Racial Conflict and Institutionalization of Social Welfare Decision-Making

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Introduction - Overview

In recent decades, there has been considerable attention devoted to the nature of interest group conflict and emerging structural changes in the American economic, social and political system. The economic changes have perhaps been the key indicators of emerging trends. These changes have been reflected mainly in the amount of economic activity and occupations devoted to services since the late 1950's; the increasing concern with technological growth; the close collaboration between national government policies and planning and the private sector; national governmental assistance for urban and suburban problems, and more recently, the increased mandates of interest groups for national policies on natural resources and population growth. The major social problems of education, welfare and related aspects of family planning have been closely intertwined with the emergent economic developments. And, concurrently a significant amount of the debate in the political arena has reflected these socio-economic concerns.

The basis for much of the discussion and analysis has been directly related to public policy formulation and the increased demands for adequate and/or efficient services by all segments of the public. Developing from these demands are issues which have significantly brought into focus, current and potential conflicts among social, class, and racial interest groups regarding priorities, levels of benefits, and goals of service organizations.

Many of the conflicts are specifically and more narrowly related, however, to the large lower income subsector of the population located in metropolitan areas. And, these are greatly accentuated by the historical failure of the U.S. to develop urban, or related planning or social welfare policies which would take into account or compliment the profound changes in the private economic sector.

This absence of policy and often theoretical understanding of the changes of the socio-economic structures, has been gradually altered with the growth of a body of theoreticians and technicians forecasting trends in the social and economic sectors. However, the adoption of broad structural administrative policies based on new conceptualizations for the public sector have been subjected to greater scrutiny than in any period prior to the service era. The major dimensions of scrutiny and accountability has resulted from both clients, and salaried service workers pressuring designated public management officials on all levels for formal rights and inclusion in organizational decision-making.
These current and potential conflicts among various interest groups are emerging as a unique development in American history. Institutionalized procedures of both older, and developing client organizations, are continually reflecting the objectives of client interest groups traditionally underrepresented or politically powerless in influencing organizational procedures. Additionally, professional unions and associations in most service organizations are continually demanding rights regarding responsibilities to clients and the organization. The trends, particularly in the older urban areas, indicate that the client organizations in which conflict has been most persistent regarding benefits to clients and professional responsibilities, will be the ones in which goals are most difficult to define or redefine in the future. And, if trends of the past decade are reliable indicators, it will be in those client organizations which are most susceptible to the inclusion of racial and class biases, that major conflicts involving the public, professionals, and management will occur. Succinctly, the emerging trends in the social, economic, and political structures, indicate that many of the more difficult areas of defining goals for a significant segment of the population in the service era will rest on the nature of conflicts among social and ethnic interest groups both internal and external to client organizations. The ability therefore of public officials to mediate solutions which can be adequately managed in client organizations as structural changes in the larger society accelerate, will be a major factor in future social welfare decision-making.

Theoretical Perspectives

The increased involvement of the public in non-market decision making, accompanied by more rigid standards for service occupations, defined by both professionals and the public, has been one of the more salient factors observed as a result of the structural changes in U.S. society. The broader changes, problems, and theoretical demands of the emerging post-industrial society have been conceptualized by many analysts in several disciplines. Basically, the broader developments and projections emphasize the growth of the service sector and public employees; an increasing reliance on advanced knowledge guided by technicians managing the governmental and economic sectors; the greater utilization of abstract theoretical knowledge to manipulate the pace of social and economic change; continued advancement of technological knowledge and forecasting
4 techniques; and, an increased reliance of long range planning to meet the needs of services, markets, and resources in both the private and public spheres.

Coinciding with these changes there has been an increasing class differentiation which has become more important in determining governmental benefits in a metropolitan society. Related, also is a growth of collective bargaining among salaried professionals seeking to maintain or operationalize a wide range of non-wage securities, if not, influence the goals of service organizations, and their institutionalized patterns.

The linkages between the aforementioned features and problems of the emerging service society cannot be fully described as a complete model. Moreover, most analysts have avoided any detailed discussions of emerging racial patterns, although they are often implicit in their observations of emergent class conflicts.

Yet, many of the racial patterns can be included in descriptive models of the future, simply by inclusion of projected demographic variables for the forthcoming decades. Specifically, the projections for the Black population indicate a continued concentration in central cities, and a high dependency ratio. Therefore, a significant segment of the Black population under most efforts at prediction probably will constitute an important segment of the population requiring social welfare services, with the avenues of upward mobility significantly decreased in the goods-producing sector, and extreme competition with other groups for the advanced knowledge and skills necessary for class mobility.

