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Interorganizational Influences on the Founding of African American Organizations, 1955–1985¹

Debra C. Minkoff²

This paper examines the relationship between traditions of social action and patterns of organizational development, using data on the formation of national African American protest, advocacy, and service organizations between 1955 and 1985. Following research in organizational ecology, Poisson regression is used to examine the association between organizational density and organizational formation across strategic forms. The results provide some support for the idea that interorganizational influences are important in shaping the contours of the African American social movement industry. Outside funding, internal organizational capacities and protest levels also play a significant role.

KEY WORDS: social movements; organizational ecology; civil rights movement; African American; voluntary action.

INTRODUCTION

Accounts of social movement development and decline are often rich with stories of activists, descriptions of state repression and the contraction of political opportunities, and analyses of the ebb and flow of resources and popular support. Many such studies are also attentive to the organizational influences that shape the timing, nature, and duration of activism, especially in terms of providing infrastructural support for movement emergence and promoting a united (albeit multivocal) front for movement progression (see, for example, Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McAdam, 1982;

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Morris, 1984, 1993; Staggenborg, 1991). From this perspective, organizational diversity is a critical component of the trajectories of social movements, although the link between social movement *organizations* (SMOs) and the social movement *industry* (SMI) requires more systematic attention, a point suggested early on by resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Zald and McCarthy, 1980).³

While both organizational and movement-based factors are acknowledged as important, most research emphasizes political and resource considerations when detailing the development of social movement industries in the contemporary United States. By contrast, this paper examines the role played by *organizational* traditions and dynamics in social movement development, using data on the formation of African American membership organizations between 1955 and 1985. More specifically, I follow Zald and McCarthy (1980) and organizational ecologists (Hannan and Carroll, 1992; Hannan and Freeman, 1989) in emphasizing how competitive and supportive organizational interactions among African American protest, advocacy, and service organizations play an integral role in establishing the current contours of this social movement industry.⁴ Such interactions are themselves driven by organizational dynamics at the population (or industry) level over and above the particular social, cultural, and political constraints that “channel” distinct forms of organizational activity (McCarthy *et al.*, 1991; see also Clemens, 1993).

In this paper I argue that to understand the development of the African American SMI since the mid-1950s we need to examine the compo-

³According to McCarthy and Zald (1977:1217–1218) a “social movement organization” (SMO) is “a complex, or formal, organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals”; a “social movement industry” (SMI) is constituted by “[a]ll SMOs that have as their goal the attainment of the broadest preferences of a social movement.”

⁴These organizational forms represent the “repertoire of collective action” (Tilly, 1978) available to African Americans over the periods of study, at least in terms of the availability of *organizational models* (see also Clemens, 1993). *Social protest* refers to the use of extrainstitutional means to influence institutional policies and/or elites; more familiar examples are the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panthers. *Institutional advocacy* (“advocacy”) refers to the use of routine institutional means to influence the decisions of an institutional elite in favor of collective interests, focusing on changing policies and securing collective goods (Jenkins, 1987:297). Examples of organizations pursuing this agenda are the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as well as Black Citizens for a Fair Media; arenas of institutional challenge are not necessarily political, but may encompass educational, economic, and cultural institutions, for example. Finally, *service/resource provision* implies providing private goods and services to the constituency without actual changes in policy or institutional structures—such as job training, welfare referral services, educational scholarships, or economic development. This category includes traditional voluntary organizations such as the National Urban League, as well as more politically oriented groups such as the Scholarship, Education, and Defense Fund for Racial Equality (SCORE).

ment development of national African American groups that span a range of organizational forms. I examine the idea that the trajectories of black protest, advocacy, and service organizations are intertwined by virtue of what Hannan and Freeman (1989; Hannan and Carroll, 1992) term “density-dependence”: the process by which organizational expansion *per se* increases the legitimacy of organizational forms at the same time as it sets up interorganizational competition and thus limits overall population growth and diversity. They argue that the very prevalence of an organizational form (population “density”) increases its familiarity and hence legitimacy, thereby expanding the opportunities for other groups to be created (Hannan and Carroll, 1992; Hannan and Freeman, 1989).⁵ When some model of activity is uncommon, those who want to adopt that form must also secure enough legitimacy to stabilize access to resources. A quantitative increase in that form is one mechanism that promotes such legitimacy, since each addition to the population increases a form’s “taken-for-grantedness” (Hannan and Freeman, 1989:133).

This suggests that there will be a positive relationship between organizational density and founding rates. As density increases, however, competitive pressures become more strong and the early benefits of organizational expansion diminish. Paradoxically, this decreases the probability of group formation just as this type of activity becomes more established. Combining these two processes, the empirical prediction is that density increases legitimacy at a decreasing rate, and increases competition at an increasing rate—i.e., there is a *curvilinear* association between density and founding rates (Hannan and Freeman, 1989).⁶ There is a good deal of empirical support for this relationship, based on studies of trade unions, semiconductor firms, newspapers, and even breweries (see Hannan and Carroll, 1992); Olzak and West (1991) also found this pattern in their study of

⁵In this discussion I follow Carroll and Hannan’s use of the term: “an organizational form is legitimate to the extent that relevant actors regard it as the ‘natural’ way to organize for some purpose. From this perspective, rarity of a form poses serious problems of legitimacy. When few instances of a form exist, it can hardly be the ‘natural’ way to achieve some collective end” (Carroll and Hannan, 1989:225). This definition decouples the concepts of “legitimacy” and “legality” and suggests that, in principle, the former is not dependent on the latter.

⁶A common criticism here is that legitimacy is based on the nature of the organization, especially its goals and strategies, and how well this meshes with preexisting public preferences. This is not so much a criticism but a clarification of the proposed framework. If an organizational form is uncommon (whether this is defined in terms of goals, structure, or strategy, for example) the successful formation and maintenance of new organizations validates the subsequent expansion of the form more generally. Aggregate population development reflects the extent to which the form has become legitimate (which may not imply that it is legally or morally sanctioned). One implication is that public preferences may be shaped by organizational expansion itself, and that actors’ definitions of what are the “natural” ways to organize are social constructions shaped by levels of prior organizational activity.

ethnic newspapers. Importantly, nonmonotonic density effects are generally robust even when direct measures of the sociopolitical environment are included as controls (Singh and Lumsden, 1990; for a critique of this approach, see Zucker, 1989).

