CONGREGATIONS AND SOCIAL SERVICES: 
AN ANALYSIS OF INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS 

DISSERTATION 

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Jacqueline Denise Brooks, M.A. 

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Dissertation Committee: 

Professor Katherine Meyer, Advisor 

Professor Korie Edwards 

Professor Townsend Price-Spratlen 

Approved by 

Advisor 

Sociology Graduate Program
ABSTRACT

Like firms, congregations exist within a milieu of social relationships that make up their organizational fields. Within this web of relationships, organizations form ties with one another through partnerships. In this analysis, I evaluate how organizational structure and organizational culture affects the partnerships that congregations build with external social service organizations. In a quantitative analysis of the Organizing Religious Work dataset, I hypothesize that religious tradition, race, mission-orientation and governance structure will significantly affect the quantity, strength and diversity of these partnerships. The results show that religious tradition and resource building function as the most significant and pervasive predictors of congregations’ partnerships with social service organizations. Mainline Protestant congregations, specifically Liberal Protestant congregations, establish a greater number of partnerships, stronger partnerships and more diverse partnerships with social service organizations than Conservative Protestant and Roman Catholic congregations. Access to capital and a congregation’s size increase its visibility in the arena of social services. Black congregations form fewer connections and less diverse connections; however, they do not maintain weaker connections than White congregations. As organizations that seek to accomplish their expressed goals, congregations are strongly influenced by mission-
orientation as a significant predictor of their involvement in social services. In the qualitative analysis, I discuss why congregations engage in social services, what they do as providers of social services and who does the work. In addition, I describe how congregations adjust their social service delivery in response to internal and external environmental pressures. Although congregations face many challenges in the provision of social services, they rely heavily on institutionalized notions of Christian charity to guide their charitable actions.
This manuscript is dedicated to my loving mother and father. It is also dedicated to my supportive family.
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VITA

1996 ..............................................B.A. Sociology, Miami University

2000..................................................M.A. Sociology, The Ohio State University

2007 - Present..........................Assistant Professor of Sociology
Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH

2006 - 2007...............................Visiting Professor of Sociology,
Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH

2004 - 2005...............................Visiting Professor of Sociology,
Colgate University, Hamilton, OH

2003 - 2004...............................MacArthur Dissertation Fellow of
Sociology
Colgate University Hamilton, NY

1997 - 2003...............................Graduate Teaching and Research
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Sociology.
Organizations, work and occupations, social stratification, race and ethnicity, sociological theory, inter-organizational relations and faith-based organizations.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” (Titus 3:8).

Recent national events such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the tragedy of September 11, 2001 have refocused America’s attention on the work of non-profit organizations. Nearly 1.6 million organizations, six percent of all organizations in the United States, make up this enigmatic sector of the economy. As Salamon suggests, these organizations have long existed as “the vast, uncharted network of private voluntary institutions that form the unseen social infrastructure of American life” (2003:1). Their niche is delivering low-cost, innovative, and creative social services to the needy. When the AIDS epidemic developed in the early 1980’s, the non-profit sector developed numerous programs to attend to the needs of HIV positive patients and their loved ones. Although the bulk of social services are provided by well-established public agencies and private non-profits, the work of congregations makes up an integral part of this system. Previous research shows that nearly 58 percent of congregations provide social services
(Chaves 2004; Ammerman 2000). Although the majority of congregations provide short-term help, such as operating food pantries, some churches build low-income housing, operate nursing homes, provide job training and manage daycare centers.

Much of the research on the connection between religion and charitable action is micro-level, and explains how religious affiliation and religiosity affect donor behavior (Auten and Rudney 1990; Regnerus, Smith and Sikkink 1991). For example, researchers have shown that Catholics and people who do not identify with a religious affiliation support charitable action (Will and Cochran 1995). Regular church attendance and participation in church events are also predictors of charitable giving (Hodgkinson, Weitzman, Kirsch, Noga and Gorski 1990; Wuthnow 1991; Wilson and Musick 1997). Yet, social service delivery has emerged as an important topic among social scientists due to the implementation of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The federal government aimed to pull congregations into the social service arena, enticing them with grants to strengthen their participation in social services. Previous research shows that congregations support social service programs in ways similar to the manner that other religious and secular non-profit agencies do, but not to the same degree (Cavendish 2000; Chaves 2001, 2004). For the most part, the impact of these new laws remains unknown; however, some reports indicate that congregations are under-represented among the organizations eligible for federal funding (Farnsley 2001).
Organizational Structure and Organizational Culture

In this study, I evaluate how organizational structure and organizational culture influence the provision of social services among congregations. First, evaluate the relationships that congregations build with established social service organizations. I argue that organizational structure influences the quantity, strength and diversity of these partnerships. In an analysis of the Organizing Religious Work data, I explain how denominational affiliation, mission-orientation, the racial composition of congregations and governance structure affects the texture of these partnerships. Previous research shows that by filtering social services through partnerships with external organizations, congregations can achieve more than if they functioned alone to provide outreach (Wuthnow 2002, 2004). Thus, social arrangements that guide the movement of congregations beyond their organizational boundaries, increases their engagement in social services.

Second, I evaluate how organizational culture informs social service delivery. The analysis originates from 31 interviews conducted with religious leaders, and laypersons affiliated with congregations in Columbus, Ohio. I argue that organizational culture shapes the mechanisms that congregations employ to deliver social services. I present a narrative that describes the patterned, institutionalized behavior associated with community outreach. Further, I argue that organizational culture influences how congregations respond to changes in their external and internal environments. Previous research shows that the values and norms, which structure internal social arrangements,
influence whether or not organizations can survive change. Thus, I provide a sociological account that details how congregations handle major fluctuations in their external and internal environments.

**How Congregations Help**

Prior research shows a strong correlation between one’s attitudes toward the poor, and one’s likelihood of donating money and other resources, such as time, to charity (Auten and Ruden 1990; Wilson and Musick 1997). We rarely think of congregations as organizations that require provocation to give charitably; we believe it is their mission to uplift the downtrodden. We expect the charitable behavior of congregations to originate in good will and not in a desire to maximize one’s own end. As organizations, which exist in open systems, the actions of congregations are guided by more than good will. Pressures from their social environments also influence their actions (Scott 1992, 1995). Previous research shows that resource dependence, autonomy and social class influence the charitable behavior of firms and non-profits (Bowman 1977; Ostlund 1977; Arlow and Gannon 1982; White and Bartolomeo 1982; Atkinson and Galaskiewicz 1988; Galaskiewicz 1997). An emerging trend among businesses reveals desires to increase market shares and profitability have dramatically increased corporate philanthropy (Smith 1994a; Stendardi 1992). Yet, when examining the charitable behavior of organizations, we have neglected to perform in-depth analyses that examine the determinants of charity by congregations. What motivates congregations to engage in social services? What social factors influence their decision-making?
Like most organizations, congregations need capital and laborers to compete successfully within their markets, two factors that are also integral to the growth of churches (Iannaccone 1994). Without members and their financial pledges, congregations cannot survive much less provide social service delivery. Previous research shows that in comparison to their secular and non-profit peers, congregations do not provide much in terms of social services. This finding is mostly attributed to the financial and personnel challenges that befall many congregations (Chaves and Cnaan 1992; Chaves and Tsitsos 2001; Chaves 2004). This seems contrary to other research which shows congregations are well entrenched in community outreach (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Wuthnow 1991, 2001, 2004; Ammerman 2000, 2005). Yet, as Chaves (2001) argues, most of this research focuses on a small number of congregations (Bartowski and Regis 1999; Harris 1995; Unruh 1999), congregations within one city or denomination (Cnaan 2002; Grettenberger 2000; Miller 1998), a small range of denominations (Ammerman 2000; Dudley and Roozen 2001), older, urban congregations (Cnaan 1997) or a national sample with a low response rate (Hodgkinson, Weitzman, Kirsch, Noga and Gorski 1993). Although these studies lend great insight into how congregations function as organizations within their environments, they neglect to address how embedded congregations are in the field of social service organizations. Yet, when considering their financial and personnel constraints, it is surprising that congregations provide any social services at all. Of the $665 billion taken in by private non-profits in 1997, 8 percent ($73 billion) went to congregations which rely on these
funds more for internal operating expenses than community outreach (Hodgkinson et. al 1993).

The evidence on how much involvement congregations have in social services is conflicting. Lower estimates suggest nearly 58 percent of congregations engage in minimal community outreach; higher estimations cite 87 to 92 percent participate in at least one social service activity (Chaves 2001; Ammerman 2000, 2005). For Cnann (2002), only the federal government rivals congregations’ role in social services. The picture of congregations as bastions of human services seems over-stated given that nearly 83 percent of congregations do not consider serving the poor and needy as their most important goal (Ammerman 2000, 2005). In short, congregations must fulfill their members’ spiritual needs before tackling community outreach.

Mainly, congregations orient their social ministries toward providing food, clothing and temporary shelter; other activities such as health screenings and job training are supported less frequently (Ammerman 2000, 2005). Typically, congregations assist people who have exhausted their eligibility with other human service organizations. Thus, churches provide emergency help fulfilling immediate short-term needs. The more cursory the outreach, the more likely congregations have the resources and time to invest in social services. Even with major federal support, secular non-profits cannot adequately replace the services that the government no longer provides. To date, there is no guarantee that federal grants will sufficiently help congregations either.

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Previous research shows that Mainline Protestant congregations engage in more community activities than any other denomination including Catholic and Jewish congregations. This holds true despite the fact that Mainline Protestant denominations tend to be more insular and maintain fewer outside ties than other denominations. In addition, these congregations do more community development despite a dramatic decline in membership. Nearly 54 percent of American congregations were established after WWII when Conservative Protestant denominations experienced rapid growth. Conversely, Mainline Protestant churches declined dramatically in membership. Churchgoers overlook older, more secure congregations for newer ones that lack large budgets and filled pews. Mostly, they seek new ways to experience spirituality and in many cases, this means adherence to stricter doctrines which older Mainline Protestant denominations do not provide (Iannaccone 1992, 1994). The success of strict congregations relies on the many hours members commit to worship services and the upkeep of the church. In fact, in a time when volunteerism is weakening, conservative denominations require and receive greater time commitments from their members (Iannaccone 1992, 1994). However, the more time members spend in church does not equate to more time spent building ties with the surrounding community.

Previous research shows that larger congregations account for the greatest percentage of monies donated to social services (Chaves and Miller 1998; Chaves and Tsitsos 2001; Chaves 2004). The largest one percent of congregations comprises one-fifth of all congregational donations; the next largest 10 percent makes up nearly half of
congregational charitable gifts (Chaves and Tsitsos 2001; Chaves 2004). Yet, the majority of congregations are not large, but medium to small ones struggling to cover their operating costs. For them, social service provision is secondary to internal expenses unless the congregation is receiving outside financial help and very few do. Trends among congregations show that many are spending more on local operating expenses with nearly 84 percent of a congregation’s total budget going toward such costs as rising clergy salaries. In addition, they are diverting more money into savings to guard against ailing budgets in case church attendance continues its gradual descent. Thus far, lower attendance rates have increased annual budgets via remaining members who are pledging more to compensate for shrinking rolls (Hodgkinson et. al 1993).

The resource constraints faced by congregation forces them to rely on organizations that are better equipped to deal with social service delivery. Previous studies show that nearly 80 percent of congregations involved in social service provision do so with a collaborator. As Wuthnow (1998) asserts, loose connections allow congregations to do more than if functioned alone to provide social services. When these partnerships solicit membership from government agencies, congregations tend to participate in long-term, more intense social services (Chaves 2004). On average, congregations donate resources to at least six organizations outside of their denominations (Ammerman 2000, 2005). In 1997, congregations formed more partnerships with Habitat for Humanity than any other secular organization (Ammerman 2000). Recently, congregations have begun forming Economic Development
Corporations (EDCs), non-profit community outreach organizations, which allow religious, government, and private organizations to collaborate on outreach programs. Most Economic Development Corporations are owned and operated by Black congregations, seeking innovative ways to help their communities. Is the ability to provide social services a selling point for congregations? The demographic changes that belie us (i.e., growing elderly population, more women in the workforce, divorce, etc.) are the same changes affecting the 60 percent of Americans who attend church on a regular basis. The vast majority of congregations tailor their services to meet the demands of their members. Many of them face similar challenges.

Unlike their peers, congregations are less threatened by for-profit competition. In recent years, the private non-profit sector has carried a larger share of social services and is now in greater competition with businesses to do so. Steadily for-profits are beginning to outpace nonprofits in such areas as daycare provision leaving nonprofits with a reduced market share in some fields (Salamon 2003). To remain competitive, many nonprofits have begun charging fees for their services and strengthening the quality of their performances (Salamon 2003). The behavior of nonprofits increasingly mimics the behavior of for-profits, leaving many to wonder what the actual differences are between both sectors of the economy. Is this the fate of congregations? Are they prepared to jump from running soup kitchens to operating hospitals? Will congregations lose their religious identity in the milieu of bureaucratic trappings? Research suggests that without much help from the government, churches have already expanded the scope of their
social services (Hodgkinson et al. 1990; Hodgkinson et. al 1993; Bartowski and Regis 2003; Cnaan 2002; Cnaan, Boddie, McGrew and Kang 2006). Today, congregations build houses, operate nursing homes, train people for new jobs, run schools, and provide daycare. The quip that government no longer seeks to provide meaningful social services to the poor, transcending mere therapeutic services, has not been lost on congregations who open their doors and reach into their budgets to help those in need.
“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

Previous research abounds with analyses of the role religious organizations play in the delivery of social services (Chaves and Higgins 1992; Ammerman 1997; Jackson, Schweitzer, Cato and Reynard 1997; Cnaan, Wineburg and Boddie 1999; Cnaan 2002; Cnaan et. al 2006; Ammerman 2000, 2005; Chaves 2004). Each of these studies relies on the supposition that religious organizations engage in social services as an expression of their faith (Bartowski and Regis 1999; Cnaan 2002; Ammerman 2005). Belief systems rooted in theological principles and moral precepts drive their social ministries. Consistent with previous research I evaluate congregations as faith-based agencies which are described as “purposive organizations that draw staff, volunteers, and board members from a certain religious group and are based upon a particular religious ideology that is reflected in the agencies mission and operations” (Cnaan et. al 1999:26). To this definition, I include the assertion that congregations exist in a milieu of social
arrangements that make up their organizational environments (Ammerman 1997; Eiesland 2000). Thus, to understand a congregation’s role in social services, we need to investigate how its internal and external social arrangements influence its organizational behavior. Here, consistent with my analysis, I offer a review of the literature in this area of study, which establishes hypotheses and guides the theoretical framework. In the quantitative component, I discuss previous research which evaluates how organizational structure (i.e. religious tradition, racial composition, mission-orientation and governance structure) influences a congregation’s social services delivery. In the qualitative component, I explore previous research which helps to describe the mechanisms by which congregations engage in social services. Both sections of the following literature review present an overview of the social forces that guide social ministries and the processes by which these ministries become integral parts of our neighborhoods.

**QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT**

In *The Once and Future Church: Reinventing the Congregation for a New Mission Frontier* (1991), Mead contends that congregations must effectively manage their organizational behavior. Here, I discuss previous research that evaluates how congregations cross their organizational boundaries as they engage in social service delivery. This study offers an analysis of organizational structures, which are real, yet intangible social forces that shape what organizations do, and how they do it. The goal is to understand *how organizational structure influences the formation of partnerships congregations forge with external social service organizations*. Following Mead’s (1991) study of church growth, I focus my attention toward organic growth which
includes the ability of congregations to cross their organizational boundaries and form ties with other organizations in their fields\(^1\). As Mead articulates in his discussion of growth among Mainline Protestant congregations:

“Organic growth helps the organizational structure of the congregation, becoming a launching pad for the ministry rather than an institutional albatross around the collective neck of its members.” (1991: 60).

Thus, the goals of the ministry extend beyond the church and its members and encompass the whole of surrounding communities. Beyond “good works”, social ministries transmit messages that tell us who congregations are, what they do, and what they believe.

Trends in organizational behavior reveal movement away from hierarchical and market arrangements and toward partnerships (Aldrich and Herker 1977: Aldrich and Whetten 1981: Powell 1990; Powell and Smith-Doerr 1994). In a study of social service agencies linked to the United Way, Provan, Beyer and Kruytbosch (1980) claim that exchange theory, contingency theory, organization ecology and transaction cost analysis explain why organizations establish inter-organizational networks. Thus, partnerships emerge from an organization’s need for survival within environments filled with risk and fluctuations. In two important works, Uzzi (1996 and 1997) showed that the survivability of businesses exists somewhere between the establishment of arm’s length partnerships

\(^1\) In *The Once and Future Church* (1991), Mead discusses four types of church growth: numerical – an increase in size and number of activities, maturational – the spiritual growth of congregants, organic – the growth of congregations as community members and incarnational – the increase of a congregation’s ability to spread its faith.
and fully embedded networks. Thus, organizations must successfully manage the quantity, strength and diversity of their network ties. Baker and Faulkner (2002) describe inter-organizational networks as a finite set of possible relationships forged among suppliers, producers, and buyers. Thus, research on network ties focuses on an array of relationships (e.g. supplier/producer, producer/buyer, and/or supplier/buyer). In this analysis, I offer an evaluation of congregations (suppliers) as providers of resources to established social service organizations (producers).

By establishing partnerships with social service organizations, congregations further advance their community outreach goals. These bridges, or functional ties, allow resources to flow from congregations to those in need (Ammerman 2005). As Dunsire quips, “…coordination means getting what you do not have….through influencing or compelling participants to act in the way desired” (1978: 16-17). Although this definition suggests that an established authority structure exists among partners, my analysis views partnerships as non-hierarchical networks (Powell 1990; Alter and Hage 1993).

Organizational structure is integral to partnership building. Previous research shows that organizational type, size, access to resources, leadership style, and longevity influences partnership formation among businesses (Galaskiewicz 1997). In similar studies, research on religious organizations shows that the most salient features of organizational structures within congregations include religious tradition, size, race and locale. Here, I extend previous studies of religious organizations. I add governance structure and mission-orientation to the analysis. I expect that organizational structure,
(i.e. religious tradition, race, mission-orientation, and governance structure)

significantly influences the quantity, strength, and diversity of the partnerships
congregations form with external social service organizations. The following section
evaluates previous research which correlates these characteristics of congregations with
social service involvement and allows me to make the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Liberal Protestant congregations maintain a greater number of
partnerships, stronger partnerships and more diverse partnerships with external social
service organizations than Conservative Protestant, Moderate Protestant and Roman
Catholic congregations.

Hypothesis 2: Black congregations maintain fewer partnerships, weaker
partnerships, and less diverse partnerships with external social service organizations than
White congregations do.

Hypothesis 3: Hierarchical congregations maintain a greater number of
partnerships, stronger partnerships, and more diverse partnerships with external social
service organizations than Congregational or Mixed congregations.

Hypothesis 4: Activist congregations maintain a greater number of partnerships,
stronger partnerships, and more diverse partnerships with external social service
organizations than Evangelical-oriented and Member-oriented congregations.

Religious Tradition

In this study, I rely heavily on Ammerman’s (2000, 2005) conceptualization of
religious tradition, in which she identifies seven streams that punctuate the American
religious landscape: Conservative Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Roman and
Orthodox Catholic, African-American Protestants, Jewish denominations, Sectarian
Groups and Other Religions. In this analysis, I focus primarily on Conservative
Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Roman Catholics, and African-American Protestants.
So, what is religious tradition and how does it differ from religious authority? For Chaves (2004) and many others, religious authority signifies the denominational affiliations which congregations maintain, and religious tradition signifies the “larger tradition(s) to which congregations may be associated, with, or without formal ties to a denomination” (p. 22). Each religious tradition represents a family of denominations or non-denominational congregations which may seem similar in doctrine and behavior, but can differ in many ways. Thus, the United Methodist Church is a denomination which follows the prescripts of Mainline Protestants, as do Lutherans and Unitarians which means that although each differs in religious practice they value a similar core set of beliefs. Similarly, congregations within the Southern Baptist Convention engage in strict religious practices, as do Freewill Baptist congregations distinguishing both denominations as Conservative Protestants. Yet, each differs greatly in its internal authority structure. While Southern Baptists maintain hierarchical governance structures, Freewill Baptists maintain congregational structures. Both denominations espouse comparable beliefs but choose to govern themselves in dissimilar fashions.

