



## The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 10  
Issue 3 *September*

Article 2

September 1983

# Social Action Organization Participation and Personal Change in the Poor: Part II

Robert D. Herman  
*University of Missouri, Kansas City*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the [Politics and Social Change Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Herman, Robert D. (1983) "Social Action Organization Participation and Personal Change in the Poor: Part II," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 10 : Iss. 3 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol10/iss3/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact [maira.bundza@wmich.edu](mailto:maira.bundza@wmich.edu).



SOCIAL ACTION ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION  
AND PERSONAL CHANGE IN THE POOR: PART II

Robert D. Herman

L.P. Cookingham Institute of Public Affairs  
University of Missouri-Kansas City

ABSTRACT

In Part I (Herman, 1982) evidence bearing on the hypothesis that participation by the poor in social action organizations results in personal change was reviewed and found to be inconsistent and open to diverse interpretations. In Part I it was observed that not all social action organizations are alike and, thus, that participation is also of varied kinds and extents and may have different consequences for personal change. A typology of social action organizations forms (developed in Part I) is used here to comparatively classify information on organizational characteristics and personal change drawn from eleven case studies. The comparative review leads to three principal implications. First, it offers more support for the situational than for the sub-cultural perspective. Second, the review implies that the emphasis of both perspectives on the necessity of personality change may be inappropriate. Third, the review suggests personal change in the poor, either dispositionally or behaviorally, but especially the latter, is much more likely in those organizations in which the poor are highly included and are sponsored by groups or institutions with relatively few resources. Finally, the paper concludes with a few observations on the meaning and significance of social action organizations of the poor.

Introduction

Anti-poverty policies have often been based upon (or, at least, consistent with) the view that the poor are psychologically different than the non-poor. Such differences have usually been conceived as deficiencies on the part of the poor. Additionally, some strategies to eliminate, reduce or ameliorate poverty have proposed that participation in social action organizations<sup>1</sup> would lead to beneficial changes in the personalities of the poor. In Part I (Herman, 1982) studies that explicitly

addressed this participation hypothesis were reviewed and found to be inconsistent and open to a variety of interpretations. The term "participation" includes a range of relationships between the poor and an organization (from client to policy-making member) and the poor may participate in highly different sorts of social action organizations (from OEO-style agencies to grass-roots social influence organizations). It seems likely that the personal impact of participation will be mediated by the extent and type of participation. In Part I a typology of social action organizations was developed. The typology (see Diagram I) will be used here to comparatively review eleven case studies of the poor's participation in social action organizations. The tasks of the review are to determine the positions of each organization on the typological dimensions and to determine the extent of each organization's impact on the poor who participated.

Diagram I

Typology of Social Action Organizations

		Socio-political Change	Individual Service
High Resource Sponsor	{ High Inclusion of Poor	1	2
	{ Low Inclusion of Poor	3	4
Low Resource Sponsor	{ High Inclusion of Poor	5	6
	{ Low Inclusion of Poor	7	8

The case studies vary considerably in theoretical perspectives, availability of systematically collected data, and comparability and quality of data. This variability has precluded the application of rigidly specified criteria. Rather, the comparison requires interpretation and judgment. The classification of each case study organization on the characteristics of sponsor's resource base and organizational inclusion of the poor are relatively simple matters. The classification of output goal orientation and the determination of personal impact are often more difficult. For these reasons the classifications, and the conclusions based upon them, must be considered as suggestive. Chart I provides information on the case study organizations.<sup>2</sup>

Chart I

Classification of Case Study Organizations:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Inclusion of Poor</u>	<u>Resource Base of Sponsors</u>	<u>Personal Impact<sup>a</sup></u>
Zurcher (1970)	Topeka (Kansas) Office of Economic Opportunity Board (TOEO)	service	low	high	*
Rogler (1972)	Hispanic Confederation of "Maplewood"	change	high	low	**
Gitlin and Hollander (1972)	JOIN Community Union of Chicago	change	high	low	***
Pollinger and Pollinger (1972)	Tremont Community Council, Bronx, NY (TCC)	service	high	low	**
Marshall (1971)	Board of the Economic and Youth Oppor- tunities Agency, Los Angeles (EYOA)	service	low	high	--
Gilbert (1970)	Mayor's Committee on Human Resources, Inc., Pittsburgh (MCHR)	service	low	high	--
Bernstein (1971)	The Woodlawn Organization Youth Project, Chicago	service	high	low	--