A more concrete way of thinking about processes of density-dependence is in terms of traditions and models of action. Very simply, the idea is that organizational density indicates how established different "organizational repertoires" (Clemens, 1993) are, which may either set precedents for future activity or constrain additional efforts due to competition (which may itself result from increased organizational legitimacy). From this perspective, Hannan and Freeman's (1989) introduction of the concept of "cross-effects" between populations to emphasize how increases in the density of one population may influence the expansion of related organizations is particularly useful. For example, they examine the relationship between the density of craft unions on the founding of industrial unions and vice versa. An equivalent project in studying social change organizations is to consider how processes of density-dependence may apply to the expansion of an SMI, particularly in terms of how the increase of organizations pursuing distinct change strategies may alternately promote or constrain the formation of additional groups. For example, Minkoff (1994) applies this perspective to the more general sectoral expansion of women's and racial-ethnic social action, emphasizing the manner in which cross-effects expand the available organizational repertoire (Clemens, 1993). More specifically, in this paper I test whether cross-effects between the density and founding rates of African American protest, advocacy, and service forms of social action have influenced SMI expansion and in what direction.

Such an ecological approach implies that trends in the development of, and variation within, SMIs are established primarily by population processes. The more familiar alternative to this view is that the expansion of national movement organizations is related to such factors as openings in the political opportunity structure (Gamson and Meyer, forthcoming; McAdam, 1982), increased funding availability (Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McCarthy and Zald, 1977), improvements in indigenous organizing capacities (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984), and the pace of insurgency more generally (Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McAdam, 1982). To the extent that prior organizational activity plays a role, it is important as a source of direct resources (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984), a model of action (Clemens, 1993), or an "abeyance structure" (Taylor, 1989) during downturns in political opportunities.

The difference between these frameworks is stark: movement-based accounts, especially political process models (McAdam, 1982), are agency

centered while the ecological approach is often criticized for its determinism and ahistoricism (see, e.g., Zucker, 1989). Similar critiques have been leveled against resource mobilization theory (Jenkins, 1983). If there is evidence that the trajectory of new organizations is channeled by interorganizational dynamics at the population level, the findings of this research will also contribute to discussions of the relative importance of "structural conduciveness" (Smelser, 1963; see also McCarthy and Zald, 1973) and grass roots activism and agency in explaining the histories of U.S. social movements. In this respect, the civil rights movement and more recent organizing efforts by American blacks present a strong test.

There are a number of comprehensive accounts of the civil rights movement that illustrate the many ways that African American social action epitomizes the ideal of insurgency in the United States (e.g., Garrow, 1986; McAdam, 1982, 1988; Morris, 1984, 1993; Piven and Cloward, 1979). The civil rights movement entailed periods of high-risk, high-cost activism (McAdam, 1988). The role of established community infrastructures in movement emergence and growth is also well documented (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984). African American collective action also represents variations in periods and forms of sustained activism, both in terms of radical challenges to political institutions, reform efforts relying on advocacy methods, and more moderate forms of organizational activity aimed at providing economic, social, and political resources to the constituency more directly. To the extent that ecological dynamics can be shown to influence such developments, some modification of social movement theory is in order. After a brief discussion of contemporary African American organizational action, I will lay out some hypotheses regarding the expected cross-influences on the development of black advocacy, service, and protest organizational forms.

AFRICAN AMERICAN TRADITIONS OF SOCIAL ACTION

Most accounts of the civil rights movement suggest that some combination of four trends were important in precipitating black protest after World War II (see, for example, McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984; Oberschall, 1973; Piven and Cloward, 1979). In particular, the rise in black migration from South to North, the resultant increase in black urbanization, and trends in unemployment and the poverty rate contributed to the initiation of the civil rights movement. Following McAdam's (1982) summary, these economic changes facilitated a political realignment that improved the chances for collective action by African Americans, contributing to a growing sense of political efficacy and a collective definition of injustice. The critical in-

redient was the growth of existing community institutions (particularly black churches, colleges, and the NAACP), which enabled Southern blacks to gain headway in challenging the white power structure (see also Morris, 1984, 1993).

By the early 1960s, black civil rights activities were picking up in the southern United States, progressively gaining northern attention and support. As McAdam (1982) argues, the period of 1960–1965 can be seen as the “heyday” of black insurgency. From the start of the sit-in movement in 1960, through the Freedom Rides in 1961, the March on Washington in 1963, and the 1965 protest at Selma, blacks actively engaged in attempts to alter the institutional structure. The configuration of social movement and voluntary organizations generated directly from, and subsequent to, the civil rights movement itself have been particularly important in the history of black activism.

The intensity of institutional challenges escalated in tandem with the progression of the civil rights movement. The culmination of this trend was the Black Power movement, associated most notably with the activities of the Black Panthers and followers of Malcolm X. Analysts of the civil rights movement have noted a “radical flank” effect, whereby the presence of a radical fringe promoted the success of reform efforts since elites were more willing to make concessions to moderates. As a result, insurgency is channeled into more institutionally acceptable action (Haines, 1984; Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McAdam, 1982). By the early 1970s, the black insurgency had abated, although Jenkins and Ekert (1986) suggest that the black movement hit a low point in 1973–1974, stabilized in the mid-1970s, and began to undergo a renewal in 1980.

Even this cursory review of the history of African American social action suggests some more concrete predictions about the association between the expansion of certain types of organizations and the founding prospects for others in the field. Below I examine three main hypotheses about organizational traditions and the development of the African American social movement industry. One path of influence relates to internal group resources and organizing capacities. African Americans have an extensive tradition of organizational activity, both in terms of formal and informal collective structures, which were important in the development of civil rights SMOs. This is generally discussed in terms of the central role played by community institutions, such as the black church, in promoting civil rights activism in the 1960s (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984). It is likely that this tradition, combined with a history of black service organizations, such as the National Urban League and the United Negro College Fund, provided an important pool of indigenous skills. Also, these early forms of voluntary action may have contributed to the formation of advocacy or-

ganizations such as the NAACP, since they established the validity of African Americans pursuing collective action by adopting the dominant organizational form—that of a voluntary service association. However, it is possible that this supportive influence was limited and service provision associations became competitors for resources and members. The same logic of association may also hold between service organizations and protest groups.

A second, related hypothesis suggests the idea of a subsequent replacement effect. Advocacy, a more direct and effective method of institutional challenge, may have replaced service provision as it became more common and accepted as a way of seeking social change. The logic is that as the number of options for advocacy efforts increased, the incentive to form service-related organizations diminished accordingly.

