management as a serious challenge that should be addressed? Do enough people view incident management as a serious problem or something that is very important? Does this affect how you implement the NIMS? How?
Constituency Group Attention:
- **Hypothesis:** Where the attention and involvement of constituency groups is greater, the more likely is successful implementation.
- **Focus Questions:** Do constituency or ‘non-governmental’ groups influence implementation? If so, how?

Sovereigns’ Attention:
- **Hypothesis:** The greater the support of sovereigns, the more likely is implementation.
- **Focus Questions:** How, and to what degree, do the branches of Idaho/Mass government support your or your agency’s efforts to implement the NIMS? Do courts usually rule in your favor? Does the legislature ‘ride you hard’ with oversight or do they tend to defer to your judgment? How about the Governor’s office? Does this effect how you implement the NIMS? How?

Commitment of Implementers:
- **Hypothesis:** The assigned responsibility for implementation of the NIMS to sympathetic implementers makes implementation more likely.
- **Focus Questions:** Are sympathetic to the NIMS, i.e., how committed are you to its goals and objectives? Do you feel there are people who are not committed to the goals and objectives? Do you think your sympathy helps you do a better job implementing the NIMS? How?

**Appendix D: Interviewee Consent Form**

**Name of Investigator(s):** Christopher Mathias, graduate student researcher and Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate College of Arts and Sciences and Ballard Campbell, Ph.D., Principal Investigator

**Title of Project:** Implementing Homeland Security Policy in the U.S. States

**Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study**
We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions you may have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

**Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?**
You are being asked to participate in this study because you have experience implementing the NIMS at the state level. You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.
Why is this research study being done?
The purpose for conducting this study and proposed interview is to understand how state level actors individually and collectively implement the National Incident Management System (the NIMS).

What will I be asked to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, Mr. Mathias will ask you to answer a series of questions about your work implementing the NIMS. You will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview that should take no longer than 90 minutes. You will be interviewed at your convenience, either in your office or another location of your choosing. You may be contacted for a follow-up interview if review of the transcript requires further information or follow-up questions. If you will be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, I will ask you to provide the phone number(s) where you can be reached.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study. You are free to decline to answer any questions you do not wish to answer, and you are free to stop your participation at any time.

Who will see the information about me?
As a public figure, we hope you will consider speaking on the record about your experiences related to NIMS implementation, meaning that your name will be attributed to your comments. If you choose to have your name attributed to your comments, identifying information such as name, occupation and location may be identified and quoted in reports and publications based on this research. I will provide you with a draft copy of the transcript of the interview so that you can review its content and add any clarifications and corrections that you feel are necessary.

However, you may also specify that your name not be attributed to some or all of your comments and that your part in this study be handled in a confidential manner. If so, only the researcher will know that you participated in the study and your responses will be coded and given a pseudonym. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only de-identified data and will not identify you as being of this project. All data will be securely stored by the researcher and audio recordings will be destroyed following transcription and analysis. In addition, only Mr. Mathias and Dr. Campbell will have access to the information database, transcripts, pseudonym database, and audio recordings. At the end of the study, all identifying information will be destroyed.

Will I benefit by being in this research?
There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. However, your answers may help us to learn more about how state actors implement the NIMS.

Will I be paid for my participation?
There is no payment to you for participation in this study.
Can I stop my participation in this study?
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, your information will not be included in the final analysis and report. In addition, the audiotape of the interview will be destroyed and no transcription will be made.

Who may I contact if I have questions or problems?
If you have any questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should talk with Mr. Mathias at 857.719.4922 or via e-mail mathias.c@husky.neu.edu. Please feel free to ask any questions prior to signing this consent form. It is my goal to make sure you understand the study and your role in it. You may also speak with the Principal Investigator of this project, Ballard Campbell, Ph.D., Department of History, Northeastern University, telephone 617-373-4448, email address b.campbell@neu.edu.

Who may I contact about my rights as a participant?
If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

I agree to take part in this research. My preference regarding the use of my name is as follows:
___ I agree to be identified by name in any transcript or reference to the information contained in this interview.
___ I wish **not** to be identified by name in any transcript or reference to the information contained in this interview.

____________________________________________________
Signature of Person agreeing to take part in research
Date

Printed Name of Person Above

___________________________________________________
Signature of Christopher Mathias, the person who explained the study and obtained consent from the participant above
Date

THE NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD HAS REVIEWED THIS PROJECT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH.

In the case Mr. Mathias needs to follow up with you, please provide a phone number and e-mail address where you can be reached:
Best Days/Times to conduct follow-up interview:
Thank you.

Appendix E: Sample Recruitment Letter

June 1, 2010

Dear XXXX,

My name is Christopher Mathias. This letter is an invitation to participate in a study I am conducting as part of my doctoral dissertation for Law and Public Policy at Northeastern University. My research project is entitled: Implementing Homeland Security Policy in the U.S. States. I am focusing on the National Incident Management System. Drawing from your state’s official website, it appears you have experience with the NIMS. To help you decide whether you’d like to participate, allow me to provide you with some information about this research project.

First, thank you for possibly supporting this research about homeland security. The purpose of the study is to develop a better understanding of how states implement the NIMS. During the course of this study, I will be conducting in-person interviews with people in Idaho/Massachusetts who have experience implementing the NIMS. My intent is to interview you and have you share your experience with the NIMS. It is my hope to connect with anyone with this state-level experience. If someone you know may be interested in participating they are encouraged to contact me using the contact information provided below. At the end of the research process, I hope to publish the study and share it with others who, like us, are close observers of homeland security.

Participation is completely voluntary. I hope you will consider participating in this research and be willing to speak on the record about your experiences related to NIMS implementation, meaning that your name will be attributed to your comments. However, you may also specify that your identity be kept confidential and that all or some of your comments be de-identified.

Should you decide to participate, we would set up an interview at your office or another convenient location. The interview will take about 1 to 1½ hours and will be audio recorded for analysis and transcription purposes only.

Be assured this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Human Subject Research Protection at Northeastern University. In addition, having received a top-secret clearance in the U.S. Coast Guard, I am experienced in handling sensitive information.

In sum, I invite you to participate in this homeland security research. I will be in [your state] for the month of August 2010. To let me know whether you are interested in participating, please contact me at [telephone number] or by email: mathias.c@husky.neu.edu. If you are interested in participating, it would be helpful for me to receive your reply by August 1, 2010 so I may schedule the interview.
I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for any assistance with this project.

Very respectfully,

Christopher P. Mathias

Notes:
1. The interview transcripts have the capacity to constructively identify the interviewees. Thus, to maintain their anonymity, interview transcripts are available upon request.
2. If you have questions or comments about this research, please contact the author at Christopher.P.Mathias@gmail.com
REFERENCES