How does adherence to religious traditions affect organizational behavior? Arguably, churchgoers are less likely to self-identify as Mainline Protestants than as Methodist. Perhaps as Berger (1969) claims, religious tradition is no longer so important to members as church experience. The personal experience of religious life overrides one’s membership or affiliation with a specific denominational structure. Yet, each congregation is infused with a fundamental set of values, beliefs and norms that are
identifiably Liberal Protestant, Moderate Protestant, Conservative Protestant or Catholic in essence. The interpretation of religious texts, style of worship, choice of religious educational materials and attitudes on social issues, such as gay marriage, abortion and social services, signifies an orientation toward a specific religious tradition. Thus, religious tradition serves as a mechanism, which creates normative behavior within member congregations. Subsequently, it informs a congregation’s attitude toward the poor, structures its institutionalized culture, and shapes how congregations express their faith (Hodgkinson et al. 1993; Cnaan et. al 1999, Orr and Miller 1994). Religious tradition shapes how congregations organize themselves, how they create cultural patterns. It also shapes how parishioners interact with one another and their denominational hierarchies. As Bartowski and Regis (1999) claim, the moral imperatives espoused within scripture, theology and tradition shape the engagement of congregations in social services. The more congregations’ theological underpinnings parallel the goals of their social ministries, the more involved congregations become in community outreach. For my purposes, I extend this concept to advance the proposition that as a feature of organizational structure, religious tradition, specifically Liberal, Moderate and Conservative Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Black Protestantism, affects the formation of network ties among congregations.
Roman Catholicism

Previous research offers mixed reviews on the involvement of Roman Catholic congregations in social services (Wuthnow 1998; Cnaan et. al 1999; Cavendish 2000; Ammerman 2005). Most studies that utilize qualitative methodologies offer sharp and persuasive narratives that describe the long-standing and pervasive role of Roman Catholic parishes in social services (Wuthnow 1998; Ammerman 2005). They discuss the endeavors of individual parishes, the historical role of the Roman Catholic Church in social services, and the Roman Catholic support of parachurch organizations and other faith-based organizations which provide social services (Wuthnow 1998; Cnaan et. al 1999; Cavendish 2000; Ammerman 2005). Yet, quantitative analyses show that Roman Catholic parishes do not perform any more or any fewer social services than Mainline Protestant congregations (Chaves 1999a, 1999b, 2004). So, which picture is most accurate? I argue, that both sets of studies offer plausible depictions of the role the Roman Catholic Church has in social services. Although Roman Catholic parishes do not outperform Mainline Protestant congregations, their presence in the field of non-profit social service providers is prolific and undeniable. Thus, one claim does not refute the other.

First, historically, the long-standing presence of Roman Catholicism in the provision of social service has been rooted in the long-reaching work of Catholic missionaries. As Ammerman (2005) quips, “Long before there were Protestant mission boards, Catholic and Orthodox missionaries were taking their faiths to the far reaches of
their respective nations’ empires” (p. 194). These missionary endeavors were accompanied by acts of benevolence which bolstered the role of the Roman Catholic Church in social services. Its desire to reach the masses through charity is written into the new Catechism of the Catholic Church which states: “Charity is the greatest social commandment … The decisive point of the social question is that goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity” (Cnaan et al. 1999:103). In recent years, the Roman Catholic Church has supported the advancement of social services under the guidance of Liberation Theology which establishes directives toward uplifting the social ills of the poor. Rooted in the scriptural teachings of the Old Testament, this movement teaches against the injustices faced by the poor and develops a course of action, which is determined by the community (Ammerman 2005).

Although the history of Roman Catholicism greatly exceeds that of Protestants, its prominence in the American religious landscape was marked by a long struggle of fighting against anti-Catholic sentiments (Herberg 1983). Tied to the histories of new immigrant groups, Catholicism was largely marginalized in the United States until American intolerance of Catholicism began to wane. The social pressures, which plagued the early Catholic Church in America, were two-fold: 1) Catholics were marginalized by the dominant Protestant society which responded to the emerging Catholic presence with prejudice and discrimination, and 2) Catholic churches sought to establish their own unique identity, independent and separate from Rome (Herberg 1983).
The former was exacerbated by the influx of Irish immigrants who were inextricably tied to the Catholic Church. Thus, to be Irish was to Catholic, to be anti-Irish was to be anti-Catholic (Herberg 1983). Today this social phenomenon befalls the experiences of Hispanic immigrants in the United States. Although the Catholic Church is well established within American society, many Hispanics struggle to negotiate their Catholic heritage with religious pluralism and pressures to assimilate (Roof and Manning 2001). By extending its activities to include community outreach and charity, the Roman Catholic Church became increasingly entrenched in the social problems of the United States - actions which initially drew disparaging comments from Rome. The more Roman Catholic parishes reached out to their surrounding communities, the more Americanized they became.

Today, Roman Catholic parishes support various social service activities, such as operating food pantries, teaching English as a second language, offering computer classes, providing temporary shelter, and offering assistance to young pregnant women (Cnaan et al 1999; Cavendish 2000). This work also extends to improving the lives of immigrants, newly arrived to the United States. Menjivar and Agadjanian (1997) showed that Protestant and Catholic churches were instrumental in providing immigrants with job referrals, legal help, medical care, family support, and English as a second language classes. Perhaps, the disjuncture between the conclusions drawn by qualitative and quantitative researchers rests on the fact that many previous analyses focus solely on congregations and not on the work performed by more secular organizations such as
Catholic Charities USA. As one of the flagships of Catholic charity, Catholic Charities USA channels resources through a vast system of nearly 1200 social service organizations (Cnaan et. al 1999; Wuthnow 2004)\(^2\). As a sectarian faith-based organization with a budget of nearly $7.5 billion, this organization maintains affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church while also providing community outreach services that are mainly directed by a professional staff and rely on government funds (Cnaan et. al 1999; Wuthnow 2004). Mostly, Catholic Charities USA provides food, clothing and shelter. From 1982 to 1992, the percentage of people who received these necessities from Catholic Charities increased from 23 percent to 68 percent (Cnaan et. al 1999). This is consistent with reports from individual congregations, denomination-wide, which claim requests from the needy have significantly increased (Hodgkinson et. al 1993). However, as I describe in the following section, I expect that Roman Catholic congregations do not outperform Liberal Protestants in the delivery of social services.

**The Liberal –Moderate- Conservative Protestant Divide**

Although 25 percent of Americans self-identify as Catholic, nearly 53 percent of Americans claim affiliation with Protestantism (Kosmin, Mayer and Keysar 2001). Among Protestants, three distinctive camps have emerged – Liberals, Moderates and Conservatives. While the presence of Conservatives represents a recent rift in the world of Protestants, the divide among Mainline Protestants (Liberals and Moderates)

\(^2\) In addition to Catholic Charities, Jewish Family and Children’s Services and the Salvation Army comprise the largest faith-based social services organizations in the USA (Cnaan 2003; Salamon 2003).
represents a long, rich history (Ahlstrom 1972; Hutchinson 1976; Marty 1991). In his analysis of the National Congregations Study (2004), Chaves found that 56 percent of American congregations can be described as Conservative Protestant, and 25 percent of congregations can be described as Liberal and/or Moderate Protestant congregations. Yet, when asked how they self-identify, 59 percent of congregations say they lean more toward the Conservative side, 11 percent lean toward the Liberal side, and 29 percent consider themselves to be right in the middle (Chaves 2004). Chaves (2004) states “that this liberal-conservative line, cutting across denominations has replaced denominations and religious families as the most sociologically significant religious boundary within American society” (p. 28).

To clarify, Liberal Protestant churches employ a humanistic and/or flexible translation of the Bible (Roof and McKinney 1987). Thus, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ represent Liberal Protestant congregations. These congregations are typically located in the Northeast and Western parts of the United States, draw mainly from the middle and upper classes, and have college educated members (Roof and McKinney 1987). As the oldest of the Mainline Protestant congregations, historically Liberal Protestants date back to the Pre-Revolutionary War Era. Until the early 1930’s, Liberal Protestantism ruled as the pre-eminent religious form in the United States. All other religious traditions, Moderate Protestantism, Conservative Protestantism and Judaism struggled to gain a foothold in American society as they moved against the might of Liberal Protestantism to shed their sectarian labels and
become mainstream denominations (Hutchinson and Moore 1996). Until the huge influx of German and Irish Catholics in the 1820s, American Protestants were decidedly Liberal (Hutchinson and Moore 1996). Liberal Protestantism was so persuasive that many Black congregations, which existed on the periphery of American religion, were also infused with this style of religious worship and practice (Herberg 1983).

Moderate Protestant congregations employ a literal interpretation of the Bible, draw their members mainly from America’s middle classes, and retain attenders who have some college education. These congregations comprise most of what we call Middle America (Roof and McKinney 1987). Located mostly in the Midwest and Western parts of the United States, they are comprised of Methodists, Lutherans, Disciples of Christ, Northern Baptists, and Reformed Churches. Conservatives make up the youngest of the Protestant congregations with many churches emerging after WWII. These congregations adhere to a literal interpretation of the Bible and draw mainly from American’s lower and middle-income families. Their fundamentalist values are espoused in the teachings of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Churches of Christ, the Church of the Nazarene, the Assemblies of God, the Seventh Day Adventists, and many other Pentecostal and Holiness groups.

While Cnann et. al (1999) states that most congregations provide similar services in similar ways, Chaves, Ammerman and Wuthnow (2001, 2001, and 2005) find that Liberal Protestants outperform all other congregations in terms of social services. Chaves’ analysis of the National Congregations Study and Ammerman’s analysis of the
Organizing Religious Work data provide the only studies which use national data sets to show that Liberal Protestant congregations significantly outperform Moderate Protestants, Conservative Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jewish congregations in social service provision (2004, 2001, and 2005).

Further, they argue that Liberal Protestant congregations (the oldest of the Mainline Protestant congregations) benefit from longevity, an asset that gives them an advantage in building what Bartowski and Regis (2003) refer to as faith-based social capital. Within faith communities, congregational networks, religious norms, and bonds of trust become valuable resources. A key feature of community development, faith-based social capital is manifested in the bonding capital (well-established ties) and the bridging capital (new ties) that congregations form. Liberal Protestant congregations have internal authority structures that support the establishment of external connections. In fact, access to resources and rigidity of authority structures are two factors that give Liberal and Moderate Protestant congregations an advantage in terms of social services. Yet, Chaves (2004) finds that Liberal Protestants consistently outperform other congregations and Wuthnow (2004) supports his claims. Perhaps this is correlated with previous research that shows Liberal Protestant congregations facilitate four types of growth: market-driven, mainstream, niche and social justice (Roozen and Hadaway 2006). As flexible organizations, Liberal Protestants congregations do not discourage moving beyond their organizational boundaries and making diverse connections. Other research suggests that Liberal theologies encourage engagement in church-based social
outreach programs as a means of expressing one’s faith and as a way to diffuse the sentiment of good works among a congregation’s members (Davidson, Johnson and Mock 1990; Davidson, Mock and Johnson 1997).

Surprisingly, in recent studies, researchers claim that Conservative Protestant congregations have begun to outpace Liberal and Moderate congregations in social service provision. This contests previous research which views Conservative Protestant congregations as restrictive toward social services. At the core of this argument, researchers claim that Conservative Protestant congregations suffer from strict theological orientations which limit their capacity to form ties outside of their denominational boundaries. Instead of focusing on church-based social concerns, they concentrate on faith-related programming (Davidson, Johnson and Mock 1990). Peter Dobkin Hall (2001) summarizes this argument in the following statement:

“Theologically conservative, “gathered” congregations are unlikely to support programs intended to reach those who have not already professed belief and adhered to behavioral restrictions required for membership in these groups … Theologically liberal congregations and denominations and Roman Catholics, on the other hand, tend to direct their service provision efforts towards broader client populations, making them available on the basis of need rather than membership” (p. 82).

Skocpol (2000) supports this view by stating: “Evangelical Christians may be building new communities of love, but mainly congregation by congregation without strong ties that include bridges that reach out” (p. 47). Conservative Protestant congregations discourage “…such institutional engagement in favor of evangelism and an emphasis on individual morality rather than social reform or social service” (Chaves 2004:28). Yet,
an alternate view of Conservative Protestant congregations is slowly emerging. Green and Sherman (2002) show that Catholic and Mainline Protestant congregations no longer dominate social service provision. They show that nearly 40 percent of the nonprofit social service organizations that they surveyed were associated with Evangelical Protestants. In addition, Smith (2000) contends, “if ever liberal [mainline] Protestantism was distinguished by its social-Gospel activism, it appears to be so no more. The evidence suggests, however, that evangelicals may be the most committed carriers of a new social gospel” (p. 43). In an intriguing finding Monsma (2004) shows that in comparison to Jewish, Roman Catholic and Mainline Protestant congregations, Conservative Protestant congregations supported 75 percent of the faith-based programs in his study. This conclusion parallels Wuthnow and Evans’ (2002) research that shows 64 percent of Evangelical Protestants report that they volunteer in church as compared with 57 percent of Mainline Protestants and 61 percent of Black churchgoers. In their seminal work on congregations, Dudley and Roozen (2001) show that white Evangelical Protestants offer just as many outreach ministries as moderate Protestant, Roman and Orthodox Catholic congregations. This supports Putnam’s (1995) claims that Conservative Protestant congregations are increasing in vitality and activities. Yet, despite these new beginnings for Conservative Protestant congregations, I expect that their role in social services, and partnership formation, still fall significantly short of Liberal Protestant congregations.
Race and Social Services

Previous research shows that racial composition within workplaces influences disparities in intrinsic rewards such as pay, promotions and autonomy (Sorenson 1989; Glass 1990; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). Overall, as the percentage of Black workers increases, their earnings, and their opportunities for advancement and self-supervised work decrease (Fossett, Galle and Burr 1989; Baron and Newman 1990; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993). This phenomenon is not strictly related to the race of the workers but to the behavior of employers who devalue the work performed by minority groups (Sorenson 1989). In this analysis, I evaluate the influence of racial composition on the behavior of congregations. I expect that congregations with more Black parishioners significantly decrease their involvement in social services. This argument is based in the proposition that Black congregations face socioeconomic obstacles that diminish their capability to engage in social services. I relate my expectations to previous work that claims the racial composition of organizations influences intrinsic rewards. Yet, rather than find correlations between employer preferences and intrinsic rewards, I expect to find correlations between the social capital of churchgoers and social service provision. Unlike most organizations, congregations rely heavily on donations from their members and the work these members perform within the church and surrounding communities. For the most part, congregations do what the financial might of their members will allow them to do. According to Bartowski and Regis (2003), the social capital of religious
organizations conveys “features of social life - networks, norms, trust – that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objects” (p. 18). Social capital encapsulates the social resources churchgoers can donate to the congregation’s coffers. I expect that Black congregations, despite their historical role in social justice, will trail White congregations in the provision of social services.

To begin, in their study of Mississippi congregations, Bartowski and Regis (1999) state that race, denomination, and region are the most salient determinants of a congregation’s involvement in social services (1999). Their research shows that Black congregations, (mostly Pentecostal), display heavy involvement in community outreach, engaging in such activities as operating food pantries, donating money to individuals and organizations which helped the poor, sending volunteers to established social service organizations, and providing the homeless with temporary shelter. In support of these findings, previous research abounds with studies that highlight the prolific role of the Black Church in civic and political activities and social and economic support for its communities (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984; Taylor and Chatters 1988: Caldwell, Green and Billingsley 1992; Findlay 1993; Higginbotham 1993; Harris 1994).

These studies detail several features of the involvement of Black congregations in social services: 1) the historical role of Black congregations in social services (DuBois 1899; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Taylor 1994; Myrdal 1944); 2) the role Black congregations play in neighborhood revitalization (McRoberts 2003; Williams 1974; Williams and Dixie 2003); and 3) the emergence of Economic Development
Corporations, especially among Black mega churches (Watts 2006). Although these analyses provide adept narratives that illustrate the rich, strong connections Black congregations have formed with their local communities, they are not comparative analyses which describe how Black congregations engage in social services differently from White congregations. Of the few analyses which compare the social service provision of Black congregations to White congregations, researchers find no differences in the amount of social services provided (Chaves and Higgins 1992; Cavendish 2000; Chaves 2004). However, previous research shows that Black congregations form more partnerships with external organizations in order to provide social services (Chaves 2004), that Black congregations are more likely to apply for funding from Faith Based and Community Initiatives (Farnsley 2001), and that Black congregations engage in different types of social services than White congregations (Chaves and Higgins 1992). Even with the proliferation of community development organizations, Black congregations trail White congregations in their provision of social services. In this study, I expect similar results keeping in mind that previous research, and current anticipated findings do not diminish the prolific, historical role that the Black plays in transforming urban communities.

How does the historical role of the Black Church influence its participation in social services today? A consistent thread that runs through scholarly writings about the Black Church is the depiction of the Black Church as an institution that perpetuates otherworldly ideals while empowering African-Americans to seek social, political and
economic change (McAdam 1982; West 1982; Morris 1984). For Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) this dialectical model represents the struggle that befalls the Black Church – to seek deliverance from a secular world and carnal desires, while seeking democratic freedom within that world (Cone 1969; Levine 1977; West 1982; Marable 1989; Smith 1994; Patillo-McCoy 1998). The Black Church is so firmly entrenched in the Black community that Woodson (1945) describes it as an “all-comprehending institution,” which “encourages faith-based social action, social service, and involvement in public policy issues” (p. 7). He states:

“The Negro church touches almost every ramification of the life of the Negro. As stated elsewhere, the Negro church, in the absence of other agencies to assume such responsibilities, has had to do more than its duty in taking care of the general interests of the race. A definitive history of the Negro church, therefore, would leave practically no phase of the history of the Negro in America untouched. All efforts of the Negro in things economic, educational and political have branched out of or connected in some way with the rise and development of the Negro church” (p.7).

Although this image has served as the cornerstone of what the Black Church is, in reality this institution has undergone several pivotal shifts which drastically changed the scope and direction of its mission and goals. Here, I discuss the role of the Black Church and extend Woodson’s (1945) assertions by using Watts’ (2006) definition of social justice. According to Watts, social justice means churches “are involved in community development, social uplifting and improvement to the general welfare of their constituent population” (2006:87). Therefore, I correlate the social service provision of Black congregations to their commitment and dedication to social justice causes. Further, I rely
on Lincoln and Mamiya’s (1990) conceptualization of the Black Church, which consists of seven different denominations: The African Methodist Episcopalian Church, the African Methodist Episcopalian Zion Church, the Christian Methodist Episcopalian Church, the National Baptist Convention USA Inc, the National Baptist Convention of America, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the Church of God in Christ. Today, nearly 61 percent of African-Americans who self-identify as regular churchgoers claim membership in one of these organizations. However, using this conceptualization excludes many Black congregations. For example, nearly 2 million African-Americans are members of the Roman Catholic Church. In addition, one of the most distinct impacts on the formation of the Back congregations has been the recent rise in the number of Conservative Protestant congregations, mainly Pentecostal and Holiness congregations. Although these newer congregations do not share the same history as the traditional Black Church, they experience the same present-day struggles and obstacles as their predecessors.

Within the literatures of Sociology, the Sociology of Religion and Black Studies extensive research exists on the Black Church and how this iconic institution has shaped the social structure of Black communities (Lincoln 1984, Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, Billingsley 1999, Raboteau 1995). As Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) state, the Black Church “has no challenger as the cultural womb of the Black community” (p.8). Most of these studies trace the development of the Black Church and its proclivity for community outreach to the turbulence and oppressiveness of American southern slavery. Denied
freedom to express their own religious convictions and to meet in Black owned houses of worship, enslaved Africans were coerced and enticed by their White, Christian slave-owners to convert to Christianity. Enslaved Africans who converted worshipped in predominantly Methodist and Baptist churches under White supervision. At times, Blacks were allowed to meet separately and form their own congregations; however, this was never without the supervision of a White pastor or White members in attendance.

During slavery, “…clandestine worship on the plantation became an invisible institution that gave meaning to the lives of Blacks” (Watts 2006: 88).

The worship experiences of enslaved Africans in the South nurtured the desire for religious freedom and in the late 18th Century, freed Blacks carried this innate longing to the North which sparked the emergence of a new American institution. In *This Far by Faith*, Williams and Dixie (2003) recount the incident which birthed the Black Church into existence:

“It was in that 1794, the first independent Black Methodist Church came into being. Ushers at the predominantly White St. George’s Methodist Church in Philadelphia pulled Black worshippers from their knees during prayer, and the incident provided the necessary momentum for the city’s Black Christians to found their own churches.” (p. 20).

Refusing to return to St. George’s Methodist Church, Absalom Jones led a group of Black followers to form another congregation, the St. Thomas Episcopal Church, thereby becoming the first Black Episcopalian Church. However, the first Black congregation, which existed separate from White denominational structures, did not come into being until 1816 when Richard Allen formed Bethel Church, the first African Methodist
Episcopalian Church\(^3\). These early Black churches not only provided Blacks with invaluable places to worship, they developed into an institution that sought to meet the needs of the Black community (Watts 2006). Black clergy, revered among their parishioners and throughout the Black community, were thrust into the arena of politics and social activism. Richard Allen, James Varick, Peter Spencer, and Thomas Paul preached the tenements of Christian faith while also demanding equal access to democratic rights and freedoms (Woodson 1945). With the establishment of the National Negro Convention Movement, freed Blacks, for the first time, made decisions about their religious, social, political and economic lives apart from the confines of White dictate (Freedman 1993). Blacks challenged slavery, pushed for economic advancement, and sought political representation.