A final line of influence suggested by the history of the civil rights movement is the radical flank effect. As described above, the main idea is that the presence of a radical fringe promoted the success of reform efforts, in that elites became more willing to make concessions to moderates. As a result, insurgency was channeled into more institutionally acceptable actions (Haines, 1984; Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McAdam, 1982). While most research emphasizes how authorities' efforts to contain insurgency meant a redirection of action toward more moderate reform efforts, such as policy advocacy, the logic of a radical flank effect likewise suggests that restrictive political conditions or patterns of elite patronage may have promoted actions that were even *less* inherently challenging, such as service provision. The general point is that levels of more moderate organizational activity were likely to have expanded as protest organization became more prevalent; the hypothesis is that protest legitimated advocacy and service activities.

As noted in the introduction, the alternative to the perspective outlined above is that the influence attributed to interorganizational relations can be explained by movement-related dynamics and general social and political conditions. That is, the counterhypothesis is that the expansion of national African American protest, advocacy, and service organizations is related to such factors as improved political opportunities (Gamson and Meyer, forthcoming; McAdam, 1982), higher levels of funding availability (Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McCarthy and Zald, 1977), improvements in the constituency's organizing capacities and resource potential (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984), and the pace of black insurgency more generally (Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McAdam, 1982). This alternative will be tested against the role of ecological influences in order to clarify the mechanisms shaping the development of the African American SMI since the mid-1950s.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

Data for this analysis have been coded from the first 23 editions of the *Encyclopedia of Associations, Volume 1, National Organizations* (Gale Research Company), which covers the period from 1955 to 1988. This directory provides descriptive information on national voluntary associations, including such background as the year the organization was formed, organizational membership, objectives, and activities. In order to obtain an overtime data base of organizations, I coded each edition of the *Encyclopedia* separately, classifying organizations on the basis of constituency, strategy, and goals, together with information on other organizational characteristics.⁷ The analysis presented here is based on data for 214 national African American protest, advocacy, and service organizations that were active between 1955 and 1985, and for which information on organizational strategy was available (this variable was missing for 15 coded organizations; there are also 55 cultural groups that were excluded in this discussion). The majority of organizations (72%) have engaged in some form of institutional advocacy, either as a single focus ($n = 78$) or combined with some service component ($n = 78$). At a national level, data collection yielded information on only 15 protest groups (7%), with 20% of the organizations having pursued a service or resource provision agenda ($n = 43$).

Figure 1 presents the prevalence of national African American protest, advocacy, and service organizations between 1955 and 1985. This time-series graph shows that the greater number of advocacy groups is due to their expansion after 1970, after the so-called heyday of the civil rights movement (McAdam, 1982). This increase in the 1970s corresponds with accounts by such researchers as Jenkins (1987) and Walker (1983, 1991), who argue rather persuasively that, despite political retrenchment, general

⁷The *Encyclopedia* is the most comprehensive directory of national nonprofit membership associations in print (the 1993 edition, for example, contained information on over 23,000 organizations). Some limitations, however, are that very small or short-lived organizations may be underrepresented, as well as radical or protest-oriented groups (which also tend to be smaller or more short-lived). In general, only those groups with some degree of formal structure are likely to be included; those that were particularly informal or even illegal during the period of study are by definition less likely to be located and included. They are also less likely to be subject to the sorts of organizational processes examined by this research. See Minkoff (1993) for a fuller description of data collection efforts. That article uses a full data base consisting of event-history records for 878 national women's, African American, Asian American, and Hispanic American organizations to analyze what organizational attributes (such as goals, strategy, and structure) influence organizational survival between 1955 and 1985.

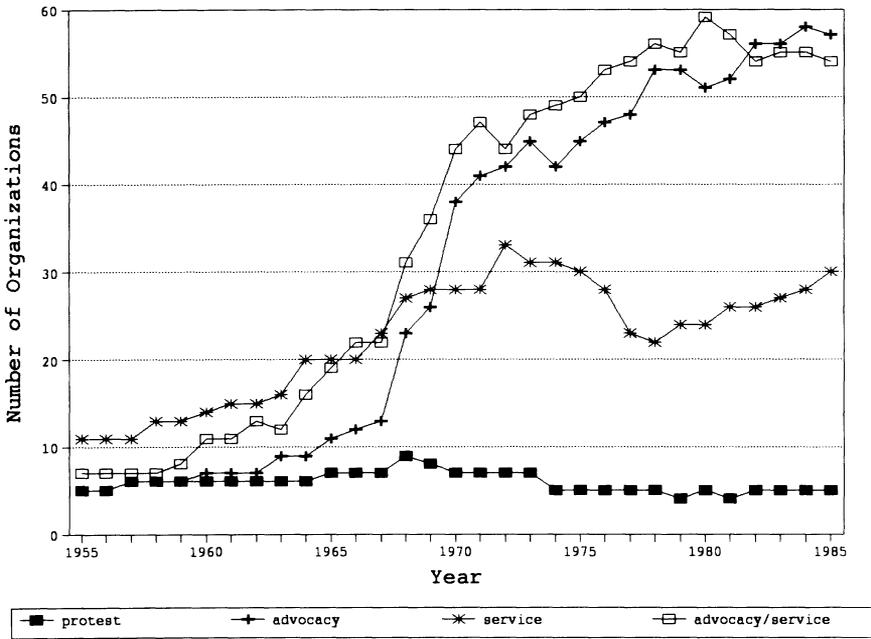


Fig. 1. Total number of African American organizations, 1955–1985 (by organizational strategy).

funding opportunities remained strong and even improved in the 1970s, especially for interest groups and a broader range of policy advocacy organizations. Additionally, this proliferation of organizations may be linked to the breakdown of consensus among the “Big Four” civil rights organizations in the late 1960s, which McAdam (1982) points to as a key factor in the decline in black insurgency.

The period of study also witnessed the rapid development of a hybrid organizational form—one that combines both advocacy and service components—which was virtually unknown in the 1950s. By the 1980s, both the hybrid and advocacy form were common. In fact, the trajectory of the combined advocacy/service organizational form is almost identical to that of advocacy groups, suggesting that they are similar because of the shared advocacy component. The key development, then, is the expansion of the advocacy form more generally that, as Minkoff (1994) has argued, subsequently replaced service provision as the dominant form of voluntary organization. The net number of service organizations seems to level off in the early 1970s, with some sign of increase in the 1980s, which may corre-

spond to the intensification of minority economic and social concerns during the Reagan presidency (Wilson, 1989).