Chart I Classification of Case Study Organizations (cont'd)

Zimmerman (1971)	Southwest Alabama Farmer's Cooperative (SWAFCA)	change	high	low	**
Herman (1976a)	"UP" of "Delmar," NY	change	high	high	--
Herman (1976a)	"Hope" of "Holton," NY	change	high	low	**
Bloomberg and Rosenstock (1968)	University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee Neighborhood Problems Project	change	high	low	**

-----

<sup>a</sup>The symbols represent the following:

- No evidence of substantial personal impact
- \* Evidence of change in basic personality characteristic(s)
- \*\* Evidence that organizational participation required or led to important, qualitatively different behavior from the poor.
- \*\*\* Evidence of both personality change and behavior acquisition

Through the review and analysis of these case studies can be only interpretative and suggestive, the effort is justified on three related grounds. First, available comparative analyses of social action organizations (i.e., Rose, 1972; Vanecko, 1969; Orden, 1973; and Austin, 1972) consider only official OEO inspired and funded community action agencies. Though OEO community action agencies differed in some ways, there are other types of social action organizations. It is important to broaden the range of organizational types included in a comparative analysis. Secondly, as implied in Part I, the effects (if any) of organizational participation on the poor may be mediated by differences in the characteristics of the poor and by differences in the characteristics of the organizations. The exploration of the hypothesis that the effects of participation are mediated by differences in the characteristics of the organizations is the primary task of this study. Thirdly, while both the cultural and

situational theories of poverty imply that the personalities of the poor "need" to be changed, this review and interpretation will not assume that proposition to necessarily be true.

In interpreting the personal impact of organizational participation on the poor, then, the following questions will be crucial. First, is there any evidence of personality change? Secondly, is there any evidence that organizational participation required or led to the acquisition of qualitatively different and important behavior(s) on the part of the poor? Obviously, this question will often require substantial judgment. Answers to these questions can fall into four classes. There may be evidence of change only in personality characteristics. There may be evidence of only the acquisition of qualitatively different behavior. Neither may have occurred. Both may have occurred.

To reduce, if only slightly, the faith the reader must place in my interpretation of evidence bearing on personal change, the following descriptions summarize the most important evidence I relied upon to reach the conclusions about the kind and extent of personal impact.

The Topeka OEO Board, initiated by the Topeka Welfare Planning Council, included 24 target neighborhood representatives and 40 agency and community representatives. Zurcher (1970) found significant changes in the poor on three (sense of mastery over the physical and social environment, achievement orientation, and universalistic orientation) of ten personality measures after a year's inclusion on the board. The non-poor did not change. Zurcher's observation of board and organizational functioning led him to conclude that the poor were not required to engage in new behaviors as the Topeka OEO adopted a service strategy.

The Hispanic Confederation (Rogler, 1972) was, unlike the Topeka OEO, an "unofficial" social action organization that a small group of Puerto Ricans established that was intended to help other Puerto Ricans. The organization appointed a committee to study the educational problems of Puerto Rican children in Maplewood; the organization investigated the formation of a food cooperative; and the organization visited the mayor, requesting that the city establish an office to serve the needs of the Puerto Rican community. The office would be controlled by the Hispanic Confederation. This proposal generated substantial opposition. Eventually a compromise was reached. Rogler's (1972) detailed account leads one to believe that organizational participation had a substantial impact on the participants' behavior. Bargaining with the mayor and social service officials were behaviors qualitatively different than any they had engaged in previously.

JOIN Community Union (Gitlin and Hollander, 1970) was an outgrowth of an SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) organizing effort and is reported by activists in that effort. Participants in JOIN frequently engaged in new, highly political activities (picketing, organizing and joining in rent strikes, and other confrontational actions). Similarly there are numerous self-reports of value change, about race relations, fatalism and the like: Though the evidence is "impressionistic," participants in JOIN seemed much changed.

The Tremont Community Council of the Bronx (TCC) was established by the New York City anti-poverty agency, the Council Against Poverty (Pollinger and Pollinger, 1972). Arguing that the official goal of the New York City anti-poverty program was socio-political change, Pollinger and Pollinger (1972) investigated the TCC to determine to what extent that general goal was achieved in the Tremont area. Briefly, Pollinger and Pollinger (1972) concluded that the TCC did not function as a source of political influence for the poor, rather it functioned as a source of social control of the poor. Utilizing questionnaire responses Pollinger and Pollinger found no evidence of values or other personality changes, but some evidence of behavior change (e.g., participants became more active in politics and in a wider variety of social action organizations).

