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ABSTRACT

Hypotheses generated from organization theory stated that if the primary responsibilities in decision making shifted in either direction between faculty and administrators, there would be a resultant change in their organizational environment. In this paper six community colleges were analyzed for change in organizational structure after the institution had been subjected to external forces resulting from the onset of collective negotiations. Representatives from the administration and the faculty (union activists, union members, and anti- or non-union members) responded to a pretested interview schedule. This resulted in data being developed for four bureaucratic indices on 15 items relating to academic matters and faculty welfare. The findings revealed a democratizing of the organization and, at the same time, a formalizing of the bureaucracy. However, few changes occurred in the academic area after negotiations were concluded, although many gains were realized with regard to faculty welfare. Statistical analysis of the data revealed significant differences in many areas and thus it was concluded that the underlying hypotheses were generally confirmed. (Author/AL)

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CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND IN LOCUS
OF DECISION MAKING: A TEST OF THEORY IN COMMUNITY
COLLEGES BEFORE AND AFTER COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Hypotheses derived from organizational theory with respect to structural changes and locus of decision-making resulting from external forces are tested in six community colleges after the onset of collective negotiations. Representatives from the administration and the faculty (union activists, union member, and anti- or non-union members) responded to pretested interview schedules providing data for four bureaucratic indices and on fifteen items relating to academic matters and to faculty welfare. The findings reveal a democratizing of the organization at the same time there was a formalizing of the bureaucracy. Few changes occurred in the academic arena after negotiations; many gains were realized with regard to faculty welfare. The undergirding theory receives a general confirmation.

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational theorists interested in change have identified in business organizations a growing trend towards a more participatory form of decision making. This trend is partially evidenced by the gradual breakdown of traditional systems of hierarchical structures as organizations attempt to cope with rapid social change. The general consensus of writers in the field of organizational theory is that unless a form of participatory control occurs the life of an organization is threatened. Bennis, for example, writes: "Democracy becomes a functional necessity whenever a social system is competing for survival under conditions of chronic change (1966, p. 19)."

Democratization of an organization and changes in structure are closely related. If an organization is moving toward democratization, then, as pointed out by Katz and Kahn, at least the hierarchical structure must be modified, if not completely restructured (1966, pp. 212-213). Reasons for the trend toward democratization and organizational change may be many. However, most theorists agree that external forces provide a

a principal impetus. Katz and Kahn have observed "drastic or revolutionary changes are initiated or made possible by external forces (1966, p. 449)." As pointed out by Rose (1965, pp. 470-477), and by Katz and Kahn (1966, p. 446), external forces may be of many types, including legislation.

In the state of Michigan, Public Act 379, also known as the Hutchinson Act, was passed in 1965. It exists as an external force capable of giving impetus to organizational changes for public employees, Section 9 of the Act grants public employees the right to organize and bargain collectively with their public employers. Community colleges are one kind of public organization affected by this external force. This provision creates a fundamental change in the relationship between faculties and their employers. For the first time, it gives faculties the legal right to demand that their employers meet with them to discuss wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment.

According to Bloch and Prince (1967, pp. 30-31), this type of fundamental change, if exercised, acts to alter the distribution of power in affected organizations. Prior to the passage of this Act, faculties in community colleges had neither tradition (as in the case of faculties in four year colleges) nor a legal right to discuss the sharing of power in governance with their employers. The Hutchinson Act gives faculty

the legal power to discuss governance under the contention that shared decision making could be considered "other terms and conditions of employment."

If Garrison (1965, pp. 29-82) and the American Association for Higher Education (1967, p. 10) are correct in their analysis of major concerns of community college faculties, then it is to be expected that faculties are exerting pressures for increased participation in governance. Such pressures may initiate changes in the locus of decision making. In turn, this forces should require some changes in organizational structure (Katz and Kahn 1966, p. 259).

A change in the locus of decision making will produce changes in the organizational structure of any institution. For example, if initially an institution resembles a loosely structure bureaucracy, then the onset of negotiations could act to change the college in at least two ways. In one instance, the institution's structure tightens and becomes more formalized. Greater impersonality, more definitive rules and regulations for both the employer and the employee, increased specialization of roles, and more of a hierarchy are indices of tightening in a bureaucratic structure. On the other hand, even though the institution might tighten structurally, it may become more democratic in nature. The locus of decision making shifts from administrative dominance to one

which includes faculty on a more representative basis. Some of the factors that make for a tightened bureaucracy act to democratize decision making in an institution (Gouldner 1954, p. 24). For example, more definitive rules and regulations can provide for increased faculty participation in decision making since these very rules may insure such an outcome.

The general thrust of this inquiry is to determine changes in the locus of decision making and also in organizational patterns relating to structure when collective negotiations enter the arena. The general hypothesis may be stated as follows:

Accompanying faculty pressures for an increased role in decision making, the organizational structure of the community college will have experienced structural changes. These changes will tighten the bureaucratic structure of the community college and act to move the institution toward a more representative bureaucracy.

