

ences between States and the implementation strategies adopted by them. The four top States all are recognized as having strong, highly skilled, professional, executive leadership (though this tends to be true of the whole group, while other States with similar leadership are not on this list). Three of these four states are also among the nation's richest and largest. Maine's position is clearly not due to State wealth, (ranking 35th in per-capita income) but may be due to strong leadership in the highly professionalized State agency and to the absence of some crucial barriers to innovation. A likely hypothesis suggests that *public prejudices* directed at a large Negro population serves as a crucial barrier to public assistance innovation. In Maine, this "barrier" is relatively slight (non-whites are .6 percent of state populations). In the other States, substantial resources, and strong leadership may have been sufficient to overcome this barrier. Of the four lowest ranking States, three are among the lowest in average per-capita income, Alabama (47th), Louisiana (44th), and West Virginia (40th); and three of the four, Alabama, Louisiana and Michigan, have high proportions of Negroes or a major urban area with a high proportion of Negroes within its boundaries.²¹

These frankly speculative attempts to explain the activity of the 12 innovating States leave us with the equally interesting question of the explanation for the delay or inactivity of the other 40 states. All 12 States are pioneers in this innovative area and two of those with least change were also the first to introduce the process into their agencies.

Executive strategy in introducing Declaration followed a prudential incremental model. States which have complex eligibility criteria and are highly concerned about criticism for allowing ineligible on the rolls tended to retain interviews and other reviews of applicant statements but also consider policy simplification.

Declaration was not a response to massive public demand. The bulk of public attention and informed innovative initiative is *rightly* focused on the far more basic question of raising benefit amounts and extending them to the tens of millions covered inadequately or not at all by existing income maintenance programs.

Initiative has come from within the agencies themselves. The early pattern seemed to be state level staff discussions followed by a testing period in a few counties leading more or less rapidly to state-wide adoption. The two major audiences are the agency's line staff and the Federal Government. Little publicity was associated with this process though, some executives pointed out, "no attempt was made to hide it." The innovation was often proposed as a technical improvement, increasing staff efficiency. References were also made to improved client functioning and increased dignity though not in response to overt client demands. During the last eighteen months, the process has accelerated. Some States are omitting the pilot project stage, innovations are more substantial, covering more categories and including broader organizational restructuring.

New York City added a vital ingredient, legitimating the innovation through favorable national newspaper publicity. In addition, New York City, was the first to include systematic and comprehensive research on these projects and by calling attention to the inclusion of AFDC encouraged extension to this category.

On a State level, Maine provides another model for the deliberate mobilization of public support. Though public assistance is not a central political issue, Maine's state department made explicit efforts to notify the public through news-release and a series of state-wide public forums at which declaration, separation and other program elements were drawn to public attention.

CONCLUSION

Public assistance is in the midst of one of its more and more frequently recurring crises. The program's leaders are searching for an adequate response to this crisis. Personnel shortages evident throughout social welfare mock efforts to deliver a humane service program. "Welfare" is increasingly being used as a code word for racial prejudice, and is a respectable means of beating the poor, especially poor Blacks. Societal change which produces larger and larger numbers of unemployed and underemployed either through lack of individual skills or absence of available jobs raises to the center of social policy the question of the

²¹ U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, *State Data and State Rankings in Health, Education, and Welfare, Part 2, 1965 edition, Health, Education and Welfare Trends*, (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966). Tables S-9 and S-42.