As the Civil War approached, this fervor was not diminished. After Emancipation, African Americans began questioning the relationship between religion and societal issues (Freedman 1993). They answered by developing social service programs which helped freed Blacks, such as the Freedman’s Bureau. In addition to monies, this organization helped people find housing, employment, and educational opportunities. As W.E.B DuBois (1903) stated, the Black Church became the mainstay of spiritual and community support within Black neighborhoods. Within its structure and throughout its various functions, it represents the “most characteristic expression of

\(^3\)The African Episcopal Church was started in 1796 to help the black community. It did not become an official “church” organization until 1816 (Jones 1978).
African character”. (DuBois 1903: 213). The Black Church established itself as a meeting ground, a goods store, a social hall and a community developer.

As the Black Church grew in prominence, the formation of partnerships strengthened their ability to provide social services. First, in order, to maintain consistency within the growing number of Black churches, church leaders formed their own national organizations. In the North, these associations were instrumental in streamlining the guidelines and missions of the various Black churches; in addition, they addressed the social problems Blacks faced. In the South, Black churchgoers were forced to follow the orders of White, national organizations until after Emancipation when they could set up their own organizations. Two of the earliest national organizations among Black Baptists were the Providence Association and the Wood River Association. Today, the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., and the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., both Black institutions, are two of the largest church judicatures in the nation.

Second, Black churches maintained fraternal ties with White organizations and non-religious entities. These ties were crucial in the ability of churches to address the needs of the Black community. For example, White Methodists established Wilberforce University, the first historically Black university (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Billingsley 1993). When the university was threatened with closure due to financial problems, it was purchased by a Black Methodist. Today it still enrolls hundreds of Black college students (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). Yet, the greatest propagation of educational institutions
occurred under the direction and operation of Black denominations. Building schools “grew primarily out of the need for a more educated and progressive-minded ministry” (Baldwin 2003: 25). This was an urgent matter especially in the South “since the southern States provided only a pittance of public funds for the education of Negro children” (Frazier 1963:38).

Perhaps the most exciting time in the history of the Black church and its formation of partnerships with external organizations developed in the mid-20th Century. After WWII, the Black Church witnessed a gamut of structural and cultural changes that challenged its ability to build effective connections. First, during the great migration, thousands of Blacks from the south poured into northern and southern cities. Between 1940 and 1970, 4.4 million Black southerners migrated to northern cities (Frazier 1963).

True to Ammerman’s observation, Black churches had to find ways to cope with the increasing numbers of new members. “This massive movement of people disrupted congregations, transplanted religious customs, taxed the urban churches, and formed in the burgeoning ghettos, favorable conditions for religious innovation” (Raboteau 1995:104). In response to this sharp rise in population, Black churches established social auxiliaries to help the migrant population. They coordinated their efforts, both internally and externally, to provide employment bureaus, day-care centers, kindergartens, and adult education classes just to name a few; in effect becoming social welfare agencies which provided a broad spectrum of the needs of the burgeoning urban populations (Wilmore and Baldwin 2003).
In the 1950’s, Black churches were forced to deal with another set of issues. As civil rights debates were heating up around the country, the Black church was forced to act. The fact that Black churches were divided based upon doctrine did not keep them from uniting. During this time of struggle, Black congregations felt they had more in common with each other than with White churches of similar denominations. Thus, the spirit of the all-comprehending institution motivated Black churches that were fragmented along doctrinal lines, to collaborate with one another even amidst attacks from those who associated Christianity with oppression (Raboteau 1995). Yet, if early Black religious leaders, such as Allen, Paul and Jones, served as the architects of the Black Church, the prophetic voice of notable leaders, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., solidified the Black Church as a formidable social force. Once again, religious leaders challenged social policies, and Black congregations were transformed into bastions of political and civic action (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984).

Hard pressed to separate themselves from the social ills that influenced their communities, Black congregations, organized countless demonstrations, meetings, and marches surrounding the civil rights debate. Rallies, which began behind church walls, were continued in the streets of southern cities that desperately needed racial reform. “From the churches, the demonstrators moved out into the public arena to bear witness with their bodies to the gospel of freedom and equality. Some gave their lives” (Raboteau 1995:58). In The Black Churches of Brooklyn (1994), Taylor provides an exemplary narrative, which details the domino effect of protest that defined the
experiences of many urban religious leaders who organized, rallied, and boycotted in support of worker rights.

“For a brief period black ministers of Brooklyn set aside their moderate approaches and became revolutionaries. They challenged the hegemony of the state and a powerful labor organization by using militant tactics and rhetoric. They sacrificed their comfortable positions as power brokers closely tied to the dominant political order and joined with ordinary people in the streets to eliminate union policies that denied people of color employment and to end government inaction on those policies” (p.139).

By taking their religious convictions to the streets, Black congregations fought against, social, political and economic marginalization. However, are Black congregations as involved in social justice and subsequently social services as they were in the past? In Race and Religion (1990), Lincoln and Mamiya state the Black Church has an explicit obligation to engage itself in the promotion of social justice, and furthermore, may not be living up to this expectation. Yet all organizations struggle with change. As Ammerman (1997) suggests, churches have to find new ways to adapt to situations in order to survive. For example, the “survival of the savvy” refers to those organizations that cannot only build effective coalitions within their establishments, but can also negotiate effective coalitions with external organizations (p. 46). In fact, this is what many Black churches have tried. In a sample of 1,000 black churches nationwide, Billingsley (1999) found that 20 percent of these churches provided some form of community wide economic outreach program. He refers to the economic and political potential of Black churches as a power base for social action and reform (Billingsley 1999). In Loose Connections (1998), Wuthnow recounts the hopes of a Black churchgoer who envisions
that this power base can serve as a source of strength and support within Black
neighborhoods. Thus, by crossing organizational boundaries and forging partnerships
with external organizations, the Black Church effectively strengthens its presence in the
arena of social services.

In his evaluation of Black urban and suburban congregations, Watts (2006)
concluded that the strength of the Black Church lies in three crucial areas – economic,
umerical and ecumenical. First, like most congregations, Black congregations rely
heavily on the charitable gifts they receive from members and the conservative handling
of these monies. However, unlike other congregations, more than two-thirds of the
money donated by Blacks goes to congregations (Watts 2006). Second, historically the
Black Church has been dependent upon the allegiance of the Black community. Finally,
the Black Church has benefited from the “long-standing informal relationship of pastors
and churches across denominational lines” (Watts 2006: 92). Each of these factors has
increased the ability of Black congregations to respond effectively to the needs of their
communities. In further support of his thesis, the following examples depict how Black
congregations provide extensive community outreach programs.

- In Detroit Michigan the Hartford Memorial Baptist Church built a “40,000
  square foot commercial center, and a $17 million shopping center, and a
  multi-million dollar housing development” (Black Enterprise 1993: 54).

- One of the most prolific Black churches, the Allen African Methodist
  Church in Queens, New York, “has used $10.7 million in HUD grants to
  build a 300-unit senior housing complex” (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990:
  75).
The Wheat Street Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia “has amassed $33 million in real-estate holdings; it is among the wealthiest Black churches in the country. The Wheat Street Charitable Foundation owns two shopping plazas, two housing developments and several single-housing units. The church is helping to rebuild Atlanta’s Black community” (Black Enterprise 1993: 54).

These examples highlight a new trend among Black congregations which is the formation of Economic Development Corporations (EDCs). In a study of nine EDCs in New York City, Ryden (2003) found that these organizations provide a plethora of social programs such as, programs dedicated to health awareness, services focused on strengthening families, childcare, and services focused on domestic violence. Overall, these EDCs, hired 189 full-time workers, 55 part-time workers, and managed annual budgets which ranged from $150,000 to $5,000,000. O’Keeffe (1986) although previous research shows that Black congregations have a formidable history of providing social services and that their present day involvement is equally fruitful, I expect that the partnerships Black congregations form to provide social services are not so plentiful, strong or diverse as the partnerships formed by White congregations. Following previous research, I expect that the organizational structure of the Black Church impedes the formation of network ties (Cavendish 2000; Chaves 2004; Chaves and Higgins 1992).
Polity

All organizations must direct the flow, volume, and type of activities which distinguish one organization from the next. Beyond the design of their buildings, we know that congregations are places of worship because of the activities they engage in, the consumers they recruit, the people who lead them and their expressed missions. Yet, how do congregations govern themselves? Who guides the behavior of clergy, members and laity all of whom possess divergent personalities, goals and interests? Who tells them what to do and how to do it? Like other organizations, congregations must enact rules and regulations which direct the behavior of their members, clergy, and administrators. Thus governance structure or polity is a formal mechanism by which congregations order their behavior (Takayama 1974; Takayama and Cannon 1979; Sullins 2004; Houghland 1979; McMullen 1994 and Wood 1970). As Weber (1947) explained, authority involves the likelihood that people will obey a set of commands. Thus, the structure of authority is embedded in social relationships, which give legitimacy to governance arrangements (Monahan 1999).

Research shows that within congregations, governance structures exist on a continuum from tightly structured hierarchical arrangements to loosely structured congregational arrangements representing differing organizational structures of autonomy and authority (Moberg 1964; Cantrell, Krile, and Donohue 1983, DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Perrow 1986). In Congregation and Community (1997), Ammerman claims that a
third type of governance structure exists in the middle of this continuum - Presbyterian or mixed structures.

A congregation that operates within a hierarchical structure follows the rules established by denominational authorities; the denomination owns the property utilized by congregations; the denomination also oversees the church’s expenditures and hires its clergy. Congregations, which maintain a congregational structure, operate as autonomous organizations that do not follow the authority of outside entities. Often referred to as free churches, they own their property, manage their own finances and hire their own clergy. As McMullen (1994) explains, that decentralized structure allows a congregation control over its personnel, its finances and its mission statements.

Congregations which maintain a mixed or Presbyterian structure follow the authority of denominational officials but maintain individual decision-making abilities (Ammerman 2005). Presenting an alternate view, Sullins extends the work of Takayama and Cannon (1979) by constructing a scale which focuses on the degree of centralization within congregational authority structures. Thus, according to Sullins (2004), congregational polity exists in decentralized, moderate, or most centralized forms which affect the implementation of policies within congregations.

As polities array along a continuum from congregational/decentralized to hierarchical/most centralized, authority becomes further removed from worshippers (Sullins 2004). Although these organizational forms suggest actual differences, they do not indicate concrete boundaries (Cantrell, Krile and Donohue 1983; Thornton and
Ocasio 1999). Like other organizations, congregations construct patterns of authority which represent fluid arrangements rather than static, fixed structures. For example, Freewill Baptist churches guide their organizational behavior utilizing congregational authority structures. However, guidance on how to administer worship services and formulate relationships with other congregations in their directorate may come from hierarchical authorities. Among all religious organizations, it is difficult to locate a denominational authority structure that is more rigid than the Catholic Church. Yet, the daily operations of parishes do not always rely on the top-down management. Instead, parishes differ in their styles of worship and the amount and types of mission work.

Previous research shows that polity is positively associated with the level of participation congregations have with their denominational bodies (Ammerman 2005), the amount of ecumenical activity congregations engage in (Takayama 1974; Takayama and Cannon 1979), and the number of inter-organizational networks congregations develop (Levine and White 1961; Benson and Dorsett 1972; Houghland and Sutton 1978; Cantrell, Krile and Donohue 1983). In an analysis of the Organizing Religious Work data, Ammerman (2005) showed that Catholic congregations construct stronger identities with their religious hierarchy than Protestant congregations. However, it is among predominantly White Protestant denominations where polity shows the greatest effect (Ammerman 2005). For example, churches, which maintain congregational authority structures, engage in more denomination-sponsored national activities and identify more with their denominations than congregations, which maintain hierarchical or mixed
authority structures. In addition, congregations, which maintain hierarchical authority structures, give more money to their denominations and engage in more denomination-led activities than congregations which maintain Presbyterian or congregational authority structures. Although Ammerman’s work shows that polity influences organizational identity, it does not show how polity influences congregations to engage in social services or external partnerships. For this, we turn to several other studies.

First, Wood (1970) suggests that hierarchical authority structures impede engagement in social services. Second, in an extensive analysis of congregations, Cantrell, Krile, and Donohue (1983) concluded that hierarchical (unitive) congregations create more inter-organizational networks to fulfill social service goals than congregational (federative) churches. Their work contradicts previous research on social service and voluntary organizations which states that hierarchical organizations engage in fewer inter-organizational networks (Levine and White 1961; Houghland and Sutton 1978). Further, these claims are based in research which argues that the formation of external ties will threaten hierarchies by eroding the dependence which these organizations have on their parent organizations (Levine and White 1961, Houghland and Sutton 1978 and Benson and Dorsett 1972). Following Cantrell, Krile and Donohue (1983), I expect that hierarchical congregations will create stronger, more diverse and plentiful ties with social service organizations than congregational or mixed churches.
QUALITATIVE COMPONENT

Whether one shows up for an occasional service or never enters the halls of a religious sanctuary, we can agree that places of worship have long existed as important American social institutions. Classical sociological theory teaches us that religion is a compelling force in society that helps to imprint values and norms into people’s lives. As Durkheim (1961) successfully argued, religion, despite the brand of faith, is a source of integration and regulation, two key features in maintaining social solidarity. In his extensive writings on religion, Weber (1958) correlated the asceticism of Calvinist worship to the churning of capitalist interests. Although the spirit of capitalism is no longer reliant on the underpinnings of any religious ideology, it owes its drive to the precepts of Protestantism. Today, religion, though threatened and often overcome by the thrust of secularization, remains an integral part of society. We still seek the guidance and direction that only religion in its distinct ethereal manner provides. Yet, this is not the only function we expect religion to supply. As ambassadors of benevolent behavior, we entrust congregations, synagogues, and temples with the duty of uplifting the downtrodden through charitable means. Research shows that nearly 65 percent of Americans stated that they trusted non-profit organizations more than the federal government to provide social services (Hodgkinson et. al 1993; Salamon 2003). Studies also indicate that when they have exhausted government aid, many people in need turn to congregations for help (Hodgkinson et. al 1993). Whether one needs a place to sleep, a hot meal, a bag of groceries for the week or a few dollars to pay the rent, people in need
can rely on congregations to fill the social service void created by public agencies.

In this section of the study, I evaluate how organizational culture influences the provision of social services among congregations. Unlike public agencies, the social service provision of congregations is normative and cognitive rather than regulated by federal guidelines. The participation of congregations in community outreach is structured by informal practices that are infused with values and moral directives (Cnaan et. al 1999, 2002; Chaves 1999; Chaves 2004; Ammerman 1997, 2000, 2005). The state invites and supports congregations to engage in social services, but it does not regulate the minutia of a congregation’s outreach activities. If congregations choose not to engage in social services, they do not lose their status as religious organizations. Thus, congregations rely on religion and not federal mandates to give meaning to their actions. Subsequently, as routines and practices become institutionalized, they become infused with social meaning.

This analysis answers four key research questions: 1) how do congregations apply social meaning to community outreach, 2) how does organizational culture influence the human services that congregations provide, 3) how does organizational culture influence who performs social service delivery, and 4) how does organizational culture influence how congregations respond to change? I rely heavily on the literatures from the Sociology of Religion, and the Sociology of Organizations to establish the framework of my thesis. I argue that decision-making within congregations is shaped by organizational cultures which support or discourage social service provision.
Motivations

In recent years, given the plethora of natural disasters that have plagued many American cities, the media has directed its attention toward the community outreach sponsored and operated by congregations. Thus, it is not uncommon to watch news cameras span a scene of ruins in hopes of locating not only a victim of tragedy, but shots of dutiful volunteers often dispatched by faith-based organizations who have arrived to help alleviate human suffering. In the midst of calamity and misfortune, we will find volunteers from small, hopeful, churches laboring alongside workers from the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, law enforcement, and sometimes the military to rebuild devastated areas and distressed lives. Thus, the role of congregations in social services, which was once hidden by the monolithic social service provision of the government, is once again in plain sight. Yet, to move members, resources, and monies from the church building to the needy, whether they are separated by a city block or five hundred miles, requires coordinated efforts. The institutionalization of social services within congregations requires the establishment and implementation of normative behavior that guides the flow of resources from provider to recipient. Using previous research, I argue that a congregation’s perspective and attitude toward community outreach is primarily directed by its denominational hierarchies. In many ways, denominational hierarchies establish organizational cultures whereby the provision of social services becomes a collective force that compels religious organizations to pursue social services (Ammerman 2005).
In his seminal work on American religion, Herberg (1983) evaluated the unique distinctions and complex relationships that define Protestants, Catholics, and Jewish congregations. Today, the nature of religious pluralism now encapsulates a growing number of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and various Conservative Protestant congregations that challenge the long-lasting influence of Mainline Protestantism on American social, political, and economic life. As Hutchinson (2003) exclaims, American religious pluralism is indeed, a work in progress. Not only have we broadened the types of religious traditions that speckle our religious landscape, we have also undergone major changes within them as well. For example, as churchgoers shifted their memberships from Mainline to Conservative Protestant congregations, the ever-increasing prominence of Evangelical Christians became a formidable force in American politics. The presence of Evangelical Christians transformed engagement on such major social issues as abortion, gun control and prayer in schools. Many attribute the election and re-election of President George W. Bush, Jr. (2000 and 2004) to his large steadfast base of Conservative Evangelicals. Thus, changes within the religious sector can have far-reaching effects.

Research shows that nearly thirty-two different religious authority types exist in the United States ranging from Roman Catholic to Southern Baptist. Each is distinguished by “the concrete national religious organizations to which congregations may have formal ties” (Chaves 2004:22). Ammerman (2005) states that denominations allow congregations and their members to see each other as members of a similar
tradition. Some research indicates that churchgoers identify more with their congregations than with their denominations suggesting that our present notion of denominationalism may be vanishing (Wuthnow 1998; Marler and Hadaway 1993). Yet, denominational bodies still significantly influence how believers participate in the religious life of their congregations. Each time a believer sings from a hymnal, offers tithes, confesses to a priest, attends Sunday school, or fellowships with other members, she or he reinforces the values, principles, and goals of their denominational hierarchies. This normative behavior serves to distinguish one denomination from the next and invariably shapes the actions of affiliate congregations and their members.

Previous research suggests that hierarchical social arrangements dominate the engagement of congregations in social services (Wuthnow 2004). Similar to firms seeking to offset uncertainty and risk, congregations restrict their community outreach within denominational boundaries ensuring a reliable flow of resources (Wuthnow 2004; Chaves 2004). This is not an automatic arrangement nor is it happenstance. Whereas in the past denominations mainly served as a means of delineating Christians based on ethnicity, race, and class, today they are modern bureaucratic organizations that manage the varied operations of their subordinate churches (Ammerman 1997). Like all bureaucratic arrangements, desires for centralization and efficiency shaped denominationalism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Accordingly, the provision of social services requires clear and consistent mechanisms, which fit the doctrine, mission, goals, and resource capabilities of congregations.
First, when congregations need additional funds for social services, they rely primarily on help from their denominations rather than outside sources such as the federal government (Chaves and Miller 1998; Bartowski and Regis 1999, 2003; Cnaan 2000). Thus, for congregations, denominations serve as the sole means by which they receive supplementary valuable resources and support for social services, a situation that is particularly true for Black congregations (Perl and Olsen 2000). Second, many denominations have established internal social service organizations which help congregations to facilitate social service delivery. For example, each Roman Catholic parish has members that volunteer with the Saint Vincent De Paul organization allowing these parishes to provide social services within the denomination. Finally, congregations structure the types of social service they provide based on the expressed goals of their denominations. Accordingly, congregations must choose to participate in social service activities that do not challenge the doctrinal base of their denominations. Requests from organizations such as Planned Parenthood and Alcoholics Anonymous may go unanswered if congregations feel the expressed mission of these programs contest their core beliefs.

Providing Social Services

If one phones many congregations across the United States, there is a chance that the call will be answered by a secretary, a receptionist or a church administrator. In some instances, due to resource constraints, the church’s religious leader may answer the phone as there is a good chance he or she wears several work-related hats. To accommodate the
increased workload that accompanies greater involvement in social services, congregations must often find new ways to divide responsibilities among religious leaders, paid staff, unpaid staff, members, and volunteers. Previous research, which evaluates the role of corporations in charity, claim that in recent years as corporations have become increasingly cognizant of how charity affects their bottom line, they have altered their internal work arrangements. As King (2001) states over time:

“…corporate philanthropy has been transformed from a relatively random, eclectic, and unscientific activity to a highly calculated and measured strategy that is integral to a business’s profits making function” (p. 116).

In what King (2001) refers to as strategic philanthropy, corporations apply a business-driven approach to contributions, which attaches value, strategic vision, and mission, to their charitable activities. Specialized departments which specifically handle charitable works are now commonplace in corporations across the United States. According to Shannon (1991) these departments, like others in the corporation, receive performance evaluations and are thus expected to meet the expectations of top management.