The Setting

A purposeful selection of six Michigan community colleges which had undertaken collective negotiations almost at the onset of the opportunity in 1965 were chosen so as to control for possible intervening variables -- size (that is, the enrollment in the institution), the type of bargaining

agent (AFT, NEA, or Independent), and the structure of the local unit (separate community college board or else combined with and part of the elementary and secondary schools). The colleges were selected so that the setting in each instance was roughly the same. The colleges studied were neither from the very largest urban areas nor from smaller, more rural communities.

Methodology

Eight respondents were chosen from each institution. Each had had continuous employment at the institution, dating back to before collective negotiations. Two were administrators, one always being the president; two were union activists; two were union members, but non-activists; and two were anti-unionists or non-union members. The classification of respondents in each category was accomplished partially by an individual's position in the institution and partially by established reputational methods.

An interview schedule was constructed and pre-tested. One section called for general changes in organizational and faculty influence and was composed of twelve statements each having four parts. Each statement determined if the institution had shown any movement toward or away from a formalized bureaucratic type of structure since 1965. The four

bureaucratic characteristics advanced by Blau (1956) and by Broom and Selznick (1968, p. 46). These are specialization, a system of rules and regulations, impersonality, and hierarchy.

A second section of the instrument had ten statements for ascertaining attitudes of desirability or undesirability on the part of the respondents regarding the direction of movement as they perceived it. A third section determined the role the faculty organization had played in effecting any change. Finally, a fourth part acquired attitudes of the respondents in reference to the role or lack of role of the faculty organization in effecting any change or lack of change. Institutional documents -- faculty handbooks, negotiated contracts, and the like -- were collected to corroborate the interview data. Appropriate statistical analyses were run.

Findings

As shown in Table I, movement toward greater Specialization (Indice A) is significant at the .01 level in one of the three areas of investigation (Which Groups Make Decisions), approaches significance in another (Arbitrariness of Dismissal), and fails to achieve statistical significance in the third (Standard Sets of Qualifications).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

TABLE 1

NUMBER AND PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING MOVEMENT ON BUREAUCRACY INDICES ---
ALL COLLEGES

| Bureaucracy Index | Factors | Number and Percent Indication of Movement Toward Bureaucracy | |
|--------------------------|---|--|---------|
| | | Number (N=48) | Percent |
| A. Specialization | 1) Groups Making Decisions | 41 | 85*** |
| | 2) Arbitrariness of Dismissal | 29 | 60* |
| | 3) Standard Sets of Qualifications | 16 | 33 |
| B. Rules and Regulations | 1) Increase in Number of Rules | 25 | 52 |
| | 2) More Specific Faculty Definition | 39 | 81*** |
| | 3) More Specific Administrator Definition | 38 | 79*** |
| C. Impersonality | 1) Faculty-Administrator Relations | 35 | 73** |
| | 2) Decline in Favoritism | 10 | 21 |
| D. Hierarchy | 1) Closeness in Supervision of Faculty | 11 | 23 |
| | 2) Administrator-Faculty Ratio | 31 | 65* |

*** Significant at .01 level
 ** Significant at .05 level
 * Significant at .10 level

from Binomial Expansion Test (McNemar 1955, pp. 43-45)



With respect to Rules and Regulations (Indice B), two of the three areas investigated show a significant movement towards a more structured bureaucracy. Both faculty member's and administrator's roles are more specifically defined, according to the respondents. Moreover, the data suggests that the more specifically defined roles for both groups appear to have come about without an increase in the number of rules and regulations.

With the respect to Indice C on Impersonality, one of the two factors is statistically significant at the .05 level. Finally Indice D on Hierarchy, one factor (Administrator-Faculty Ratio) approaches significance.

Turning to the findings with respect to change in locus of decision making, Table 2 shows that statistically significant changes in decision making have occurred in only two of the nine academic areas investigated, in

[Insert Table 2 about here]

faculty appointments and in administrative appointments. As indicated by the frequency distribution and the mean scores, a shift towards more faculty involvement has occurred in every instance.

Table 3 shows that on all items investigated relating to faculty welfare significant changes have occurred. In fact, with the exception of time

TABLE 2

D-SCORE^b AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CHANGE IN ACADEMIC AREAS SINCE 1965--ALL COLLEGES

| Item | Time Period | Locus of Decision Making a Frequency | | | | | Mean ^a | D-Value ^b | Level of Significance |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| Administrative Appointments | Before 1965 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 34 | 4.75 | 8.13 | .01 |
| | 1969 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 25 | 20 | 4.36 | | |
| College Objectives | Before 1965 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 20 | 20 | 4.25 | 2.67 | n.s. |
| | 1969 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 29 | 12 | 4.10 | | |
| College Admissions | Before 1965 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 20 | 21 | 4.27 | 1.16 | n.s. |
| | 1969 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 22 | 16 | 4.04 | | |
| Degree Requirements | Before 1965 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 15 | 24 | 4.25 | 3.39 | n.s. |
| | 1969 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 23 | 15 | 4.04 | | |
| Faculty Appointments | Before 1965 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 17 | 22 | 4.13 | 14.98 | .001 |
| | 1969 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 34 | 3 | 3.67 | | |
| Course Assignment | Before 1965 | 1 | 13 | 6 | 15 | 13 | 3.54 | 2.68 | n.s. |
| | 1969 | 1 | 15 | 10 | 17 | 5 | 3.23 | | |
| Curriculum | Before 1965 | 2 | 13 | 8 | 20 | 5 | 3.27 | 3.39 | n.s. |
| | 1969 | 0 | 15 | 17 | 12 | 4 | 3.10 | | |
| Departmental Objectives | Before 1965 | 5 | 22 | 10 | 7 | 4 | 2.65 | 2.05 | n.s. |
| | 1969 | 6 | 27 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 2.27 | | |
| Text Selection | Before 1965 | 38 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1.29 | .18 | n.s. |
| | 1969 | 39 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1.21 | | |