Although Fig. 1 provides a “birds-eye view” of the aggregate development of African American protest, service, and advocacy organizations, it leaves open the question of how such trends might be linked to each other and to conditions in the social and political environment. By examining one of the key processes underlying the cumulative expansion of this SMI—i.e., organizational formation—this issue will be addressed more systematically.

Models and Estimation

To test the types of organizational cross-effects discussed above, I employ a simple analysis: I look at how the number of active organizations in the prior year (organizational density) influences the founding rate in the year of study. The dependent variable is the founding rate of groups by type of strategy; the central independent variables are organizational density and a squared density term, which is meant to measure the predicted nonmonotonic relationships between density and organizational formation (see Hannan and Carroll, 1992; Hannan and Freeman, 1989). The logic of the analysis is that if the density coefficients are positive, this suggests that increases in active groups improve the formation rate for new groups (i.e., more activity supports new activity). If the density coefficients are negative, the idea is that increases in active groups hinder the formation of new groups (i.e., more activity depresses new activity). If, however, the linear term is positive and the quadratic term is negative, this implies that initially the expansion of groups opens up the opportunity structure by legitimating additional activity, but as the social movement field becomes more dense, competitive pressures dominate (i.e., more activity supports new activity, although this influence turns around as the number of groups increases).

The founding process will be estimated using Poisson regression, which is appropriate for use with count data (Cameron and Trivedi, 1986; Hannan, 1991).⁸ The Poisson model estimates the probability of organizational formation each year. The baseline assumption is that the probability of

⁸One limitation of the Poisson formulation is that it fails to account for overdispersion and can result in spuriously small standard errors of the exogenous variables (Cameron and Trivedi, 1986; Hannan, 1991; King, 1989). A common correction is to estimate the event count using negative binomial regression, which is a generalization of the Poisson model. Choice of the model is based on standard tests of fit for nested models (King, 1989). In most of the analyses that follow, the Poisson model fits the data best and only these coefficients are presented. When the negative binomial provides a better fit, those coefficients are presented and noted in the text.

event occurrence is constant over the interval (the year, since more refined data on the month of founding are not available), and independent of all previous events (King, 1989). That is, the assumption is that within the year the occurrence of each event does nothing to raise or lower the probability of subsequent events. Since the unit of analysis is the year (with the dependent variable being the number of organizations formed per year), there are only 31 observations. Analysis was carried out using LIMDEP 6.0 (Greene, 1991). The small number of observations imposes some limitations on the analysis, especially in terms of the available degrees of freedom and the number of variables included below.

Measurement

The central independent variables included in this analysis are measures of organizational density, calculated as the total number of organizations active at the beginning of the prior year, plus the total number of organizations formed during that year, minus the number of failed associations. This specification is based on previous research on density-dependence and density-dependent cross-effects (see, for example, Hannan and Carroll, 1992; Hannan and Freeman, 1989; Minkoff, 1994; Olzak and West, 1991). For the purpose of constructing the density measures, entry into the population can be accomplished through the creation of a new organization (based on the reported year of formation), or if year of formation is missing, when an organization enters the sample between one edition of the *Encyclopedia* and the next. The analyses that follow are based on subgroup population measures so that they are calculated in terms of the type of activity the organization pursued during its year of formation. In addition to a linear term, I include a quadratic term that is the measure of population size squared; in order to reduce the number of decimals for the estimated coefficients, this term is divided by 100.

I also control for historical effects that might influence patterns of organizational formation. In keeping with published accounts of the civil rights movement (Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McAdam, 1982), it seems probable that the period after the so-called decline of black insurgency provided distinctive organizational formation prospects. I therefore include a dummy variable distinguishing the post-1968 period from that earlier part of the study; the "movement decade" (1955–1967) is the baseline category.⁹ The

⁹The analysis was also carried out with more elaborate measures of period effects, but they did not improve on this specification. Similarly, in analyses not reported here I included a linear time variable that was not significant for any of the founding rate analyses (either in bivariate or multivariate models).

expectation is that protest groups are most likely to have been formed prior to 1968, while Fig. 1 suggests that advocacy groups became more prevalent in the latter period. As a more traditional form, service groups might seem to be a more likely response to the downturn in political opportunities in the 1970s and 1980s, but this may not hold given the trends noted in Fig. 1. In the analyses that follow, I combine advocacy and joint advocacy and service groups, since they follow the same pattern of development (results are similar with advocacy/service organizations excluded).

In addition to density and period effects, I also estimate the influence of what I refer to above as movement-related dynamics and general social and political conditions. To index African American organizational capacities and potential mobilization, I include a measure of African American educational attainment (percentage of the black population aged 25–29 with some college (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1987, Table 12). Although this measure may be of questionable validity for understanding the genesis of widespread insurgency, the dependent variable in these analyses is *organizational formation*, which is distinct from protest *per se*; the conditions promoting or constraining each form of collective action are distinct (Piven and Cloward, 1993). Based on known correlations between education and political and organizational participation (Barnes *et al.*, 1979; McCarthy and Zald, 1973), higher educational attainments are more likely to influence the formation of national membership *organizations*, especially those pursuing service and advocacy. However, there may be no correlation with the founding of protest organizations, which may be tied more directly to community resources of the sort described by Morris (1984, 1993) and McAdam (1982).

As a measure of political opportunities, I include a dummy variable referencing whether the incumbent presidential administration in the previous year was affiliated with the Democratic party, which should promote protest and advocacy efforts in particular since organizers may infer that they face lower chances of repression (Walker, 1991). To reference the general availability of funding, I use a lagged measure of total foundation and corporate funding (in billions, 1982 constant dollars, American Association of Fund Raising Council, 1988). The final control variable is employed as an index of movement dynamics: the total number of civil rights and black movement-initiated events (lagged two years; see Jenkins and Ekert, 1986).¹⁰ There is likely to be a positive interaction between protest

¹⁰These data were generously made available by Craig Jenkins. Raw data were available from 1953 through 1980. This allowed for the construction of a two-year lagged time series for 1955 through 1982, with missing information on events for 1983, 1984, and 1985. For those years I calculated three-year moving averages to extend the series. That is, for 1983 I calculated an average based on total number of events in 1980, 1981, and 1982 (corresponding

events and the formation of protest organizations. Moreover, the radical flank argument suggests that activism may spur the formation of more moderate advocacy and service groups, as both federal and philanthropic support is directed toward such agendas. In effect, this variable measures the "structural potential" (Piven and Cloward, 1979) of African Americans during the course of this study period. Controlling for both funding levels and movement events should capture the influence of both internal and external resources on the organizational founding process.