Similarly, previous research shows that six percent of congregations have at least one paid staff member that dedicates at least one-fourth of his or her their time toward social service goals. In addition, more active congregations have at least one staff person that dedicates ¼ of his or her time to social service projects (Chaves 1999). Institutional isomorphism seems at work here! With the advancement of Faith Based and Community Initiatives, congregations are posed to mimic the normative behavior of corporate charity
and well-established social service organizations. Grant writing, coordinating resources, serving as liaisons between the congregation and social service providers, doling out aid, and managing budgets represent a slice of the varied responsibilities paid staff members must do. Often, these responsibilities fall to other paid staff, religious leaders, lay members and volunteers when funds are in short supply. However, when congregations have adequate resources, these tasks can become aggregated under the guise of an Economic Development Corporation which is a distinct non-profit entity that supports social services and community development. As Vidal (2000) states, forming an Economic Development Corporation is a common means for congregations to enter social services. Requiring an extensive amount of resources, Economic Development Corporations are most commonly found among large congregations; in particular, Black mega-churches have gained notoriety for the establishment of these unique, effective partnerships.

To engage in social ministry congregations need access to viable resources (Wood 1981; Davidson 1985; Mock, Davidson and Johnson 1991; Dudley 1991; Dudley and Johnson 1993). Among these resources, leaders are perhaps the most valuable. Despite their denominational affiliation, theological orientation, size, or locale, congregations must have leaders who organize, coordinate and manage daily church life. In addition to directing the operation of their congregations, religious leaders communicate messages of faith, hope and duty to their members. As Wood (1981) claims, when religious leaders exclaim that expressing one’s faith through community outreach is an underlying
principle of the church, they strengthen the likelihood their members will support social service activities. This assertion is not lost on the Black Church which has produced some of America’s most prolific community and world leaders. In his study of Black religious leadership in four urban areas, Stone (1989) showed that African-American ministers in Baltimore, Maryland serve as gatekeepers who are essential to the political life of the city. Further, O’Keefe (1986) claims that the power of church leaders has a significant impact on the outcome of local elections. In fact, even today the Black community continues to search African-American congregations for notable leaders.

In an analysis of the National Congregations Study, Chaves (2004) showed that nearly one-third of congregations cannot afford to hire and maintain permanent, full-time clergy members. When this occurs, invariably members leave, services are cancelled, and social programs are cut. For those congregations that can afford clergy, their presence, skills, and experience allow congregations to function effectively as providers of spiritual comfort, guidance and purveyors of benevolent acts which bind the church to its members and surrounding communities. Although work that uses quantitative methodology shows no influence of clergy leadership on the direction and involvement of congregations in social services, qualitative research offers strong findings, which support the notion that the clergy is extremely instrumental in social service delivery. Bartowski and Regis (2000) showed that pastors’ personal experiences and views on charitable choice could significantly influence the direction and scope of their congregations’ role in social services. For example, they correlate a pastor’s past positive
experiences with charitable choice, the belief racial and class barriers can be broken through social programs, and a belief that the government should sponsor anti-poverty programs with a favorable position on charitable choice.

In the *Newer Deal: Social Work and Religion in Partnership*, Cnaan (1999) found that in Philadelphia, clergy were actively involved in 45 percent of the social programs sponsored by congregations which include activities such as hospital visitation, after-school care, programs for social justice, programs for teens, drug and alcohol prevention and GED classes. In addition, they showed that the clergy dedicated a mean number of twenty-six hours per program per month (Cnaan 1999). In the qualitative analysis, I rely on these studies to describe how religious leaders serve as key decision-makers that influence the direction of congregational involvement in social services.

**Responses to Environmental Changes**

In *Congregation and Community*, Ammerman (1997) re-defined how we evaluate congregations by using organizational theory to establish a framework of analysis that describes how congregations respond to environment change. From Kanter (1990) et al. Ammerman (1997) quotes:

“As environmental movement presents pressures and opportunities for change, organizations can subtly change their identities by reformulating their relationship to their environments: changing the businesses in which they operate, the products they offer to the market, the investors who supply capital, and so forth. The most extreme version of identity change is when an organization becomes something entirely different (in its businesses, products, ownership, etc.) in order to allow a portion – the asset base, the products, some know-how, the employments, base, even a tax carryover – to endure” (p.44).
Thus, summarizing the work of Kanter, and other researchers of organizations, Ammerman argues that we can categorize congregational change into four broad groups: decline, a reorientation to the locale, adaptation (e.g. attracts new members, change the church culture, or change the governance structure of the congregation), and new beginnings (e.g. changes of rebirth, changes of new births). Basing her work in the theoretical foundations of population ecologists and new institutionalism (respectively “survival of the fittest” and “survival of the similar”), Ammerman (1997) develops a clever thesis which argues that in response to environmental changes, congregations will adapt, move, die, or decline in effectiveness. In addition, she argues that a third process of the “survival of the savvy” influences the internal political workings of congregations which emphasizes “the mobilization of power within the organization, on effective use of influence and the building of coalitions – in short, on internal politics” (pgs. 45-46).

Thus, in the following section I review the theoretical underpinnings of population ecology and new institutionalism. Following Ammerman’s (1997) work, I argue that both processes influence the manner in which congregations respond to environmental change. Each perspective considers the local context as instrumental in determining organizational behavior (Huckfeldt, Plutzer and Sprague 1993; Leege and Welch 1989).

From population ecology, we know that in order to survive, organizations must adapt to their surrounding environments. This occurs through natural selection, whereby the environment chooses the best-fitting organizational form. For example, changes in the religious landscape indicate how social environments manipulate the behavior of
congregations. When parishioners began demanding stricter religious principles, the field of religious organizations exploded with new, conservative churches. The steady increases in mega churches reflect another environmental shift which highlights the ever-changing wants and preferences among churchgoers. However, before organizational forms are selected, the organization attempts different variations to see which best suits the environment. Therefore, the process of selection really becomes a process of trial and error whereby organizations mutate into different forms until their form matches the criteria established by the environment (Baum and Singh 1996).

For the most part, organizations remain structurally inert unless they are required to change. Hannan and Freeman (1977) argue that organizations experience structural inertia whereby they face barriers both internal and external to change. This view of organizations describes them as sluggish organisms that are slow to change and in fact, are damaged by changes that occur too quickly. For example, among the internal barriers to change, Hannan and Freeman (1977) argue that organizations face constraints via their political environments. Change requires the alignment of key decision-makers. As indicated earlier, the role of religious leaders is instrumental in directing a congregation toward or away from social services. In later works, Hannan and Freeman (1977, 1984) argue that organizations have difficulty adapting to change, and, at times, change can be bad for organizations. For example, older and large organizations gain legitimacy within environments because of their longevity and size. However, when they make changes they reduce the legitimacy they have developed over time (Hannan and Freeman 1984,
Yet, Haveman (1992) shows that organizations need to alter their behavior when they are threatened by fast and sudden changes in their environments. In this vein, change is good for the organization because it has a positive impact on the organizations performance.

Population ecologists assume that the birth and death of organizations is the result of an organization’s effectiveness. Therefore, organizations that survive are best fit for the environment and those that die are not (Baum 1996). As a survival mechanism, organizations seek to fill specialized niches which increase their competitive edge (Carroll 1985). As congregations become more entrenched in social services, they can potentially fulfill key niches. Chaves and Higgins (1992) show that Black congregations perform different social services than White congregations. Black congregations are more likely to provide meals, engage in civil rights activities, establish community economic developments, create public education programs, and address public health issues. Thus, Black congregations create niche social services by responding to particular needs.

In contrast to population ecologists, institutional theorists focus on the organization as a rational actor. They ask: why are there so many similar organizations? Their argument focuses on the desire of organizations to gain legitimacy. First, institutional theorists view organizations as institutions that instill policies and procedures that become infused within the organization’s framework. Meyer and Rowan (1977) argue that overtime organizations adopt innovations that become legitimized within
institutions. The adoption of these changes is characteristic of isomorphic behavior, whereby organizations take on the characteristics and forms of organizations within their environments. This behavior is a survival mechanism. Their argument is based in Selznick’s (1957) foundational work which argued that organizations are institutions which establish concrete processes. For example, this is evident in large, public organizations that gain power and legitimacy through the advancement of bureaucratic systems. It is through this accumulation of legitimacy and efficiency that organizations increase their chances of survival. The inclusion of these processes become rationalized myths within organizations because they are seen as the most efficient means of doing business but at the same time are not proven to be the most efficient (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Fligstein 1990). Thus, institutions adopt new policies through coercive behavior (DiMaggio and Powell 1990).

This is seen in the areas of government whereby organizations must adapt to legal standards in order to maintain their chances of survival. For example, the government requires non-profit agencies to keep adequate tax records. Over time, the role of tax record keeping becomes institutionalized within organizations. Another mechanism is modeling whereby organizations mimic the behavior of other organizations (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). For example, Japan modeled its system of bureaucratic government after the practices set up by Western nations, specifically the United States. However, Selznick (1957) argues that organizations do not always mimic the behavior of organizations around them, even if that behavior seems to have become institutionalized.
for other organizations. For example, he showed that universities within a technical environment were slow to change their curriculum and make-up (Selznick 1957).

Is institutional theory too rational? Does it ignore the role of culture within organizations? Baum (1993, 1996) argues that old institutionalism did not account for the missions and goals of organizations. Overtime interests as member organizations and desires to survive, force organizations to adopt practices that match their organizational environments (Baum 1993, 1996). Fligstein (1990) focuses on the changing work cultures within organizations based upon the style of management the organization adopts. He argues that the inclusion of certain management styles are simply attempts to keep abreast of changing fads and trends. The American workplace has seen a sharp rise in the number of companies that are implementing quality circle team management (Applebaum and Batt 1994). Fligstein (1990) argues that over time, these practices become institutionalized, but their effectiveness in increasing efficiency is never truly measured. No organization is more susceptible to its cultural environment than congregations. In an eloquent analysis of Black churches, as purveyors of social justice, the research of Patillo-McCoy (1998) “uses social constructivism as an analytical approach to bridge social movement theory and cultural theory” (p. 768). Patillo-McCoy (1998) articulates how the unique cultural environment of the Black Church constructs a framework for political and social activism.
“The power of prayer, Christian imagery, and call-and-response interaction lies not only in the possibility of realizing concrete results from particular supplications, but also in the cultural familiarity of these tools among African Americans as media for interacting, conducting a meeting, holding a rally, or getting out the vote. Black church culture constitutes of a common language that motivates social action” (p. 768).

In this study, I include culture in my discussion of social services. As Granovetter (1973, 1985) argues, organizations are embedded in a milieu of social relationships that influence their behavior. For example, Ammerman (1997) showed that internal organizational cultures influence how congregations respond to internal and external change within their environments. Here, I extend this argument to discuss how congregations alter their internal social arrangements to adapt to such fluctuations in their environments.
CHAPTER 3

DATA AND METHODS

“And the LORD answered me, and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” (Habakkuk 2:2).

The presence of congregations in our communities and neighborhoods is hard to ignore; yet, our understanding of what they do is limited. For parishioners and onlookers, churches generate sentiments of awe, respect, and wonder. For researchers, churches also emit a sense of mystery. As social investigators, what do we really know about congregations? Although churches are a staple of American religious life, they comprise one of the least studied fields of organizations. Why is this? First, no organization, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, consistently collects data on churches. Information gathering on American churches has been piecemeal leaving most researchers in the precarious situation of requesting entry into places that often function as insular organizations. Basic demographic statistics, (i.e. age of church, congregation size, annual revenues) remain unknown. Second, it is difficult for researchers to compile a complete list of American congregations. Current estimates indicate 353,000 congregations exist nationwide, although that number may be severely deflated due to the undercounting of storefronts. Some argue there are as many as 500,000 established congregations.
Although the internet has increased the ability of researchers to gain information on organizations, much of the contact information is based on yellow page directories. Invariably these directories contain misleading and inaccurate references. Finally, many congregations do not maintain records which researchers need to analyze their shifting characteristics, demographics and activities. Many congregations lack the financial resources to employ administrative workers or historians to document and catalog the pertinent facts, figures, and numbers which researchers use to evaluate organizational behavior. If basic demographic data are hard to acquire, the task of compiling information on the members themselves becomes a challenging feat.

To date, the National Congregations Study and the Organizing Religious Work studies are the only national data sets that include a wealth of information on a generous cross-section of America’s congregations. For the most part, studies on congregations have been limited by small sample sizes often focusing on one congregation, a few congregations within a specific denomination, or several congregations within a particular geographical area. This is not to say these works lack merit. The foundation of current research into the world of congregations was laid by these studies which have greatly increased our understanding of how congregations function as organizations.

In this study, I utilize quantitative and qualitative methods to further this understanding. First, in the quantitative component, I analyze the Organizing Religious

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4 The National Congregations Study contains information on more than 5000 American congregations. Data were collected between 1997 and 1999.
Work (ORW) data set using Ordinary Least Squares Regression. My goal is to use the ORW data to analyze the partnerships which congregations build with external social service organizations. I evaluate the *quantity and strength* of connections that congregations establish with external social service organizations, and I evaluate the *types* of organizations with which congregations choose to partner. I measure the quantity of connections by evaluating the total number of connections established with social service organizations. I measure strength by evaluating the total number of organizations to which congregations donate money to and the total number of organizations to which congregations send volunteers. I distinguish among different types of social service organizations by constructing three separate groups: organizations that provide food, clothing and shelter (needy organizations) organizations that provide counseling, and organizations that provide health and education services. I also measure the total number of connections established with religious and secular organizations.

Second, in the qualitative component, I analyze data collected on 31 different congregations within Columbus, Ohio. I construct a narrative which describes the obstacles specific congregations undergo as they expand their organizational boundaries in an attempt to partner with their community members and external organizations. I use organizational theory (e.g. new institutional theory, resource dependence and agency theory) to describe how shifts in a congregation’s internal and external environments (i.e. changes in racial composition, aging membership, dwindling economic resources) force congregations to alter their goals, activities and internal make-ups. In the following
sections, I discuss the ORW data, the Columbus Congregations Study and my methodology.

**QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT**

To analyze what congregations do, Nancy T. Ammerman and a team of researchers compiled the Organizing Religious Work Data (ORW) set which is one of the most comprehensive data sets that includes information on the partnerships that congregations establish with other organizations. In essence, this data set contains much of the information we need to understand how congregations function as viable organizations within constantly shifting environments. I utilize this data to construct an analysis of how congregations use their partnerships to participate in social services. Beyond the telltale demographic data, the ORW’s main contribution to the sociological study of religious organizations is the information it contains on 6000 connections formed by 549 congregations. With this information we can begin to answer such questions as: with whom do congregations partner, which resources do member organizations exchange, how many partnerships do congregations construct, and what factors influence the establishment and maintenance of partnerships? Data were collected in seven different research sites: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Nashville, Tennessee; New York, New York; Hartford, Connecticut; Seattle, Washington, and rural counties in Alabama and Missouri. In addition, forty-three in-depth interviews were completed with religious leaders and lay people. Researchers interviewed representatives of each congregation gaining information on the following: individual congregations
(age, size, annual revenues, size of staff, daily and weekly activities, denominational affiliation, mission and educational level of the clergy); church members (race, average age, educational attainment, income level); partnerships (length of association, type of services organization provides and the resources exchanged between member organizations such as money, volunteers, food, clothing, etc).

The ORW data contain two separate data sets, one which contains information on the 549 congregations and one which contains information on the 6000 connections. I began my analysis by merging both data sets. Once merged, I cleaned all data, and ran basic descriptive statistics to check for general statistical problems and missing values.

Table 1 (see Appendix) describes how each dependent variable is measured in the analysis. Table 2 (see Appendix) describes how each independent variable is measured in the analysis. I use nine dependent variables and twenty-two independent variables. The dependent variables measure the number of partnerships congregations establish with external organizations for the purpose of social service delivery. The dependent variables measures five aspects of partnerships: 1) the number of partnerships which congregations form with all external organizations (TotalOrg), 2) the number of partnerships which congregations form with only social service organizations (TotalOut), 3) the number of partnerships to which congregations donate specific resources (TotalVol and TotalMon), 4) the number of partnerships which congregations establish with specific types of social service organizations (NeedyOrg, HlthOrg, and ConsIOrg), and 5) the number of partnerships which congregations form with religious-based or secular organizations.
The independent variables measure five aspects of congregational characteristics: 1) denominational affiliation (Conservative Protestant, Roman Catholic, Liberal Protestant, Moderate Protestant and Other), 2) authority structure (Congregational, Mixed and Hierarchical), 3) mission-orientation (Activist Oriented, Evangelical Oriented and Member Oriented), 4) demographic characteristics (clergy education, total budget, rural/urban location, age, size, percent Black attenders, percent attenders that live near the congregation, percent over the age of 65), and 5) social class (percent with high school or less than high school education, percent with income less than $15,000). Table 3 (see Appendix) shows the descriptive statistics for selected independent and dependent variables.

The results indicate sufficient variance adequate for Ordinary Least Squares regressions. In secondary data analysis, missing values often present a challenge. In this analysis, I handled missing values by using means replacement. In a separate analysis not shown, I produced a means comparison with selected independent and dependent variables before utilizing means replacement. This analysis produced bias results that are inconsistent with previous research. Means replacement adjusted for the biased results. I performed means replacement on the following variables: clergy education (5 replaced values), congregational authority (7 replaced values), mixed authority (7 replaced values), hierarchical authority (7 replaced values), size (3 replaced values), live near congregations (5 replaced values), percent with low income (5 replaced values), total budget (8 replaced values), age (3 replaced values), percent with high school or less
education (5 replaced values); and percent over the age of 65 (5 replaced values).

Means Comparison

Table 4 (see Appendix) shows the means comparison for several independent and dependent variables. To account for the variance in the number of attenders at each congregation, I weighted the means comparisons by size. The average congregation establishes ten connections with external organizations, donates overall resources to six organizations, sends volunteers to three organizations, gives money to three organizations and receives help from an average of 3 organizations. Second, on average, Liberal Protestants (17 connections) and Moderate Protestants (16 connections) establish more connections with external organizations than Catholic (10 connections) and Conservative Protestant (11 connections) congregations. Liberal and Moderate Protestant congregations (12 and 20 respectively) support more organizations with overall resources than Catholic and Conservative Protestant congregations. Third, on average, congregations with an activist mission (13) establish slightly more ties with external organizations, and donate resources to more organizations (9) than congregations with an evangelical (12 overall connections and 6 outreach connections) or member orientation (12 overall connections and 7 outreach connections). On average, congregations with flexible authority structures, establish more ties, support more organizations with resources, and receive help from more organizations than congregations with rigid authority structures. Finally, on average, congregations that have a higher percentage of White members establish more external ties (7 connections) and donate resources to more
organizations (4 connections) than congregations with a high percentage of Black members (6 overall connections and 3 outreach connections).

Overall, the results reinforce images of congregations as benevolent organizations. First, although previous research shows that resource limitations restrict the direct involvement of congregations in social services, the results indicate that congregations can support a wide range of social services by channeling resources through external organizations. This is most apparent among Liberal and Moderate Protestant congregations which donate resources to more organizations than Conservative Protestant and Roman Catholic congregations. This finding is consistent with previous research that indicates Mainline Protestant congregations outperform Catholic and Conservative Protestants in social service delivery. Why is this? First, historically Mainline congregations have transitioned into mainstream denominations which draw and retain members from America’s middle classes. In contrast, Conservative Protestant congregations remain marginalized and insular denominations which draw mainly from lower-class groups. Thus, Mainline congregations maintain a social and economic position which strengthens their resource-building capabilities. Second, previous research neglects examinations of the effect of mission-orientation on social service delivery. In this analysis, I measure the influence of expressed organizational goals on charitable behavior. The results show that activist congregations donate resources to more organizations than evangelical and member-oriented congregations. I argue that engagement in social services is an integral component of achieving social justice goals.
Third, congregations with flexible authority structures are more active in social services. The results also indicate that Black congregations maintain fewer external connections than White congregations. I surmise this difference is mediated through fewer resource-building opportunities.

Table 5 (see Appendix) shows additional means comparisons for selected independent and dependent variables. To account for the variance in size of congregation, I weighted the means comparisons by number of attenders. The results show that on average Liberal Protestant congregations support more organizations that provide food, clothing and/or shelter (5 connections), and health and educational services (5 connections) than Catholic (6 connections) or Moderate Protestant congregations (1 connection). The means comparisons show congregations that have an activist-mission support more organizations that provide food, clothing and shelter (3) and those that provide health and education services (3) than evangelical-oriented and member-oriented congregations. Predominantly Black congregations support more organizations that provide food, clothing and shelter (2) than predominantly White congregations (1). They also supply more secular organizations with resources (2) than White congregations (1).

