

**DISENTANGLING RACE AND POVERTY:
The Civil Rights Response to Anti-Poverty Policy¹**
The DuBois Review, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2008): 339-368

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Abstract:

Despite disincentives, civil rights organizations have chosen to advocate on behalf of the poor throughout their histories. This paper examines the SNCC's and the NAACP's activities concerning the Economic Opportunity Act during the early and mid-1960s. First, I establish the level of attention SNCC and NAACP devoted to the War on Poverty. Based on analysis of the groups' archives, I find that both groups increased their attention to anti-poverty policy during a period when other issues were salient to all African Americans. Secondly, I assess why these shifts in organizational priorities occurred. My findings indicate competition among civil rights organizations drove the NAACP and SNCC to commit attention to anti-poverty issues, and to focus attention to grassroots organizing concerning the War on Poverty. Differences in the organizations' structures mediated what form this attention would take.

Keywords: Civil rights organizations, NAACP, SNCC, Economic Opportunity Act, anti-poverty policy, welfare reform, interest groups

“[I]n our minds, gaining the right to vote - and even initially, the right to sit at a lunch counter - was tied to the racially-based powerlessness of [rural and poor African Americans], and gaining these rights would, we thought and hoped, inevitably lead to improving their economic status. That it did not do so doesn't mean we didn't think it would.”

---Julian Bond, Chairman of the NAACP, former Communications Director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee²

INTRODUCTION

Given the conflation of race and poverty in the general perception, it may seem apparent that civil rights groups focused on racial equality also would advocate for the poor.³ However, representation of the poor has never been the top priority of civil rights organizations. Existing literature on the activities and ideologies of civil rights groups argues that such organizations have functioned with a distinct middle class bias since well before the 1960s civil rights movement (Goluboff, 2007; Reed, 1999; Marable, 1985). Additionally, all organizations face disincentives to represent the poor: such advocacy is expensive, politically unpopular, and often involves trade-offs with other issues that are more central to organizations' missions.

Nonetheless, because of the disproportionate effects of poverty on African Americans, civil rights groups may consider economic issues and issues of poverty to be inherently part of their mission. Such organizations have expressed concern with, and commitment to, issues that specifically affect the African American poor. (Strolovitch, 2007). Although they varied in their chosen tactics and strategies, groups such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference were particularly concerned with African American economic freedom.⁴ Organizations and activists struggled to balance their commitment to sometimes radical economic goals with the necessity of working towards civil rights goals that were palatable to white liberals and policymakers. (Jackson, 2007). For many

activists and leaders, the goals of civil rights were inseparable from those of economic equity because activists on the frontlines were struggling to overcome both racial and economic oppressions. As John Lewis, former chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, explained: "...people have said that the civil rights movement was a middle class movement...But, a lot of the people that made up the rank and file of that movement, the people that got arrested and went to jail, the people that participated in the marches, that stood in that immovable line, they were dirt poor."⁵

Additionally, middle class African Americans might have particular interests in addressing issues of economic inequality. Research demonstrates that middle and upper class African Americans, who largely compose the membership of civil rights organizations, do not consider their own interests to be far removed from those of the African American poor. Scholars have found that African American middle class status may be fragile – African Americans have less wealth and income than middle class whites, and contend with housing segregation and discrimination as do the African American poor. (Patillo-McCoy, 1999; Oliver and Shapiro, 1995). Dawson finds that shared interests based on race lead middle class African Americans to care more about issues affecting the poor than class differences would predict. (Dawson, 1994).

Dawson's findings have spurred arguments that the emphasis on linked racial fate masks differences, and different interests, among African Americans. By assuming common interests based on race, the dominant interest is assumed to be "common." (Reed, 1999, 44). Although policymakers and organizational leaders evoke linked racial fate with claims to represent "all African Americans," scholars have found that such claims are often accompanied by inactivity on behalf of non-dominant subgroups. For example, Cohen finds that African American

leadership largely neglected the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on African Americans. Borrowing from her theory of primary and secondary marginalization, we could define organizational constituencies as either primary or secondary based on their level of marginalization within, and outside of, the organization. (Cohen, 1999). Often, the definition of a group's primary constituency is non-controversial; it would be difficult to argue that the NAACP was not founded to represent African Americans. However, such broad identities are often difficult to translate into organizational priorities. Therefore, primary constituencies often dominate organizational priorities whereas secondary constituencies receive less attention, or are ignored altogether.

Additionally, advocacy that is considered to be relevant to an organization's overall constituency often carries implicit, and sometimes explicit, class biases. For example, civil rights organizations' relatively recent focus on affirmative action policies is interpreted by some scholars as the representation of middle class interests, to the neglect of low-income African Americans (Reed, 1999; Marable, 1985). In her *Survey of National Economic and Social Justice Organizations*, Strolovitch demonstrates that organizations claiming to represent "all African Americans" give disproportionate attention to issues affecting the wealthy and highly-educated. She finds that civil rights organizations focus substantially more attention on affirmative action in higher education, an issue that affects an advantaged subgroup of their constituency, than on welfare reform, an issue that affects a disadvantaged subgroup of their constituency. (Strolovitch, 2007, 121).

Therefore, whether civil rights organizations represent the poor is, in fact, an empirical question – such representation cannot be assumed. Examining civil rights organizations' advocacy on behalf of the poor sheds light on an important, yet largely unexamined, aspect of the

groups' histories, and illustrates how issues of class and race intersect in interest group priority-setting.⁶ Additionally, it provides a unique opportunity to further understand the internal decision-making process of organizations -- how do interest groups choose their priorities? What factors might lead groups to advocate on behalf of marginalized subpopulations of their constituencies?

In this paper, I examine the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) and National Association Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) activities leading up to, and concerning, the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA), the legislative component of President Johnson's War on Poverty.⁷ It may seem that the NAACP and SNCC had one clear incentive to represent the poor during the War on Poverty: federal funding was available to organizations involved in anti-poverty programming. However, neither the NAACP nor SNCC received federal War on Poverty funds during the mid-1960s, and both organizations were quite vocal about their refusal to do so. SNCC did not pursue federal funding because of its overall distrust of federal anti-poverty programming. In 1965, the NAACP Board decided that the organization should not become a prime contractor of the federal anti-poverty funding because such a commitment would compromise the organization's ability to protect the rights of African Americans from the federal government.⁸ In fact, civil rights organizations faced particular disincentives to making anti-poverty policy a priority during the War on Poverty.

During the early and mid-1960s groups were quite narrowly focused on passing the Civil and Voting Rights Acts, legislation that was intended to fight racial discrimination. After the passage of the Acts, groups debated whether the movement should focus on overseeing their implementation, or should emphasize activities related to the goal of economic justice -- a goal which many groups and leaders saw as inseparable from civil rights, but which had taken a back

seat to desegregation and nondiscrimination since the mid-1950s.⁹ African Americans were not the primary recipients of public assistance – in 1960, 40% of welfare recipients were African American.¹⁰ Additionally, neither the Johnson Administration nor the national media initially considered the War on Poverty to be particularly relevant to African Americans. In its coverage of the first year of the EOA's implementation, the news media focused on rural poverty and the experience of poor whites in the US. (Gilens, 1999, 116). Therefore, civil rights organizations had a choice – they could choose to focus on the effective implementation of the Civil and Voting Rights Acts, which would affect *all* African Americans. Or, they could choose to prioritize the War on Poverty, which would affect low-income Americans, many of whom were African American.

As donations to civil rights groups dropped after the passage of the Acts, civil rights groups had little incentive to take on a politically unpopular priority that did not explicitly concern racial equality.¹¹ By the late 1960s, the NAACP had become less dependent on membership for revenue because of its increasing reliance on grants from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and the Carnegie Corporation.¹² However, during the early and mid-1960s, civil rights organizations, including the NAACP, relied heavily on membership contributions for revenue. (Marger, 1984).¹³ Therefore, declining membership numbers put organizations in precarious positions, and may have made a commitment to a costly goal, such as poverty alleviation, increasingly unattractive.

My findings indicate that despite such disincentives, both the NAACP and SNCC increased their anti-poverty activities during the War on Poverty. Competition among organizations pushed groups to advocate on behalf of the poor. The NAACP became involved at the national and local levels, and worked to increase its relevance to the African American poor.

SNCC focused on grassroots organizing to ensure that low-income African Americans were not disempowered by the federal government's anti-poverty policy. Although SNCC had considered poverty alleviation to be critical to its mission since its founding, strategic considerations led the group to operationalize its ideological commitment.

In the next section, I present theoretical understandings of interest group decision-making. Secondly, I explain my approach to establishing organizational priorities. I then establish the level of attention that both groups devoted to anti-poverty policy during the War on Poverty. The NAACP and SNCC increased their attention to the needs of the poor during this period, but with varying tactics and goals. Next, I present my findings as to why both organizations shifted their priorities during the 1960s. As I demonstrate systematically in this paper, competition among civil rights organizations drove the NAACP and SNCC to commit attention to anti-poverty issues, and to focus attention to grassroots organizing concerning the War on Poverty. Differences in the organizations' structures mediated what form this attention would take.