Basic education and the ability to continually advance one's knowledge within a profession, already prevail as a key factor in many professions, and these trends will probably become more important in others. Indeed, continuing education in the area in which one is employed has become a prerequisite for advanced occupational status in many fields, including, but not limited to nursing, medicine, and teaching on the higher educational levels.

The policies and procedures effectuated and institutionalized in organizations responsible for basic skills or services, or related to advancement of professionals will therefore become more critical as technology advances. Indeed, the very nature of professionalism will have to be redefined in many occupations.
However, the most basic social welfare conceptualizations and problems in large measure will rest on the public-at-large, particularly Blacks, within service or catchment areas of the organization responsible for clients. The authority, an increasingly sophisticated Black client sector is willing to invest in the hands of professionals in determining policies outside of legally defined professional arenas, is likely to be the key dimension. In addition, the relationship between racial conflict and social welfare services will reflect the degree to which professionals collectively bargain for procedures effecting institutionalized organizational policies related to racial conflicts (perceived or real) in the community, and the extent to which professionals of different ethnic groups ally with their ethnic interests outside of their professional membership ranks in influencing the direction of client organizational priorities and benefits. Briefly stated, a major determining factor in the service society will be the extent to which organized professional workers effectuate a redistribution of power and authority in client organizations and their institutionalized procedures, and whether the public, particularly Blacks, view such changes in their interests.

The Study Design

The basic assumptions of this analysis are that professionals in the public sector will increasingly focus on policies in collective bargaining with management which reflect a concern with policies and procedures which effect the structure and goals of the organization, and their professional relationship to the public. Coinciding with these changes has been a continuous and heightened concern of professionals within membership groups (unions or associations), with ideological causes reflecting their ethnic group interests in the public, and the manner in which policies and priorities are developed and institutionalized within client serving organizations.

The assumptions of this analysis were specifically related to the theoretical developments outlined in the previous section, and limited to conclusions regarding Blacks.

In the analysis, the demands of professionals related to procedures, policies and goals of the organization by professional groups, were analyzed by studying the emphasis on non-wage factors, that could (1) alter professional-management patterns; (2) increase professional decision-making, and (3) influence client professional patterns.
The groups included in the analysis were educators, social welfare workers, and professionals in health. This study analyzed all agreements maintained by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 250 workers or more. The non-wage items for educators included class-room size, promotion, and evaluation procedure; for welfare workers, caseload, promotion, evaluation, and payments for additional education; and for personnel in health, patients treated, evaluation, promotion, and payment by management for higher education.

The three groups of professionals comprised 276,550 workers or 77% of the 358,012 professionals covered by agreements on file at BLS as of June, 1973.

The assumptions in the analysis regarding growth of Black professional organizations were analyzed by documenting the dates of organizational charter, from a compilation of Black organizations in the Directory of National Black Organizations by Charles Sanders and Linda McLean.

Findings

Education Personnel

The educational personnel covered by agreements analyzed, primarily included regular teachers (excluding agreements for principals) in city public schools. A limited number of these agreements included specific language regarding substitute teachers, and four of the agreements were for college faculties.

As indicated in Table I, there were ninety-three agreements analyzed which covered 235,450 educational personnel, or 70 percent of the professionals included in the analysis. The largest number of agreements were for unions or associations covering 250,749 professionals, primarily in smaller or middle sized cities. And, all the agreements were negotiated in 1965, or after except the agreements covering New York City personnel.

Class-room size/Pupil teacher ratio

Specific language on the number of pupils per teacher were included in 62.3% of the agreements analyzed. In general,

* It is important to note that this comprises only a sample of all union or association membership.
the larger the number of education personnel included in
the agreements, the more specific the language on the
number of pupils per teacher. A summary of the agreements
indicated that most of the agreements set forth desirable
class size, limitations, and indicated to the extent possi-
ble, that the board recognize its responsibility to main-
tain the desirable median/maximum in class room size.

In most of the collective bargaining negotiations stu-
died in the school system, policy on class size was negoti-
ated, while in others the administrators unilaterally es-
tablished guidelines or regulations.