The Board of the Economic and Youth Opportunities Agency of Los Angeles (EYOA) was the official anti-poverty agency in Los Angeles (Marshall, 1971). The EYOA emphasized services and services coordination. Utilizing questionnaire responses Marshall (1971) found no change in feelings of political efficacy or in feelings of militancy on the part of the poor representatives on the EYOA board, though there was some evidence that they believed they now participated in more organizations than previously. However, such changes were matters of slight increases rather than a qualitative shift.

The Mayor's Committee on Human Resources, Inc. was Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania's official OEO agency. Gilbert's (1970) account of this organization examines its creation by social work professionals, the early and unchanging goal of providing and coordinating social services, and the extent to which neighborhood council board members were demographically representative of poverty neighborhood residents. While Gilbert did not collect evidence directly relevant to the personal impact of participation, the indirect evidence suggests that the more educated and more politically active neighborhood residents participated and that there was no personality or behavioral change among them.

The Woodlawn Organization Youth Project was a temporary organization created on Chicago's South Side by The Woodlawn Organization (TWO), an early Saul Alinsky assisted community

organization, and two youth gangs, the Blackstone Rangers and the East Side Disciples (Bernstein, 1971). TWO received a contract from the national OEO office to provide a job training program for unemployed youth. The gangs were involved in planning and designing the training program and many of their members or would-be members later received job training. Though a University of Chicago evaluation concluded that the job training program was fairly successful, opposition from powerful political forces (including then Mayor Daley, the city's official anti-poverty agency, and the Chicago Commission on Youth Welfare) resulted in a refunding application being turned down. Though successful in providing a service, there is no evidence that the TWO Youth Project affected the personalities or behavior of the youth gang members.

The Southwest Alabama Farmer's Cooperative was a small producer cooperative of black farmers in ten Alabama counties (Zimmerman, 1971). With some technical assistance from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Cooperative League, the SWAFCA was established in 1966 and had over eight hundred members by early 1967. Though the SWAFCA's goals were the economic goals characteristic of other farm cooperatives, achieving those goals had very important characteristics for the socio-political structure in southwest Alabama. Zimmerman's (1971: 146) description of agricultural institutions and relations prior to the cooperative puts the situation clearly.

Before the cooperative, the economic situation of black farmers in southwest Alabama looked hopeless. For the most part, they grew cotton and corn. Some owned their land; most were tenants. Virtually all were tied to whites by their need for credit at the beginning of each year to buy food, seed and fertilizer in return for handing over the crops they produced each fall. The loans were of goods in kind marked up to unreasonably high prices. No cash changed hands. For the few who escaped the credit bind, there was still no open market. The black farmer dealt with the white man in control of his area. He bought or borrowed far above retail and sold wholesale according to the artificial price structure of monopoly markets.

While there is no evidence of changes in SWAFCA member's personalities, it is clear that there were dramatic differences in their behavior. Participating in the cooperative required many to take substantial risks and commit themselves to an uncertain venture.



UP was a social action organization created as a result of a training program undertaken by extension personnel at an eastern university (Herman, 1976a). Over its short life UP unsuccessfully pursued goals of improving housing for the poor and establishing a food-buying cooperative. Members of UP showed no changes in personal control, social control or traditional control beliefs (Herman, 1976b). Nor was there any evidence that UP participants acquired new, qualitatively different behaviors.

HOPE was a social action organization created by grass-roots organizing in an upstate New York city (Herman, 1976a). HOPE conducted a successful voter registration drive in the city's black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods, and opposed building additional single site public housing directly adjacent to the existing public housing project. HOPE, however, failed to convince the city to build single dwelling, scattered-site public housing. Members of HOPE showed no measurable changes in control beliefs, but many members did engage in behaviors (e.g. confronting city housing inspectors and landlords, meeting with and making demands of housing authority and city officials, and publicly demonstrating their views through picketing and sit-ins) new to them and that demanded much (Herman, 1976a; 1976b).

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Neighborhood Problems Project (Bloomberg and Rosenstock, 1968) were temporary social action organizations that resulted from community organizing projects sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The first organizing project carried out a successful voter registration drive, and participants in the UWM project were important members of separate social action organizations that produced a housing rehabilitation program and a summer jobs program. A second UWM community organizing project led to successful "direct action" efforts to have a school-crossing traffic light installed, a pedestrian overpass constructed, and an education program. Bloomberg and Rosenstock (1968) did not collect evidence on personality change in the UWM projects. Their report does suggest that many of the participants engaged in behaviors new to them.