A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF WHY AND HOW GROUPS SHIFT THEIR PRIORITIES

Pluralists argue that competition among organizations allows multiple voices to be heard within the US political system – power is dispersed among groups of citizens with common preferences and no one group of elites holds disproportionate levels of power (Truman, 1960 [1951]; Dahl, 1961). Instead, groups and group leaders strive to attract members or ideological adherents. This creates competition among groups and ensures that all people have the opportunity to gain representation – some group or group leader will always be seeking their support. Because

pluralist theory emphasizes competition within the political system, scholars pay attention to what types of groups exist, how groups form and maintain themselves, and who, in terms of group interest, is represented in the US political system. However, such research rarely examines the internal priority-setting processes within groups.¹⁴ Indeed, usually organizational goals and priorities have already been determined at the point when scholars examine organizational behavior. Although few scholars have analyzed the internal decision-making processes of organizations, many have noted the importance of such analysis.¹⁵

A group's internal response to external factors often determines its organizational priorities.¹⁶ In their analysis of incentive systems, Clark and Wilson argue that a group will face varying levels of competition from rival organizations based on the types of incentives it offers to its members. (Clark and Wilson, 1961, 157-161; Wilson, 1995 [1973], 266). If several organizations are addressing the same set of issues, relations can be harmonious as long as groups are not required to compete over membership.¹⁷ This may be possible if each group carves out a unique role for itself concerning the issues, or approaches the same social problem with differing tactics than the other groups sharing its constituency.¹⁸ A group may also avoid competition by shifting its focus within its overall mission, or focusing on a different aspect of its "identity." (Heaney, 2004). However, within a group of organizations that arguably share a defined constituency, such as civil rights groups, perceived competition for membership may be inevitable, regardless of the various options for organizational focus and strategy.¹⁹

Because of my reliance on archival research, this paper is able to assess *whether* groups respond to competition, and also *how* they respond. I expect that if one organization begins to approach general goals from a new perspective, one that appeals to a broad-base of membership, competition to maintain membership may require shifts in other organizations' goals and

priorities towards those of the rival organization. To maintain its membership, political strength, and preeminence among organizations sharing its mission, or its identity, an organization will work to prevent the loss of its constituency, or potential constituency, to other organizations with similar missions.

Secondly, I expect that a group's perceptions of, and responses to, competition, a factor that is external to an organization, will depend on its structure. This research offers a unique opportunity to assess the interaction of internal and external factors on decision-making, and makes it clear that such factors cannot be assessed in isolation. A national organization that controls the programming of its affiliates, such as the NAACP, will be influenced by activities at the local level. Even if its chapters have no power to name organizational priorities, the national office will be affected by the activities of other organizations in the field, like SNCC, that are mobilizing people that both groups consider to be part of their constituencies (Clark and Wilson, 1961; Wilson, 1995 [1973]; Gray and Lowery, 1996). For large organizations with autonomous affiliates, or for loosely-federated organizations, such as SNCC, local activities may determine national priorities because the national office seeks to retain relevance to local groups.²⁰ If the national office does not maintain a cooperative relationship with its local offices and organizers, the local groups are able to pursue their own priorities without regard to the national organization, stripping the national office of its purpose.

ESTABLISHING AND EXPLAINING PRIORITY SHIFTS: DATA AND METHODS

Establishing Shifts in Organizational Priorities

An examination of the NAACP and SNCC provides an opportunity to understand priority-setting in two organizations with similar missions, but with very different organizational structures and

approaches to social change. Neither the NAACP nor SNCC considered poverty policy to be a top priority, although both considered economic justice to be highly relevant to their overall missions. While the NAACP had a long-established, and highly organized bureaucracy, SNCC functioned with a very loose structure and embedded suspicion of any type of bureaucracy. A comparison of decision-making within the two groups is worthwhile because of their differing approaches to achieving similar overall goals.

Determining organizational priorities, and the reasons groups arrive at those priorities, is a challenging task. Organizations have various audiences, means for expressing their priorities, and sometimes do not decide on an explicit hierarchy of goals. Archival research provides a unique opportunity to determine organizational priorities, and to assess the dynamics leading to internal decision-making within organizations. I examine materials such as annual reports; annual convention resolutions, speeches, and programs; internal memos, communications to membership, public speeches, and press releases.²¹ Both public and internal documents contribute to my assessment of organizational priorities and decision-making. For example, a program from an organization's national convention allows me to assess the amount of attention the group was devoting to anti-poverty policy; minutes from the Board meeting where the convention was planned provides an understanding of the factors that contributed to determining the theme of the convention.²²

Sometimes it is clear when an organization is prioritizing an issue – local affiliates are mobilized, organizational representatives make public speeches, and media attention is focused on the organization's activities. Such an impressive campaign on an issue gains publicity for the organization spear-heading the effort, and can be quite beneficial for the group in the long-term. In the short-term, however, it is quite costly. Only an organization that is not only financially

comfortable, but also has a presence in multiple states or urban areas, access to media attention, and the ability to attract participants to public gatherings could conceive of such a campaign.

Smaller organizations, or even large ones that do not wish to devote all of their resources to one issue, may prioritize advocacy on issues without embarking on an all-consuming campaign.²³

To determine shifts in organizational priorities, it is necessary to measure the level of priority each organization devoted to anti-poverty policy during distinct time periods.

Organizations engage in many different types of activities, and for many different reasons.

Factors distinct to each organization, such as whether it generally relies on direct-action tactics, mobilizes local organizations, or has local branches, will affect how it prioritizes an issue. As Table 1 illustrates, I have included various types of activities at each level of priority.²⁴

[Please insert Table 1 approximately here]

According to my scales of priority, indicators of an organization's high level of commitment to an issue include: explicit statements of the issue as an organizational priority, internal structural changes aimed to make the organization's activities concerning the issue more effective, and activities that involve the mobilization of membership. These activities reflect an organizational commitment to the issue that is financial, and also involves membership. Without some evidence of membership involvement, an organization's commitment to an issue is not classified as a high priority. At a mid-level of commitment, a group has committed ongoing resources and staff to the issue, but has not reached out to membership through direct mobilization. Staff may lobby Members of Congress on the policy and make public statements on the issue, but will not activate membership to contribute funds for activities on the issue, or to participate in demonstrations. If an issue is a low-priority for an organization, the group may offer rhetoric either supporting or opposing a policy, but will not commit any substantial

organizational resources, in terms of staff or funding, to the issue. For example, a staff member may attend a coalition meeting about a piece of legislation, but that will be the staff member's only activity concerning the legislation. Coalition activity itself might indicate various levels of organizational commitment to an issue. If an organization actively participates in a coalition, activities such as fundraising and membership mobilization indicate a high commitment to the issue, based on my priority scales. On the other hand, staff attendance at a coalition meeting requires minimal organizational resources.

This methodology allows me to present archival information in a standardized form, providing an understanding of fluctuations in attention to anti-poverty policy, both across and within organizations. For each low-level priority indicator, I assign one point; for each mid-level priority indicator, a group receives two points; and, for each high-level priority indicator, a group receives three points. I then determine the organization's activities as a percentage of total possible activities. Once fluctuations in priorities are documented, it is possible to examine why shifts in organizational attention to the poor occurred, contributing to an understanding of organizational decision-making, and to an awareness of how politically marginalized groups gain representation.

Assessing the factors that affect priorities

To assess the influence of each variable examined, I assess the impact of each document based on its content, author, and intended audience. For example, a memo from a National Field Director to an Executive Director about the problems with expanding branch activity indicates that these problems existed, and that the national office was responding to them. On the other

hand, a similar letter from a Branch officer to the national office does not indicate that the national office found such concerns to be pressing, or was responding to them.

I evaluate the relationship between the independent variables and an organization's attention to welfare reform in two ways. First, I determine the role of the independent variables during a time that the organization is focusing on welfare reform. Often, an organization's shift in focus to anti-poverty policy occurs after several months of internal discussions. Based on internal and external documents, membership numbers, budget numbers, branch numbers, and re-organization activities, I determine changes in the independent variables during the period before the planning of the anti-poverty activities. While this method does not establish a causal relationship between changes in an organization's structure and priority change, it provides an understanding of the structure of the organization, and the organization's economic health, as it embarked on a priority shift to represent the poor.

Secondly, in many cases, the content of resolutions, speeches, and internal memoranda divulge reasons for the organization's attention to the issue. For example, a memo from an Executive Director to his or her assistant stating that the organization must begin to focus on public assistance issues to attract the support of the masses indicates the importance of a group's constituency to its determination of priorities. In the quote below, Roy Wilkins, Executive Director of the NAACP, explains to Branch leaders that the NAACP should increase its attention to the War on Poverty to maintain its preeminence within the civil rights movement:

As one of the Association's leaders, you will recognize at once that we are striking out in a new direction and launching a major new program area [the War on Poverty]. You will also, I believe, welcome it as an absolutely necessary move if the Association is to maintain its leadership in our movement.²⁵

Such documents, which present apparently causal reasoning, establish the relationships between the independent variables and the organization's attention to poverty, and help tell the story of the organizational changes and their effects on the organization's emphasis on welfare issues. However, simply because a reason for priority-shift is given in an organizational document does not indicate that other factors were not also relevant. I pay attention to organizational explanations for shifts in focus, but also take into account factors such as whether the organization was financially healthy at the time, or was facing a decline in membership.

CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS' PRIORITIES

Civil Rights Organizations' Decisions to Advocate on Behalf of the Poor

On August 20, 1964, Congress passed the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA), which established anti-poverty policy as a priority of the Johnson administration. The purpose of the EOA was to alleviate poverty in urban and rural areas. The EOA was considered unique by policy makers, as well as advocacy groups, because of its emphasis on the involvement of the poor through Title II, which included the creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), and the legislation's "maximum feasible participation" clause. The Title's overall principle was that the poor should participate in the newly established local anti-poverty agencies, known as the Community Action Programs (CAPs) (Axinn and Stern, 2001, 247). Although funded by the federal government, each CAP would be run by local agencies and nonprofit organizations, opening the door to possible interest group participation in the implementation of the EOA (Jackson, 1993, 419).