Do congregations prefer to support certain social service organizations over others? Overall, the results show that congregations show little bias toward the types of social services they support. Liberal Protestant congregations show the widest range of support for social services which indicates their organizational structures bolster the formation of network ties. As expected, activist congregations fulfill their social justice
goals by maintaining more ties with social service organizations than evangelical and member-centered churches. Consistent with previous research, the results show Black congregations support different types of social services than White congregations. They support more “needy” organizations and maintain more ties with secular organizations. I argue Black congregations maintain different services through the establishment of Economic Development Corporations which expand their social service provision and external connections.

Measurement

In this analysis, I use twenty-one independent variables. First, I evaluate the effect of denominational affiliation on social services. In the ORW data, congregations are coded based on their denominational and theological orientation. Therefore, a Baptist, yet Conservative congregation, is coded as Conservative Protestant. Consistent with prior research, I restrict my analysis to the major denominational groups in the United States: Conservative Protestants (reference category), Liberal and Moderate Protestants and Roman Catholics. All congregations in the ORW data set were assigned a denominational grouping based on how respondents answered the following question: *which denomination does your church associate with?* I created five dichotomous variables (Conservative Protestant, Catholic, Liberal Protestant, Moderate Protestant and Other). I use Conservative Protestants as a reference category. Second, I measure the

5 Typically researchers collapse Liberal and Moderate Protestants into one category: Mainline Protestants. In this analysis I separate Liberal and Moderates in order to gauge which denominational group is more engaged in social services.
effect of internal authority structure. Congregations were asked to describe their **internal authority structure**. Each congregation was asked: *Who has the final say about who should become the congregation’s clergy leader?* Respondents selected a committee; a governing council, the congregation, the clergy, or a denominational official. Based on their responses, congregations were organized into congregational authority structures (reference category), hierarchical authority structures, or mixed authority structures. Congregational authority structures allow members to make key decisions regarding personnel, direction and finances. Denominational officials who make key decisions in the areas of personnel, direction and finances lead hierarchical governance structures. Mixed authority structures represent congregations that are flexible and allow the congregation’s members, leaders and hierarchical authorities to make key decisions together. Third, I measure the effect of a **congregation’s mission** on social services\(^6\).

Congregations were asked sixteen questions which were used to construct mission-orientations\(^7\). An evangelical mission measures the extent to which congregations support evangelical works in their surrounding communities. An activist mission measures the extent to which congregations support and engage in social justice. A member mission measures the extent to which congregations support and provide services for their members.

\(^6\) In order to ascertain the effect of legitimacy, I created a separate mission variable which measures the extent to which congregations believe their prominent role in the community or their denominations is an important part of their mission. However, this variable was consistently insignificant and was deleted from the final models.

\(^7\) In the Columbus Congregations Study the same sixteen questions were asked. Question #33 comprises the question for mission-orientation.
Fourth, I measure resource availability by looking at specific congregational characteristics. The level of clergy education is measured as the type of education the congregation’s religious leader has ranging from high school diploma to post-graduate degree. Previous research shows a positive, significant relationship between level of clergy education and how much congregations engage in social services (Chaves 2004). Sixth, the total budget is a logged variable which measures the amount of revenue the congregation receives from all resources within a year. This variable was logged to account for the large range of budgets ($2,000 to $7 million). Seventh, rural locale is a dummy variable with urban location as the reference category. Eighth, the size of the congregation measures the number of attenders that regularly frequent the church for services. Consistent with previous research, the number of attenders is a better indicator of church behavior than member size which can often be a misleading number. The number of members is often much larger than the number of attenders who have the greatest impact on the services provided by the church. This variable was also logged to account for the large variation in range (4 attenders to 7000 attenders). Ninth, the age of the congregation indicates the year in which the congregation was founded. Congregations were asked to disclose the year in which they were founded. The results indicate a range from 1731 to 1998. Therefore, older well-established congregations were represented along with newer congregations. In order to measure racial differences
between congregations, I evaluated the influence of racial composition⁸. Each congregation was asked to disclose the percentage of its members that are White, African-American, Asian, and Hispanic. Previous research shows the landscape of American congregations is highly segregated. This variable measures the extent to which congregations are racially integrated or segregated ranging from less than 10 percent Black to more than 90 percent Black.

In order to gauge the effect of resource dependence, I evaluated how much influence attenders who also resided in the surrounding community had on community outreach. Congregations were asked to disclose the percentage of attenders who live within a ten-minute walk of the church from less than 10 percent to greater than 90 percent. The final variable which measures congregational characteristics is the percentage of members that are 65 years of age or older. Since congregations rely on their attenders as resources, the age of their members will have a direct influence on the ability of congregations to utilize these resources. Congregations were asked to disclose the percentage of members who are 65 years of age or older from less than 10 percent to greater than 90 percent.

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⁸ In results not shown, I utilized a different measure for racial composition. I measured Black congregations as congregations that self-identified as belonging to one of the seven historical African-American congregations. In all of the regression models, this measure was consistently insignificant. Thus, I changed my measure of racial composition as described above.
Dependent Variables

In this analysis I use nine dependent variables. Table 3 (see Appendix) shows the descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation and Range) for each dependent variable. Each of the dependent variables was constructed by calculating the total number of connections which congregations established with particular social service organizations. Respondents were asked to supply the following information on the connections they formed with external organizations: name of organization, length of association, types of resources exchanged, amount of resources exchanged, services provided by member organization, whether a representative of the organization attended worship services at the congregation and whether the congregation used its church bulletins to list information about the organization. Each dependent variable was created by summing the number of partnerships which congregations formed with external organizations.

First, I measure how embedded congregations are within their environments by examining the total number of ties which congregations construct with external organizations (Mean = 12.25; Std. Dev = 7.56). This total combines all of the organizations with which congregations support through social services and/or receive resources from. It also includes network ties that congregations form for the purpose of fellowship. Second, I measure how embedded congregations are within the sphere of social services by examining the total number of organizations which congregations support with contributions (Mean = 7.7; Std. Dev = 5.7). This variable was constructed by summing together only the number of organizations congregations support in any
manner with contributions (i.e. money, food, clothing, shelter, personnel). Third, I measure how well congregations use their financial and personnel resources to support social services by examining the **total number of organizations which congregations support monetarily** (Mean = 4.9; Std. Dev = 4.7), and the **total number of organizations which congregations support with volunteers** (Mean = 4.4; Std. Dev = 2.6). These variables were constructed by summing only the number of organizations with which congregations support financially and summing only the number of organizations which congregations support with volunteers. Sixth, I measure the total number of organizations with which churches support that provide **food, clothing and shelter** (FCS organizations). This variable was constructed by summing the number of partner organizations which provide these services to the needy (Mean = 2.9; Std. Dev = 2.3). I measure the total number of partner organizations which provide **counseling services** (Mean = .84; Std. Dev = .96). This variable was constructed by summing all the organizations whose primary mission is to provide counseling for drug and alcohol abuse and other needs. Eighth, I measure the total number of partner organizations which provide **health and education services** (H/E organizations). This variable was constructed by summing all of the organizations that provide health and educational services (Mean = 3.1; Std. Dev = 3.1). I measure the total number of **religious organizations** that congregations support with charitable contributions (Mean = 3.8; Std. Dev = 3.6). Finally, I measure the total number of **secular organizations** congregations support with charitable contributions (Mean = 2.5; Std. Dev = 2.5).
Analysis

In my analysis, I complete an Ordinary Least Squares Regression measuring the effect of internal and external environmental characteristics on the partnerships established by congregations. I conduct the analysis in accordance with the expectations of multiple regression which assumes the relationship between my observed and outcome variables is linear and that the effect of the independent variables is additive (Berry and Feldman). I use a general model of linear regression in my analysis:

\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \ldots + \beta_k X_k + \varepsilon \]

I conduct my analysis in accordance with basic regression assumptions: 1) that the error term is uncorrelated with my independent variables, 2) that it has the same variance as the values of the independent variables, 3) that the values of my errors are independent of one another, and 4) that the error term is normally distributed. Measures of goodness of fit were performed to identify and correct violations of linear regression assumptions. In results not shown, I checked for linearity by calculating normal probability plots for the regression models. All plots indicate a strong linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The Adjusted R squares indicate that the models were not prone to mis-specification. The Durbin Watson results indicate that the OLS models meet the requirements of linearity; therefore, corrections for non-linearity were not necessary. In results not shown, I performed additional calculations which measured the presence of multicollinearity between the independent and dependent variables. The results were negative. Each OLS Regressions Model met the requirements of Goodness of Fit.
QUALITATIVE COMPONENT

In the second part of the analysis, I apply organizational theory to the engagement of congregations in social services. More specifically, I argue that new institutional theory, resource dependence and agency theory can explain the movement of churches across organizational boundaries. Like most organizations, congregations fight for survival by responding to internal and external environmental pressures. Like most organizations, congregations respond to external and internal pressures. Through qualitative interviews, I construct a narrative of the mechanisms congregations deploy to engage in social services. I show that congregations seek to provide community outreach due to pressures to maintain benevolent images in response to strong religious leadership and in response to changes within their neighborhoods.

I surveyed congregations in Columbus, Ohio in a project entitled the *Columbus Congregations Study*. Using a stratified random sampling method, I constructed a list of congregations based on information listed in the Polk directories for Columbus, Ohio, churches. I cross-listed selected sampling frame with information found in the yellow pages for Columbus, Ohio. Further, I cross-listed the contact information for African-American congregations with a list constructed by Robert Wead⁹. I stratified the congregations based on denominational affiliation: Roman Catholic, United Methodist, 

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⁹ Wead, R.S. 1996. *Coming This Far by Faith: History of Selected Black Churches in Columbus, Ohio*. This study includes a list of Columbus African-American churches. I cross-referenced my completed list with this study to check for inaccuracies.
Lutheran (ELCA), Southern Baptist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, and historically African American. The denominations chosen for study represent similar denominational groups used in the Organizing Religious Work (ORW) data. I maintained records for each congregation in an Access database which listed the name of each congregation, address, phone number, contact name and web-site address when listed or if found through an Internet search. I selected a random sample of congregations. From this list, I mailed questionnaires to half of the selected sample, and I mailed invitations to participate in a face-to-face to the other half of the sample. In total, I began with a list of 75 congregations of which I invited each congregation to participate in an interview. I maintained a phone log which documented follow-up calls to all the congregations in the sample. My goal was to: 1) make sure that congregations were aware that an invitation to participate in an interview arrived in the mail, 2) make corrections when necessary (i.e. wrong address, wrong contact person listed, church no longer exists), 3) set up dates and times for interviews, and 4) delete unresponsive or unwilling participants and send invitations to newly selected congregations.

I completed 31 interviews with local religious leaders. Twenty face-to-face interviews were conducted between 2003 and 2007. The interviews were conducted on-site at the churches, most times in the offices of pastors. Each interview lasted an average of two hours. I audio taped each interview. Thirteen interviews were conducted during the summer of 2003. Seven face-to-face interviews with religious leaders and laypersons of Black congregations were conducted from 2006 – 2007. Finally, eleven
phone interviews were conducted with religious leaders from 2006 – 2007. Respondents were asked a series of questions that were primarily based on the Organizing Religious Work Data set. The questions focused on 1) the congregation’s history, 2) the congregation’s demographic makeup, 3) demographic information on the members, 3) activities performed by the congregations on an annual, monthly, and weekly basis, 4) connections made with external social service organizations, and 5) resources exchanged with external organizations. The respondents were also asked a series of open-ended questions which allowed them to discuss the following: 1) how churches reach out to community members, 2) how congregations reach out to external organizations and 3) how churches adapt to changes in their environments.

The sample represents nine different denominations with one congregation expressing no denominational affiliation. Second, the congregations showed a range of governance structures: six maintain congregational authority structures, fifteen hierarchical authority structures and ten mixed authority structures. Third, twenty-three congregations reported their racial composition as 90 percent White or greater. Eight congregations are categorized as predominantly Black. Fourth, the congregations showed moderate levels of social capital. Nearly 90 percent of the congregations indicated their members have more than a high school education and 70 percent of the congregations reported that their members earn $15,000 or more annually. Fifth, nearly 75 percent of the congregations reported annual budgets of $100,000 or greater. In addition, nearly 70 percent of the congregations draw their congregations for surrounding communities.
Finally, the congregations ranged in size from 50 members to 2000 attenders. The congregation with the fewest attenders represented a Presbyterian church that is struggling to survive. Nearly 90 percent of the members are over the age of 65 and this congregation manages its daily operation on one of the lowest budgets in the sample $79,000. In the week I visited the church, they were forced to terminate their food pantry due to low volunteer rates. The food pantry had served the community for over thirty years. Although there is some variance in the number of congregations that have Black attenders, only one congregation represented a predominantly Black congregation. Although these congregations varied in important ways that would suggest that their social service involvement would significantly differ one to the other, they all expressed similar reasons for engaging in social services. Mostly, congregations engage in social services for three specific reasons: 1) out of tradition, 2) response to strong religious leadership, or 3) response to changes in external and internal communities. Thus, in this paper I discuss the strength of congregational involvement in social services, and what motivates congregations to engage and sometimes disengage from social services. Given the small size of the sample, generalizations referencing the population of congregations in Columbus cannot be made. Therefore, this analysis only serves as an attempt to discuss the obstacles and challenges faced by the individual congregations in my study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

“Well faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone” (James 2:17).

In the quantitative analysis, I find that hierarchical or inter-organizational networks structure the charitable behavior of congregations. Limited resources threaten the extent to which congregations fully participate in social service delivery, thereby forcing congregations to channel their social service delivery through external organizations. Thus, organizational structure mitigates the provision of social services among congregations. As expected, Liberal Protestant congregations establish more partnerships, stronger partnerships and more diverse partnerships with social service organizations than Roman Catholic and Conservative and Moderate Protestants do. Black congregations form fewer and less diverse ties than White congregations. In support of new institutionalism, mission-orientation functions as a significant indicator of partnership formation. Congregations which self-identify as activist collaborate more with social service organizations.
In the qualitative analysis, I provide a narrative, which describes how congregations internalize the notion of “Christian charity”. I discuss the motivating factors that influence charitable behavior among congregations, what services they provide and who performs most of the work. In addition, I describe how internal and external pressures alter a congregation’s role in social services.

**QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT**

Table 6 (see Appendix) shows the influence of organizational structure on partnership formation. Columns 1 – 4 present the linear regression findings for the following dependent variables: 1) all partnerships congregations form with external organizations, 2) partnerships congregations form with outreach organizations, 3) partnerships congregations form with organizations to whom they send volunteers and 4) partnerships congregations from with organizations to whom they donate money.

Table 7 (see Appendix) shows the influence of organizational structure on partnership formation. Columns 1 – 5 present the linear regression findings for the following dependent variables: 1) partnerships formed with organizations which provide food, clothing and shelter, 2) partnerships formed with organizations which provide counseling services, 3) partnerships formed with organizations which provide health services, 4) partnerships with religious organizations, and 5) partnerships formed with secular organizations.
The Role of Liberal and Moderate Protestants

Like individuals, organizations build partnerships based on the social connections maintained by each member (Granovetter 1973). In short, they seek familiarity and credibility from each other. Thus, like other organizations, congregations facilitate organic growth via the establishment of partnerships which form based on trust, prior knowledge and information seeking behavior (Granovetter 1973, 1985; Powell and Smith-Doerr 1996; Gulati and Gargiulo 1999). A congregation’s longevity, its presence in the community and its reputation in its field informs its partner seeking behavior. This study reveals that the high visibility of Liberal and Moderate Protestant congregations in the field of social services is directly linked to the prevalence of their ties with external organizations. This holds particularly true for Liberal Protestant congregations who maintain stronger and more diverse partnerships with social service organizations than Conservative Protestant, Moderate Protestant and Roman Catholic Congregations. In regards to the quantity of their partnerships, Liberal Protestants fall slightly behind Moderate Protestants who establish more partnerships with social service organizations than their counterparts. Thus, I find moderate support for Hypothesis 1.

Neither Liberal nor Moderate Protestants exhibit insular behavior. Moderate Protestants (4.43**) establish more partnerships with external organizations than Liberal Protestants (3.94**). Moderate Protestants (3.74**) also establish more ties with social service organizations than Liberal Protestants (3.66**). Both Liberal and Moderate Protestants provide resources to more organizations that supply people with food,
clothing and shelter (1.78** and 1.24**), both provide resources to more organizations that supply counseling services (0.29** and 0.33**), and both provide resources to more organizations that improve one’s health and educational goals (1.49**) and 1.23**).

Finally, although both establish more contacts with religious organizations (1.71** and 1.67***), only Liberal Protestants (1.50**) provide resources to more secular organizations.

If the trend among organizations shows movement away from hierarchical arrangements and toward inter-organizational networks, why are Liberal and Moderate Protestants outpacing their peers? Why does institutional isomorphism favor these religious traditions? I argue that adherence to religious tradition informs the proclivity for social service delivery by Liberal Protestants and to a lesser extent Moderate Protestants. To respond effectively to organizational change, congregations need an established or revised ideology that supports the proposed change. Following Ammerman (1997) and Kanter (1990), I argue that survivability relies on the ability of congregations to promote change from within their organizations. Whether congregations utilize a process of change, which exemplifies “survival of the fittest," “survival of the familiar”, or “survival of the savvy”, their decision to establish partnerships must express their organizational values. I argue that the internalization of Christian charity, particularly its emphasis on good works, becomes more diffused among

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10 The “survival of the fittest” refers to the use of resources in responding to change. The “survival of the familiar” refers to interaction among similar organizations. The “survival of the savvy” refers to the use of leadership in responding to change (Ammerman 1997:pgs. 45-46).
Liberal and Moderate Protestant congregations. Spiritual salvation is marked not just by one’s relationship with God, but also by one’s willingness to help others.

This process is highlighted by the diverse relationships that Liberal and Moderate Protestants maintain. The partnerships that congregations maintain with external social service organizations reflect ties with denomination-specific organizations, ecumenical organizations and secular organizations. Many denominations aggregate their social service delivery via the operation of a national organization which relies heavily on the resources provided by individual congregations. The Nazarene Missions International, the United Methodist Community of Relief, and the Faith Mission exemplify denomination-specific organizations which mitigate the provision of social service for the entire denomination. As Ammerman (2005) states, the maintenance of these organizations intensifies the mission-mindedness of member congregations.

Congregations also support ecumenical organizations such as Heart to Honduras, the Hunger Network, and the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Habitat for Humanity and the Lions Club represent secular organizations that receive resources from congregations. I argue that the mission-mindedness of Liberal Protestants allows them to move further beyond their organizational boundaries than their peers. Note that Liberal Protestants outperform their peers in the establishment of partnerships with secular organizations. Perhaps congregations that are more conservative avoid establishing partnerships with organizations that do not express similar theologies. Congregations that support Right to

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11 The Church of the Nazarene operates Nazarene Missions International. The Lutheran Church operates Faith Mission.
Life causes may choose to support Pro-Life agendas through their denominations and other religious organizations, but may not support secular organizations such as Planned Parenthood which counsel pregnant women.

Here, Roozen and Hadaway (1993, 2006) shed more light on the prolific role of Liberal Protestants in social services. They contend that unlike their Moderate and Conservative peers, Liberal Protestants are flexible enough to acquire growth. Although Roozen and Hadaway (1993, 2006) refer mainly to an increase in church members, I argue that flexibility allows Liberal Protestants to view partnership formation in a non-threatening manner. Note that Liberal Protestant congregations maintain stronger partnerships than their counterparts do. They provide volunteers for more organizations (0.76**) and donate money to more organizations (2.86***) than Conservative Protestant, Moderate Protestant and Roman Catholic congregations. Roozen and Hadaway (1993, 2006) also suggest that a focus on social justice appeals to newcomers. Why not advertise one’s commitment to social justice by establishing strong links with social service organizations? For Bartowski and Regis (2003), Liberal Protestants use their faith-based social capital (accrued through their longevity) to build well-established ties (bonding capital) and to create new ties (bridging capital). Thus, Liberal Protestant congregations benefit from their credibility and experience in the field of social services.
The Role of Activist Congregations

Although the federal government has issued a request for congregations to increase their role in social services, their plea is constrained by the resource limitation of congregations. A desire to meet social expectations is not enough to improve the social service delivery of congregations. This study evaluates how well congregations match their community outreach accomplishments with their expressed goals. Congregations that indicate serving the needy and promoting change in the community as their most important organizational goals were classified as activist congregations. Their engagement in social services was compared to congregations that focus on evangelism and congregations that focus on meeting the needs of their members. Few studies evaluate this effect on organizational behavior. In previous research, religious tradition serves as a proxy for mission-orientation.