### Discussion and Interpretation

Though the positioning of the case study organizations in the typology is not without some discontinuities, the patterning does strongly imply that type 5 organizations (social action organizations that are oriented, to some degree, toward socio-political change, that are sponsored by groups with comparatively few resources, and in which the poor participate at a high level) have had the clearest and most consistent personal impact on the

poor (see Table I). Most of the studies of those (type 5) organizations provided no systematic evidence on the personality change issue at all. It is, thus, possible that members of those organizations may also have undergone personality change as well, although in the case of HOPE, and to a lesser extent the Hispanic Confederation, there is some evidence that suggests that they did not. The only solid evidence of personality change occurring in other (non-type 5) organizations is the Topeka Office of Economic Opportunity case.<sup>4</sup> While it is, of course, impossible to prove that personality change did not take place in the other organizations, there is no reason to suppose that personality change occurred. Further, there are even stronger reasons to believe that (excepting the TCC) the non-type 5 organizations did not require or lead the poor who participated in them to acquire important new behaviors.

As was noted earlier, the distinction between a socio-political change orientation and an individual service orientation is often difficult to make, and such classification often obscures the varied, mixed nature of the activities and goal orientations of many social action organizations. Except in the case of the TCC, all of the organizations that required or led to important, qualitatively different behavior from the poor have been classed as oriented toward socio-political change. This suggests that the goal orientation dimension may not be as important as often assumed. Perhaps sponsorship and inclusion of the poor are more important. Table II explores this possibility. There is no appreciable difference in the patterning of Table II as compared to Table I, lending further support to the view that inclusion and sponsorship affect the personal impact of the participation of the poor. One can further speculate that high resource sponsors are reluctant or unable (for legal or other reasons) to turn an organization over to the poor. Since the participating poor are unlikely (though the Topeka case shows it not impossible) to be personally affected by their experience in anti-poverty or social action organizations unless they are in substantial control of the organization, it seems reasonable to conclude that governmentally-sponsored social action organizations have not been, nor are they likely to be, the most effective means of changing or mobilizing the poor.

The empirical patterns in Tables I and II have two important implications for the principal contemporary theories of poverty. Neither the situational nor the subcultural theory contains an unambiguous, consistent prescription for the design of social action organizations. The subcultural theory implies little about anti-poverty or social action organization design, except for limiting the poor to client-level participation. The situational theory strongly implies organizations with high inclusion

Table 1

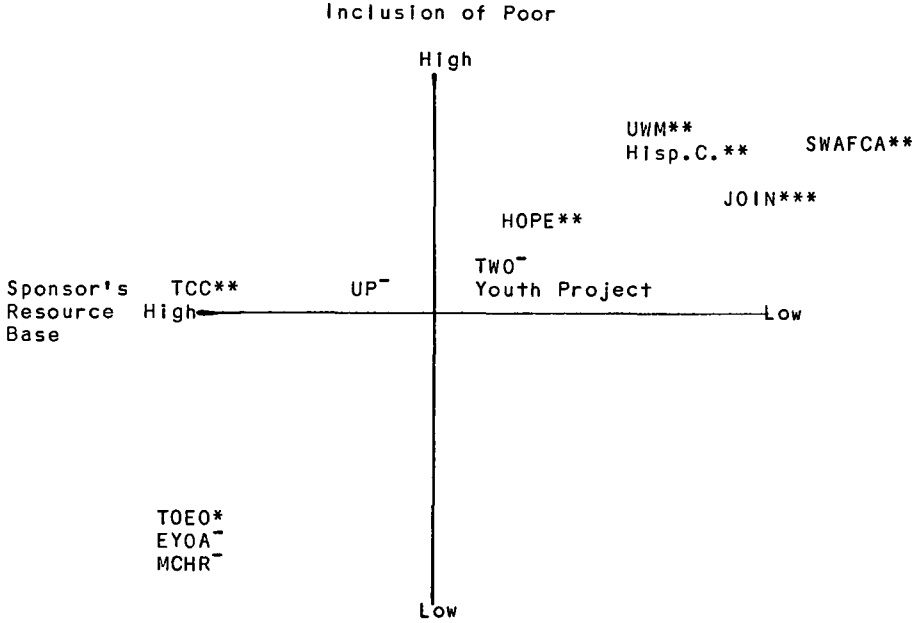
Position of Case Study Organizations In Typology