Although literature on the activities and ideologies of civil rights groups has demonstrated a commitment to issues affecting the middle class, existing literature also points to groups' dedication to advocacy concerning economic issues. (Jackson, 2007, 1993; Piven and

Cloward, 1977; Meier and Bracey, 1993).²⁶ Hamilton and Hamilton argue that civil rights groups have consistently operated with a “dual agenda,” focusing on both traditional civil rights issues as well as those concerning universal social policy (1997).

Civil rights organizations have consistently emphasized three main points: (1) preference for a universal social welfare system that does not distinguish between social insurance and public assistance, (2) jobs for all in the regular labor market, and (3) federal hegemony over social welfare programs (Hamilton and Hamilton, 1997, 4).

Because they focus on universal and contributory social welfare policy, Hamilton and Hamilton do not examine organizational representation of public assistance recipients – an important distinction when discussing responses to social welfare policy. Public assistance policies are unique in the realm of social welfare because of their political unattractiveness; they are not publicly nor politically supported, and are not based on contributions from eventual recipients. Additionally, it was not until the War on Poverty that welfare policy came to be viewed through a racial lens and associated with African Americans. Despite the inequitable nature of welfare disbursements, neither the public or policy makers viewed poverty policy as particularly affecting Blacks. (Lieberman, 1998; Gilens, 1999). In short, it was not at all obvious that the policy deserved a place on the race-centered agenda of civil rights organizations. Why then did these organizations decide to advocate on behalf of an unpopular group, such as welfare recipients? Figure 1 summarizes the NAACP’s and SNCC’s attention to anti-poverty policy during two periods – two years leading up to the EOA and two years of passage and initial implementation of the Act.

[Please insert Figure 1 approximately here]

The NAACP’s Attention to Anti-Poverty Policy during the 1960s

The NAACP was founded in 1910 to establish a permanent and lasting voice in the battle against lynchings, race riots, and unjust criminal prosecution of African Americans (Meier and Bracey, 1993, 8). By 1920, membership dues from African Americans supplied most of the organization's income. At the same time that black membership was increasing, the NAACP was also performing outreach to sympathetic whites. (Kellogg, 1967, 134). The NAACP's goals during the period after its founding focused on securing liberty for African Americans through anti-lynching legislation, criminal defense in cases resulting from the race riots in cities during the early 20th century, and equitable criminal representation in general.

Throughout its history, however, the NAACP has had a reputation for elitism and a lack of concern with the plight of low-income African American. By the mid-1950s, the organization addressed issues confronting African American workers primarily through policy advocacy, and not litigation strategy, which became largely confined to cases involving nondiscrimination and desegregation. (Frymer, 2008; Goluboff, 2007). As Table 2 illustrates, the NAACP's attention to public assistance policies was scant until 1964 and 1965. Although the organization offered rhetoric concerning poverty during the early 1960s, it did not engage in activities that brought the issue to the attention of its membership or policymakers.

During the War on Poverty, on the other hand, the NAACP devoted significant financial resources to the program, and mobilized its membership and branches to be active in its implementation. As poverty issues became increasingly important within the civil rights movement during the early 1960s, the NAACP struggled with whether and how it would address the interests of low-income African Americans. My measurements of priority reflect this change: the NAACP increased its involvement from 8% of possible anti-poverty activities in the early 1960s, to 57% of possible activities in 1964 and 1965.

[Please insert Table 2 approximately here]

Beginning in 1961, the Board passed resolutions specifically addressing public welfare, and the inequitable disbursement of welfare benefits between African Americans and whites. In both 1961 and 1962, a Convention Resolution specifically addressed attempts by numerous states to deny benefits to eligible recipients based on residency requirements, and to disparage the character of welfare recipients:

Throughout the country there is a growing campaign...to discredit the principle of humane and efficient public assistance to persons unable to maintain themselves. This has taken the form of efforts to malign newcomers by charging, without basis in fact, that they have deliberately migrated to urban areas in order to seek welfare and other public assistance... We call on our branches and state conferences to investigate all instances of denial of public assistance where such denial is racially motivated and to take affirmative action through appropriate statements, protests and other means to insure that the rights of innocent children and all other necessitous persons are protected.²⁷

In 1962, the Board passed a resolution linking economic and social factors to the reasons why a disproportionate number of African Americans were eligible to receive welfare benefits, and supporting benefit provision to children with a father in the home. The NAACP framed the issue in terms of racial discrimination, and argued that it affected African Americans as a whole.

...The high proportion of Negro families receiving such assistance in many communities is used to reflect discredit upon the race of these recipients...economic and social factors, such as continued higher levels of unemployment among Negroes, should be pointed up as contributing to this unfortunate situation... since gainful employment is too often denied the Negro male, [we urge that] there be a renewal of the temporary provision allowing assistance to dependent children even if an employable male is in the home, when the unemployment is through no fault of his own.²⁸

The national office itself was not active concerning welfare reform, or welfare legislation, during the early 1960s. Although directives concerning discrimination by state welfare agencies were issued to branches, and resolutions stating the organization's positions were passed at

Conventions, there is no evidence that the national office played a role in the passage of President Kennedy's Public Assistance Amendments of 1962.

As Table 2 illustrates, the NAACP increased its activities during 1964 and 1965 to a mid-level of priority. In September 1964, at the first NAACP Board meeting after passage of the EOA, the Board voted to appoint a Special Committee to study the Anti-Poverty Act: "...As to the Anti-Poverty Act, we must devise ways of working on the community level... We must study it and devise ways and means of getting in on the ground floor, on the local level."²⁹ At the October 1964 Board meeting, the newly-formed Special Committee on EOA Implementation reported that it was preparing a memorandum outlining the Anti-Poverty Act for the branches, indicating the most appropriate areas for NAACP involvement.³⁰ By this time, the national office had already received word that branches were "moving rapidly ahead to implement [EOA] programs" from the organization's regional offices.³¹ The November issue of *The Crisis*, the NAACP's newsletter, named the implementation of the EOA as the organization's top priority, and reported the branches' activities.³² Shortly after the national office named the anti-poverty legislation as its top priority, Herbert Hill, Labor Secretary and a member of the Special Committee, presented his proposal for NAACP involvement in the anti-poverty programs: "[The Labor Secretary proposed that] the NAACP become the basic coordinating agency in the Negro community for initiating, negotiating, and operating programs developed under the authority of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964."³³

In 1965, the NAACP passed its most detailed, and policy-based, resolution concerning the organization's welfare-related activities.

The NAACP recognizes...the EOA as a great challenge to the American people and an equally great opportunity for the American Negro and all other minorities...We believe the NAACP can make a significant contribution to the

War on Poverty and urge our national officers, branches, and members to pursue constructive and aggressive courses of action...³⁴

Although national and local staff generally recognized the importance of placing immediate priority on the War on Poverty, some affiliates were ill-equipped to make such a transition. In early 1965, Hill wrote to Roy Wilkins and explained that branches would require significant help from the national office to be able to participate in local anti-poverty programs effectively. “Because the NAACP has traditionally eschewed social work approaches ... there will be a reluctance as already indicated, on the part of government agencies to enter into contractual agreements with the NAACP.” Therefore, Hill stated that branches would need “extensive intervention” by the national office, and that this help could not be limited to memos.³⁵ The Board voted to create a manual for the branches to guide them in their participation in the anti-poverty programs at the local level. Branches were to seek representation on local CAP planning boards, and to demand representative participation of African Americans throughout the phases of the poverty program.³⁶ The organization’s 1965 annual report highlighted the anti-poverty activities of numerous branches and State Conferences.³⁷

Between the early and mid-1960s, the NAACP’s attention to anti-poverty policy shifted from a low to a mid-level. By 1965, the NAACP’s activities reflected the organization’s acknowledgement of the structural bases for poverty, and a commitment to rely on the federal government to provide aid for those who were ineligible to receive contributory benefits. The national office mobilized its branches, met with policymakers, and named the War on Poverty as an organizational priority after the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act. As the evidence in this section suggests, the national office was concerned that its branches have the appropriate tools to implement the War on Poverty, and that the NAACP be highly relevant to the implementation of the EOA.

SNCC's Commitment to Anti-Poverty Policy during the 1960s

From its inception, SNCC prioritized the mobilization of African Americans living in poverty throughout the rural South as an important goal. This commitment eventually would extend to low-income African Americans living in northern cities. The War on Poverty, and passage of the Equal Opportunity Act, catalyzed SNCC to push for nondiscriminatory, and sometimes revolutionary, anti-poverty policy. SNCC's priorities reflected the organization's consistent commitment to economic autonomy for African Americans. However, SNCC's anti-poverty activities remained largely rhetorical until the mid-1960s. SNCC gave anti-poverty policy a low priority during the early 1960s; the organization participated in 22% of possible anti-poverty activities. In 1964 and 1965, SNCC participated in 41% of all possible anti-poverty activities. (See Table 3). SNCC never gave high priority to the federal government's anti-poverty policy. [Please insert Table 3 approximately here]

At the end of 1963, SNCC's Executive Committee met to discuss the organization's future. The Committee decided that socioeconomic issues should become the organization's top priority. SNCC was particularly concerned with urban areas of hard core poverty, and the Committee argued that if such poverty were to be addressed, it would have to be "systematically and not sporadically."³⁸ The staff decided that the organization's new focus required a re-thinking of strategy – poverty prevents people from participating in direct action activities, organizers would therefore need to use new tactics to organize poor people. To implement this type of organizing, the Executive Committee decided that further education of the staff about the causes of poverty was necessary. By the end of 1963, SNCC was committed to increasing its organizational resources to mobilize the rural poor.³⁹ However, this commitment was reflected

in plans for staff education, and remained largely rhetorical until after the passage of the EOA in 1964.