The results indicate that activism increases the movement of congregations beyond their organizational boundaries. They establish more partnerships with external organizations (1.48**) and social service organizations (.89**). The strength of their partnerships is characterized by the commitment of volunteers (.52*) and the donation of money (.38**) to more social service organizations. In addition, they maintain more ties with organizations that provide food, clothing and shelter (0.61**) and health and education services (0.47**). Finally, they maintain more ties with secular organizations (0.61**). In contrast, evangelical congregations collaborate with fewer organizations that provide food, clothing and shelter (-0.35**) and partner with fewer secular organizations (-0.50**).
First, why is the presence of activist congregations in social services so pervasive? This finding, more than any other, reveals that congregations are situated in a social context that influences their daily decision-making. More than organizations that exist within physical environments, congregations strive to become a part of their communities as places of spiritual growth and human refuge. Embeddedness marks a social relationship, a tacit bond that signifies each actor will act in the other’s best interests. The organizational environment is a social setting in which the corporate actors and their clients share mutual interests (Burt 1983). Further, it reveals that congregations are not simply rational actors that respond based on their ability to weigh the costs and benefits of their actions. Charity may be rational and profitable for corporations as it heightens their image in the minds of consumers. Yet, one has to believe that congregations function from an ethereal place that leads them to engage in benevolent behavior without the guarantee of any returns. Thus, ties with community outreach organizations are not viewed as a threat to the survivability of congregations or an affront to religious authority. Rather they represent the pay-off on a promise and social expectation to improve the world in which they exist.

Institutional theory suggests that organizations establish partnerships in order to increase their legitimacy (Scott and Meyer 1983; Kraatz 1998). Organizations exist in environments, which pressure them to “justify their activities or outputs” (Oliver 1990). Organizations will establish partnerships when they experience high amounts of domain consensus, the degree to which organizations accept each other’s claims to specific goals.
and functions (Oliver 1990). In what better way can activist organizations express their goals other than engaging in community outreach? The pursuit of social justice becomes infused within the culture of the congregation. As Ammerman (1997) states, institutional culture molds patterns of relationships and support. Thus, the expression of activism must become ingrained in the congregation through worship services, fellowship activities, and the works of missionary groups. The provision of social services becomes a collective sentiment that shapes organizational behavior to such a degree that not to provide social services is in direct opposition to the goals of the church (Ammerman 2005).

Second, why do evangelical congregations maintain fewer partnerships with social service organizations? The results support previous work that shows the strict theological orientation of conservative congregations limits their partnerships (Davidson, Johnson and Mock 1990). In this study, Conservative Protestant congregations identify more with evangelical goals than Roman Catholics and Liberal and Moderate Protestants. They were followed by Black congregations, of which 54 percent self-identified with evangelical goals. Previous research shows that congregations engage in social services primarily through the provision of food, clothing, and shelter. Yet, evangelical congregations maintain fewer links with organizations that provide food, clothing, and shelter. Further, they establish fewer partnerships with secular organizations. As insular organizations, conservative congregations restrict movement beyond their organizational boundaries. Yet, perhaps the results do not indicate less social service provision.
Conceivably, the results may indicate that evangelical congregations engage in more direct care rather than indirect social service provision. Internal service groups and missions groups comprise the structure of most congregations. Groups that focus specifically on community needs, such as visiting inmates (a “Prison Ministry”) or operating a food pantry (a “Food Service Ministry”) order the internal work arrangements of congregations. Missions groups (e.g., a “Women’s group” or a “Men’s group”) may operate independently or in tandem with service groups. Dudley and Roozen (2001) showed that White Evangelical Protestants offer just as many “outreach ministries” as Moderate Protestant, Roman and Orthodox Catholic congregations. Thus, although the results indicate that evangelical churches lack external partnerships with social organizations, this may not limit their engagement in social services.

The Role of the Black Church

The results indicate moderate support for Hypothesis 3. Black congregations establish fewer partnerships with external organizations and less diverse partnerships. They establish fewer overall partnerships (-0.47**) and fewer partnerships with outreach organizations (-0.49**). They support fewer organizations with financial donations (-0.27**). In addition, they collaborate with fewer organizations that provide food, clothing and shelter (-0.13**), organizations that provide counseling services (-0.10***), organizations that provide health and education services (-0.18*) and religious organizations (-0.32***). If Black congregations have a long history of social justice, why do they lag in their support of social services? Previous research shows that Black
congregations do not provide any more or any fewer social services than White congregations do (Chaves and Higgins 1992; Chaves and Tsitsos 2001). Yet, the results indicate that Black congregations do not utilize partnerships as a key tool in the propagation of social services.

I argue that three factors limit the formation of partnerships by Black congregations: 1) their conservative structure, 2) their access to key resources and 3) their use of internal service groups and/or missions groups. In this study, 54 percent of Black congregations were classified as evangelical. Thus, they rated three factors as important to the mission of their congregation: 1) maintaining an active evangelism and outreach program and encouraging members to share their faith, 2) helping others to resist the temptations of this world and preparing for the world to come and 3) preserving the truths of their religious tradition. Each criterion is highly correlated with conservative ideals.

As noted earlier, conservative congregations are plagued by insular structures that restrict their movement across organizational boundaries. As Chaves (2004) states conservative congregations espouse a “...religious tradition that discourages such institutional engagement in favor of evangelism and an emphasis on individual morality rather than social reform or social service” (p. 22). The increase in the number of Conservative congregations shows that churchgoers seek the strictness that these congregations provide. Yet an increase in members does not translate to an increase in community outreach.
Second, perhaps resource building influences the ability of Black congregations to establish external linkages. Like most congregations, Black churches rely heavily on financial support from their members and the volunteer activity of their members. Despite the Black Church’s focus on social justice, the conservative nature of Black congregations may lead religious leaders to direct resources to the operation and maintenance of the church rather than to community outreach. Previous research shows that despite an increase in church membership, most congregations are forced to direct a sizeable percentage of their budgets to operating expenses (Hodgkinson et. al 1993). In addition, although 9 out of 10 congregations use volunteers, most of their time is spent on worship and educational activities, only 8 percent of their time is dedicated to human services and welfare (Hodgkinson et. al 1993). Thus, the support of social services requires access to additional funds that can be directed toward social services once the congregation’s basic needs are met. Further, congregations can direct volunteers to perform social service duties after the church has met its members’ spiritual and worship needs.

Finally, I argue that Black congregations may provide the bulk of their social service provision through the maintenance of internal service groups and missions groups. When asked to identify their most important social service programs (as indicated by revenues expended), approximately two-thirds of congregations indicated missionary or outreach programs to underprivileged populations, domestically and internationally (Hodgkinson et. al 1993). These programs included local mission work,
ministry to the local area, mission trips and world services. Internal service groups and missions groups increase the ability of congregations to provide direct social services. By committing resources to these internal groups, congregations solidify their roles in social services.

A Note on Leaders, Money, and Members

In his seminal work on American congregations, Chaves (2004) stated that leaders, money, and members significantly direct the organizational behavior of congregations. This study finds moderate support for his assertions as it relates to the provision of social services among congregations. First, by using amount of clergy education as a proxy for leadership, I find that religious leaders influence the number of partnerships which congregations form with organizations that provide counseling services (0.05*) and organizations that provide health and education services (0.16*). It also influences the number of organizations with which congregations support with volunteers (0.11**). Previous work shows that congregations feel pressured to provide new and innovative services (Hodgkinson et. al 1993; Cnaan 2002; Monsma 2004). I suggest that religious leaders may direct their congregations to support more types of social services. Second, the size of a congregation’s total budget influences the diversity of a congregation’s partnerships. Congregations with large budgets support more organizations that provide food, clothing, and shelter. They also support more organizations that provide health and education services and they support more secular organizations. Supplying people with food, clothing, and shelter is the most common
form of social service among congregations. The number of church members a
congregation boasts influences the number of partnerships it forms, the strength of its
partnerships and the diversity of its partnerships.

**QUALITATIVE COMPONENT**

In the quantitative analysis, I showed that organizational structure (i.e. 
denominational affiliation, mission-orientation, and racial composition) influences the 
embeddedness of congregations within the field of social service organizations. Here, I 
present a narrative which describes the motivating factors that underlie social service 
provision. Reaching out to communities appears to be the “Christian thing to do” and 
regardless of their resource limitations, congregations create ways to reach out to others. 
I derive my findings from thirty-one interviews I conducted with religious leaders and 
church administrators. I found five features that characterize the social service provision 
of congregations: 1) why congregations engage in social services, 2) what congregations 
do, 3) who does the work, 4) how internal pressures affect social service delivery, and 5) 
how external pressures affect social service delivery.

**Why Congregations Engage in Social Services**

The history of American religious benevolence is extensive. Entrenched within 
the fabric of our social structure, Christian charity is mediated through formalized 
practices that are distinctive to congregations. Similar to established social service 
organizations, congregations create ways to field requests from the needy; in short, they 
serve as social service triage to the poor. Nearly 87 percent of congregations indicate that
serving the needy is an important goal. This falls slightly behind the importance of spiritual worship (93 percent) and the spiritual growth of members (90 percent). As the pastor of a United Methodist Church describes, “Missions work is about caring for people. It’s about acceptance. It’s about expanding our spiritual lives to the community.” This is consistent with previous research that indicates nearly two thirds of American congregations believe that their most important social expenditure is providing for the needy (Hodgkinson et. al 1993).

In the quantitative analysis, I found that activist and evangelical congregations are more embedded in social services than member-oriented congregations are. Among the interviewees, 40 percent self-identify as member-oriented congregations, compared to 35 percent which self-identify as evangelical, and 25 percent which self-identify as activist. Of the overall connections that congregations form with social service organizations, 63 percent are maintained by evangelical and activist-oriented congregations. The Pastor of Learning and Serving with a Church of God congregation explains, “I can give you an idea of who we partner with, but the list is rather long. I believe we have over 30 partnering ministries.” Within a year, her congregation can expect to donate a sizeable portion of its $1 million budget to social services. In fact, over the past year, her church has donated more than $80,000 to just seven of the partnerships she had time to discuss with me.
Interestingly, most of the Black congregations self-identify as evangelical (45 percent) or activist (55 percent). Although previous research shows that Black congregations do not provide more social services, research does show that Black congregations provide different types of social services (Chaves and Higgins 1992). They place more emphasis on social services which improve one’s health or increase one’s educational opportunities. Overall, 72 percent of congregations consider promoting social change in the community as important. For congregations, seeking community cooperation and desiring to become leaders within their communities falls even lower on the scale of importance (49 percent) and (44 percent) respectively. Yet, for Black congregations these percentages are slightly higher in comparison to their White counterparts. Historically, Black congregations have relied on a strong sense of social justice that encapsulates community outreach. The pastor of a large, Baptist church discusses his congregation’s role in social services:

“We care deeply about who we are, and who we are to the community. The decisions that we make about community outreach and charity is directly linked to how and what we feel about the community. It’s always been that way. We know they expect something from us. We may not always have the right answers, but we try.”

He credits his passion for community outreach to his long involvement with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which was founded by Martin Luther King Jr. A member of the SCLC for 15 years, he works to transfer his commitment to community outreach to his congregation. Among other activities, the congregation maintains a food pantry that has been a staple in their community for over twenty years.
In most of the interviews I conducted, pastors expressed a willingness to engage in social services, because they believed this was the duty of the church. Yet, often congregations struggle to match their social service goals with their theological origins.

One Freewill Baptist pastor expressed his concerns about allowing Alcoholics Anonymous to rent space in his church,

“…everyone will say, our guide is the Bible, but Jesus didn’t seem afraid to mix it up a little bit, but crossing that hurdle is another thing. . . .with AA we crossed that hurdle and that was kind of a difficult thing, because that was the first time we had to cross, you know well doctrinally what they teach and how the program works. But they meet here every night of the week, at 10 0’clock at night and that was a real hard step for some people to cross, but everybody crossed it and it’s been working really well, I think.”

Ninety-five percent of the congregations explicitly describe their goals in a mission statement. Thus, the mission statement serves as an important tool that communicates the congregation’s goals and its theological origins. One must inform the other. A mission statement clarifies a congregation’s goals and informs its decisions. Along one of Columbus’ busiest and most populated corridors lies a predominantly Black, Baptist church, which desires to spread the message of hope from its pews to the streets. On the inside cover of Rev. Jones’ church booklet, he writes:

“The Church has been singled out by God to be a model people. In responding to the urging and pulling of God we are in pursuit to be a “cutting edge” ministry. We are aware, however, that we will never solve all problems of the world as even Jesus said, “the poor you will have with you always”. Therefore, this is not our aim. Our aim is to learn how to address issues and concerns that discredit, dissuade, and discourage all men and women. Furthermore, we who have experienced discrimination and prejudice first hand must not permit ourselves to serve in a discriminatory manner.”

12 Name has been changed.
“... this ministry must utilize and rely upon biblical and spiritual direction as we participate in godly change in the life of an individual or group. If our ministry style is to be a “cutting edge” ministry, we must constantly define and evaluate our values and rules we use to interpret and understand life.”

This congregation functions under the leadership of a pastor who envisions his congregation as “being in the world, but not of the world”, while also changing the world. The church boasts twenty-four different ministries, most of which share in the responsibility of delivering social services. The most prolific is the Outreach Ministry which is charged to “promote and produce an atmosphere of reaching out to the unsaved by establishing projects that will encompass the community as well as enhance the church as a whole.” In a conversation with the church administrator, Naomi Washington stated that her congregation believes that members “come to learn,” and “go out to serve.” For this congregation outreach is an important part of the ministry, as she claims, “we don’t just want to be in a church in the community”, but “a church of the community”.

In addition to using mission statements, congregations express their community outreach goals through church bulletins and within Sunday worship services. Consider the words printed within the bulletin of a Lutheran church. Drawing from Romans 12:13 the anecdote describes the activities at a women’s shelter.

13 As described in the church’s booklet. The booklet this lists the church’s ministries, the duties of each ministry and the scriptural foundations for each ministry.
14 Name has been changed.
15 The anecdote is copyright of Augsburg Fortress (2002).
16 “Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.”
“The shelter will be full in a couple of hours. The only empty room is just now being prepared for two women coming in later tonight. The average stay is 16 days. In that time, the women must try to think, shake off the fear, and make decisions for themselves and often their children.”

The story goes on to describe the condition of the shelter, the vulnerability of the victims of abuse, and the sparse resources the shelter has access to on a daily basis. In the final sentences, it calls for action.

“There would not be shelter without the donations, dollars and resources, all freely given by people who give hospitality to others they will never know. Just one example, one opportunity in a world of opportunities. The heart knows where to go, and it has been freed to go there. What are you waiting for?”

Church bulletins serve as a valuable resource that not only expresses the congregation’s goals; they also inform church members of the community’s needs. Seventy percent of the congregations stated that they advertise the needs of their social services partners in their weekly bulletins.

What Congregations Do

Consistent with previous research, the congregations within this study engage in direct and indirect social service provision ([Bartowski and Regis 1999]Bartowski and Regis 1999; Bartowski and Regis 2003; Cnaan et. al 1999; Cnaan 2002; Cnaan et. al 2006; Ammerman 1998, 2000, 2005). Mainly, direct outreach is managed via congregational-level service groups and/or auxiliaries that order internal work arrangements. Each internal group serves a key role in deciding how work is delegated and carried out within congregations. Generally, three mechanisms regulate indirect social service provision: support provided to and from denominational-level missions.
groups, support provided to ecumenical social service organizations, and support provided to secular social service organizations. First, most congregations were more likely to report the existence of auxiliaries than the establishment of specific service groups which focus on specific community outreach activities. Several congregations maintain prison ministries which visit local incarcerated men, women, and adolescents, provide inmates with supplies, such as hygiene products and writing materials, and engage in after-care for released prisoners. One congregation extended this service to the families of inmates and the victims of crime. The most common service group that congregations maintain is a food pantry ministry which services local families. Most congregations which maintain a food pantry receive donations from members and from such external organizations as the Mid Ohio Food Bank. In addition, First Link, a referral service, directs families in need to local congregations. As one pastor explains:

“People come to us when they face hardships such as being out of work. We see many single mothers, senior citizens who are on a fixed income and the disabled. We usually get a good number from First Link. About six or seven families a week come through here.”

Their food pantry ministry works tirelessly with local food brokers and grocery retailers to encourage more donations of surplus food and personal care products. At a predominantly Black, Baptist church, the Outreach Ministry provides educational services and sports-based programs which benefit youth. Further, a predominantly Black, non-denominational church, maintains a “Health Ministry”, which provides health education for church members and the community. Each year, it sponsors a community
health fair that provides the community with health screenings and information. Although only one congregation in the study provided this service, this is in line with previous research that states Black congregations provide more educational and health services to the community (Chaves 2004; Chaves and Higgins 1992).

Second, 93 percent of congregations report having at least two church auxiliaries (or “missions” groups) which are typically characterized by the age or gender of members (i.e. Men’s Groups, Women’s Groups, and Youth Groups). Unlike service groups which focus on specific community outreach tasks, missions groups may not serve any social service functions. Primarily, these groups provide members with opportunities for fellowship and/or seek to develop a member’s spiritual maturity. Yet, when they do engage in community outreach, they tend to provide a range of services, such as working with the homeless, counseling victims of physical and sexual abuse, providing necessary items for new mothers, and in one case collaborating with a church in Tanzania to build a health facility. In a Catholic parish, the Women’s Group (which in this case is comprised mainly of elderly women) annually gathers supplies for poor, single mothers. Their “annual baby shower,” provides “all the things a new mother would need, pacifiers, formula, the whole layettes [and] quilts\textsuperscript{17}”. The items are then delivered to the Pregnancy Help Decision Center, a local woman’s health center that assists low-income mothers.

\textsuperscript{17} This statement was given by the Catholic priest who presides over this parish congregation.
As noted earlier, hierarchical social arrangements order social service delivery among congregations. The denomination/congregation relationship suggests a top-down approach whereby subordinate churches internalize the policies and practices of their denominational hierarchies. Overtime these policies become internalized. Thus, the work of social services is often filtered through denomination-level missions groups and organizations. As Ammerman (2005) states, missionary support activity is supported via religious hierarchies. In this study, 10 percent of the organizations that congregations support are denomination specific, 42 percent of the organizations that congregations support are ecumenical, and 25 percent of the organizations that congregations support are secular. Several examples of denomination specific organizations include the United Methodist Community of Relief, Faith Mission of Ohio (Lutheran), and Nazarene Missions International (Church of the Nazarene).

This process is most evident among Roman Catholic parishes, which have institutionalized denomination-wide social service practices. Thus, the goals of the denomination are expressed through the actions of individual parishes. Here, I find that the social service delivery of Catholic parishes differs from that of other congregations in five distinct ways. First, Catholic parishes donate a greater percentage of their total budget to their denominations to support social programs. Second, they receive more money from their denominations to support social services. Third, denomination officials approve all expenditures regarding social services. Fourth, parishes support more national social service organizations. Finally, they donate more money to special
offerings and/or fund-raisers. Among Roman Catholic parishes, a variety of programs guide social service delivery including St. Vincent de Paul which handles a variety of needs, such as food, clothing, furniture, and small monetary gifts. This relationship indicates a mutual connection between localized congregations and their parent denominations, which establishes a direct route for channeling resources. Previous research shows that congregations primarily receive additional funds and resources from their parent denominations. According to Hodgkinson et. al (1993), congregants are demanding more social services including counseling. As the void created by public agencies widens, denominations continue to find unique ways to handle the crisis without the aid of Faith Based and Community Initiatives.

In order to expand the boundaries of their organizations, religious leaders must be willing to establish new connections with external organizations and sometimes work fervently to maintain these ties. By establishing loose connections, congregations increase their ability to provide social services and broaden their inter-organizational networks (Wuthnow 1998). Previous research suggests larger congregations with bigger annual budgets are most likely to create numerous ties (Chaves 2004). However, although these ties are connections among organizations, they must be solidified through the efforts of individuals who create and maintain the partnerships. Here I find that clergy established only 19 percent of the connections with external organizations, but work to maintain ties with 23 percent of the external organizations. Given the fact that their primary duty is to fulfill the spiritual needs of their members, this percentage seems
rather impressive. In this sample, each congregation shared outreach responsibilities with at least two external social service organizations. Overall, 68 connections were formed with different social service organizations (ecumenical and secular) including: Alcohol and Narcotics Anonymous, the YMCA, the Boy Scouts, the Interfaith Hospitality Network, JOIN, the American Red Cross, Godman Guild, Mission First, Friends of the Homeless, and various support groups (e.g. Multiple Sclerosis, Gay and Lesbian, and Singles). In most cases, congregations donate material resources and space to these organizations. Each year, congregations donate an average of $1500 to social service organizations and at least four volunteers help these organizations achieve their goals.

As previous research shows, in some cases, congregations aggregate their social service provision in the form of an Economic Development Corporation (EDC) (Ammerman 2000). This is especially true for predominantly Black congregations (Ammerman 2000). No congregation within this sample established a CDC. However, a fruitful interview with a pastor who has over thirty years experience leading urban ministries shed light on how CDCs develop. Newly appointed to a West Side Columbus congregation, he previously led a congregation in Toledo, Ohio, where he initiated the construction of a CDC, which services a predominantly Black community. Interestingly enough, his Methodist church was predominantly White. This racial divide prevented church members from reaching out to the community and the community from attending the church. However, the need for social services in the community was great. He first surveyed the community and social service providers. Over time through connections
with local universities, mental health organizations and government agencies, his
congregation established a community development corporation which offers counseling,
a health clinic, a law clinic, computer labs and job skill training. As the pastor states:

“The community was saying, “this is not our church,’ and the church was saying, “this is not our
community.” ….We were tearing down the walls of our community. Once we connected with
other organizations, such as the government, we were able to get the grants we needed to begin
community events ….It was our goal to make sure the community felt good about us….”