		<u>Goal Orientation</u>	
		Socio-political change	Individual service
High Resource Sponsor	High inclusion of poor	1 UP <sup>-</sup>	2 TCC**
	Low inclusion of poor	3	4 TOEO* EYOA <sup>-</sup> MCHR <sup>-</sup>
Low Resource Sponsor	High inclusion of poor	5 Hispanic Confederation** SNAFCA** HOPE** JOIN*** UWM**	6 TWO Youth Project <sup>-</sup>
	Low inclusion of poor	7	8

- Key: <sup>-</sup>No evidence of substantial personal impact  
 \* Evidence of change in basic personality characteristic(s)  
 \*\*Evidence that organizational participation required or led to important, qualitatively different behavior from the poor  
 \*\*\*Evidence of both personality change and behavior acquisition

Table II

Position of Case Study Organizations when Classified  
by Sponsorship and Inclusion Dimensions<sup>a</sup>



KEY: Same as Table I

<sup>a</sup> The organizations are placed here in a manner that roughly indicates differentiation within a given cell, as well as between cells.

of the poor, though additional structural prescriptions are vague. The comparative review of the case study organizations offers more support for the situational prescription than it does for the subcultural prescription. Instances of personal impact and of more important impact are concentrated in the organizations consistent with situational theory and inconsistent with subcultural theory. In this first implication for theories of poverty, support for the situational theory, this research is similar to other research on poverty. For example, research by Coward et al. (1974) on the characteristics of the poor and the non-poor in a community survey, by Placek and Hendershot (1974) on family planning and contraceptive practices of welfare mothers, by Berger and Simon (1974) on socialization practices of black families, and by Davidson and Gaitz (1974) on the work habits and attitudes of the poor and non-poor all support the situational theory and contradict the subcultural theory.

The second major implication of this analysis for theories of poverty calls the heavy emphasis on personality change into question. As noted earlier, those situationalists who have considered the organizational participation of the poor have stressed the need for personality change, although none have been very precise in defining and detailing what is meant by that term. If the argument is that effective participation by the poor cannot be achieved without concomitant change in the poor's basic personality system, the comparative review presented here offers little support for it. If the argument is that social action organizations must present the poor with the opportunity and the requirement that they engage in behaviors not usually available to them, then this review supports it. It further suggests that what is important is that an organization's sponsors and participants not create an organization with the view that the personalities of the poor need changing. This most often happens when the poor are both involved in creating and directing the organization.

These implications, support for the situational view and de-emphasis on personality change as an outcome of effective participation, for a theory of poverty may not be generally applicable. As noted earlier the organizationally active poor often differ from the less active and inactive poor. Social action organizations, of whatever structure, do not recruit or attract all of the poor. The subcultural view, though suffering from a number of empirical disconfirmations, may account for the behavior of some proportion of the poor. Lewis (1968: 11) once estimated that proportion: "My rough guess would be that only about 20 percent of the population below the poverty line in the United States have characteristics which would justify classifying their way of life as that of a culture of poverty." If so,

then social organizations that attempt to resocialize the poor may still be necessary and sometimes effective, as the Topeka Office of Economic Board was. This analysis of the structure of social action organizations and the poor's experience in them cannot, and should not, be overgeneralized. This entire paper, throughout, has argued that theory and research on poverty, anti-poverty and social action organizations, and the participation of the poor recognize contingent relationships and search for mediating personality and organizational variables.

Closely following from the foregoing considerations is this review's chief implication for research and theorizing on the personal impact of organizational participation by the poor. Both earlier research and the case studies reviewed here undermine any unconditional participation hypothesis. Research on the organizational participation of the poor can no longer assume that all of the poor need or will undergo personality change. Whether the poor need to be changed is certainly debatable; whether, in any particular case, they are likely to be depends at a minimum on the relation between the characteristics of the participating poor and the structural characteristics of the organization.

### Conclusion

Though poverty and anti-poverty strategies are not currently important policy issues, it is not because poverty in the United States has been eliminated. It may not be long before questions about anti-poverty strategies are again raised - either by governmental policy-makers or by a voluntary organizations. In any case important questions about the social action organizations approach to reducing poverty remain. Can such organizations be an effective means of reducing or eliminating poverty? Before we can begin to answer this question a prior question must be considered. Is poverty primarily an economic or political phenomenon?