The specifications for class size varied. Many agree-
ments included a detailed itemization of class size while
others outlined minimum and maximum figures; maximums that
should not be exceeded. In the latter case, if maximums
are exceeded, principals are to inform the teacher in
writing, stipulating the reason to the teacher and super-
intendent of schools. In most cases, statements of reason
may also be available for examination by the union.

Among the most specific language outlined regarding
class size was the agreement for New York personnel. The
agreement listed four exceptions where maximums regarding
class size may be exceeded: 1) when no space is available,
2) where conformity to established guidelines would place
additional classes on short-time schedules, 3) where con-
formity would result in half-classes, and 4) in the case
of specialized or experimental educational programs.

In addition to the above factors, a few agreements
contained provisions to pay teachers at a specified rate
for overload assignments. However, in these agreements
teachers could have no more than one period of overload
teaching per day. And, finally, a substantial number of
the agreements made special provisions for class size in
atypical situations; (the exceptions being classes in
music, art, physical education, team-teaching, classes
for the physically handicapped, special adjustment classes,
and the educable mentally retarded.)

Evaluation

Among the ninety-three agreements studied, 60% contain-
ed specific evaluation procedures. The evaluation procedure
provisions contained a variety of different items, from an
introductory statement of intent for the evaluation, to the
persons responsible for aiding the teacher to improve per-
formance.
However, most of the agreements contained very specific language for non-tenured teacher evaluations, as well as the frequency of the appraisals. On the whole, non-tenured teachers were evaluated twice annually and tenured-teachers once every three and/or five years. A few agreements for tenured-teachers stipulated annual evaluations or evaluations which could be made at the superintendent's discretion. In school systems where these procedures were adopted for tenured teachers, the same rules applied to them as applied to non-tenured faculty.

The officials responsible for evaluating teachers were usually the administrator (principal) or the general administration, and peer and self-evaluation were absent from the majority of the agreements.

The right of the teacher to be informed of evaluations was specifically outlined in the majority of the agreements, and most of the agreements mandated that the appraisal of the teacher be conducted with the full knowledge of the teacher and without the benefits of mechanical surveillance devices. Yet, central to the interest of this study, few of the agreements in the public school sector included language on community participation in evaluating teacher performance.

Promotions

Specific guidelines on promotions were included in fifty-five (55%) of the agreements. In general, positions paying a salary differential and/or those of a supervisory or administrative nature are classified as promotional positions for educational personnel. Promotional positions generally include the positions of coordinator, department chairman, counselor, administrative assistant, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and sometimes specialist. In most of the agreements, the school board or the superintendent's office must publicize vacancies of higher job classifications on school bulletin boards (a frequently mentioned item in the agreements), or in periodic bulletins or newsletters from the administrative office.

The general requirements for promotion included: appropriate professional background, experience, appropriate degree, certification status, prior service that has been rated satisfactory, length of service in system, and good references or recommendations. In some systems, tests (written and oral) are given with each item assigned specific percentage points. And, generally when examinations are provided, there are subjective considerations included. These factors include:
health, character, personality, capability and relations with the public in the larger cities. However, such items were broadly written in general terms, and for the most part, discretionary.

Social Welfare Professionals

Social welfare professionals were the second largest group of workers analyzed. Included in this analysis as indicated in Table II were eight agreements covering 22,400 workers, primarily in New York City and Los Angeles.

The small number of agreements for social welfare workers is reflective of the recent collective bargaining emphasis and the limited number of agreements on file at BLS. This analysis indicated that only the agreement in New York City for 250 workers or more was negotiated prior to 1970.

This small number also limited any detailed consideration of the non-wage items. As indicated in Table II, only two of the agreements included specific language on case load requirements per worker. General language was included in the agreement between New York City and the Social Service Employees, but it was not specific in either duties or performance. In addition, while promotional guidelines were specifically outlined in the agreements, they were not detailed in regard to client relationships. And, regular evaluations by administrators were not outlined in detail for workers, either in frequency or purpose.

A more salient factor relating to procedures for upward mobility was the emphasis placed on payments by government for advanced education in social welfare professions. The benefits to workers for advanced educational work ranged from full tuition with partial pay, or other agreements which would provide incentives for study at approved colleges or universities. And, while stipulations are fairly common for advanced education among teachers, the option appeared to be much broader for social welfare workers in choice of study and mobility either within or outside the respective organization.

The most important aspect of the agreements relating to the growth of collective bargaining among welfare workers, was the emphasis placed on maintaining jobs for workers even if technological advancements necessitated changes in the structure of organizations. Language specifying this factor was included in the agreements between the County of Los Angeles and the Joint Council of Los Angeles Employees Association Service Employees, and the agreement between New
York City and the Social Service Employees.