Table I presents a Pearson correlation matrix of the measures of the organizational and institutional environment used in this analysis (note that the dichotomous variables referencing the post-1968 period and recent incumbency of a Democratic administration are also included, but these correlation coefficients should be interpreted with caution). Not unexpectedly, in some instances the correlations between independent variables are quite high, particularly among the advocacy and service density measures and resource measures. This suggests that multicollinearity might be a problem in interpreting the results. More specifically, high intercorrelations may mask otherwise significant findings. In the following analyses I have only presented models that seem to be within acceptable bounds based on regression diagnostics carried out with SPSS-X.

RESULTS

Table II presents zero-order negative binomial and Poisson estimates of the influence of environmental measures on the rate of protest, advocacy, and service group formation; for service and protest groups the Poisson estimates are appropriate, for advocacy groups the negative binomial model provides the best fit. At this preliminary stage it is clear that no single measure had an across-the-board influence on the founding of these different forms of African American organizations. In the case of protest organizations, the only significant predictor of the founding rate was the recent incumbency of a Democratic presidential administration. As expected, this more open political environment improved the founding pros-

to events in 1978, 1979, and 1980). Similarly, for 1984 I used the average of total events in 1981, 1982, and 1983 (imputed). Finally, for 1985 I used the average of movement-initiated events in 1982, 1983 (imputed), and 1984 (imputed). This technique likely underestimates the number of events in those years, since there appeared to be a jump in events between 1979 and 1980 (from 108 to 122) but a linear increase is modified by using three-year averages for the following years (calculated n for 1983 is 111, for 1984 it is 113, and for 1985 the number of imputed events is 115). This represents a conservative method of dealing with the missing data.

Table I. Pearson Correlation Matrix: Independent Variables

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
I Advocacy density	1.000							
II Service density	.832 ^a	1.000						
III Protest density	-.309	.147	1.000					
IV Post-1968	.907 ^a	.890 ^a	-.039	1.000				
V Democratic president	-.153	-.176	.132	-.167	1.000			
VI Educational gains	.925 ^a	.648 ^a	-.506 ^a	.757 ^a	-.058	1.000		
VII Funding	.755 ^a	.901 ^a	.299	.823 ^a	.074	.585 ^a	1.000	
VIII Movement events	-.232	.127	.658 ^a	-.160	.557 ^a	-.275	.316	1.000

^a $p < .01$.

Table II. Bivariate Results: Influence of Political and Resource Conditions on the Founding of African American Protest, Advocacy, and Service Organizations, 1955–1985 (Poisson and Negative Binomial Estimates)

	Protest founding ^a	Advocacy founding ^b	Service founding ^a
Educational attainment	-0.096 (0.114)	0.059e-1 (0.759e-1)	-0.115 ^d (0.059)
Democratic administration	1.712 ^d (0.802)	0.375 (0.325)	-0.123 (0.338)
Funding	-0.058 (0.204)	0.447 ^c (0.124)	0.326 ^d (0.131)
Movement activity	0.217e-2 (0.169e-2)	0.241e-2 ^d (0.106e-2)	0.171e-2 ^d (0.088e-2)

^aPoisson regression estimates.

^bNegative binomial estimates.

^c $p < .01$.

^d $p < .05$.

^e $p < .10$.

pects of more challenging groups. Interestingly, there was no apparent relationship between this political environment measure and the founding of either advocacy or service organizations. Looking at the zero-order results for advocacy organizations, it appears the levels of foundation funding and movement activity were correlated with an increased founding rate, consistent with both a resource mobilization and radical flank argument. These two measures also seem to have been related to improvements in the founding rate of service groups. Levels of higher educational attainment had the opposite influence; that is, improvement in potential organizing capacities seemed to have diminished the founding rate of service groups. This suggests that as African Americans improved their collective capacity for voluntary participation they were less likely to form organizations that were dedicated to a more moderate service provision agenda.

Although these zero-order results provide some initial insight into the founding process, the key questions posed in this paper refer to the influence of density-dependence on the expansion of different types of African American groups. In testing the effects of the density of one form of organization on the formation rate of another, I control for “self” density and the density terms for the other form of activity. For example, in estimating the effect of the density of black protest organizations on the founding rate of black advocacy organizations, I include the density of black advocacy organizations and the black protest terms. This allows me to address the extent the founding rate of the focal organizations is associated with “internal” effects along the lines of legitimation and competition or “cross-effects” of the development of other types of action. In the baseline model I also control for period effects. After modeling the organizational influences separately, I add the set of variables measuring political and social conditions to test the alternative, movement-based account of SMI development. However, the full models are estimated without controlling for the variables referencing the incumbent presidential administration and the post-1968 period. Neither is significant in any of the full models and each introduces high levels of multicollinearity. Excluding these variables does not change the substantive results (results available from the author).

Table III sketches out the predicted and observed associations between organizational forms. The arrow represents the direction of influence; a plus or minus sign above the arrow suggests a positive or negative linear relationship, a plus sign *over* a minus sign (+/-) depicts a positive linear and negative quadratic effect between density and organizational formation. The same denotation holds for representing the observed patterns of internal density-dependence, which is indicated in parentheses under each type of organizational founding. Only significant associations are included in the observed effects summary depictions, which refer separately

Table III. Predicted vs. Observed Patterns of Influence

Predicted "cross-effects"	Observed "cross-effects"	
	Baseline models	Full models
H1: Internal traditions		
Service $\xrightarrow{+/-}$ Advocacy	Service $\xrightarrow{+/-}$ Advocacy	Service $\xrightarrow{+/-}$ Advocacy
Service $\xrightarrow{+/-}$ Protest	Service $\xrightarrow{+/-}$ Protest	Service \rightarrow Protest
H2: Replacement effect		
Advocacy $\bar{\rightarrow}$ Service	Advocacy $\bar{\rightarrow}$ Service	Advocacy \rightarrow Service
H3: "Radical flank" effect		
Protest $\bar{\rightarrow}$ Service	Protest $\bar{\rightarrow}$ Service	Protest $\bar{\rightarrow}$ Service
Protest $\bar{\rightarrow}$ Advocacy	Protest $\bar{\rightarrow}$ Advocacy	Protest $\bar{\rightarrow}$ Advocacy

to the results from the baseline models that include ecological and period effects (Model I in Tables IVA–VIB below) and the full models (Model II in Tables IVA–VIB below).