SNCC increased its advocacy on behalf of the poor after the passage of the EOA because it believed that the War on Poverty was a disingenuous attempt to address fundamental economic inequality in the US. SNCC's interpretation of the EOA is not surprising, particularly because of the implementation problems of the Act, which often seemed to discriminate against poor blacks, and because SNCC had long been unexcited about federal poverty programs. Even before the organization analyzed the War on Poverty programs specifically, SNCC was highly skeptical that they could ever be effective in alleviating poverty. In the *New York Herald Tribune*, Chairman John Lewis stated: "Giveaway federal programs -- ...the inadequate War on Poverty...-- all provide a mere Band-Aid for the gaping wound of economic injustice. The problems are so tremendous that individual civil rights organizations cannot handle them."⁴⁰ This recognition of the inequities inherent in the US political system caused SNCC to focus on local relief and organizing – staff and committee members repeatedly argued that overhauling the economic system was an impractical goal.⁴¹ Throughout its history, and culminating in 1965 with the creation of the Poor People's Corporation, SNCC preferred a strategy of providing poor blacks with the means to escape poverty, and argued that aid programs fostered dependence on the federal government, which could not be trusted to provide adequate benefits on a nondiscriminatory basis.

At the Waveland Staff Retreat in 1964, three months after the passage of the EOA, SNCC staff discussed how to react to the War on Poverty. Responding to an Executive Committee directive issued in September, a workshop was held on federal programs, with special emphasis on the poverty program; however, the staff present in the workshop decided that they did not

have enough information, and that further research was needed before SNCC could establish its position on the War on Poverty.⁴² The national office was asked to provide information about the poverty programs, and, as will be seen below, began to devote resources to providing SNCC staff with up to date information about the ramifications of the poverty legislation.⁴³

Perhaps most reflective of SNCC's critical view of the War on Poverty programs was its weekly internal publication in 1965, "Life with Lyndon." "Life with Lyndon" provides a unique lens into SNCC's ideology concerning anti-poverty policy, and makes clear that the organization was unsupportive of the War on Poverty programs because of its commitment to improving the economic position of the poor, not because of a lack of interest. Responding to the staff's request for additional information concerning the federal poverty programs, Jack Minnis, a research staffer, wrote detailed analyses of the War on Poverty grants, and the players in the federal government who were responsible for implementation, or, "Poverty Warriors." In the "Life with Lyndon" series SNCC complained about the small percentage of funds allocated to poor people.

On January 17 Lyndon announced that \$101 million of war-on-poverty money has been allocated. A total of \$22,670, .02% of the allocations, actually went to poor people in the form of small business and farm loans. The balance, 99.98% went to poverty warriors themselves. A typical grant (no loans to the warriors – only the poor must repay) was the one to the Systems Development Corporation of Santa Monica, CA. ... While Lyndon's head poverty-warrior, Sargent Shriver (he should know a lot about poverty – he was born to wealth and married even more) could only find \$22,670 to put into the hands of poor people...⁴⁴

SNCC argued that the OEO should increase its disbursements to the poor instead of funding corporate projects. This theme was prevalent throughout the newsletters, and was consistent with SNCC's ideological commitment to providing the poor with the tools to lift themselves out of poverty: "...if Lyndon had decided to give the poverty money to the poor, instead of to his

rich and near-rich friends, there would be...families who had a decent living in the US who hadn't had one before."⁴⁵ In December 1965, SNCC was forced to stop producing the newsletter because of the high costs of researching, printing, and distributing it to the staff.⁴⁶

In addition to its newsletter, the national office organized protests against the slow implementation of War on Poverty programs at the national level. The Washington and national offices organized two days of protests in Washington DC to "break the poverty barrier," and demanding immediate implementation of War on Poverty programs. The organization indicated that the protests were "the first major unemployment demonstrations in the US in 10 years."⁴⁷ SNCC also focused on poverty alleviation through local outreach to help residents receive the appropriate amount of welfare benefits.⁴⁸

Although the national office did coordinate a limited number of national-level activities, SNCC advocated that local organizations be at the forefront of the fight to gain improvements for poor people. In 1965, the national office prioritized a local anti-poverty project, the Poor People's Corporation, which funded economic projects in black communities in Mississippi.⁴⁹ The Corporation's founding conference was held at Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, MS and included 300 participants. Jesse Morris, a SNCC field organizer, helped found the organization. (Carson, 172). Upon its founding, the Corporation identified the failings of the War on Poverty as one impetus for its creation:

...the poor are not being involved in the planning of the Community Action Programs ...and ...politicians are using the "War on Poverty" for patronage and other political purposes. In Mississippi, a new approach is being tried...A Poor People's Corporation has been formed...This corporation is responsible for providing technical assistance to low income groups that have been formed for self-help purposes and to provide financial and other resources to said groups.⁵⁰

Reflecting SNCC's commitment to the distribution of anti-poverty funds to the poor themselves, the Corporation's entire budget was spent on anti-poverty projects. The Corporation was staffed by one full time worker, whose low wages were paid by SNCC, and three volunteers.⁵¹ The focus on providing funds to the poor, and not on maintaining the organization, reflected the anti-bureaucratic ideology of many SNCC staff. Additionally, it prevented the Corporation from the bureaucratic spending associated with the War on Poverty, of which SNCC was extremely critical.

SNCC's response to the War on Poverty reflects both its rhetorical and action-based commitment to self empowerment among African Americans. The organization did not engage with the federal government in its implementation of EOA programs, but rather served as a watch-dog to be sure that poor African Americans were receiving the benefits that were due to them. Additionally, the group helped organize local responses to poverty that would ideally allow the poor to develop a means for sustained income.

WHY THE SHIFT? EXPLAINING ORGANIZATIONAL DECISIONS TO SHIFT PRIORITIES

Case studies based on archival research raise concerns that perhaps the research is creating a story and, in this case, neglecting other factors that may have led organizations to advocate on behalf of the poor. My research includes assessments of factors based on existing literature about the various reasons interest groups represent particular issues, including relations between each organization and political parties and policy makers; trends in welfare receipt among African Americans; trends in poverty levels among African Americans and whites; and changes to welfare legislation itself.⁵² In this paper I focus on the factors that I find to most

affect priority change in crowded issue niches: organizational structure and competition.

Findings about the interaction between internal and external variables may be mitigated by concerns that a host of external factors may have an independent effect on decision-making (March and Olsen, 1989). Perhaps President Kennedy's directives to his Council on Economic Advisers to design anti-poverty policies, which would eventually be the foundation for the War on Poverty, led civil rights organizations to focus on anti-poverty.⁵³ As I discuss above, although Kennedy's policy prescriptions undoubtedly focused national attention on poverty, neither policy makers nor civil rights organizations generally considered his directives to have particular racial implications. (Lieberman, 1998; Gilens, 1999). During the early 1960s civil rights groups were concerned about poverty – as I demonstrate below, it took competition among the groups to turn that concern into active advocacy.

Another possibility is that civil rights organizations increased their attention to poverty policy as more of their constituents became affected by poverty, or by welfare programming. However, my findings indicate that changes in welfare receipt and poverty rates among African Americans do not explain shifts in organizational priorities. During the early and mid 1960s, the poverty rate among African Americans declined as the level of AFDC receipt increased. Poverty rates among African Americans had been dropping since the 1950s, largely due to migration to northern cities, overall economic growth, inclusion in public assistance policies, and increased job opportunities. Trends in AFDC receipt during this period are tricky to interpret – the slight increase in the percentage of African American recipients in the late 1960s was due to the increasingly non-discriminatory distribution of benefits, not to increases in the number of eligible recipients. (Lieberman, 1998; Patterson, 1994; Blank, 2003).

Perhaps groups advocated on behalf of the poor because of an existing ideological commitment to economic justice. As the research in this paper demonstrates, the NAACP's and SNCC's decisions to represent the poor were strategic – both groups were aware of their position among civil rights organizations when determining their priorities. Even for SNCC, a highly ideologically-driven group, advocacy on behalf of the poor happened in part because of the group's acknowledgment of its effect on other civil rights organizations' priorities. The findings in this paper point to the importance of moving beyond ideology as an explanation for group priorities. In groups with multiple goals, structural and strategic considerations will determine which commitments become organizational priorities.⁵⁴

Explaining Civil Rights Advocacy on Behalf of the Poor

The NAACP's and SNCC's responses to anti-poverty policy varied a great deal – SNCC focused on fighting the unjust implementation, and economically traditional foundation, of the Economic Opportunity Act. On the other hand, the NAACP sought to work with the federal government to coordinate implementation at the local level. Both organizations increased their advocacy on behalf of the poor because of their perceived positions among civil rights organizations.

Because of their common overall missions, the NAACP and SNCC shared an issue niche with other civil rights groups, such as the National Urban League (NUL), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The civil rights movement included campaigns for school desegregation, the desegregation of public facilities and accommodations, and voting rights for African Americans, all of which were conducted by coalitions of organizations. These organizations often worked with varying strategies, and focused on particular aspects of each campaign. Although working towards similar goals, the

groups were often conflicted about the strategies used to achieve these goals, and which groups would play prominent roles in each campaign. (Zald and Garner, 1987; Peake, 1987; Morris, 1984). Because each organization struggled to maintain its unique role within the movement, and its relevance to the movement, relations among groups affected organizational priorities. This research demonstrates that groups in crowded issue niches are especially attuned to the activities of other groups, and may therefore adjust their priorities accordingly.