However, based on the limited number of agreements negotiated as of 1973 it is difficult to determine the impact on non-wage items on organizational structures or the public among welfare professionals.

**Health Professionals**

There were twenty-five agreements analyzed for health professionals covering 18,700 workers as indicated in Table III.

Each of the agreements analyzed for 250 professionals or more were negotiated after 1970, and the majority of the agreements were for 500 workers or less.

The agreements covered nurses, doctors, dentists and related professional technicians. Nurses constituted the largest number of the agreements and doctors the fewest.

As indicated in Table III, the non-wage items chosen for analysis among health professionals varied considerably. Specifically, only three of the twenty-five agreements analyzed contained criteria on patient load per professional worker, and, the language on this item was written in general terms.

Evaluation and promotional consideration, however, were specific in most of the agreements, and frequently, but not exclusively, related to patient care. Indeed, evaluation and promotional procedures, particularly for nurses, could be considered a major item in the context of most of the agreements. Nurses appeared to be concerned with evaluations which appraised their professional duties, and specified the procedures and basis for monetary gains and administrative duties.

In addition to the above factors, a major aspect of the agreements was the emphasis placed on shift differentials by management for workers. Many of the agreements specifically outlined procedures for shifts in duties outside of regular schedules, and when notification of shifts was to occur.

Finally, advanced education among health professionals has increasingly become a major aspect of upward mobility and tenure as indicated. In Table III, about half of the agreements contained provisions for payment of additional education. Succinctly, based on the limited number of agree-
ments analyzed for this study, the major non-wage factors among health workers, excluding doctors, appeared to be an emphasis on defining professional roles and status within organizations by management.

The Growth of Black Professional Organizations in the Service Society

The growth of Black professional organizations in the service sector has largely coincided with the emphasis on collective bargaining among professional workers. The reasons for the coinciding growth are important to note as they relate to both services and the future structure of client organizations. There are several factors which stimulated the growth of these organizations. First, the civil rights movement, and federal-local programs of the 1960's provided an initiative for Black professional groups to organize; second, the politicization of Black lower-income clients regarding services and accountability of client organizations provided a need and goal for Black professional groups to attempt to meet; third, Blacks as a result of exclusion in the private sector have traditionally emphasized the service area as a means of upward mobility, and clearly had a special interest in maintaining or increasing their professional status as collective bargaining accelerated; and fourthly, younger Blacks, many of whom were involved in civil rights activities, have viewed these professional organizations as opportunities for alternative service structures in the Black communities.

As indicated in Table IV, the majority of national Black organizations in the service sector were formed after 1965. Prior to that time, the preponderance of the national organizations were in the health and educational areas, with the Urban League and the National Medical Association encompassing many of the duties in the social welfare area and medical spheres.

These older organizations still perform valuable functions. However, there are noticeable differences in the functions and goals of these two organizations from those organizations which developed after 1965. A major difference is the degree of specialization among the newer organizations; their frequent incorporation of militant positions voiced in the Black community, and often the impatience of the loose membership towards traditional approaches of solving social welfare problems in the Black community.
Yet, regarding this analysis, perhaps the most important factor is that Blacks in these areas are largely unionized in the professional areas, which have become most organized in recent years. Indeed, although Blacks as of 1970 comprised only 6.5% of the white collar workforce, they represented 16.6% of the union membership in these organizations, and were more unionized in the educational and health fields than other workers.

And, even though it is difficult in this research study to provide any accurate figures on the number of Blacks who belong to both unions or associations, and Black service organizations, it is safe to assume that the number is substantial, particularly in larger cities.

This observation viewed in the context of the findings on the non-wage items in the previous section would tend to suggest that Black professionals have gained substantial benefits in recent years from collective bargaining agreements which solidify their positions within the organization. Historically, this is important for professional Blacks in the service area, especially in view of the traditional emphasis on upward mobility in these occupations.