^a5.0 = Administrative only; 4.0 = Administration with faculty advisory; 3.0 = Co-equal; 2.0 = Faculty with administrative advisory; and 1.0 = Faculty only.

^bKolmogorov Smirnov Test (Siegel 1956, pp. 127-136).

assignments all changes are significant at the .001 level. The direction

[Insert Table 3 about here]

of all changes has been towards greater faculty participation.

In summary, while changes occurred in both the academic and welfare areas, the overwhelming alteration has taken place with respect to the latter.¹

Conclusions

While not every anticipated change reached statistical significance, many did. All were in the predicted direction. Those that changed the least were the ones where faculty control was already the greatest (for example, in textbook selection). Only in Hierarchy indices were no significant differences achieved, although one measure approached it.²

1. For a more extensive presentation of the findings, consult Bylsma (1969).
2. In retrospect, closeness of supervision while clearly a bureaucratic practice, is at the same time almost the quintessence of faculty anathema. If administrators are reacting to faculty pressures in the academic arena, it is really not surprising that they did not push for closer supervision

TABLE 3

D-SCORE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CHANGES IN FACULTY WELFARE AREAS SINCE 1965--ALL COLLEGES

| Item | Time Period | Locus of Decision Making a Frequency | | | | | Mean ^a | D-Value ^b | Level of Significance |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| Continuing Contract | Before 1965 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 29 | 4.52 | 16.28 | .001 |
| | 1969 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 25 | 9 | 3.83 | | |
| Class Size | Before 1965 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 26 | 20 | 4.35 | 34.56 | .001 |
| | 1969 | 0 | 5 | 26 | 17 | 0 | 3.25 | | |
| Work Load | Before 1965 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 29 | 4.54 | 32.74 | .001 |
| | 1969 | 0 | 1 | 28 | 17 | 0 | 3.21 | | |
| Academic Calendar | Before 1965 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 33 | 4.67 | 77.24 | .001 |
| | 1969 | 0 | 3 | 41 | 3 | 1 | 3.04 | | |
| Salaries | Before 1965 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 32 | 4.65 | 212.06 | .001 |
| | 1969 | 0 | 2 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 3.04 | | |
| Time Assignment | Before 1965 | 1 | 11 | 6 | 16 | 14 | 3.65 | 6.0 | .05 |
| | 1969 | 1 | 14 | 11 | 20 | 2 | 2.35 | | |

^a5.0 = Administrative only; 4.0 = Administration with faculty advisory; 3.0 = Co-equal; 2.0 = Faculty with administrative advisory; and 1.0 = Faculty only.

^bKolmogorov Smirnov Test (Siegel 1956, pp. 127-136).

Thus the study affords an overall confirmation of its undergirding theory. By applying the theory to a heretofore untested domain, corroboration enhances its generalizability. The positive outcomes endorse the extension of the theory to new settings.

Discussion

Of the many unanswered questions of a practical kind vis à vis the structure and governance of community colleges, two merit immediate further analysis. One calls for research on the newly created suborganization within the parent body, namely, the union itself. As the union consumes resources (faculty dollars and time, to name but two)

^{2.} at this juncture. The frequency of visiting classrooms will not increase in a noticeable way.

As for the administrator-faculty ratio, another study now in progress comparing community colleges with and without collective negotiations is revealing that those engaged in the practice have a statistically higher proportion of administrators to faculty than those who do not have unions. Why the increase in this study failed to achieve full statistical significance remains unknown. Perhaps three years was too short for grievance officers, regular rather than consultant bargainers, and others who have become administrative office holders within the organization.

for its own maintenance and for goals it sets with respect to growth and accomplishment, how are other ongoing commitments faring? What is the cost and consequence of newly created administrative offices (lawyers, negotiators, grievance officers, secretaries, etc.)? Is this another professional cadre? Trained how and where? An so on. The introduction of a new influential sub-organization in higher education needs investigation.

The second ponders the enigma of rather small faculty gains in the academic area. Was the talk of union leaders merely rhetoric appealing to the high level ethical instincts of academic whereas economic welfare was really all that was intended? Is there a distinctive ideological difference between faculty in community colleges and those in four year institutions that shows community college faculty are really satisfied with the limited role they play in academic decision making? (Perhaps the difference arises from uncomparable socialization processes, the community college faculty having come from the high school setting and the four year faculty directly from the graduate school). Those and related questions regarding distinctly different practices in faculty participation in governance need illumination for a better understanding of the community college as a social organization.

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