Internal Traditions and Institutional Standing

Tables IVA and IVB present results relating to the "internal traditions" hypotheses outlined above. Specifically, I examine the relationship between service and advocacy, as well as service and protest. Model I in Table IVA indicates that, in the case of African American groups, increases in the number of active service organizations were positively correlated with the founding rate of advocacy organizations at a decreasing rate. On the face of it, this is some confirmation that the earlier establishment of such organizations as the National Urban League or the United Negro College Fund facilitated the founding of organizations such as the NAACP. However, this competitive effect became dominant during the early 1980s when the density of service groups reached 28 (the point of inflection is calculated as $(-b_L/2b_Q)$). The reversal, then, is not significant compared with the linear, legitimation effect.¹¹ Nonetheless, the significant quadratic coefficient may be picking up more recent increases in interorganizational competition. Although there is

¹¹The lack of a significant reversal was also confirmed by fitting a spline regression with a fixed knot at the calculated point of inflection (or, equivalence point). This technique provides a method of determining whether the change that occurs at the knot may be so minor that a linear model may be adequate to describe the process (see Smith, 1979). My thanks to one of the reviewers for informing me about the use of this technique.

Table IVA. "Internal Traditions"—Poisson Regression Estimates of the Influence of the Density of Service Organizations on the Founding of Advocacy Groups

	I	II
Advocacy	-0.026 ^c (0.391)	-0.059 ^c (0.011)
Advocacy ² /100	— ^a	— ^a
Service	0.574 ^c (0.141)	1.071 ^c (0.239)
Service ² /100	-1.043 ^c (0.286)	-1.875 ^c (0.473)
Post-1968	1.223 ^c (0.391)	— ^b
Educational attainment		0.161 ^d (0.092)
Funding		0.286 ^d (0.165)
Movement activity		-0.439e-2 ^c (0.107e-2)
Constant	-4.982 ^c (1.574)	-10.814 ^c (2.000)
Log-Lik	-61.763	-56.596
<i>N</i> = 31		

^aQuadratic term not significant and is omitted from full model.

^bMeasure not significant and is omitted from full model.

^c*p* < .01.

^d*p* < .10.

a predominantly supportive interdependence between the development of service and advocacy forms, the more common type of density-dependence among advocacy groups is competitive. As an additional point, the advocacy founding rate is significantly higher in the postmovement decades, even controlling for the expansion of the SMI.

Adding controls in Model II does not alter the observed interorganizational influences, but it is clear that the apparently higher founding rate after the 1960s can be explained by specific contextual variables. Both funding levels and black educational attainments were correlated with improvements in the founding rate, as predicted by resource-based accounts of SMO activity (Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McAdam, 1982; McCarthy and Zald, 1977). Funding levels seemed to have been especially significant; each

Table IVB. “Internal Traditions”—Poisson Regression Estimates of the Influence of the Density of Service Organizations on the Founding of Protest Groups

	I	II
Protest	-0.197 (0.415)	-1.573 (1.146)
Protest ² /100	— ^a	— ^a
Service	1.371 ^d (0.694)	0.917 (1.063)
Service ² /100	-4.406 ^d (1.936)	-2.897 (2.292)
Post-1968	1.223 ^c (0.240)	— ^b
Educational attainment		-0.634 (0.406)
Funding		1.739 (1.245)
Movement activity		0.707e-2 (0.321e-2)
Constant	-13.226 (6.377)	2.665 (10.833)
Log-Lik	-16.134	-15.125
<i>N</i> = 31		

^aQuadratic term not significant and is omitted from full model.

^bMeasure not significant and is omitted from full model.

^c*p* < .01.

^d*p* < .05.

billion dollar increase in foundation and corporate philanthropy multiplied the founding rate by 37%. This compares to a 17% increase for each unit change in African American higher educational attainments.¹² While not significant at the bivariate level, including these controls uncovers a suppressor effect. The most interesting finding is the significant decrease in advocacy group formation in relationship to increases in African American movement-initiated protest *events*. While the zero-order results indicate the

¹²These figures are based on the “multiplier of the rate” (Hannan and Freeman, 1989): $100[\exp(b) - 1]$, where *b* is the coefficient of *x* (some independent variable). This gives the influence of a 1-unit change in *x* on the founding rate. It is important to keep in mind that units of measurement are not standardized across independent variables, which limits strict comparisons.

reverse relationship, in the full model it is clear that increases in protest activity tended to depress the advocacy founding rate. Also, while there was less than a 1% decrease with each protest event, it is important to keep in mind that by 1985 the average number of yearly protest actions was approximately 115. One interpretation of this finding is that nonorganizational protest activity may represent a preferred mode of collective action when possible, decreasing organizational contributions to more moderate institutional change. However, this hypothesis cannot be explored further with the available data.

The same pattern of results holds for service and protest groups. Turning to Model I in Table IVB, increases in voluntary service activities also significantly promoted the formation of protest organizations at a decreasing rate. Here the idea is that organizations such as the National Urban League opened up the arena for more challenging groups such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), but this positive influence receded as organizations pursuing protest developed and competition between service and protest organizations increased. Calculating the point of inflection, it appears that this reversal occurred around 1961, during the height of black insurgency. Competition may not have been that significant, however; in a separate analysis I found that the reversal began after service density reached approximately 16 and that the difference was not significant (results not reported). In the case of protest groups, the internal trajectory of the service subsector seems to have been more relevant than the number of other active protest groups. Unlike the case with advocacy groups, there was no significant difference between the movement and postmovement years.

Adding controls in Model II minimizes the apparent cross-effects of service organization developments, but separate analyses were unable to ascertain which contextual measure(s) explained the original density effect. The only variable that provides an improvement in fit over the baseline model (Model I) is the measure of black educational attainment. However, that measure itself is not statistically significant. Given that the number of protest formations is quite low in each year, and that there are so few observations to begin with, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Replacement Effects

A second, related hypothesis suggests the idea of a subsequent replacement effect. Here the idea is that as advocacy becomes more accepted as a valid means of social action, this strategy may have replaced service provision since it serves as a more direct method of institutional change. As

Table V. “Replacement Effect”—Poisson Regression Estimates of the Influence of the Density of Advocacy Organizations on the Founding of Service Groups

	I	II
Service	0.095 ^e (0.058)	-0.192 ^e (0.113)
Service ² /100	— ^a	— ^a
Advocacy	-0.028 ^c (0.009)	0.022 (0.021)
Advocacy ² /100	— ^a	— ^a
Post-1968	1.018 (0.770)	— ^b
Educational attainment		-0.508 ^c (0.186)
Funding		1.191 ^c (0.387)
Movement		-0.205e-2 (0.171e-2)
Constant	-0.963 ^d (0.860)	-0.588 (1.575)
Log-Lik	-42.897	-34.183
<i>N</i> = 31		

^aQuadratic term not significant and is omitted from full model.

