

## Book Review

Bell, J. M. (2014). *The Black Power Movement and American Social Work*. New York: Columbia University Press.

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In this book, Joyce Bell has added considerable depth and detailed analysis on the development of Black professional associations by filling a research gap in the existing literature concerning the institutionalization of the Black liberation movement during the age of Black Power. It has also offered a critique of state-centered studies of social movement outcomes. The book reveals in-depth scholarship on both the Civil Rights and Black Power movements revolving around social movement theory and new knowledge about race and power. The book has examined the leadership models and the importance of intra-organizational dynamics in shaping the national association of Black social workers.

The project of Bell is based primarily on extensive archival research, participant observation and Theory Guided Process Tracuity (TGPT) to examine the ways in which the movement became institutionalized within formal organizations.

Divided into eight chapters, the book has particularly highlighted in depth the institutionalization of Black Power politics into the professions, particularly social work, and the far reaching impact of the Black Power movement on U.S. society. In the first chapter, the author has discussed that Black Power was the central motivation and political lens for the creation of new racial practice within organizations in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the U.S. The author has looked specifically at the rise of Black professional associations and the use of the specific case of American social work to

illustrate the role of the movement in shaping the profession. Placing the activism of Black social workers during the late 1960s and early 1970s in the context of institutionalization of the rights revolution and the expansion of Black Power politics, the author has argued the rise of Black professional associations in general - and within social work in particular - is a primary example of the institutionalization of the Black Power movement.

Chapter 2 provides the historical perspectives of the Black liberation movement in the United States and critically describes that it was not a sort of political formation but morphed into a political form and simultaneously ushered in new radicalized norms within institutions to carve out institutional space for African Americans and reinforced class cleavages within the Black community. The unprecedented Black access to higher education and white collar employment, combined with their movement ideology, led to the growth and development of an independent Black organization, which has been discussed in Chapter 3. This chapter has also explicated the relationship between action and organization of Black social workers and the framing of the Black Power movement.

Chapter 4, which is very important for social workers, helps readers to understand the relationship between the Black liberation movement and social welfare. The social workers, who straddle the fence between activism and service delivery, are forced to rethink their roles in movements. The atmosphere of uncertainty, caused by the shifting

movement of ideas and practices, created openings for dissenting social workers to seek change within the profession. Chapter 5 traces the process of the mobilization of Black social workers and the emergence and transition from a Black caucus of settlement workers to a multi-cultural campaign. More significantly, it describes emotional dynamics at work in the conflict within the organization.

Chapter 6 describes the emergence of the Black Social Workers Association for pursuing their goals independently amid the perceived constraints of the larger professional organization in the context of shifting radical ideologies and the expansion of Black Power politics. Chapter 7 presents the comparative outcome of Black social workers' activism in two relatively prominent, similar social work organizations and discusses the role of emotional labour in these struggles. The author has developed a conceptual model for understanding the role of intra-organizational social movements in civil institutionalization. The concluding chapter highlights the popular conceptions of the Black Power movement in the development of Black

professional associational life and explores the idea of treating the Black Power era as a transition period in race relations.

The book will be useful to understand the divergent paths of these movements and the relationship to the larger structure of the Black Power movement. It will also help readers develop deeper insights to understand the process of how movement gains became institutionalized within formal organizations. The social workers will be highly benefitted by reading the work of Bell to understand the impact of the Black Power movement and its, not only into their professional lives, but also into education and culture.

I believe that social work academicians and researchers should seriously consider use of this book while teaching papers on social movements, which will be definitely very much useful to understand new dimensions of the movement, social dynamics and the relationship between social movement and social welfare.