For the NAACP, pressure came from competing organizations, such as SNCC, and led the national office to name anti-poverty activities as a priority. Because the NAACP operated with a top-down, bureaucratic structure, the national office was not concerned with local offices' autonomy to determine their own priorities. SNCC perceived itself to be a radicalizing force among civil rights organizations, and considered its own anti-poverty activities to be critical to pushing the more traditional groups' priorities. SNCC's commitment to a decentralized structure and to local organizing determined how it implemented its anti-poverty activities.

The NAACP's Protection of its Preeminence among Civil Rights Organizations

The founding bylaws of the NAACP established the group as a highly centralized one whose activities would be implemented by its branches. Charles Flint Kellogg argues that "From the beginning, the Association was highly centralized and the national body maintained control over branches and membership" (1967, 119). The national office's authority to establish priorities does not indicate that there were no tensions between the national and local offices, or even that the local offices effectively responded to national priorities.⁵⁵ The national office, however, unquestionably recognized its authority over its branches, and consistently worked to enforce its priorities with local offices. This internal dynamic stands in marked contrast to other

organizations, such as SNCC, which struggled with whether the national office had authority to determine local priorities. For the NAACP, priority-setting at the national level applied to all organizational offices at the regional, state, and local levels.

As the civil rights movement picked up steam during the early 1960s, the NAACP increasingly worried about losing members to organizations, such as SNCC and CORE, as well as losing the public's perception of the NAACP as the preeminent civil rights organization.⁵⁶ Such competition was not new for the NAACP. The organization had recently experienced what it considered threats to its primacy among civil right organizations by the National Negro Congress (NNC) and the Communist Party.⁵⁷ Eventually, the employment and economic activities of the NNC convinced the NAACP that it needed to shift its agenda in order to appeal to African Americans who were mobilized by the NNC. (Bates, 1997).

Throughout its history, the NAACP had come under fire for catering to the interests of the middle and upper classes.⁵⁸ This reputation led the organization to be particularly concerned with maintaining its relevance as poverty became an increasingly important issue for civil rights organizations. Fears about the actions of new civil rights groups being formed in the early 1960s, such as SNCC, were expressed by Gloster B. Current, Director of Branches, in a letter to L. Pearl Mitchell, a Board member:

Today there are competitive organizations in the field... They feel that if they can carve out a role for themselves and thus diminish the strength and agility of the larger civil rights organizations in the field, that they will be able to corner the civil rights market and take control of it.⁵⁹

The NAACP was quite concerned with the recruitment strategies of other civil rights groups. As the 1960s civil rights organizing intensified, and as the number of active civil rights organizations grew, the NAACP became increasingly concerned with its image as an elite, top-down organization. Newer, or newly-radical, organizations were appealing to low-income

African Americans, and emphasizing the importance of their involvement in the civil rights struggle. In 1962, Roy Wilkins, Executive Secretary, reported to the Board that CORE, SCLC, and SNCC “all were in full-fledged competition with the NAACP throughout all phases of the civil rights program...”⁶⁰

This competition from newer civil rights organizations had direct implications for the NAACP’s strategies. Before a staff meeting in 1960, which would address the NAACP’s image, John Morsell, Assistant Secretary, received memos from national staff concerning the direction the NAACP should take in relation to political action and the masses. Mildred Bond, Life Membership Secretary, wrote to Morsell complaining that historically, the leadership and membership of the NAACP had been middle class. Numerically, the organization continued to grow, but this was because the middle class itself had grown. Bond stated that the staff should consider whether it was time to break away from only middle class involvement.⁶¹ Calvin D. Banks, Field Secretary, made an argument similar to Bond’s, and explicitly argued for reaching a greater number of African Americans: “The talented tenth stigma must be erased. We must get closer to the masses. We must aim for a simplification of approaches which will increase awareness.”⁶² Herbert Hill, Director of Labor, agreed, arguing that the organization needed to focus on attracting membership at the local level to increase mass membership.⁶³

In September 1964, after the Board voted to focus on the implementation of the EOA, Wilkins wrote a memo to the branches explaining the Board’s decision. He instructed branches to immediately request representation on CAP boards to maintain the NAACP’s visibility as the preeminent civil rights organization:

As one of the Association’s leaders, you will recognize at once that we are striking out in a new direction and launching a major new program area. You will also, I believe, welcome it as an absolutely necessary move if the Association is to maintain its leadership in our movement.⁶⁴

Similarly, in its 1965 resolutions, the Board indicated that the reason for its prioritization of the EOA was to maintain the organization's leadership in the civil rights movement:

...NAACP branches can and should play an important role in mobilizing the Negro community in determining its representation in such local agencies [the Community Action Programs]. NAACP branches should be recognized as a primary source of those who represent the Negro community...⁶⁵

The NAACP's directives to branches, to represent individuals receiving public assistance on CAP boards, were driven by the organization's need to maintain its viability as a civil rights organization among all African Americans. Because African Americans continued to face disproportionate levels of poverty even after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, and other organizations, such as SNCC, continued to draw these disparities to light, a mainstream civil rights organization could not close its eyes to the needs of poor African Americans.

SNCC's Unique Commitment to Local Organizing and Radical Objectives

SNCC was founded in April 1960 to serve a unique purpose within the burgeoning civil rights movement. The Committee would coordinate the growing student movement, and local protest groups, throughout the South. The conveners of the initial meeting, including Ella Baker of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, thought that there was a need for "an organization among organizations" to provide information and funds concerning student protest activities.⁶⁶

From its inception, the organization was not to attempt to control the actions of local protest groups, or to step out of its coordinating role.⁶⁷

SNCC considered its commitment to decentralization to be distinctive among civil rights organizations. Because other groups had to work to build local chapters and to maintain themselves as organizations, SNCC staff argued that these groups were not able to take risks

concerning their programs and priorities. SNCC, on the other hand, conceived of itself as a coordinating agency that did not function as a traditional interest group, and therefore did not determine its priorities based on a concern with maintaining itself. SNCC did not build chapters at the local level; therefore, it could work to form “community movements” as opposed to “community organizations.”⁶⁸ Organizers were very aware that poverty prevented political and community participation. Because SNCC was committed to developing stable community and political organizations at the local level, it was particularly concerned with the implications of the high levels of poverty among African Americans, especially in the South.

Staff considered SNCC’s commitment to local protest strategy to be one of its unique characteristics, as compared to other civil rights organizations that were focusing on more traditional forms of political activity.⁶⁹ The group’s focus on the local level, and local level protest strategies, was reflected in its organizing attempts. Through community building and mobilizing at the local level, SNCC argued that the black masses would be able to gain political control. While activities at the national level were sometimes relevant, it was local-level organizing that would produce the leaders necessary to effect social change: “...In order for the Negro to keep his political power, assuming he will have it and assuming he will get the vote, there must be grassroots political organization through housing projects, neighborhoods, housewife organizations, the churches, the social clubs, etc.”⁷⁰

SNCC worked to distinguish itself from other civil rights organizations. At a 1962 meeting of the heads of civil rights organizations in New York, SNCC was forced to defend its unique approach to local organizing to other civil rights organizations. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP stated that he believed that other organizations, namely SNCC, were attempting to push the NAACP out of the civil rights struggle. SNCC also came under attack from the National

Urban League's Executive Secretary, Whitney Young, based on its lack of traditional organization. Young suggested that SNCC and CORE merge, since SNCC did not serve a unique purpose. SNCC staff responded that the organization's commitment to local autonomy made it distinctive among other civil rights groups: "[SNCC is able to] establish clear identity with the local community by living in it to the point where [staff] is no longer outsiders."⁷¹ As this exchange demonstrates, SNCC was very aware of the need to establish a distinctive identity among civil rights organizations.

In addition to its unique commitment to local organizing, SNCC defined its role in the movement based on its militancy. After the Heads of Organizations meeting, the Coordinating Committee defined its intent in terms of possible competition with other civil rights groups: "...our intent is not to be on a competing basis with other groups, but to assist them where possible to fulfill their own objectives. This may mean stimulating them to direct action..."⁷² After experiencing ideological disagreements with other civil rights organizations during the planning of the March on Washington in 1963, SNCC was encouraged to maintain its involvement with the Big 10 civil rights organizations after the March by Eleanor Holmes, field organizer, specifically for the purposes of radicalizing the other groups:

...as the most militant of the civil rights organizations, SNCC has an obligation to keep its point of view alive in the Committee [of the Big 10 civil rights organizations] and to seek to move it in a more militant direction...Even the Big 6 includes the far richer, far more influential, and far more conservative NAACP and Urban League...SNCC should not abandon its radicalizing role at this juncture.⁷³

SNCC's oversight of the implementation of the War on Poverty was driven by its commitment to local activism and autonomy, and its awareness of its unique role within the civil rights movement. SNCC was critical of the War on Poverty, particularly because it did not

provide enough autonomy for the poor themselves. The group's commitment to local organizing and its consistent support for economic programs that did not rely on federal aid were unique among civil rights groups. SNCC was aware of the importance of defining its own goals and positions within the broader civil rights issue niche. Similar to the NAACP, SNCC's perception of its place within the civil rights movement made the War on Poverty a priority for the organization; and its structure, one of local decentralization, contributed to its critical response to the program.