However, the importance of Black professionals benefiting from collective bargaining agreements and their organizations within unions or associations is a more difficult proposition than the one stated in the previous paragraph. Traditionally, in sociological literature there has been an interesting and fruitful dialogue concerning the role of the Black professional, the Black community, and value systems. Yet, few of the studies linked Black professional roles to changes in the character of the economic system. And, as indicated consistently throughout this analysis, changes in the socio-economic structure have an important bearing on the nature of discussions of Black professionals. In this regard, three factors can help clarify this observation. First, as noted previously, Black professionals have an important stake in the emphasis of social control mechanisms established for the larger professional group, but they cannot ignore an increasingly sophisticated Black client group; secondly, the demands for racial integration in service areas has raised conflicts for those Black professionals who relied on client service segregation as a means of security and mobility; and thirdly, the multiple forces accounting for the growth of the service era described in this study, have gradually meant that the security of Black professionals has rested on their ability to organize and alter social control processes within or-
ganizations, and the socialization process leading to professional status.

In this context, as Charles Sanders has indicated in an important study of Black professional groups in health and welfare organizations, issues leading to institutional change in the service sector regarding Blacks, have been more important for Black professionals than changing the goals of the service organization or the collective bargaining agent. Sanders concluded that Black professionals in these fields did not challenge the more covert racial procedures of traditionally white professional organizations, but only raised issues related to the Black community. His findings would indicate that the growth of Black professional groups are more important in many cases for security, than changing the overall goals of professional groups. And, Robert Barlett, in a more limited analysis concluded that professionalism had a stronger influence on Black professional's perceptions of the Black community than ethnicity, class, or place of residence.

These findings suggest that processes which alter professional standards regarding the Black community are more important in non-wage areas, than changing structures. Yet, as aforementioned since these studies do not construct models based on overall socio-economic changes, they miss the point that professional security among ethnic groups is an important aspect of political change and politicization. In fact, although political scientists have traditionally emphasized professional security as a factor of politicization, sociologists have been interested less in rewards, and more interested in client-professional relationships.

Succinctly, these observations indicated that as American society has become more occupationally oriented towards the white collar worker in the service areas, Blacks who have traditionally emphasized education in these areas for middle-class status, have become an important force in determining both the processes of goal determination of services for the Black community, and in influencing the direction of institutionalized procedures in client service unions for their class interest. At this point, these organizations are not particularly ideologically oriented, but the conflicts and issues they have raised are important in terms of the emerging racial and class conflicts, and must therefore be considered an important dimension of analysis of post-industrial capitalism.
Conclusion

This analysis has attempted to present one dimension of the conflicts among professionals serving the public, which are important in the American service era.

Since, the study focused on emerging trends, there are few rigid conclusions which can be developed. However, the findings do indicate that professionals in the service sector are an important force in outlining the institutionalized procedures of client organizations.

The influence which professionals are exerting, is an important dimension for several reasons. First, the growth of collective bargaining among professionals can not be divorced from the broader economic changes in American society. Secondly, the goals of the service-welfare sector are increasingly being defined by the scope of duties professional workers will assume and; thirdly, the structure of client serving organizations in the future probably will be determined more by legal professional agreements than traditional means of informal consultation.

The impact that these trends currently and in the future will have on the Black community in terms of institutionalized patterns within client-serving organizations are in many respects hypothetical. However, it appears, that broader social, and subsequent institutional changes in the service sector, will depend largely on how Black professionals view the interests of the broader Black community and their own professional goals.

In observing these phenomenon, it is therefore crucial that theories of the institutionalization of race reflect the emerging developments in the service sector, and observations of the service society reflect potential racial patterns.

The crucial dimension is class conflict between lower income clients seeking social changes, and professionals seeking to maintain institutionalized structures. Additionally, the manner in which ethnic biases are incorporated into policies and procedures related to services for the Black community will be an important aspect of social change.

Social change has become more intertwined with the influence of professionalization, technology, and class biases than in any previous era. Professionals, as indicated in the findings of this study, are dramatically focusing on more defined responsibilities and power. Thus, a Black client
group demanding accountability of professional responsibility must face this reality, and the fact that changes in non-wage factors increasingly must be approved by professional unions or associations. Therefore, it should be expected that community demands for professional responsibilities will have to be proven frequently through approved union studies with client participation subject to union-management negotiation.

These developments regarding Blacks, client serving organizations, and unions, require close attention. The emphasis on non-wage items, could in fact alter many of the current race relation theories, and observations.

This article suggests that the theoretical developments needed for the future in terms of Blacks and post-industrial capitalism have not been adequately defined, but that the conflicts regarding institutionalization of procedures in client serving organizations are a significant indicator of the directions which must be studied.

Footnotes:


4. Ibid.


7. Daniel Bell, op. cit.


-59-


13. Ibid. 107

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