Although the congregation was White, the predominantly Black residents expected and
relied on the church to provide social services. For congregations, social services are not
only tools to recruit new members but help to bridge racial divisions in many cases. As
this pastor described, a congregation’s involvement in social services is directly linked to
how it views its surrounding community and how the community views the congregation.
When either side is reluctant or distrusting, social services are difficult to disseminate and
receive. Yet, in this case, collaboration with a myriad of partners (public and private)
allowed both congregation and community to bridge an all too common and formidable
divide.

Who Does the Work?

Although denomination-wide programs function to streamline social service
delivery, in most cases, the approval of outreach expenditures is left to localized
congregations rather than dictated via top-down authority structures. In fact, in only four
cases do denominational officials serve any role in helping congregations manage their
budgets. Rather, decision-making is mainly channeled through formal committees and/or
councils of members who seek additional guidance from the clergy. In slightly fewer
cases, these committees and councils function alone without seeking further advice from the clergy. Thus, overwhelmingly, the laity controls the dissemination of charitable aid.

In the following quote, a Catholic priest describes how his parish decides not only whom to help but also how.

“This varies depending upon what we’re dealing with. We have the St. Vincent de Paul organization that provides funds for people in the neighborhood who are in need, people not in the congregation. We have neighbors who come to us and say ‘I need food.’ We [the congregation] provide things like that. We have people who are itinerants who pass through the area and need help with shelter. Therefore, we’ll put them up in one of the local motels and give them some food. For other expenditures, the pastor himself may make the decision or the finance committee; it depends upon the’ nature of the beast’ as it were.”

Thus, similar to social service organizations, his congregation first evaluates the level of care needed and then it decides on how much care can be provided internally. When the congregation lacks the necessary funds or resources, it refers people to other congregations and/or social service organizations. In a suburban A.M.E. congregation, each auxiliary must seek the approval of the pastor regarding spending and activities. Thus, the pastor grants mission works and expenditures. One pastor explains how he was instrumental in establishing a budget for his congregation, and subsequently helped to create a missions committee:

“It’s kind of mixed up. They never had a budget before I came, and now that we have a budget the board actually, uh…the way it works here, our congregation is the highest power. Therefore, of course, they’re going to approve everything. But we have a mission committee involving two other persons and myself which are elected by the congregation and uh, it’s kind of, uh, it’s not spelled out anywhere I mean, what the powers and duties are, it’s just one of those things that’s the way it was….now we know X amount of dollars is in the mission budget. So, within that, uh, the three of us could spend that money, in fact all the money we gave, $9000, was dispersed out, the congregation never really voted on exactly where that money was going.”
Previous research has shown that corporations have greatly increased their charitable contributions amidst pressures from other organizations in their respective fields (Alpherson 1995; Davidson 1997; Foley 1998; Graham 1994). Internally, firms have bureaucratized this social expenditure by establishing departments that deal specifically with directing corporate funds to charitable causes (Alpherson 1995; Levy 1999; Muirhead 1999; King 2001). In many ways, charity has become big business. We rarely think of congregations as bureaucratized places that establish internal hierarchies; however, as organizations they too must arrange their activities in ways that maximize efficiency. Yet, as previous research shows, congregations lack the funds to hire personnel who can manage direct social service programs (Chaves 2004). In this sample, the number of paid staff ranges from one (i.e. clergy as sole paid staff member) to twenty paid staff members (e.g. clergy, administrative workers, choir directors, custodians, historians, musicians, etc.) Yet, the responsibilities exercised by these workers often extend far beyond their job descriptions. No congregation hired a staff person to handle social service provision. In most cases, a paid staff member became indirectly and “unofficially” in charge of social service provision. When Johnetta Walker\(^{18}\) agreed to accept a 20-25 hour-a-week paid position as a church administrator, she did not expect that several months into the job she would need to work nearly full-time (extra hours without pay) to accommodate her burgeoning work load. A retired administrator with a

\(^{18}\) Name has been changed.
major corporation, her role as a church administrator with her suburban, A.M.E. church blossomed into serving as an advisor and assistant to many others within her church.

“I started this job out of retirement. I worked in the corporate setting as an administrator, so I have important skills the church can use. But, you name it, and I do it [laughs]. I put together the church bulletins, schedule weddings, and make sure all the auxiliaries get their budgets in on time, schedule meetings with the pastor, help run the tutoring program …..we just started that. I’m trying to start my own business, but the work here at the church, is really slowing me down.”

Since the congregation lacks the funds to hire a staff person to direct outreach programs, Johnetta often fills the void by handling budgeting problems, offering advice and guidance on which social programs to support, and gathering volunteers and materials. This extends to overseeing the management and operation of the church’s food pantry. Each week Johnetta supervises the daily operation of the food pantry which is available to the public every Tuesday and Thursday.

“We receive supplies all week long. Sometimes we tell people what we need, like in the winter we may need coats, and such. However, mostly people bring things in and drop them off, and I have to sort them for the pantry. I also have to make sure that the auxiliary that is responsible for the pantry has someone there when it opens.”

This scenario is played out in countless congregations where budgetary constraints limit the hiring of social services directors. Even if social services are not within one’s job title or explicitly described within one’s job description, the provision of social services becomes indirectly that person’s responsibility. Such is the case for Carmen Henderson and Karen Meis, both church administrators of small, predominantly Black, Apostolic churches on the East side of Columbus. Officially, their full-time permanent positions include managing the church’s daily operations. Unofficially each functions as the
coordinator of their respective church’s outreach programs. Consistent with previous literature, both conservative evangelical churches are working to increase their presence in social services. Yet, this push for increased community outreach is under-funded and under-staffed. As Carmen explains:

“Things become very confusing around here pretty fast. Everyone seems to know what we should be doing, but we don’t have enough people to help run the show. The pastor wants to help the community more. I get that. People are in need. However, every time we get ready, I mean ready to move forward with it, everything starts to pile up. We don’t have money stored up for rainy days. Therefore, when the roof starts leaking or the air conditioner goes out, we gotta stop, re-group and go find the money. That becomes job one. I mean for mostly me and the pastor. It becomes our job number one.”

Hopes to establish an EDC become lost in the hustle to keep a small, yet faithful church afloat. With nearly 200 members and an annual operating budget of $125,000, Carmen’s church needs to seek outside funding in order to increase its provision of social services. Yet, this entails completing grant applications, making phone calls, setting up meetings and creating partnerships. Unlike Carmen, Karen Meis is more familiar with these tasks. In 2004, her modestly sized congregation, sought funds through public grants to develop an after-school program. Staffed by church members, who received training using federal funds, the program operates from the church’s basement each weeknight between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Yet, each week the church struggles to keep its program staffed with trained workers who receive a minimal wage.
“If you ask them [the workers], it’s volunteer work really. The pay is not that great. I received the training along with four other women. However, really that’s not my job. I’m really just supposed to fill in, you know, when someone’s sick or they’re late. However, I’m down there a lot. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not complaining or nothing. I like that we’re helping our young kids stay off the streets. They’re great kids. We help them with their homework, mostly keep them busy until their parents pick them up. I don’t know. Some people want to quit. But that may not be their decision if we don’t get re-approved for funding this year.”

In addition to her office duties, Karen keeps track of all the paperwork associated with the youth program including payroll. Further, she also oversees the program’s activities ensuring that federal guidelines are met. The possibility of expanding their outreach services rests on the success of the youth program which requires more workers.

Previous research shows that the direction of social services often falls to the clergy who must juggle multiple responsibilities. This is the case for Pastor Fowler\(^1\) who heads a small, predominantly Black congregation in Columbus’ near east side. In addition to serving as the congregation’s headship, Pastor Fowler works full-time as an administrator for a charter school\(^2\). A new congregation, Eastside National Baptist Church\(^3\) was founded by Pastor Fowler in 1999 although it moved to its current location (from a school building) in 2000. The congregation of 75 is searching for a new church

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\(^{1}\) Name has been changed.  
\(^{2}\) In a recent update, I was informed that the charter school recently closed due to lack of funding. Pastor Fowler hopes to re-open the school.  
\(^{3}\) Name has been changed.
home. As the sole director of his church’s social services resources, Pastor Fowler oversees the Food Pantry and directs all mission expenditures. In the past year, he approved monetary donations for external food pantries, international outreach, local scholarships, and other programs, which serve the homeless. Through word-of-mouth, his church has gained a notable reputation in the community as a caring place that lifts families out of dire situations. Situated on a busy city street, Eastside National Baptist Church peeks out between a popular convenient store and a boarded up gas station. No city parks, playgrounds or well-lit libraries hide behind homes and businesses here. If you work here, you live here. The city street provides a government-funded conduit that shuttles commuters through here and away from here. Yet, despite its aesthetics, Eastside National Baptist Church is a beacon of hope for the community.

“They know me. They know what I do, and what I’m about. I don’t stop at giving them money for their electric bill or helping them pay the rent. I want to know what’s going on with their spiritual life. I want to know if they’ve accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. I want to know what they believe. If they’re just floating out there, not believing in anything, I offer them prayer. I tell them I want to pray with them and for them so that they reach a good end...an end that leads to them knowing God.”

Changes in Internal Environments

As previous research shows, organizational survival is often a mechanism of adaptation (Baum 2002). Unlike their non-profit counterparts, congregations are heavily dependent on their members for resources. When major shifts occur in the composition of their congregations, they must find ways to alter activities in ways that appease their members. This may mean changing their worship style to appeal to a younger audience or offering new programs that accommodate the needs of working parents. Changes in
the composition of the congregation can create challenges that impede social service delivery. Major shifts in the number of members and the ability of members to contribute (financially or through volunteerism) greatly affects congregations.

In this study, Jay Street United Methodist Church\textsuperscript{22}, exemplifies how internal change initiated by a parent denominational body, can disrupt the harmony of a congregation and offset the balance it shares with the surrounding community. When I arrived for the interview, the predominantly Black congregation was preparing its 100\textsuperscript{th} church anniversary, a celebration that would prove to be bittersweet. Only in command of the congregation for five weeks, Pastor Smith\textsuperscript{23} revealed how he was handed a “homeless congregation” to guide. Two years earlier, denominational officials ordered the congregation to move from its birthplace to a new location where it would serve as a regional church that would meet the needs of more people. To eliminate competition with another larger, Black UMC congregation, the UMC requested that Jay Street relocate to new neighborhood where it could service more people. Centered in a working/lower middle-class area, Jay Street moved into a small building badly in need of repairs that it shares with another congregation.

According to the UMC, this move is temporary; yet, two years into its move, Jay Street is still in its temporary home. To speed things along, the congregation located a

\textsuperscript{22} Name has been changed.
\textsuperscript{23} Name has been changed.
building in a predominantly White area that it hopes to purchase. Yet, according to the pastor, the congregation has received a lot of backlash from a “community that does not want a predominantly Black congregation living there”. Tension has been further fueled by a dispute regarding the community’s water system. Connection to the city’s water line is costly, and creates problems for current residents. Thus, Jay Street has begun looking for other sites including older White congregations where the memberships are in decline. Yet, finding a new building is the least of Jay Street’s problems. As the Pastor Smith describes:

“How do you convince a group of Black people whose forefathers and mothers built an old building on Jay Street that they’re supposed to move out of there and move into some White folk’s neighborhood. Our people have a kind of pride that makes that hard to swallow….What they care most deeply about now is where we’re going to be.”

Members who did not want to leave Jay Street no longer attend the church. Further, the church has yet to connect with its new community. Pastor Smith states, “We had an outreach program on Jay Street in which we fed nearly 100 people a day; well, those people are not going to come all the way from Jay Street. We have the same program here. People are coming, but it’s certainly not to that extent.” Due to the restructuring, Jay Street is focusing inward. Rather than spending much time building bonds with the community it is focused on the internal workings of the congregation.

Jay Street was the only congregation in the sample that was trying to adapt to a new location. However, in several other cases, congregations were seeking ways to adapt to declining memberships. In the quantitative analysis, I showed that congregations with
a greater percentage of members 65 and over are dependent upon more organizations for resources. In the case of East Presbyterian Church, nearly 80 percent of its small congregation is elderly. Lacking needed resources, the congregation is fighting imminent death. Two days before meeting with me, Tim Mayor\textsuperscript{24}, Clerk of the Sessions, helped his Presbyterian congregation shut down its food pantry which served as a staple in their North East side community for nearly 30 years. A congregation which at one point boasted nearly 600 members now provides services for approximately 85 people of which only half are regular attenders. Located in a predominantly Black neighborhood, the congregation has tried recruiting new members. Tim explains:

“We tried to change the aesthetics of the church to bring in a younger population, but it’s difficult to change your worship style when your congregation is primarily elderly. If we go beyond five years, I’ll be surprised if things don’t change.”

When asked what they could do to change things, he replied they organized a study group to evaluate the problem, but he does not believe there is a solution. “I could see it coming; I pride myself on being a realist. We have some dreamers who still [think] things can happen.” In short, the congregation has gone into what he calls, “survival mode” reducing expenses where necessary and recycling resources when needed. Limited resources prevent it from hiring a full-time pastor. The headship has alternated among retired pastors who simply provide worship services on Sundays. Without enough members to serve as volunteers, the congregation was forced to reduce its involvement in

\textsuperscript{24} Name has been changed.

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social services. His response to these events: “There is no more cutting. We can’t cut anymore.” Most likely, the church will dissolve or merge with another congregation. To bring in needed revenue, the congregation began renting space to a pre-dominantly Black church each Sunday. At the time of interview, this congregation offered to buy three acres of land which sits in the back of the church.

What happens when members leave congregations? Do major declines in membership affect a congregation’s ability to engage in social services? Instead of directing a great percentage of their revenues toward social services, many congregations invest and/or save in anticipation of periods when their membership rolls decline. In some ways, congregations must find ways to establish consistency in their annual budgets. This can prove to be a difficult task when revenues rely on voluntary giving and attendance. Thus, when congregations experience major declines in membership they must find ways to adjust and cutting back on social services is often the first line of defense. Previous research shows larger congregations are more involved in social services.

In the quantitative analysis, I showed larger congregations support more external social service organizations and support a wide variety of programs. The size of a congregation is more important than budget in explaining social service delivery. Size not only affects community outreach, but also it ultimately affects the survivability of a congregation. The pastor of a Lutheran church stated that his congregation had a difficult time engaging in community outreach and retaining members. At one point in its history,
the congregation’s membership numbered 1,000, and as he puts it, members had “difficulty getting a seat”. Over time, the aesthetics of the local community changed, and people began to move to “more desirable places [within the city]…..to raise a family.”

The only external ties which the congregation retains with social service organizations are with Narcotics and Alcoholics Anonymous, both of which use the church building for meeting space.

Located in a suburban area on the West side of Columbus, a Catholic parish struggles to provide social services as its membership continues to decline. According to the parish’s clergy, nearly 1700 families claimed membership in the parish; today, that number has dwindled to nearly 657 families. He attributes the decline to several causes: a rise in the elderly population with the parish, competition for area suburban parishes, an increase in empty nesters (within the parish and the community), and an increase in White flight in the surrounding community. As the pastor of a predominantly White, Baptist congregation exclaims, recouping lost members presents challenges for congregations.

“When I came here, there was hardly any congregation. One of the things that’s happened here and it’s kind of unique to this situation - we have built the congregation up two or three times. In the time that I’ve been here, like one time we had a lot of people that moved away, we lost at one time 25 of 30 people. People were real, real good workers. We should have more than 125 members, but we’re building back up. We’re optimistic, and we’re working at it, and we’re building back up.”

In addition to these challenges, one Baptist pastor expressed difficulties trying to re-build congregations that were damaged by church splits. Unlike other forms of membership reduction, church splits create tension, and disarray in congregations that
become splintered over loyalties. As he describes:

“There was a split before I came…there was a group of people that left probably almost all the people who grew up in the church then, because there was a lot more, they had their children here and some had their grandchildren here, and then they left…they’re around at different churches. I have seen many of them mature [spiritually] and they’re in other places fulfilling functions like they should. In addition, they don’t seem to have the conflict they had here. Some people leave in such a way that they know they should go back, but their ego won’t let them. That’s the toughest thing to overcome. I still have a few people who quit when the split occurred. They pulled their memberships, and they still haven’t connected back up officially.”

Church splits create personal and spiritual fractures which heal slowly. When members remove their membership, they also remove their labor and capital from congregations, which are often badly in need of resources.

Changes in External Environments

How organizations respond to change significantly influences their chances of survival. As Ammerman (1997) contends, shifts in community characteristics can alter the trajectory of congregations. The relationship between a congregation and its community often represents one of symbiosis. Yet, when this relationship is threatened due to change, organizations must respond in ways that maximize their survival. For example, as the community surrounding a predominantly White, Baptist ministry experienced an influx of Black residents, the pastor felt compelled to reach out to the new residents of his surrounding community even as his White membership began to decline. Therefore, his mission became twofold: convincing members not to leave and finding ways to reach out to potential new members. He stated that he’s hoping to “cross racial barriers” by creating programs which the children of Black residents can enjoy. His hope is that through their children, the adults will want to visit the church and eventually join.
So far, offering Vacation Bible School seems to be working.

“That is one thing that seems to work. We had 81 kids and we had black families that brought their kids and were here the whole week, but we miss the connection on Sunday, and I know a lot of the reasons why.”

He believes he lacks members that are willing to go into the community to fellowship and perhaps offer transportation to the church for worship services. In fact, according to this pastor, social services are most successful when the resources of the church (money, and volunteers) compliment the resources of the social program they are trying to support.

In the following scenario, the pastor of a racially integrated church described how his congregation transitioned from a White Conservative religious tradition to Black Christian. The transition from a predominantly White congregation to an integrated congregation that appeals to Black Christians was not easy. Members had to be convinced the direction of the church was a divine move of God. In fact, the church moved its physical location to attract a larger Black population.

“[It was] God’s direction, and the desire in our hearts to teach about the Body of Christ. Once we opened the eyes of the congregation, we started to attract the ear of others. We moved to [deleted street name] because of the large attraction of Black and Hispanic people. When [we were on] [deleted street name] the large black community did not translate into members, we tried but we couldn’t capture the neighborhood.”

Currently, the congregation is half White with Hispanics and African-Americans making up the other half of its members. Not only was it the most diverse congregation, but also the most active in social services. To continue to establish relationships with the community, it opened a private, charter school (K-6). Due to funding issues, the school was closed. Still dedicated to community services, the congregation turned the school
into an outreach ministry center which houses a food bank, services for pregnant women, and a center for the arts. To strengthen its relationship with the community and recruit new members it offered space to a Tanzanian Christian group that needed a place to hold worship services. Although the surrounding community is predominantly African-American and Hispanic, it is experiencing its own influx of African immigrants.

Via my interviews, I was able to show that congregations do attempt to legitimize their roles as benevolent organizations. In fact, like firms, congregations bureaucratize the distribution of aid through missions committees. In addition, clergy leaders are influential in reinforcing myths of “Christian charity” and play instrumental roles in how involved congregations are in social services. In the quantitative analysis, I was unable to show a significant, positive relationship between clergy education and congregational philanthropy. Yet, in my interviews, pastors consistently discussed how they were actively involved in the directing funds toward social services. Finally, in my interviews clergy leaders described how their internal (members) and external communities influenced the congregation’s ability to engage in social services. Clearly, more research that combines quantitative and qualitative methods will improve our understanding of how congregations behave as organizations.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help” (Psalm 121:1).

The blueprint of charitable works among American congregations illustrates the intricate patterns of relationships that congregations build with their members, their communities and external organizations. Each indelible line represents a shared goal, shared interests and a commitment toward community outreach. These goals become manifest in the direct and in-direct ways that congregations strive to meet the needs of the recipients of social services (Harris 1995b; Ammerman 1997; Chaves 2002; Bartowski and Regis 2003). How congregations arrange themselves within the parameters of their organizational structures and how congregations generate the values and norms that guide their behavior significantly influences their participation in social services. Thus, organizational structure and organizational culture function as social forces that shape and guide the charitable actions of congregations. In this study, I utilize quantitative and qualitative methodologies to analyze the influence of organizational structure and organizational culture on the social service provision of American congregations.
**Reasons to Reach Out**

In the quantitative component of this study, I evaluate the inter-organizational ties that congregations build with external social service organizations. Here, the resource flow among member organizations represents a one-way path in which congregations supply established social service organizations with essential resources such as money, volunteers, food, clothing, and other in-kind goods. I assess the veracity of these partnerships by measuring the quantity, strength, and diversity of these network bonds. I argue that organizational structure influences the embeddedness of congregations in the field of social services as gauged by the character of the partnerships congregations form with external social service organizations.