CONCLUSIONS

The NAACP and SNCC responded differently to competition from other civil rights organizations because of differences in each group's structure. The indirect result, however, was a convergence on poverty alleviation, which moved up the ladder of organizational priorities for both groups. Because it felt particularly vulnerable based on its historical preeminence, as well as recent threats to that preeminence, the NAACP responded to competition from other civil rights groups, and chose to activate its affiliates to participate in the implementation of anti-poverty legislation. The organization's top-down decision-making structure allowed the national office to respond to competition from other civil rights groups, and to direct local affiliates in their anti-poverty activities. The passage of the EOA, and its discriminatory implementation, incited SNCC, an organization suspicious of federal government policies and committed to local organizing, to speak out against the War on Poverty and to create its own local alternatives to the federal aid for the poor, such as the Poor People's Corporation. SNCC's conception of itself as a radicalizing force for existing civil rights organizations pushed its decision-makers to remain critical of the American economic system, and to advocate for policies and programs that would

usurp that system. This intended “radicalization” worked, and beginning in the early 1960s, the NAACP became heavily influenced by the activities of emerging civil rights organizations, including SNCC, and allowed other groups’ platforms to determine its organizational priorities and strategies.

The findings in this paper are important because they point to the inadequacy of interest group research that does not examine the interaction among external and internal variables when studying organizational decision-making. Based on the findings in this paper, future research must consider external factors, such as competition among organizations, but also to pay particular attention to structural differences among groups within the same issue niche, and the effect of these differences on the interests a group chooses to represent.

The research in this paper establishes and explains shifts in priorities within organizations. However, SNCC and the NAACP varied in their level of attention to the poor, and in the magnitude of their shifts in priorities. (See Figure 1). What explains the differences in the magnitudes of the shifts in priority among civil rights organizations? A brief consideration of the groups might indicate that these differences could be explained by an organization’s ongoing concern with the needs of the poor – SNCC, an organization with a founding commitment to poverty issues, experienced a less dramatic increase in advocacy activities during the War on Poverty than did the NAACP. However, the research in this paper demonstrates that differences in organizations’ founding ideologies may not be enough to explain these differences. Future research is necessary to explore the factors that lead to differences in the levels of attention organizations devote to anti-poverty issues.

Civil rights organizations’ advocacy on behalf of the poor both confirms and complicates the pluralist understanding of the US political system. As pluralism would predict,

organizational competition did lead to increased representation on behalf of the poor. However, representing the poor is a taxing endeavor, both financially and organizationally. For organizations that are not embedded in a community, leaders must establish relationships and trust with community leaders before any mobilization can occur, and often before national representation can be effective.⁷⁴ Certainly, other goals, which are less expensive and have a higher possibility for success, are more attractive for interest groups to pursue. As scholars have documented extensively, it is difficult for the interests of the poor to be heard in Congress, by parties, or by interest groups.⁷⁵

Despite these challenges to the representation of the poor, the findings in this paper offer a glimmer of hope for increasing the representation of marginalized interests within the US political system. Competition within a group of organizations with similar missions may lead to increased advocacy on behalf of politically marginalized subgroups of the organizations' constituencies. As scholars have established, organizations work harder to advocate on behalf of their advantaged subgroups and primary constituencies. (Strolovitch, 2007; Cohen, 1999). However, if one organization within a movement can be convinced of the interests of a politically alienated group, such as low-income African Americans, other organizations may follow suit, and representation may become increasingly democratic.

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Table 1: Organizational Activities as Indicators of Priority

| |
|---|
| <p><u>Low Priority Indicators (1 point each)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position taken on issue (Statement, Convention Resolution) |
| <p><u>Mid-Level Priority Indicators (2 points each)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff, or organizational committee, assigned to issue as one of several, or only, assignments • Internal evidence of funding for activities concerning issue • Communications to policymakers about issue (Testimonies before Congress or Parties, position letters) • Public speeches or statements made by staff/leadership about issue • National office directs local branches/affiliates to be active on issue • Mailings to membership about issue |
| <p><u>High-Level Priority Indicators (3 points each)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising with membership about issue • Mobilization of membership for actions about issue • Consultation with policymakers about issue (Legislative drafting, implementation) • National Office offers workshops/training for local branches/affiliates on issue • Internal Discussions, as reflected in meeting minutes and transcripts, indicate issue as priority • Organizational Documents name the issue as a priority (Resolutions, Annual Reports, Organizational Publications) • Organizational re-structuring to address issue (overall restructuring, creation of new department) • Organization offers own plan concerning issue |
| <p><u>No Evidence of Priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of any evidence of issue as priority |

Figure 1: Organizational Attention to Anti-Poverty Policy

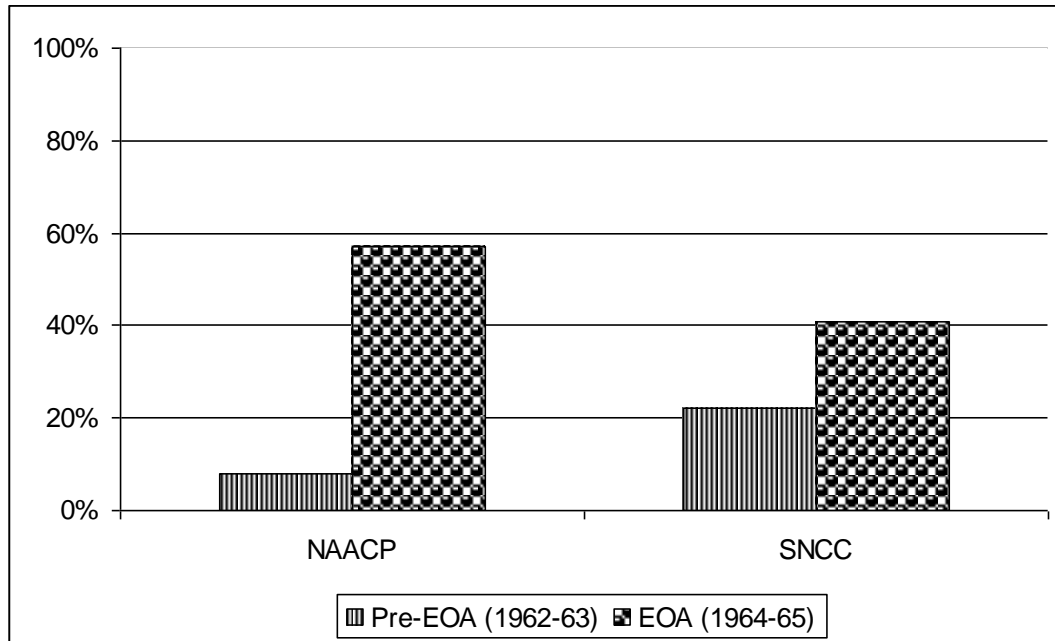


Table 2: NAACP's Prioritization of Anti-Poverty Policy, 1960-1965

| Organizational Activities | Pre-EOA (1960-1963) | Immediate Response to EOA (1964-1965) |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| <u>Low Priority Indicators (1 point each)</u> • Position taken on issue (Statement, Convention Resolution) | X | X |
| <u>Mid-Level Priority Indicators (2 points each)</u> • Staff, or organizational committee, assigned to issue as one of several, or only, assignments | | X |
| • Internal evidence of funding for activities concerning issue | | |
| • Communications to policymakers about issue (Testimonies before Congress or Parties, position letters) | | X |
| • Public speeches or statements made by staff/leadership about issue | | X |
| • National office directs local branches/affiliates to be active on issue | X | X |
| • Mailings to membership about issue | | |
| <u>High-Level Priority Indicators (3 points each)</u> • Fundraising with membership about issue | | |
| • Mobilization of membership for actions about issue | | |
| • Consultation with policymakers about issue (Legislative drafting, implementation) | | X |
| • National Office offers workshops/training for local branches/affiliates on issue | | X |
| • Internal Discussions indicate issue as priority | | X |
| • Organizational Documents name the issue as a priority (Resolutions, Annual Reports, Org. Publications) | | X |
| • Organizational re-structuring to address issue (overall restructuring, creation of new department) | | |
| • Organization offers own plan concerning issue | | |
| <u>No Evidence of Priority</u> • Absence of any evidence of issue as priority | | |
| PRIORITY LEVEL* | 8% | 57% |

*Priority level determined by the organization's activities as a percentage of total possible activities. The NAACP activities during the early 1960s totaled 3 out of 37 possible activity points, or an 8% priority score; NAACP activities during the War on Poverty totaled 22 out of 37 possible activity points, or a 57% priority score.

Table 3: SNCC'S Attention to Anti-Poverty Policy 1960-1965

| Organizational Activities | Pre-EOA (1960-1963) | Response to EOA (1964-1965) |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <u>Low Priority Indicators (1 point each)</u> • Position taken on issue (Statement, Convention Resolution) | X | X |
| <u>Mid-Level Priority Indicators (2 points each)</u> • Staff, or organizational committee, assigned to issue as one of several, or only, assignments | X | X |
| • Internal evidence of funding for activities concerning issue | | |
| • Communications to policymakers about issue (Testimonies before Congress or Parties, position letters) | | |
| • Public speeches or statements made by staff/leadership about issue | X | |
| • National office directs local branches/affiliates to be active on issue | | |
| • Mailings to membership about issue | | |
| <u>High-Level Priority Indicators (3 points each)</u> • Fundraising with membership about issue | | |
| • Mobilization of membership for actions about issue | | X |
| • Consultation with policymakers about issue (Legislative drafting, implementation) | | |
| • National Office offers workshops/training for local branches/affiliates on issue | | |
| • Internal Discussions indicate issue as priority | X | X |
| • Organizational Documents name the issue as a priority (Resolutions, Annual Reports, Org. Publications) | | X |
| • Organizational re-structuring to address issue (overall restructuring, creation of new department) | | |
| • Organization offers own plan concerning issue | | X |
| PRIORITY LEVEL* | 22% | 41% |

*Priority level determined by the organization's activities as a percentage of total possible activities. SNCC activities during the early 1960s totaled 8 out of 37 possible activity points, or a 22% priority score; SNCC activities during the War on Poverty totaled 15 out of 37 possible activity points, or a 41% priority score.