^bMeasure not significant and is omitted from full model.

^c*p* < .01.

^d*p* < .05.

^e*p* < .10.

expected, the results presented in Model I of Table V indicate that there was a negative association: increases in the number of active advocacy groups seemed to constrain significantly the organizing prospects of service groups. This implies that service provision set the precedent for advocacy without gaining any advantage in return: increases in advocacy groups acted as a competitive influence as field size increased. An increase in service activity also appears to have promoted the founding of additional service organizations without any observable competition (each additional service organization multiplied the founding rate by approximately 10%). This is an interesting finding, as we would be more likely to assume competition for members and sponsors among organizations doing the same sorts of activity (or, those with some “product substitutability” as suggested by McCarthy and Zald, 1977). However, these results suggest that the lines of competition are directed *across* strategic boundaries rather than *within* them.

Again, this result may be attributed to external influences. Examining the coefficients in Model II, it seems that the apparent influence of advocacy density might be explained by the significant contextual factors. As was the case with the founding of advocacy organizations, improvements in foundation and corporate philanthropy were positively correlated with the founding rate of service groups. An estimate is that a one billion dollar increase in funding multiplied the founding rate of service groups by almost 300%, suggesting again the disproportionate influence of this factor on organizational dynamics. The measure of African American educational attainments is also significant in the full model, but its direction of influence was *opposite* that observed for advocacy. That is, improvements in educational attainments seemed to be related to a decreased founding rate of service organizations (by about 42% for each additional percentage of the population). It may be that enhanced organizational capacities improved the constituency's ability to create and maintain advocacy groups, which then decreased the incentive to support new service-oriented initiatives. This suggests a competitive interorganizational dynamic, but one that is measured more directly by controlling for the constituency's resource potential. Interestingly, in the full model the service density coefficient is negative and marginally significant, which provides some confirmation of this hypothesis. As a final point, the number of movement-initiated events does not indicate any significant influence on the founding of the African American service organizations included in this study.

Radical Flank Effects

A final line of influence suggested by the history of the civil rights movement is the radical flank effect, which channels protest into more institutionally acceptable actions. While not developed to account for patterns of organizational formation, flank effects may be reflected in a positive association between the number of protest groups and the founding rate of advocacy or service related groups. In addition, a significant positive correlation between movement events and the founding rate would indicate a flank effect. Turning to Table VIA, there is preliminary support for this argument, at least in terms of the relationship between protest and service organizations. The results presented in Model I suggest that the density of protest organizations increased the founding of service groups, with no competitive turnaround. However, once measures of the social and political climate are introduced (Model II), the opposite sort of relationship is observed. In exploratory analyses (results not presented), I found that this change in sign can be attributed to the inclusion of the education variable

Table VIA. “Radical Flank Effect”—Poisson Regression Estimates of the Influence of the Density of Protest Groups on the Founding of Service Groups

	I	II
Service	0.005 (0.057)	-0.148 ^e (0.080)
Service ² /100	— ^a	— ^a
Protest	0.440 ^d (0.134)	-0.775 ^d (0.323)
Protest ² /100	— ^a	— ^a
Post-1968	0.304 (0.762)	— ^b
Educational attainment		-0.672 ^c (0.174)
Funding		1.823 ^c (0.485)
Movement activity		-0.224e-2 (0.151e-2)
Constant	-2.641 ^d (1.060)	2.736 (1.720)
Log-Lik	-42.833	-31.855
<i>N</i> = 31		

^aQuadratic term not significant and is omitted from full model.

^bMeasure not significant and is omitted from full model.

^c*p* < .01.

^d*p* < .05.

^e*p* < .10.

in the full model. While to some extent improvements in organizing capacities increased the founding rate of service groups, this may have been modified by increases in protest organization as an alternative form of social action. Again, the positive and significant influence of funding stands out. Also of interest is the fact that the number of protest events is not significant, which suggests that the developmental dynamic was an interorganizational one rather than a movement-organization one.

The interaction between protest and advocacy groups is also negative: with increases in the number of protest organizations, these two groups seemed to have been in more direct competition (Table VI, Model I). It may be that as protest itself became more prevalent it contended with advocacy and service organizations for members and sponsors. Moreover, after about 1968 or 1969, advocacy organizations were also in significant

Table VIB. “Radical Flank Effect”—Poisson Regression Estimates of the Influence of the Density of Protest Groups on the Founding of Advocacy Groups

	I	II
Advocacy	0.104 ^c (0.029)	0.105 ^c (0.029)
Advocacy ² /100	-0.100 ^c (0.023)	-0.123 ^c (0.024)
Protest	-0.363 ^c (0.132)	-0.470 ^c (0.168)
Protest ² /100	— ^a	— ^a
Post-1968	1.587 ^c (0.415)	— ^b
Educational attainment		0.287 ^c (0.086)
Funding		0.719 ^c (0.184)
Movement activity		-0.242e-2 ^c (0.084e-2)
Constant	1.368 ^d (0.633)	-1.753 ^d (0.858)
Log-Lik	-61.697	-55.842
<i>N</i> = 31		

^aQuadratic term not significant and is omitted from full model.

^bMeasure not significant and is omitted from full model.

^c*p* < .01.

^d*p* < .05.

^e*p* < .10.

competition with other advocacy groups (when advocacy density reached approximately 43, as estimated in Model II). Unlike the process of service group formation, there was a significant and negative relationship between increases in protest events and the rate of advocacy group formation (by about 35% for each additional organization). This suggests that advocacy organization development was more tied into movement dynamics than were service groups, although there is also a significant organizational cross-effect as predicted. Again, higher funding and educational levels seemed to have improved the founding rate of advocacy organizations. As an additional level of confirmation, in analyses not presented here I combined all advocacy and service organizations and examined the influence of protest density on the joint founding rate. The results were substantially the

same as those presented in Table VI; the main difference was that the education variable was not statistically significant. These results lend some additional validity to the idea that protest organizations are in a competitive relationship with other movement-related groups. They also reiterate the finding that the dynamic of SMI development is at once organizational and movement based.