The nature and causes of poverty have long been debated and I do not propose to review the debate. I do want to observe that most parties to the debate assume that there is not only a distinction between the economic realm and the political realm, but that economic events, activities and issues are (and should be), in essence, different than political events, activities and issues. The pervasiveness of this assumption is one of the triumphs of capitalism. I have become persuaded that the economic and the political are, if not exactly the same thing, very closely intertwined.

One of the consequences of the assumed essential difference between the economic and the political has been that social action organizations of the poor (both official "War on Poverty" and independent organizations) have often been thought to be economic instruments. Because the distribution of income and the proportion of the population classified as poor (using a relative not absolute measure) did not appreciably change during the "War on Poverty" years (Plotnick and Skidmore, 1975), there is a widespread consensus that the "War on Poverty" was a failure. If we think of the "War" as a set of programs intended to change the skills or labor market position of the poor and/or to reform economic practices and institutions, such a conclusion must, by and large, be accepted. But, if we (following Piven and Cloward, 1971) think of the "War" as initially a political strategy for maintaining the electoral support of inner city blacks and poor for the Democratic party and subsequently as a strategy employed by local political establishments to blunt and co-opt the political demands and incipient political mobilization of these collectivities, we must conclude that the "War" was a success (for some).

Though it may be true that the official "War on Poverty" and its community action agencies failed to change the economic conditions of the poor and succeeded in maintaining the boundaries and stability of the contemporary national political system and of local political systems, what did independent social action organizations accomplish? More importantly, what is the meaning and significance of their existence? It is, of course, impossible to offer any well-documented, conclusive assessment of the accomplishments of independent social action organizations. Some of these organizations have apparently had limited, local effects on economic practices and the economic situation of some of the poor. We can expect no more than that. To suppose that the nation's political economy and its mechanisms for distributing income can be changed by relatively small, resource-impoverished, locally-oriented groups represents, it seems to me, a serious misunderstanding of the nature of political and economic power in the United States. This is not to deny the strategic utility of economic goals for such organizations, since such goals are often the best means for organizing the poor on their own behalf. The poor, however, cannot directly effect the extent or causes of poverty themselves. We will miss the sociological meaning and significance of social action organizations if we think of them as primarily efforts at economic self-help.

As two relatively recent studies (Lamb, 1975; Fainstein and Fainstein, 1974) emphasize, the existence and fate of social action organizations of the poor constitute important evidence about the operation of pluralist democracy in the United States.

A number of authors have built a convincing case that the American system of democratic pluralism is one of limited pluralism and that the poor are the major collectivity excluded from full participation in the system (for theoretical summaries see Bachrach, 1967 and Gamson, 1968; for empirical evidence see Hamilton, 1972 and Gamson, 1975). All social action organizations of the poor are potentially challenging groups (in Gamson's terms). Because of their pattern of sponsorship and internal control, independent social action organizations are particularly likely to become attempts by the poor to gain increased admittance to the local political system.

The evidence on the extent to which organizations of the poor penetrated local political systems is mixed and sparse. Lamb (1975), for instance, in a study of 100 poor neighborhoods (not organizations) finds that the majority were not highly mobilized. However, he does find that militant (as measured by such activities as sit-ins, boycotts, demonstrations and mass marches) mobilized neighborhoods have achieved greater degrees of change in local institutions such as private welfare agencies, local schools, and employers than other types of poor neighborhoods. Based upon a qualitative interpretation of recent urban political movements (meaning politicized organizations of blacks, Latins and other non-whites) Fainstein and Fainstein (1974: 235) conclude:

These movements cannot be called a success. Many of them have not been able to withstand internal disaffection or diversion from their stated goals. Externally they have largely not managed to exploit local issues for broader purposes. The political and numerical weakness of urban minorities has caused them to concentrate their demands on local targets. Here the need to appeal to followers on the basis of narrowly defined issues has resulted in movements oriented toward highly specific goals. Within the limits of this arena, however, they have made some gains. Most important, they have assisted in forcing local governmental institutions to consider constituencies which they have previously ignored, and this consideration has resulted in an improvement in public services in some instances and, at least, the halting of such policies as indiscriminate urban renewal.

In short, what evidence is available suggests that most of the poor have not been members of social action organizations or otherwise politically mobilized and that many (most?) social



action organizations have not managed to fully enter local political systems, though they have sometimes achieved some important changes in local institutions. If this is a reasonably accurate conclusion, why have social action organizations not been more effective political instruments?