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NOTES

¹The author would like to thank Reuel Rogers, Cheryl Welch, Dennis Chong, and two anonymous reviewers at the *Du Bois Review* for their insightful comments and constructive feedback on earlier versions of this article. Research for this project was supported by the Simmons College Fund for Research, and research grants from the Center for Legal Studies and the Graduate School, both at Northwestern University.

² E-mail correspondence with author, May 6, 2008.

³ On the racial implications of welfare policy, the equation of African Americans with welfare recipients, and the negative implications of this association see, for example, Gilens, 1999; Omi and Winant, 1997; Lieberman, 1998; Quadagno, 1994.

⁴ See Jackson, 2007; Hamilton and Hamilton, 1997; Carson, 1995.

⁵ John Lewis, Interview with Author, June 11, 2008.

⁶ Existing scholarship points to civil rights organizations' ongoing commitment to economic issues. (Jackson, 2007, 1993; Piven and Cloward, 1977; Meier and Bracey, 1993; Hamilton and Hamilton, 1997). However, this literature does not systematically examine civil rights organizations' activities concerning public assistance policies. Strolovitch's recent work (2006, 2007) draws the analytical distinction between universal social welfare policy and welfare policy in terms of the constituency the policies affect. In her survey of social justice organizations, she considers Social Security, a universal policy, to be a policy that affects all group members. She considers welfare to be a policy that disproportionately affects marginalized groups within an organization's constituency.

⁷ I analyzed SNCC archives between 1960, the year of the organization's founding meeting, and 1972, the year the group disbanded. I examined NAACP archives between 1956 and 1965 – a decade that was critical to the NAACP's organizational development and programmatic definition. The SNCC archives, housed at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change are available on microfilm. *The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959-1972*. (New York: New York Times Company Microfilming Corporation of America, 1982). The following parts of the SNCC archives were examined: Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972; Subgroup B: New York Office, 1960-1969; Subgroup C: Washington Office, 1960-1968; Subgroup D: Records of Undetermined Provenance, 1960-1968; Appendix A: Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party Papers, 1961-1972. All future references to SNCC documents will be labeled "SNCC." The following parts of the NAACP archives were examined: Supplement to Part 1, Supplement to Part 4, Supplement to Part 10, Supplement to Part 13, Supplement to Part 16, Supplement to Part 17, Part 21, and Part 29. John H. Bracey, Jr. and August Meier, *Papers of the NAACP* (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, various dates). The NAACP archives are available in their entirety at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC. All future references to NAACP documents will be labeled "NAACP."

⁸ NAACP, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, April 12, 1965, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-26. Relying on funding opportunities as an explanation for priority-changes is overly-simplistic even for organizations that did pursue federal funding. The National Urban League underwent an enormous and costly restructuring to make itself more eligible for federal grants during the War on Poverty. These decisions were partially based on the group's conception of itself as the social service provider among civil rights organizations.

⁹ See Goluboff, 2007 on the NAACP's shift away from labor issues after *Brown v. Board of Education*. See Frymer, 2008 on the NAACP's attention to labor issues, and explanations of institutional constraints faced by the organization when addressing labor issues. See Hamilton and Hamilton, 1997, on civil rights organizations' attention to economic policy generally.

¹⁰ On AFDC rates, see Piven and Cloward, 1993 [1971], 194; on discrimination against eligible African Americans, see Lieberman, 1998.

¹¹ Public support for welfare declined dramatically beginning in the early 1960s. In response to the question, "Are we spending too much, too little, or about the right amount on welfare," the proportion of Americans supporting

increased welfare spending dropped from 60% in 1961, to just below 40% in 1969, to 20% in 1973. The proportion of Americans stating that too much is spent on welfare increased from just fewer than 10% in 1961, to just fewer than 30% in 1969, to over 50% in 1973. (Teles, 1996, 44). See Teles, 1996 for a detailed discussion of the reasons for shifting public support for AFDC policy. Also see Lieberman, 1998; Gilens, 1999; Quadagno, 1994.

¹² See Marger 1984, 26. Marger explains that the NAACP's foundation funding was unique among civil rights organizations because the organization received non-specific grants. Other organizations, such as CORE and the SCLC, also received foundation funding, but for specific projects.

¹³ The NAACP's involvement with some unions, such as the AFL-CIO, which was involved with the implementation of the War on Poverty, could have increased the organization's attention to Johnson's anti-poverty policies. The NAACP's labor department recognized the large number of potential NAACP members in the trade union movement. (On the Labor Department's engagement with unions, see Frymer, 2008). Although attention to the preferences of union members on policy may have contributed to the NAACP's position on, and public statements about, the War on Poverty, it did not require that the War on Poverty become a top priority for the organization. The organization's concern with addressing the needs of its members, however, certainly included its cross-membership with unions. See below for more detailed discussion of the NAACP's concern with membership retention in the determination of its priorities.

¹⁴ Extensive research examines the internal structure of groups, and the influence of structure on group operations. As I explain throughout this paper, I am more specifically interested in the influence of internal structural factors on priority-setting and decision-making. Works that focus upon internal dynamics and their influence on priority-setting include: Moe, 1980; Rothenberg, 1992; McFarland 1984; Barakso, 2004. On the internal structures of organizations and the significance of structure to group operations, without specific application to priority-setting, see, for example: Michels, 1949; Lipset, Trow, and Coleman, 1956; Truman, 1960 [1951]; Greenstone, 1969; Hrebenar and Scott, 1982; Bacharach and Lawler, 1982; Wilson, 1995 [1973]; Clemens, 1997; Pollenta, 2002.

¹⁵ See Tierney in Crotty, Schwartz, and Green, 1984; and Baumgartner and Leech, 1998.

¹⁶ Increasingly, scholars recognize the importance of external factors and their effects on organizational decision-making. See Baumgartner and Leech 1998; Walker 1991; Hrebenar and Scott, 1982; Gray and Lowery, 1996; Browne, 1998; Berry, 2003; Salisbury, 1984; Tarrow, 1984; McFarland, 1992.

¹⁷ On the role of subgroups within organizations, see Moe 1980.

¹⁸ Scholars argue that groups carve out defined issue areas, or "issue niches", to maintain their unique appeal to their constituency. According to scholars, "issue niches" are more narrowly-defined than issue domains, which are broadly defined and include multiple policy areas. (Browne, 1990).

¹⁹ Other examples of citizens' groups sharing constituencies include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) groups and women's organizations. Also, more issue-based groups, such as environmental groups, might consider themselves to represent the interests of a defined constituency -- environmentalists.

²⁰ SNCC's national office did not have a stated purpose outside of coordinating the activities of local organizers and groups. On SNCC's role in relation to local groups, see Pollenta, 2004.

²¹ I approached each organization's archival index with a list of my topics of interest. Generally, I looked for index subjects that pertained to organizational priorities, decision-making, structure, poverty efforts, relations between policymakers and organizations, relations between national and local offices, and relations among organizations. I would then note each document listed under a subject, and examine those documents. The organizations share many index terms, such as "Board Meeting Minutes." Some terms are specific to each organization. For example, only SNCC's files include documents pertaining to the "Poor People's Corporation."

²² The archives of each organization are composed of their office files. Some include both national and branch offices, and others include only the national office. Generally, I restricted my research to the national office files of

each organization. If, however, a branch's files were relevant to a particular anti-poverty campaign, or to a national decision to reach out to branches, I consulted those files. Not surprisingly, each organization varied in its record-keeping. An organization's approach to record keeping may reflect its approach to bureaucracy. For example, the NAACP's files are more extensive than SNCC's. However, SNCC did maintain national office files and records. Although relying on archives for extensive documentation of the field work for SNCC would be difficult, the national office functioned bureaucratically.

²³ My assessment of organizational activities accounts for differences in organizational resources and size. Each type of activity only counts once in my determination of priority level. In other words, the NAACP may send one mailing, or five mailings, to its branches concerning anti-poverty policy. I am not counting how often the activities occur, but rather what types of activities occur. A variety of activities concerning an issue indicates organizational commitment to the issue. Simply because an organization sends five mailings to branches does not indicate that the organization is, overall, committed to the issue. The branch department may be the only component of the organization working on the issue. A group that produces four organizational brochures naming an issue as a priority may be no more committed to the issue than a group that produces one brochure, but sends the brochure to its entire membership and policymakers. Assessing the variety of activities an organization devotes to an issue provides a nuanced understanding of the type and level of attention an issue received.

²⁴ The activities assigned to these categories are based on surveys of interest group activities in the legislative arena, as well as social movements. On interest group activities, see Heinz et al, 1993; McFarland, 1984; Goldstein, 1999; Scholzman and Tierney, 1986; Walker, 1991; Moe, 1980. On social movement organization activities, see Zald and McCarthy, 1987; McAdam, 1984; Chong, 1992; Morris 1984.

²⁵ NAACP, Memo to Presidents of Branches and State Conferences from Roy Wilkins, Re: Action Memo: NAACP in the War on Poverty, October 13, 1964, Supplement to Part 17, National Staff Files, 1956-1965 Group 3, Series A, Box A-310.

