

An Examination of Contract Negotiations in
The Southampton School District, Long Island, New York

by

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Chapter 2

In terms of equitable distribution, the parties in the Southampton School District negotiations have competing interests. Although equity is the goal, the conflict results from how the sides envision the components of the contract being negotiated.

Review of the literature:

POLITICS

The Market and the Polis

GOALS

Equity
Efficiency
Security
Liberty

PROBLEMS

Symbols
Numbers

Causes
Interests
Decisions

SOLUTIONS

Inducements
Rules
Facts
Rights
Powers

Chapter III

Methodology

The Procedures

This chapter describes the methods by which the data for the study were collected, what data were collected, who was interviewed, and how the interview questions were conducted. Ultimately, it exposes why these sources of data are relevant.

Goals

The goal of the study was to identify patterns, themes and biases characterized in the strategic representations. Therefore a content analysis was conducted, including newspapers and interviews.

Sources

Southampton is a small, rural community, and as such, community members convey their ideas on many issues through the local newspaper, *The Southampton Press*. *The Press* is a weekly publication. Of particular interest to readers is the editorial section, entitled *Opinion*. The paper has been in operation since 1897, and over the course of time, has established itself as the main venue for communication in this small town. It was chosen as a key resource for this study due to the fact that it is the main forum where people discuss the good, the bad and the ugly about Southampton Schools.

Another key resource was the interviews conducted with two key players in the Southampton School District negotiations, namely, the Superintendent of Schools and a senior teacher known to unofficially wield a great deal of power in a “behind the scenes”

fashion. The interviews were conducted in an informal, conversational manner, pen and paper notes were taken.

Chapter IV

Presentation and Findings

In terms of equitable distribution, the parties in the Southampton School District negotiations have competing interests. Although equity is the goal, the conflict results from how the sides envision the specific components of the contract being negotiated. See chart below:

Concepts of Equity in the Southampton School District

*Simple definition – Same size share for everybody

Complications in the Polis as depicted in the Southampton Teacher Contract Negotiations		
Dimension	Issue	Dilemma
<u>Recipients</u>	<u>Membership</u> 1. Board of Education (BOE) 2. Southampton Teachers Association (STA) 3. Southampton Community	STA contract: Revisions of the contract are negotiated relative to each party's interest. Equal/unequal revisions
<u>Items</u>	Specific relevant issues remain with those who are negotiating.	Equal distribution/ unequal distribution
<u>Process</u>	The BOE attorney and the assistant superintendent of business represent the district. - They periodically advise the BOE on developments. This ensures interests of Southampton taxpayers. The STA is a part of the New York State Teachers Union. - The Executive board and the crisis team meet with the BOE's attorney with the superintendent present on developments. Southampton Community - This group represents themselves at BOE meetings, the media	Equal interests/ unequal distribution of rewards Equal interests/ unequal distribution of rewards Equal interests/ unequal distribution of rewards
<u>Solution</u>	Signed Contract	Equal Distribution

*As defined by Deborah Stone, *Policy Paradox, The Art of Political Decision Making*

June 30, 2004 Southampton Teachers' Contract Expired

February 14, 2005 Southampton Teachers Association declares impasse

February 16, 2005: Teachers begin demonstrating by wearing black and a bright green pin stating "STA Contract Now" on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and leaving school during lunch and at the precise end of the contractual day. Teachers begin attending monthly BOE meetings wearing same.

May 11, 2005 Southampton Teachers Association Marches from each school throughout the town holding placards that read such things as "STA CONTRACT NOW," "WHAT'S GOING ON BOE?" "HONK IF YOU LOVE TEACHERS!"

May 11, 2005 Teachers attend high school forum for Q & A with superintendent about district issues from 5-6 p.m.

May 11, 2005 Teachers attend BOE Meeting wearing black (7:30 p.m.) and President of STA reads statement representing teachers' perspective, and Member of STA executive committee speaks publicly about teachers' discontent.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Based on the conceptual map in chapter 2, which is an interpretation of Stone's framework for the paradox of policy making, on paper this is an argument about efficiency, i.e. helping students achieve the highest test scores and as a result assuring their success in the future. However, after analyzing the data and interpreting the methods described in chapter 3, it became apparent that, under Stone's model, this issue falls under the goal equity which describes "who gets what, when and how" (Stone, 2002).

During the literature review it was evident that Stone's goal of "liberty" was never compromised or utilized. Both sides, the BOE and the STA, exercised their rights under NY State law. This is because every action taken was in accordance with, and did not violate or question each party's rights under the law. Further, as a result of the contract negotiations coming to an impasse, the community has voiced their concerns for their security in the media by stating that they feel like their community is being "ripped apart." This would fall under Stone's notion of psychological needs, part of her thinking around the goal security. The politics, problems, and solutions described in Stone's research were considered during the interpretation of data.

Recommendations: The map would more clearly reflect the influence of alliances, passion and loyalty continually infiltrate and shape the decision making process which would ultimately affect the temporary resolution in the Polis.