One (once?) prominent view holds that the poor have not succeeded, and cannot, in developing stable and effective social action organizations because they are psychologically incapable of doing so. I believe otherwise. I concede that not all of the poor are equally capable of effectively participating, which is also true, no doubt, at other levels in the stratification system. The evidence reviewed here as well as other evidence (Fainstein and Fainstein, 1974; Lamb, 1975) supports the presumption that the poor can effectively participate in purposive social action organizations when opportunities to do so are available. That more of the poor do not participate in social action organizations is due to a lack of resources. As Olson (1965) and, more recently, Gamson (1975) have demonstrated, there is nothing "natural" about collective action. The poor have few, if any, resources to spare for such risky endeavors. They are not completely unwilling to take such chances, however. Several of the case studies show that the poor are especially likely to participate (and invest resources) in social action organizations when others have provided the initial investment and thus a promising opportunity. That many social action organizations have not been especially politically effective is due to the formidable obstacles any challenging group faces.

#### Notes

1. Social action organizations, as defined in Part I, are those organizations, regardless of whether they are governmentally or privately sponsored, in which the poor participate to some extent and which are oriented to either changing the skills, attitudes or personalities of the poor or to achieving socio-political change, or both.
2. Because it would result in a very lengthy paper I have not included descriptions of the case study organizations. Those interested in a more extensive documentation of the cases may either write me for a detailed consideration of each case or turn to the original reports. Additionally, I want to be as straightforward as possible about the extent of interpretation involved in this paper. The comparative review rests upon two levels of interpretation. Though some of the studies (e.g. Zurcher, 1970; and Bloomberg and Rosenstock, 1968) present original quantitative data, most represent the author's interpretation of qualitative data. On top of those interpretations rest my interpretations

about the structure of the organization and the kind and extent of personal impact. Though it has long been commonplace to recognize that data "do not speak for themselves," the gap between data and interpretation here is larger than is the case in more "rigorous" sociological research. Obviously, I do not believe this larger gap invalidates this kind of project. That only one person has reviewed and interpreted the case studies raises questions about the extent to which interpretations may be biased in support of a given hypothesis. Though I began with no explicit hypotheses and though I have tried to apply the same criteria in the same way throughout, the possibility of bias or selectivity (though unintended) is, indeed, there. Some may feel that the use of uninformed coders working from a set of operational coding guidelines would have reduced the chance of bias or selectivity. Perhaps so. Such a procedure would certainly have given the research a more scientific aura. Besides lacking the resources to undertake that procedure, I think the use of a single, informed interpreter is, in the present circumstances, defensible and desirable. This project is one interpretation of the personal impact of the poor's participation in social action organizations -- no more, and no less.

3. For those interested in the psychological assumptions upon which this interpretive scheme rests, let me state that I do not believe that any and every behavioral acquisition must be preceded (or succeeded) by a change in basic personality characteristics. Though the four-fold interpretation to be used here is consistent with either behavioristic or cognitive paradigms, I prefer the cognitive approach. I conceive the pursuit of new behaviors by the poor without apparent personality change as an instance of the expectancy theory of motivation, in which a person's actions are regarded as determined by outcome preferences, expectancies linking efforts and performances, and expectancies linking performances and outcomes. Though expectancy theory has been developed by those interested in work behavior, it is equally applicable to "voluntary" behavior. For major statements about expectancy theory see Vroom (1964) and Porter and Lawler (1968).

4. Louis Zurcher has informed me, in a personal communication, that those who participated, and experienced personality change, had fairly significant roles (high inclusion) in the TOEO. He suggests that the TOEO case is not inconsistent with interpretation advanced here.

5. See the papers in Haveman (1977) for evaluations of the various component programs of the War on Poverty. Some of the authors in the Haveman (1977) collection do not entirely agree with the view that the war was a failure. For instance, Haveman (1977: 9) concludes that: "A reasonable appraisal of the results

of the War on Poverty might, however, run as follows: While the direct contribution of the War to raising the income of the poor does not appear to have been great, the total effect of that effort on poverty reduction may have been substantial. The extent of a favorable judgment rests on how one interprets subtle and indirect evidence regarding the causes of the unexpected and unplanned [federal policy] developments, in particular their dependence on the announcement of a War on Poverty and the implementation of its programs."

