

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967 4051

constitute a majority of the Board, but they are represented and do have a voice and vote. The size of this Board of Directors varies between 40 and 50 members about 40 percent of whom are or were residents of the poverty area being served by CAA. This means that the Board is weighted in favor of the prominent civic business leadership of the community—the so-called “Establishment.” Needless to say, this also means that there will be no undue “rocking of the boat” when decisions are made. What is more, the procedures for recruiting Board members fairly well guarantee that “safe stability” will characterize the Board majority.

Members of the Board of Directors are recruited in several ways. One involves having the Board's nominating committee nominate individuals recommended by other Board members. Another way is to have individuals recommended by the administrative staff of CAA for nomination. These may be, and indeed have been, at times residents of the poverty area. Such people are of course likely to be tractable and cooperative from the point of view of those running the program—the so-called “tame” or “respectable” poor. A third way in which Board members are recruited is through an organization called the General Area Council. This is a large representative body numbering some 200 members who represent every club and neighborhood association in the entire CAA poverty area. Each club or association elects three members to this General Area Council. This council in turn elects six of its community resident members to the CAA Board of Directors. The fourth way in which Board members are selected has already been mentioned—namely, through representation of each neighborhood Advisory Committee.

The above sketch of procedure for recruiting Board of Director membership suggests that while there is no guarantee that “rebel” types won't appear in the governance of CAA, it is certain that such disruptive people will not gain control over the operation. Furthermore, the presence of “tame” representatives of the poverty area on the Board tends to counter or soften the impact of any rebel effort to alter the status quo.

Another aspect of the general “control” picture involving neighborhood center organization appears when the relationship between the center staff and the neighborhood Advisory Committee is examined more closely. There is evidence that local residents do in fact “run” the meetings of the Advisory Committee. Advice from the professional center staff is sought, but initiative is retained by the Advisory Committee “laymen.” However, at all such meetings there is what might be called “a hidden agenda” item which seriously limits the extent to which the local residents really control the center programs. This item is the simple fact that the Advisory Committee does not control the budget and the allocation of funds. Whether or not a given activity or program will actually be established depends on whether funds are available. Through its control of funds CAA's top-level administrative staff exercises considerable control over local neighborhood programs. Because of this organizational arrangement the idea that CAA is a model for efforts to set up grassroots participation in self-help programs has a bit of a hollow ring. It does appear true that there is little if any effort to impose programs on the area residents from above. However, the power of those “above” to exercise budgetary vetoes on ideas from below serves to limit severely the effectiveness of the much heralded local initiative. As will be seen later, this limitation is frustrating to some of the residents and lower-level staff members involved in the activities at the Center.

With respect to staff recruitment and training most of the neighborhood organizers have college degrees or at least some college training. The top level administrators of CAA encourage lower level staff to continue their education. Arrangements can be made so that staff workers can earn up to six credit hours of college work each semester while they are working for CAA. There is also an in-service training program for the new staff members. This apparently runs about three months during which they work under the supervision of various staff people at the different neighborhood centers. The results of staff recruitment efforts have been particularly interesting in that the preponderance of the staff is Negro even though “Anglos” and Latin-Americans are substantially represented in the area served by the CAA. One explanation for this selectivity is that college trained Anglos and Latin-Americans can get higher salaries than the CAA pays. Whether or not this reflects differential quality of college education as between Negroes and non-Negroes is an interesting question to contemplate. In any event, college-trained Negroes find CAA salaries (mini-