In the qualitative component, I describe the institutionalized patterns within congregations that make social ministries possible and that allow congregations to manage environmental change. I argue that organizational culture can encourage and/or impede the participation of congregations in social services by influencing how congregations choose to internalize the notion of Christian charity and how congregations choose to express their commitment to Christian charity. In addition, I argue that organizational culture shapes a congregation’s response to environmental changes. Congregations that manage environmental change effectively solidify and strengthen their ability to provide social services.

The results show that the significant influence of organizational structure on the behavior of congregations is mediated via religious tradition, mission-orientation, and the racial composition of congregations. Each feature of organizational structure informs the network building behavior of congregations, yet in different ways. Thus, I draw
several conclusions about the partnerships that congregations form with social service organizations. First, religious tradition and resource building have the strongest and most pervasive effect on congregations. Liberal Protestant and resource-rich congregations form plentiful, strong, and diverse ties with social service organizations. Both features of organizational structure heighten the presence of congregations in the realm of social services.

Second, activist congregations form abundant, strong, and moderately diverse ties. Their networks stretch into limited and specific areas of social services. Thus, the embeddedness of activist congregations in social services falls short of investing resources across an array of social service organizations. The establishment of inter-organizational networks reflects union logic that influences the selection of member organizations (Baker and Obstfeld 1999). It also reflects disunion behavior that reflects avoidance from specific organizations (Baker and Obstfeld 1999). I show that activist congregations establish significantly fewer ties with social service organizations that provide counseling services and with religious-based social service organizations. This may suggest that activist congregations make clear and important distinctions between the types of social service organizations that exist.

Third, in the quantitative analysis I show that racial composition restrains the networking building of Black congregations. Thus, Black congregations reflect more insular behavior than White congregations. This study shows that Black congregations lack collaborations with external social service organizations. However, it does not show
evidence that Black congregations lack participation in social services. Rather, I argue that the narrative component of this study suggests that the present day activities of Black congregations is rooted in a strong historical legacy of community outreach.

Like most research, many of the surprising findings are not findings at all. Governance structure, the age of a congregation and the social class of congregations’ members lacked significance. I was unable to provide support for my third hypothesis that hierarchical congregations form more partnerships with social service organizations. In fact, all of the measures of governance structure (i.e. hierarchical, mixed and congregational authority structures) were unsuccessful as predictors of organizational behavior. Similarly, age did not have a significant influence on the embeddedness of congregations in the realm of social services. Rather resource-building outperformed newness and longevity as significant measures. Finally, social class was ineffective in influencing the organizational behavior of congregations. In this analysis, members were unable to influence the behavior of their churches via their social class status.

In the qualitative analysis, I show that congregations construct internal mechanisms that fortify their culture of giving. These processes order why churches engage in social services, what they do, who does the work, and how churches respond to internal and external environmental pressures. The mechanisms that drive social service delivery become institutionalized in the fabric of the church’s expressed actions. Thus, the structured work of social services represents processes that rest upon religious theology. Ultimately, religious leaders and members adopt these mechanisms as inherent
features of a congregation’s objectives. In addition, the institutionalization of congregations’ goals informs how they respond to environmental change.

I conclude that organizational structure and organizational culture function as complementary social forces that shape the charitable behavior of congregations. Thus, I identify five essential characteristics that order congregations’ partnerships and delivery of social services. I argue, that a congregation’s role in social services is mediated via religious tradition, a commitment to social services, and the inheritance of social service provision passed down to congregations via a legacy of social justice. In addition, I include resource building (i.e. money and members) and response to environmental changes as important factors that promote charitable action. Overall, this analysis indicates that congregations’ social service activities represent structured work rather than piecemeal efforts that lack focus, direction and support. In the following section, I discuss and explain how each aforementioned process shapes the charitable behavior of congregations.

Tradition

Historically, religious tradition has served as a force that delineates the sea of churchgoers based on their religious preferences. In this study, I show that religious tradition also affects the engagement of congregations in social services. Consistent with previous research, Mainline Protestants, specifically Liberal Protestants outperform their peers in terms of community outreach (Chaves 1999; Ammerman 2005). This study contradicts previous research that claims Conservative Protestants are beginning to
outperform Liberal and Moderate Protestants (Skocpol 2000; Hall 2001). In comparison to their peers, the presence of Liberal Protestants is more firmly entrenched in the arena of social services. As a feature of organizational structure, religious tradition works independently of resource building. Liberal and Moderate Protestants construct messages about social services that are distinct from the messages generated by congregations that espouse the spiritual teachings of different religious traditions. Unlike public agencies, congregations do not provide social services under the watchful eye of the government. Rather they base their charitable action in informal rules that are supported by moral commitments (Strang and Sine 2002). This study shows how religious tradition works differently among denominational families as a catalyst for social service provision. I argue that religious tradition works distinct from resource building in three separate ways: 1) it forms congregations’ attitudes toward charity, 2) it frames the institutionalization of charitable behavior that shapes congregations’ internal cultures, and 3) it tells congregations how to express their faith.

For Mainline Protestant congregations, religious tradition pushes them to establish more overall partnerships with external organizations, specifically social service organizations, than their Liberal Protestant counterparts. This finding refutes previous work that identifies Mainline Protestant congregations as more insular than Liberal Protestant congregations (Roozen and Hadaway 1993, 2006; Percy 2006). Mainline Protestant congregations seek to fulfill their community outreach goals, as supported by moderate Christian theological orientations, via partnerships with established social
service organizations. Although their partnerships represent numerical fortitude, they do not reveal stronger ties or more diverse connections than Liberal Protestant congregations. Rather, once Liberal Protestant congregations extend their benevolent arms into the arena of social services, they solidify their presence by building more intense and more diverse partnerships with social service organizations than Mainline Protestant congregations. As Roozen and Hadaway (1993) suggest, Liberal Protestants encourage the provision of social services, especially the establishment of partnerships with external social service organizations. In support of Mead’s work (1991, 1993), Liberal Protestant congregations promote two types of growth: organic growth which encourages their movement across organizational boundaries and incarnational growth which encourages them to spread their faith. The flexibility to engage other organizations and to engage their local communities sets Liberal Protestants congregations apart from their peers. Consistent with studies that evaluate corporate philanthropy, Liberal Protestant congregations may attach social meaning to charitable work that enhances their reputation in the community, among their parishioners and within the field of social service providers (Alpherson 1995; Davidson 1997; Foley 1998; Graham 1994; Muirhead 1999; Mullen 1997; Stark 1999). This perspective is supported by a liberal interpretation of Christian religious texts that calls for the advancement of good works. Mock, Davidson and Johnson (1991) show that pastors with a liberal theology initiate the formation of social ministries more than their Conservative and Moderate Protestant counterparts. Overtime the charitable work of Liberal Protestant
congregations builds their faith-based social capital, an asset that communicates to others that they are credible, experienced, and reliable purveyors of social services.

Subsequently, these messages become institutionalized within the cultures of Liberal Protestant congregations. Institutionalization comprises a unique process that allows established relationships to become taken for granted (Zucker 1983). Charitable behavior relies on the melding of the goals and concerns of congregations and their communities generating shared desires to improve the local ecology (Burt 1983). Church members internalize the normative behavior of their places of worship, using these practices as scripts that guide their mission-minded actions (McMullen 1994; Ammerman 2005). Community outreach becomes as much an individual goal as it is a goal of the congregation, of the denomination and of the religious tradition.

Expressing one’s faith reaches beyond the pews and compels parishioners into tangent communities seeking to uplift the downtrodden through good deeds. As described by the pastor of a Methodist congregation, in order to “tear down the walls”, between his church and the community, it was imperative that his members internalized and accepted this goal as a worthy task. Often congregations use religious materials such as, church bulletins to entice their members to support community outreach. These materials become important messengers of the church’s intentions to regular attenders and newcomers who are attracted to social justice aspirations (Roozen and Hadaway 1993).
Commitment

The results indicate that mission-orientation, specifically activist orientations, significantly influences social service provision among congregations. Whereas religious tradition works across the full range of characteristics that define partnerships, mission-orientation falls short of producing an assortment of partnerships. They form significantly fewer connections with organizations that support counseling services and secular social service organizations. Similar to religious tradition, I argue that the social service delivery of activist congregations represents the establishment of concrete internal routines that direct the delivery of social services. For organizations, stated goals directs the allocation of their resources and establishes legitimacy within their fields (Hannan and Freeman 1984). As an expressed objective, activist congregations identify serving the needy and promoting social justice as primary goals. These designations underscore a congregation’s understanding of how it fits into the local ecology. Consistent with the process of institutionalization, activist congregations establish internal routines that match their expressed goals (Selznick 1957). I argue that within activist congregations, these internal routines are clearly defined practices, rather than ambiguous customs that prevent religious leaders, lay leaders and members from pursuing their community outreach goals. As the objective of helping the needy becomes solidified as a permanent, fixed feature of a congregation’s religious life, it becomes more of a rule than a suggestion. The more members believe that they “come to learn,” but “go out to serve” the more churches benefit from members who want to help their communities. This
phenomenon is manifested in the plethora of missions groups that characterize the internal arrangements of congregations.

Inheritance

In support of my second hypothesis, I found that Black congregations form significantly fewer ties with social service organizations. In addition, they build significantly fewer ties with secular organizations. My hypothesis is supported by previous research that correlates accessibility to societal rewards with 1) the level of social capital among African-Americans and 2) race segregation within America’s workplaces (Winsborough and Dickenson 1971; Bonacich 1972; Fossett, Galle and Burr 1989; Tomaskovic-Devey 1989, 1993; Baron and Newman 1990; Glass 1990). This study refutes Chaves and Higgins (1992) finding that Black congregations form more collaborations with outside organizations. Yet, although this analysis indicates less engagement with external social service organizations, it does not indicate less overall involvement in social services. Largely, the quantitative analysis measures a congregation’s experiences with in-direct social services. It does not account for the social service activities that congregations perform on their own. Nor does the quantitative analysis adequately depict the influence of the socio-historical role of social justice within Black congregations. However, in the qualitative component African American religious leaders highlight the notable connection between the Black Church’s past, its present and its future. Within the qualitative interviews, Black pastors identified the heritage of social justice within the Black Church as a catalyst for charitable action.
In the opening pages of his church’s bulletin, the pastor of a Baptist congregation chooses to write “...we who have experienced discrimination and prejudice first hand must not permit ourselves to serve in a discriminatory manner.” Acknowledging the struggles that have punctuated the struggles of many African Americans, he calls his congregation to service. Another African American pastor credits his dedication to social justice to his long-standing membership with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization that served an integral role in the Civil Rights Movement.

Bartowski and Regis (2003) found that congregations situated in low-income neighborhoods provide intensive benevolence that requires more exposure and interaction with those in need. Following their findings, I argue that Black congregations facilitate social services mainly via direct services that meet the needs of people within their immediate surroundings. Previous research shows that Black congregations provide different types of social services than White congregations (Chaves and Higgins 1992). They emphasize participation in meal services, childcare, and counseling services (i.e. health, education, substance abuse). Although the Civil Rights Movement reflects the highlight of the Black Church’s involvement in political activism, the present day perils of many Black communities continue to extend the role of the Black Church beyond the pulpit and into its neighborhoods. Thus, its historical role as an anchoring institution in the African American community remains intact (Myrdal 1944; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). As Billingsley (1993) aptly described, the Black Church serves as a power base that relies on its legacy as a public institution to encourage people spiritually and to
shelter them from social challenges such as racism, discrimination, poverty and political marginalization. In essence, this legacy is the birthright of today’s Black Church.

The Importance of Resource-Building

This study shows that resource building significantly affects the participation of congregations in social services. In the quantitative analysis, the results show that access to financial support and the number of regular attenders within a congregation significantly affects the ability of congregations to form partnerships with external social service organizations. Previous research shows that congregations with large budgets do more in terms of social services (Hodgkinson et. al 1993; Ammerman 2000; Chaves 2004). This analysis shows that monetary backing significantly affects the types of social services that congregations support. Congregations with large budgets support more organizations that provide food, clothing and shelter and they support more religious based social services. Thus, I conclude that greater financial means gives congregations the flexibility to diversify their support of social services.

The results show that a congregation’s size parallels its access to capital. Whereas money influences the diversity of a congregation’s ties with external social service organizations, the number of regular attenders influences the quantity and strength of congregations’ partnerships. This analysis lends insight into how size and budget work cooperatively to influence the engagement of congregations in social services. The marginal role of rural congregations in social services bolsters this assertion. Overall, rural congregations form significantly fewer partnerships and
maintain less diverse connections. Situated in ecologies that distance them from valuable resources, rural congregations exist on the periphery of social service provision.

Chaves (2004) argues that money, members and leaders comprise the three most important predictors of a congregation’s participation in social services. This assertion is consistent with resource-dependence that claims congregations rely heavily on their members for resources (i.e. money, volunteers). I argue that the involvement of congregations in social services extends beyond the claim that more resources leads to greater social service involvement. Instead, I maintain that congregations utilize their members to perpetuate the notion of Christian charity. The qualitative interviews described how religious leaders attempt to instill the principle of charity in their congregations. Members not only seek to spread their faith to the community, they diffuse their faith to other members as well. Perhaps in large congregations, bureaucratic practices become more firmly engrained in the congregation’s culture. Thus, each week members are presented with clear directives and the necessary support to fulfill social service goals. I extend this claim to include religious leaders as valuable resources. The results show that clergy education has a significant positive influence on the bonds congregations form with organizations that provide counseling services and health and education services. Among Columbus congregations, clergy leaders were instrumental in initiating and maintaining their congregations’ bonds with external social service organizations.
Responses to Environmental Change

Finally, congregations filter their responses to internal and external changes via organizational structure and organizational culture. The ability of congregations to survive fluctuations in their environments depends on their internal organizational arrangements and their internal cultures. Congregations that lack the ability to respond to change, generally lack strong leadership, adequate resources and flexible cultures. These characteristics allow congregations to view change as something that will destroy them. In the qualitative interviews, several congregations were faced with potentially fatal changes. By relying on the support provided within their organizational structures and organizational cultures, congregations were able to generate innovative ways to respond to change. In some cases, this meant selling a church building, changing the congregation’s worship style and forging connections with other religious organizations. One of the more memorable interviews identified how the pastor of a White congregation choose to respond to his community’s shifting population. Faced with an increase in African American residents, he sought the guidance and mentorship of African-American pastors who advised him on how to welcome and support the new residents within his community. This meant offering different types of services and altering his congregation’s worship style. Yet, this pastor’s work is not done. In recent years, his community has witnessed an increase in gay and lesbian residents. Again, he took up the mantle to find innovative ways to welcome and support his new community. Admittedly, this is proving to be difficult, since his conservative, fundamentalist denomination has a
marked history of standing in opposition to the rights of gays and lesbians in America. Thus, the congregation’s historical *image* is inhibiting his ability to build a rapport with members of his community.

Without ways to respond to change, organizations face failure and even death (Meyer and Rowan 1977). In another Columbus community, the pastor of a White congregation worked to stave off the decline of his congregation. As the African American population grew in the community adjacent to the church, his congregation became more racially integrated. In an unusual, yet unique move, he guided his congregation through a dynamic transition that resulted in the congregation breaking its denominational ties and claiming non-denominational status. In addition, his congregation drastically altered its worship style to accommodate the new congregation that reflected the community in which it exists. In this case, the congregation’s organizational structure served as a mechanism of support while the congregation actively worked to generate a new organizational culture.

As the aforementioned examples illustrate, congregations must commit themselves to change, if they want to survive within ecologies ripe with unpredictable behavior. Based in religious faith, social services become normalized features of congregations’ activities. Tradition, commitment, inheritance, resource building, and response to environmental change help to transform new practices into old routines within congregations. As worshippers and on-lookers, we extol legitimacy upon congregations regardless of their role in social services. Yet, when they do engage in
community outreach it confirms our historical expectations that congregations will help
us in our time of need. Here, I offer an explanation that describes the prolific role of
congregations in social services. Utilizing a quantitative analysis and qualitative
interviews, this study verifies that American congregations exist not on the periphery of
social services, but in the nexus of charitable organizations that serve our nation’s
communities.
APPENDIX

Tables
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TotalOrg</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of organizations congregations establish connections with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TotalOut</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of organizations congregations support by providing resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TotalVol</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of organizations congregations support by providing volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TotalMon</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of organizations congregations support monetarily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NeedyOrg</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of partner organizations that provide food, clothing, and shelter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HlthOrg</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of partner organizations that provide health and education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ConslOrg</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of partner organizations that provide counseling services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReliPart</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of religious-based partner organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SeclPart</td>
<td>Linear variable measured as the total number of secular partner organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Description of Dependent Variables
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable identifies Conservative Protestant congregations. Used as reference category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable identifies Roman Catholic congregations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Protestants</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable identifies Liberal Protestant congregations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Protestants</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable identifies Moderate Protestant congregations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable identifies congregations with other denominational affiliations or no denomination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable identifies congregations that have a congregational governance structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Authority</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable identifies congregations that utilize a combination of governance structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical Authority</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable identifies congregations that utilize a denominational governance structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist Mission</td>
<td>Scaled variable measures the importance of activism and social justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Mission</td>
<td>Scaled variable measures the level of importance of evangelical works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-Oriented</td>
<td>Scaled variable that measures the importance of providing services to members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy Education</td>
<td>Scaled variable measures the formal education of clergy education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Linear variable measures a congregation’s total annual revenues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Dichotomous variable that indicates a congregation’s geographical location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Linear variable measure’s a congregation’s age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Linear variable measures the total number of attendees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Scaled variable measures the percent of attendees that are Black.</td>
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</table>

Table 2: Description of Independent Variables
Table 2: Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Variable Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Live Near Church</td>
<td>Scaled variable measures the percent of attendees that live within 10 minutes of the church building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly</td>
<td>Scaled variable measures the percent of attendees over the age of 65.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>Scaled variable measures the income level of attendees.</td>
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### Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Selected Dependent and Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Range</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>TotalOrg</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td>7.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>TotalOut</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TotalVol</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1 - 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TotalMon</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1 - 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NeedyOrg</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1 - 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HlthOrg</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1 - 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>ConsIOrg</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReliPart</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1 - 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SecIPart</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1 - 24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Protestants</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Protestants</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0 - 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congregational</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Authority</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activist Mission</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0 - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Mission</td>
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Table 3: Continued

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<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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Table 4: Means Comparison for Selected Independent and Dependent Variables Weighted by Size
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Table 5: Means Comparisons for Selected Independent and Dependent Variables Weighted by Size
Table 6: Influence of Organizational Structure on Partnerships Formed with External Organizations.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Model I</th>
<th>Model II</th>
<th>Model III</th>
<th>Model IV</th>
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<td>-0.86</td>
<td>-0.70</td>
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<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.82</td>
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<td>0.76**</td>
<td>2.86***</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.55</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Activist-Oriented</td>
<td>1.48***</td>
<td>0.89***</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
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<td>0.39</td>
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<td>0.14</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.88***</td>
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<td>(logged)</td>
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<td>0.66</td>
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<td>-0.27**</td>
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<td>-0.01</td>
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Table 6: Continued

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<th>Model II</th>
<th>Model III</th>
<th>Model IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent attendees with high school education or less</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent attendees with low incomes (&lt; $15,000)</td>
<td>0.00822</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
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*= .05 significance
** = .01 significance
*** = .001 significance
<table>
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<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Model V</th>
<th>Model VI</th>
<th>Model VII</th>
<th>Model VIII</th>
<th>Model IX</th>
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<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>b</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roman Catholics</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.64</td>
<td>-1.53**</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
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<td>Liberal Protestants</td>
<td>1.78***</td>
<td>0.29*</td>
<td>1.49***</td>
<td>1.71***</td>
<td>1.50***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Protestants</td>
<td>1.24***</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
<td>1.23**</td>
<td>1.67***</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
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<td>Activist-Oriented</td>
<td>0.61**</td>
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<td>0.47**</td>
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<td>0.61***</td>
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<td>0.16*</td>
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<td>-0.70</td>
<td>-0.70*</td>
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<td>0.36</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent attendees live within 10 minutes</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td>Percent attendees over 65 years old</td>
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<td>0.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent attendees live within 10 minutes</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent over 65 years old</td>
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<td>-0.17</td>
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<td>-0.03</td>
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Continued

Table 7: Influence of Organizational Structure on Partnerships Formed with External Organizations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Class Indicators</th>
<th>Model V</th>
<th>Model VI</th>
<th>Model VII</th>
<th>Model VIII</th>
<th>Model IX</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent attendees with high school education or less</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent attendees with low incomes (&lt; $15,000)</td>
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<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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0.35**

-0.03

-0.08

0.06

-0.001

0.13

0.05

0.16

0.16

0.140

* = .05 significance

** = .01 significance

*** = .001 significance
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Wead, R. 1996. "Coming This Far by Faith: History of Selected Black Churches in Columbus, Ohio ".