#### References

- Austin, David R.  
1972 "Resident participation: political mobilization or organizational co-optation?" Public Administration Review 32: 409-20.
- Bachrach, Peter  
1967 The Theory of Democratic Elitism: A Critique  
Boston: Little, Brown and Co., Inc.
- Berger, Alan S. and William Simon  
1974 "Black families and the Moynihan report: a research evaluation."  
Social Problems 22: 145-61.
- Bernstein, Jerome  
1971 "Manpower - T.W.O. and the Blackstone Rangers."  
Pp. 250-70 in Edgar S. Bohn and Barry A. Passett (eds.), Citizen Participation: Effecting Community Change. New York: Praeger.
- Bloomberg, Warner, Jr. and Florence W. Rosenstock  
1968 "Who can activate the poor? One assessment of 'maximum feasible participation.'" Pp. 313-54 in Warner Bloomberg, Jr. and Henry J. Schmandt (eds.) Power, Poverty and Urban Policy. Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Coward, Barbara E., J. Allen Williams, Jr. and Joe R. Feagin  
1974 "The culture of poverty debate: some additional data." Social Problems 21: 621-34.
- Davidson, Chandler and Charles M. Galtz  
1974 "'Are the poor different?' A comparison of work behavior and attitudes among the urban poor and non-poor." Social Problems 22: 229-45.

- Fainstein, Norman I. and Susan S. Fainstein  
 1974 Urban Political Movements  
 Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Gamson, William A.  
 1968 "Stable unrepresentation in American society."  
 American Behavioral Scientist (Nov./Dec.): 15-21.  
 1975 The Strategy of Social Protest  
 Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey.
- Gilbert, Neil  
 1970 Clients or Constituents  
 San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gittlin, Todd and Nanci Hollander  
 1970 Uptown: Poor Whites in Chicago  
 New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.
- Hamilton, Richard R.  
 1972 Class and Politics in the United States  
 New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Haveman, Robert H. (ed.)  
 1977 A Decade of Federal Antipoverty Programs.  
 New York: Academic Press.
- Haveman, Robert H.  
 1977 "Introduction: poverty and social policy in the  
 1960's and 1970's - an overview and some  
 speculations," Pp. 1-19 in Robert Haveman (ed.),  
 A Decade of Federal Antipoverty Programs.  
 New York: Academic Press.
- Herman, Robert D.  
 1976a The Participation of the Poor in Social Action  
 Organizations: A Contingency Approach.  
 Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell  
 University.
- 1976b "Voluntary organization participation and  
 personality change in the poor: a longitudinal  
 study." Journal of Voluntary Action Research  
 5: 95-105.
- 1982 "Social action organization participation and  
 personal change in the poor: Part I." Journal of  
 Sociology and Social Welfare IX: 573-586.

- Lamb, Curt  
1975 Political Power in Poor Neighborhoods, New York: Schenkman.
- Lewis, Oscar  
1968 A Study of Slum Culture: Backgrounds for La Vida. New York: Random House, Inc.
- Marshall, Dale Rogers  
1971 The Politics of Participation in Poverty. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Olson, Mancur Jr.  
1965 The Logic of Collective Action. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Orden, Susan R.  
1973 "The impact of community action programs on private social service agencies." Social Problems 20: 364-81.
- Plotnick, Robert D. and Felicity Skidmore  
1975 Progress Against Poverty. New York: Academic Press, Inc.
- Pollinger, Kenneth J. and Annette C. Pollinger  
1972 Community Action and the Poor. New York: Praeger Publishers
- Porter, Lyman W. and E. E. Lawler  
1968 Managerial Attitudes and Performance. Homewood, IL: Irwin-Dorsey.
- Rogler, Lloyd H.  
1972 Migrant in the City: The Life of a Puerto Rican Action Group. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Rose, Stephen M.  
1972 The Betrayal of the Poor: The Transformation of Community Action. Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman.
- Vanecko, James J.  
1969 "Community mobilization and institutional change." Social Science Quarterly 50: 609-30.
- Vroom, Victor H.  
1964 Work and Motivation. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Zimmerman, Stanley

1971

"Economic development: the SWAFCA cooperative."  
Pp. 145-83 in Edgar S. Cahn and Barry A. Passet  
(eds.), *Citizen Participation: Effecting  
Community Change*. New York: Praeger Publishers,  
Inc.

Zurcher, Louis A., Jr.

1970

*Poverty Warriors: The Human Experience of Planned  
Social Intervention*. Austin, Texas: University  
of Texas Press.