The final question addressed in this section is whether the influence of one set of density effects can be explained by another. For example, we know from the results presented in Tables IVA and VIB that both service and protest densities influence advocacy group formation. Tables IVB and VIA also suggest that the development of protest and service groups are related. Given how closely aligned the trajectories of black advocacy, service, and protest groups are, it may be that the apparent influence of the growth of one organizational form is biased without controlling for all other forms. Table VII presents full models of advocacy, service, and protest group formation, controlling for all relevant density and context measures. The results confirm the earlier findings, suggesting that density-dependent cross-effects represent independent processes that shape the formation of new groups. This reiterates the importance of approaching the study of SMOs from the industry level, since the overall development of the SMI clearly relates to component dynamics of SMO growth.

CONCLUSION

The research presented in this article supports the idea that within a social movement industry, interorganizational relationships can be understood as the interplay between the legitimation of various traditions of social action and competition for common resources. The prevalence of institutionally acceptable action, such as service provision, seems to enhance the organizing prospects of SMOs, which more directly challenge social institutions through protest and advocacy. However, these more established, precedent-setting forms appear to risk replacement by the entrance of more contemporary types of activity. There is little confirmation of the existence of a radical flank effect in terms of the relationship between the density of African American protest organizations and the founding of service or advocacy groups. Rather, protest organization density apparently *diminished* the founding rate of both alternative forms. This contrasts with other studies that focused on movement actions and not on organizational dynamics (Haines, 1984; Jenkins and Ekert, 1986; McAdam, 1982). From this perspective, the trajectory of black activism—both its upsurge and decline over the period examined in this paper—can be viewed

Table VII. Advocacy, Service, and Protest Group Formation: Full Models (Poisson Regression Estimates)

	I Advocacy	II Service	III Protest
Advocacy	0.077 (0.049)	0.026 (0.021)	-0.127 (0.089)
Advocacy ² /100	-0.099 ^b (0.035)	— ^a	— ^a
Service	0.680 ^c (0.274)	-0.2438 ^c (0.199)	0.672 (1.106)
Service ² /100	-1.330 ^c (0.518)	— ^a	-1.905 (2.467)
Protest	-0.320 ^d (0.185)	-0.834 ^c (0.345)	-2.110 (1.313)
Protest ² /100	— ^a	— ^a	— ^a
Educational attainment	0.191 ^c (0.093)	-0.895 ^b (0.263)	0.387 (0.722)
Funding	0.395 ^d (0.216)	1.962 ^b (0.536)	2.358 ^d (1.411)
Movement activity	-0.370e-2 ^b (0.105e-2)	-0.145e-2 (0.165e-2)	-0.281e-2 (0.384e-2)
Constant	-7.262 ^b (2.445)	4.301 ^d (2.241)	-2.754 (11.492)
Log-Likelihood	-52.220	-31.171	-13.802

N = 31

^aQuadratic term not significant and is omitted from full model.

^b*p* < .01.

^c*p* < .05.

^d*p* < .10.

as having an organizational component in addition to a movement-based dynamic.

The analyses also provide some insight into the role of external sponsorship in the development of the African American SMI. As resource mobilization accounts (McCarthy and Zald, 1977) have stressed, funding levels were critical, especially for supporting new service and advocacy initiatives. It is also noteworthy that the founding rate of advocacy and service groups varied both in response to higher levels of foundation funding *and* movement events, although funding supported new organizational activity while protest activity depressed it. As noted above, this constraining effect holds for both the density of protest *organizations* and the density of protest

events. Looking at the role of funding and movement activism jointly, one hypothesis that follows from these findings is that increases in protest movements lead to reactive funding, which gets funneled into more moderate groups, such as service organizations, thus raising their chances of group formation. At the same time, the rise of protest movements undermines less confrontational forms of organization. In any event, once protest becomes a viable mode of action it apparently competes with alternative organizational forms rather than spurring their continued development.

In a more general sense, this research demonstrates that interorganizational cross-effects influence organizational developments independent of the role played by the social and political climate. This suggests that movement-based accounts emphasizing only the “institutional channeling” of organizational forms (McCarthy *et al.*, 1991) are presently underspecified and would be improved by some attention to interorganizational dynamics as suggested by organizational ecologists (Hannan and Carroll, 1992; Hannan and Freeman, 1989). More specifically, the findings presented encourage some modification of agency-centered accounts of social movement development, which are inattentive to the role of organizational dynamics at the population level. There is a great deal of constraint that develops in systems of SMOs, and the rise of density has a substantial influence on those organizations that are in the process of being established, over and above the ebb and flow of participants, funding, and political or public opinion.

The findings are equally clear that internal and external resources, along with political dynamics, are critical counterweights to systems-level constraints. In particular, levels of black movement activity, which express quite clearly African American mobilization and political pressure, cannot be overlooked. Importantly, there appears to be an inverse association between activism and new organizational activity, suggesting the hypotheses that protest is a more preferred alternative to more formal organizational activity. In general, the evidence supports the proposition that constraint and human agency work together in a linked set of processes. Openings for protest mobilizations impact on organizational dynamics, and organizational developments set the parameters within which insurgencies develop and expand.

In more broad terms, the question posed by this research refers to the relationship between density-dependent legitimation and competition and the development of social movement industries. The earlier establishment of service associations by African Americans apparently improved the legitimacy of more confrontational strategic forms such as protest and advocacy. The opportunity to increase the number of organizations that pursue some degree of institutional challenge, however, may have had the paradoxical effect of supplanting other means adopted to address group interests. On

the one hand, this can be seen as a positive gain for the group: in the case of African Americans, more direct forms of institutional challenge—whether radical protest or reform-oriented efforts at social change—have become more feasible (or, as some might argue, coopted). On the other hand, the competition set up between national organizations pursuing distinctive change strategies may limit an organizational diversity that is more responsive to shifts in the political environment. The combined trends of increasing class divisions among African Americans and decreasing political power and support (Wilson, 1989) suggest that a multiorganizational effort is critical to address the multiple needs of this constituency—from civil rights to the right to survival. To the extent that advocacy, service, and protest agendas conflict, and the organizations pursuing such actions compete, the options for social action and social change would seem to be unduly circumscribed.

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