²⁶ Histories of civil rights organizations refer to shifts in focus to poverty issues, but their purpose is not to trace the organization's commitment to social welfare policies; therefore, such shifts are examined only when they involved an overall change in the organization's focus (See Peake, 1987; Kellogg, 1967; Garrow, 1986; Meier and Rudwick, 1973; Carson, 1981; Parris and Brooks, 1971). Exceptions include Jackson, 2007, discussed above. Another exception is an article by August Meier and John H. Bracey, in which they analyze the history of the NAACP from its founding to 1965 in terms of its adherence to the ideals of the Progressive movement, and the influences of environmental and internal factors on the organization's programs and strategies (Meier and Bracey, 1993, 4). The authors claim that internal struggles did not influence the direction of the organization, and that the NAACP remained flexible in its prioritization of issues. Based on environmental changes, the organization was able to incorporate economic issues without moving away from its initial focus on racial policies (Meier and Bracey, 1993, 20). Like Hamilton and Hamilton, Meier and Bracey's analysis of economic issues does not include public assistance policies.

²⁷ NAACP, *NAACP Annual Convention Resolutions* 1961, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-13.

²⁸ NAACP, *NAACP Annual Convention Resolutions* 1962, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-14.

²⁹ NAACP, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, September 14, 1964, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-26.

³⁰ NAACP, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, October 13, 1964, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-26.

³¹ NAACP, Report of the Secretary to the Board of Directors for the month of September 1964, October 13, 1964, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-32.

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- ³² NAACP, "NAACP Maps Plans for Anti-Poverty Program," *The Crisis*, November 1964, 616.
- ³³ NAACP, Report of the Secretary to the Board of Directors for the month of October 1964, November 9, 1964, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-32.
- ³⁴ NAACP, *NAACP Annual Convention Resolutions* 1965, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-20.
- ³⁵ NAACP, Memo to Roy Wilkins from Herbert Hill, Re: Federal anti-poverty program, January 11, 1965, Supplement to Part 17, National Staff Files, 1956-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-310.
- ³⁶ NAACP, Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, April 12, 1965, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-26.
- ³⁷ NAACP, *NAACP Annual Report 1965*, New York: NAACP, 1966, 19.
- ³⁸ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series II: Executive and Central Committees, 1961-1967, Minutes of the SNCC Executive Committee Meeting, December 27-31, 1963, reel 3, frame 329.
- ³⁹ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series II: Executive and Central Committees, 1961-1967, Minutes of the SNCC Executive Committee Meeting, December 27-31, 1963, reel 3, frame 329.
- ⁴⁰ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, "Some Comments on the Civil Rights Movement, reprinted from the *New York Herald Tribune*," May 23, 1965, reel 14, f329.
- ⁴¹ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VIII: Research Department, 1959-1969, "Federal Programs – some notes and suggestions," March 29, 1965, reel 21, frame 1022. SNCC's critique of federal anti-poverty programs was consistent with the organization's ongoing critique of the federal government and of both political parties. For example, in his speech at the March on Washington, John Lewis pointed to the federal government's indictment of civil rights workers in Albany, GA, the inadequacies of both political parties for African Americans, and asked "Where is our party? Where is the political party that will make it unnecessary to have Marches on Washington?" As quoted in Carson, 2001 [1981], 94.
- ⁴² SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series II: Executive and Central Committees, 1961-1967, Minutes, Executive Committee, September 4, 1964, reel 3, frame 353.
- ⁴³ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series V: SNCC Conferences, 1960-1964, Minutes at Waveland Retreat, November 1964, reel 11, frame 958.
- ⁴⁴ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, Life with Lyndon in the Great Society, January 22, 1965, reel 21, frame 353.
- ⁴⁵ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, Life with Lyndon in the Great Society, Vol. 1, No. 13, May 1, 1965, reel 21, frame 353.
- ⁴⁶ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, Life with Lyndon, Vol. 1, No. 44, December 2, 1965, reel 21, frame 353.
- ⁴⁷ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, Press Release: Poorest Counties Get Least Help, August 4, 1965, reel 14, frame 439.
- ⁴⁸ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, Press Release: Poorest Counties Get Least Help, August 4, 1965, reel 14, frame 439.

⁴⁹ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, Minutes of the first membership meeting of the Poor People's Corporation, August 29, 1965, reel 44, frame 280.

⁵⁰ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series XVII: Other Organizations, 1959-1969, Fundraising Letter re: Poor People's Corporation, April 1, 1965, reel 44, frame 280.

⁵¹ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, A paper answering a few questions some people have raised in regards to the Poor People's Corporation, June 15, 1965, reel 44, frame 280.

⁵² On the various forms of influence of political elites and parties on organizations, see for example, Greenstone, 1969; McCarthy and Zald, 1973; McAdam, 1982. On the expectation that rules governing institutions, or legislation, will affect responses to the institutions or legislation, see March and Olsen 1989.

⁵³ On Kennedy's plans see Patterson, 1994. On the possible effects of policy on politics, or policy feedback, see Hacker, 2002 and Campbell 2003.

⁵⁴ Particularly in discussions of poverty and race, it may be tempting to argue that civil rights organizations advocate on behalf of the poor because they are ideologically driven to do so. Not surprisingly, scholars have argued that members of civil rights organizations are particularly ideologically driven concerning issues of racial equality. (Wilson 1973 [1995]; Bayes 1982.) The research in this paper indicates that ideological commitment to either racial equality, or economic equity, does not determine the level of attention an organization devotes to anti-poverty policy.

⁵⁵ In fact, the national office was consistently preoccupied with maintaining its control over local branches. (See Bracey and Meier, 1997, v). Gloster B. Current, the NAACP's Director of Branches, emphasized the need to improve the national/local relationship throughout his career.

⁵⁶ Marger, (1984), argues that competition among organizations led the NAACP to shift its goals, but not substantially. According to Marger, competition had more of an effect on the NAACP's strategies, which the organization widened to include direct action. Marger's assessment of organizational goals is based on analysis of *The Crisis*. My findings indicate a more substantial shift in activities than those of Marger.

⁵⁷ See Bates 1997; Goluboff 2007; Marable, 1985; Anderson, 2003, particularly concerning the Communist Party's impact on NAACP activities.

⁵⁸ The NAACP has consistently been considered a more conservative organization than other civil rights groups. On this reputation, and responding to this reputation, see Bond in Jonas, ed., 2005; Smith in Johnson and Stanford, 2002; Barker, Jones, and Tate, 1999.

⁵⁹ NAACP, Letter to Miss L. Pearl from Gloster B. Current, June 14, 1961, Supplement to Part 16, Board of Directors File, 1956-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box 27.

⁶⁰ NAACP, Report of the Secretary to the Board of Directors for the month of March, 1962, April 11, 1962, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-31.

⁶¹ NAACP, Memo to John Morsell from Mildred Bond, Re: Staff Conference, March 12, 1960, Supplement to Part 17, National Staff Files, 1956-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-307.

⁶² NAACP, Memo to John Morsell from Calvin D. Banks, Re: Reactions to Conference Proposals, March 12, 1960, Supplement to Part 17, National Staff Files, 1956-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-307.

⁶³ NAACP, Memo for Staff Conference, March 1960, from Herbert Hill, March 21, 1960, Supplement to Part 17, National Staff Files, 1956-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-310.

⁶⁴ NAACP, Memo to Presidents of Branches and State Conferences from Roy Wilkins, Re: Action Memo: NAACP in the War on Poverty, October 13, 1964, Supplement to Part 17, National Staff Files, 1956-1965 Group 3, Series A, Box A-310.

⁶⁵ NAACP, *NAACP Annual Convention Resolutions* 1965, Supplement to Part I, 1960-1965, Group 3, Series A, Box A-20.

⁶⁶ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series I: Chairman's Files 1960-1969, "Statement of Purpose, April 1960 Founding Conference," April 16, 1960.

⁶⁷ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series I: Chairman's Files 1960-1969, "Letter concerning October Conference and Recommendations of the Temporary SNCC October 14-16, 1960."

⁶⁸ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series III: Staff Meetings, 1960-1968, "Minutes of SNCC regional meeting," March 24, 1962, reel 3, frame 806. See Pollenta, 2004, for a discussion of SNCC's commitment to local organizing and the effect of this commitment on organizational structure and decision-making.

⁶⁹ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series II: Executive and Central Committees, 1961-1967, Memo to SNCC Executive Committee from Eleanor Holmes, re: SNCC and the Big 10 of the March on Washington, September 6, 1963, reel 3, frame 275.

⁷⁰ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series VII: Communications Department, 1960-1968, Some Comments on the Civil Rights Movement, Reprinted from the NY Herald Tribune, by John Lewis, May 23, 1965, reel 14, frame 329.

⁷¹ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series III: Staff Meetings, 1960-1968, Minutes of SNCC regional meeting, Atlanta, GA, March 24, 1962, reel 3, frame 806.

⁷² SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series V: SNCC Conferences, 1960-1964, Minutes of the June Meeting of the Coordinating Committee, June 1-2, 1962, reel 11, frame 813.

⁷³ SNCC, Subgroup A: Atlanta Office, 1959-1972, Series II: Executive and Central Committees, 1961-1967, Memo to SNCC Executive Committee from Eleanor Holmes, September 6, 1963, reel 3, frame 275.

⁷⁴ See Hays, 2001; Piven and Cloward, 1971.

⁷⁵ See: Jacobs and Skocpol, 2005; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Walker, 1991; Schattschneider, 1960; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1997.